

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee  
6 Raymond Street, N.W.  
Atlanta 14, Georgia

*Text*

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THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE grew out of the student sit-in movement in 1960. It is composed of local protest groups across the South, a staff of 190 young people, and Friends of SNCC groups in the North.

SNCC staff and local affiliate group members work on voter registration and direct action in the hard core areas of the South. They daily face the violence portrayed in this pamphlet.

SNCC looks toward a day when all men shall walk with their heads high, each with equal opportunities, unafraid.

The costs of this pamphlet have been borne by SNCC in order that the Danville story could be told. Your contribution will help cover printing costs and further the struggle for human dignity in the South. Make checks payable to SNCC.



August, 1963



**DANVILLE, VIRGINIA**

# OFFICIAL RECORD OF HOSPITALIZED DEMONSTRATORS,

JUNE 10th, 1963 — Danville, Virginia

<b>Albert Chambers</b>	Lacerations of head, fractured wrist, possible injury to back.
<b>Juanita White</b>	Multiple abrasions on legs and lacerations on knee.
<b>Barbara Graves</b>	Lacerations of scalp.
<b>Richard Coleman</b>	Lacerations of scalp.
<b>Hubert Graves</b>	Possible fracture or sprain of left wrist.
<b>Mary Graham</b>	Laceration of scalp.
<b>Eddie Bethel</b>	Lacerations of scalp.
<b>Floyd J. Stone</b>	Possible back injury.
<b>Frank Davis</b>	Laceration of scalp.
<b>Jessie Warren</b>	Lacerated scalp and possible dislocated shoulder.
<b>Charles Russell</b>	Multiple lacerations of scalp.
<b>Joe Wilson</b>	Injury to left knee.
<b>Ronald Walton</b>	Injury to left shoulder, scapula and coccyx.
<b>Frank Adams</b>	Swollen area right shoulder and complaints of hands hurting.
<b>Paul Price</b>	Laceration on right side head. Complains of dizziness and vomiting.

An unknown number of persons were treated as outpatients by the staff of Winslow Hospital and discharged without a record being made of their injuries or injury.



*"Danville, Virginia Invites You to Make Our City Your City — A Fine Place to Live and Work."* (Chamber of Commerce Report, April, 1963)\*

A young Negro woman who will bear the scars of a police billy stick on her face for the rest of her life — she questions Danville as a "fine place to live and work." A Negro man who was beaten so savagely by police that he almost lost an eye, and was refused medical attention in jail for three days — he has questions also.

This "fine place" erupted into racial turmoil in late May, 1963 and for its size is running a close race with Birmingham for top honors in police brutality.

*"Danville's population was 46,577 in the official U.S. census count...Ninety-nine per cent are American-born..."*

The almost 15,000 Negro citizens of Danville, Virginia are all American-born. But: only 6.2% of them (in the county) are registered voters; the schools are integrated only in a token manner; they cannot have white collar positions or key jobs in municipal government; they cannot eat at most restaurants in the city; they cannot

\* All quotes in italics are taken from this report published by the Danville Chamber of Commerce in April, 1963.



Rev. Lawrence Campbell

see motion pictures at the downtown theatres unless they sit in the balcony; they cannot sleep at the city's motels; their streets, for the most part, are unpaved and poorly lighted; their garbage is not collected regularly; and if they are ill — or beaten by white police — they go to an ill-staffed and ill-equipped segregated hospital.

They can be unemployed, or work as maids, doormen and janitors; they can be discriminated against, whipped, beaten, threatened, and jailed.

*"The Library has nearly 70,000 volumes, over 900 records for children, other audio-visual material and a Genealogical Collection. There is a branch library for Negroes and a book-mobile which serves the outlying areas..."*

Danville was affected with sit-ins when the movement spread rapidly through the South in 1960, but the central battle in this "enlightened, liberal" upper South state came over the desegregation of the main Library.

Negroes and a few, very few, sympathetic whites waged a furious battle for several months to desegregate the Library. Not so ironically, the Library itself is a Confederate Memorial, where the last full cabinet meeting of the Confederacy took place before General Lee announced his surrender.

After bitter wrangling, the library officials, facing a court order to desegregate, closed the building altogether from September to November, 1960. The building was then reopened — on an integrated basis — but without chairs. For some months afterward, the Danville Library was one of the few free public libraries in the United States where a one-year card cost \$2.50.

*"Often called the 'city of churches,' Danville has over 100 sanctuaries of various denominations. . . .The city maintains a high moral and spiritual tone..."*

One June 22, several police officers kicked in a door in the main sanctuary of the High Street (Negro) Baptist Church and arrested three workers for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The lock on the front door had been jimmed open the night before. The three SNCC workers were charged with grand jury indictments of "inciting the colored population to acts of violence and war against the white population" and were taken to jail.

This event, conducted with such "high moral and spiritual" tones, was perhaps one of the most outrageous skirmishes in the battle between the Negro community and the Danville city fathers.

The battle began, properly, on a hot shining last day of May, when two ministers, who had long agitated in their parishes for equality, led a protest march to city hall. Rev. Lawrence Campbell and Rev. A.I. Dunlap walked almost every day from May 31 to June 5 to the city hall, demanding equality in municipal employment. They wanted, as Negroes, to be employed as firemen, policemen, city clerks, meter readers and typists.

On June 5 the two clergymen, along with several students, tried to see Mayor Julian Stinson. Mayor Stinson was not available. The students and ministers demanded to be heard, however, and when Mayor Stinson was not forthcoming, they replied calmly that they would wait, and sat down on the floor.

Police rushed them, pushed Dunlap down a flight of stairs, and choked a young Negro girl, who, not properly schooled in non-violence, responded abruptly and swung at a policeman with her pocketbook. She and the two ministers were jailed.

Campbell and Dunlap, both leaders of the Danville Christian Progressive Association, were indicted by the grand jury for "inciting to riot" and



Rev. L. W. Chase

"inciting or encouraging a minor to commit a misdemeanor." Bond was set at \$5,500 each.

The next day, Campbell requested that the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee send field secretaries into the city to aid the leadership, now being picked off and under heavy bond. The first SNCC field secretary arrived on Sunday, June 8. At one time or another, 15 SNCC workers aided the local movement in Danville.

Three— Avon Rollins, a SNCC executive committee member, Robert Zellner, a field secretary, and Daniel Foss, a summer volunteer for SNCC — hardly ever left.

Monday afternoon, June 10, 38 persons — including Rollins and Foss — were arrested as they marched to the city hall, still pressing publicly for their demands. Police turned fire hoses on them, and beat them with clubs.

That evening, the following scene took place:

A group of 65 Negroes (and one white woman, a SNCC office worker) walked five abreast from Rev. Campbell's church to the city jail. SNCCer Zellner was along, photographing the march. Mrs. Campbell was at the head of the line. The group, led by Rev. H. G. McGhee, sang hymns and circled the jail once, passing several policemen who stood there watching.

As they began the second trip around, police halted them. Chief of Police E. G. McCain snatched a camera from Zellner's hands, smashed it on the ground, and had him hauled into jail. McCain told Rev. McGhee to stop singing and disperse the group. Instead, Rev. McGhee broke into a loud prayer and asked forgiveness for the police "who know not what they do."

Chief McCain bellowed, "Let 'em have it" and firemen turned hoses on the people, many of them women and teen-agers. Nightstick-wielding police and deputized garbage collectors smashed into the group, clubbing Negroes who were bunched for safety against parked cars. Some were washed under the cars; others were clubbed after the water knocked them down. Bodies lay on the street, drenched and bloody. Police and garbage collectors chased those demonstrators who were able to walk for two blocks.

At the Bible Way Church, pastored by Rev. Campbell, bloody men and women came in by twos and threes and were shuttled to the hospital.

Of 65 demonstrators, 40 were hurt.

The next day, the two Danville newspapers, the *Register* and the *Bee*, mentioned casually that "demonstrators were dispersed with the use of hoses and nightsticks."

The next day, Rev. L. W. Chase, pastor of the High Street Baptist Church and President of the DCPA, led a group of 200 Negroes to the city

hall to protest the police brutality of the night before and to again assert the need for equal employment. Many of those who paced slowly up and down in front of the city hall wore bandages on their heads and arms, and one young man walked with a crutch. Mayor Stinson was not available to see them.

Three days later, June 13, Rev. Chase again led about 250 Negroes to the city hall to speak to the Mayor. The crowd waited on the steps as Rev. Chase and five others — all victims of the attack June 10 — tried vainly to get into the city hall. The doors were locked, and sullen white faces peered at them unblinking as Chase called, "We want to see the Mayor."

Rejected, Chase and his group rejoined the crowd on the steps and everyone decided to stay all night, if necessary, to see the Mayor.

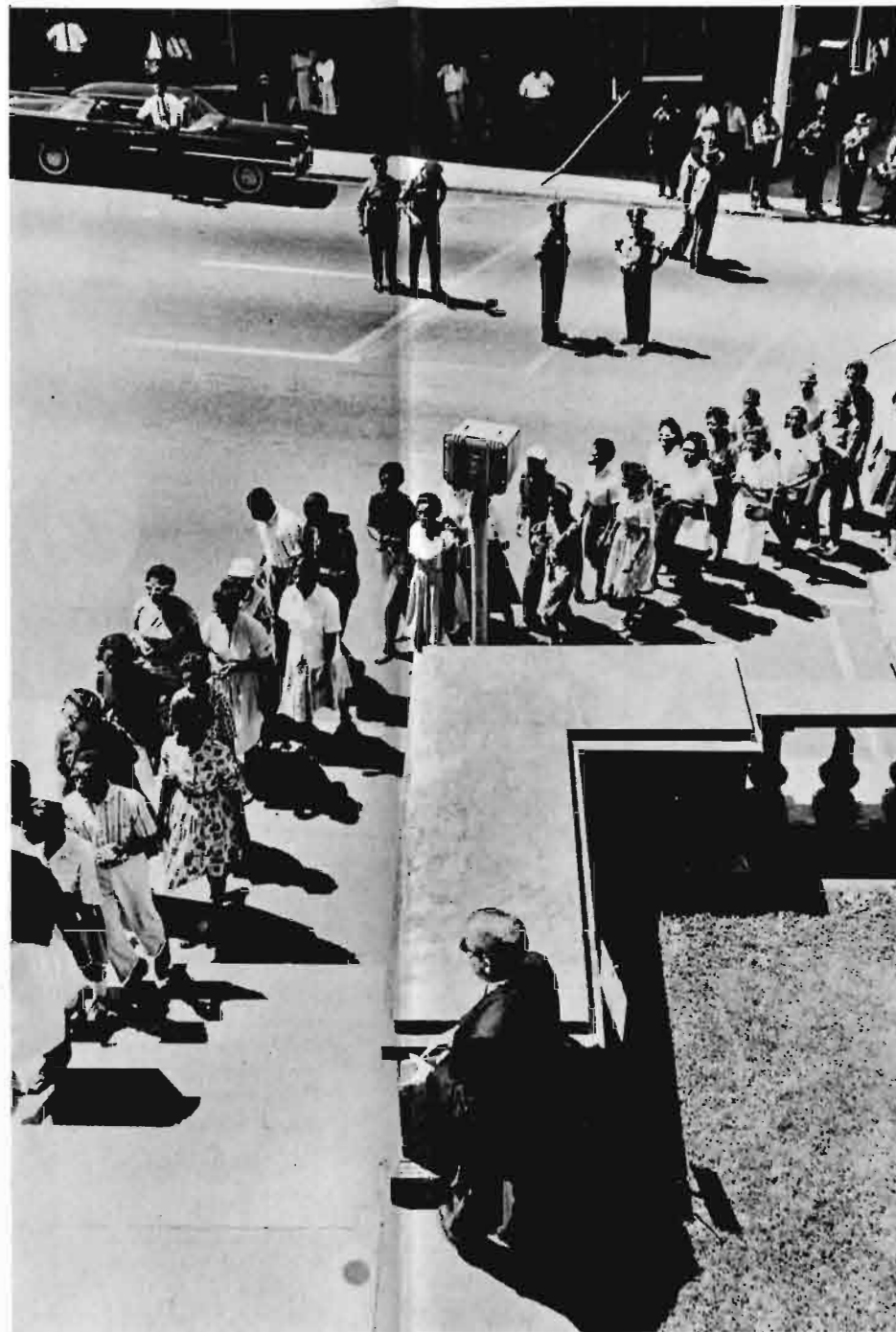
They stayed nine hours.

Women from the High Street church and other ladies from the community brought several hundred sandwiches and several hundred cokes for the demonstrators. The young and old people sang Freedom songs, talked, occasionally danced, heard a lecture on Negro history by James Forman, SNCC executive secretary, and waited.

At 11 p.m., when some of the demonstrators had stretched out on the narrow stairs prepared to sleep, if possible, a sudden huddle took place among the police, who had previously blocked off the area for four blocks around.

Then the fire trucks appeared. And police suddenly appeared in back of the demonstrators, on the top steps, after they had come from inside the city hall. They had clubs in hand. An old lady, trembling, cried, "Are they going to hurt us again? Are they going to beat us?"

Dr. Milton Reid, Virginia representative of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Chase, and Forman conferred. The demonstrators huddled



One of several fruitless marches to the City Hall.





SNCC workers show a Danville youngster how to protect himself from a policeman's club.



AP photo

Monday afternoon, June 10: a prelude to what came later that evening.





And so the people reluctantly left the steps of the City Hall.





Left: at a non-violent workshop. Bottom:  
waiting in vain to be admitted to a  
Danville restaurant.



On the steps of the City Hall.

together, one hand protecting their faces, the other clenched tightly around the railing which ran down the steps of the building.

Some in the back, closest to the police, began to flee, but about 50 persons were prepared to brave three high-pressure fire hoses not more than 15 feet from their faces.

Forman jumped up and said to Chief McCain, "What are you doing?"

Reid and Chase spoke together as Forman confronted the Chief. It was this confrontation, many people believe, which gave the demonstrators time to get out of the way of the hoses. High pressure hoses could have, at that small distance, blown eyes out and broken bones. So the group got up and descended the stairs. Police followed them, brandishing nightsticks, to the Negro neighborhood.

After that night's mass meeting at Rev. Campbell's church, police, armed with submachine guns, set up roadblocks near the church and searched several cars. Standing near the four patrol cars loomed a riot tank with four machine guns mounted on top. This was Danville, Virginia, June, 1963 and its "high moral and spiritual tone..."

*"LABOR — Danville people are largely native Virginians and Carolin-*



**SNCC workers:** (left to right) Cordell Reagon, Dorothy Miller, Bernice Johnson, Avon Rollins, and Robert Zellner. Reagon and Miss Johnson are two of SNCC's Freedom Singers.

*ians, 75.2 per cent white. They are loyal and intelligent workers...They believe in the old fashioned way of producing an honest day's work for an honest day's pay..."*

Dan River Mills, Inc., is described by the Chamber of Commerce as "the largest single-unit textile mill in the world." It employs some 12,000 persons and, in 1962, sold over \$173-million worth of cloth and yarn.

Of the 12,000 employed at the mill, about 1100 are Negro. Although it is alleged that there are Negroes in key jobs, the highest position held by a Negro is as machinist. The maximum wage paid a Negro man is \$75-80 per week.

Robert N. Gardiner, the public relations director of the mill, is now public relations assistant to Mayor Stinson, who, with other city councilmen, refused to negotiate with "criminals and outside agitators." Many Negroes in Danville believe that Gardiner was taken on to smoothe over police brutality and the refusal to negotiate; they say the mill could, single-handedly, change the racial situation in Danville.

Since the protest began, Negroes have picketed the employment office of the mill, and have even been arrested on mill property. On July 9 leaders of the DCPA announced a "world-wide" boycott against all Dan River products. Demonstrations occurred simultaneously in New York City and in Danville on July 17 against the mill. The New York demonstrators were sponsored by several locals of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, and the New York Friends of SNCC.

*"The City maintains a police court, civil court, juvenile and domestic relations court, traffic court, and jointly with the state, the corporation court."*

The City of Danville also maintains a corporation court Grand Jury which,

on June 21, handed down indictments against 14 persons charging them with an ancient Virginia statute: "inciting the colored population to acts of violence and war against the white population." This statute, passed in the 1830's after a slave uprising, was used to hang John Brown after his Harper's Ferry raid. All the fourteen were placed on \$5000 bond each. All were either local leaders or associated with SNCC, SCLC, or the Danville Christian Progressive Association.

When the Grand Jury held its hearings the week prior to June 21, no person subpoenaed was allowed to bring his lawyer. Attorney Len Holt of Norfolk, Virginia had handled most of the cases. He, too, was indicted and spent three days in jail after he was served with the indictment in the courtroom.

Holt and other lawyers asked that all pending cases be placed in the jurisdiction of the Federal court. They complained that Judge A. M. Aiken, who had tried two cases, walked into the courtroom wearing a gun, and refused attorneys the opportunity of obtaining witnesses.

*"Danville's civic and social organizations have shown a consistently progressive spirit, adding much to the civic development as well as to the cultural and social life of the city."*

Since demonstrations began in Danville on a large, concentrated and consistent scale, the only voice from the white community has been a statement from 13 ministers, speaking as individuals, asking for increased communication between the races. But not one "civic or social" organization issued any official statement urging the city fathers to create a bi-racial committee or to give the Negro community any of the rights it so stridently demanded. In fact, the sole city councilman who spoke up for an official



**Observers**

bi-racial committee was publicly reprimanded.

So this, then, is the "progressive spirit" of Danville.

It will be up to the Negro community and the largely mute white community to see which direction Danville takes. There are only a few alternatives, and only a few roads on which to travel.

The hardest of all is the road on which the city administration has embarked, for the bitterness always latent in this tight mill community is now deeply embedded. Too many beatings, too many arrests, too many indignities have already been suffered by the Negroes of Danville, Virginia for them to forget.

The end of this story cannot be written now, and will only be written by the Negro community in Danville, the heroes who were beaten but were not afraid to go back and continue saying to the city: "We will continue. You can work with us to make this a truly 'fine place to live and work' or you can, as you have already done, try to thwart us in every way you devise. But no matter which way you choose, the outcome will eventually be the same. We will win."