

Civil Rights Movement Veterans

"We who believe in freedom cannot rest," — Ella Baker

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Published in *Freedomways*. Author cannot be located.

Seige at Savannah

by Benjamin Van Clark

(Ben Clark (21) is Chairman of the Youth Division of the Chatham County Crusade for Voters.)

Originally published in *Freedomways*, 1st Quarter, 1964

Savannah, Georgia, a city whose Negro population numbers 70,000, is on the border of the Savannah River. Today its economic life is at its lowest ebb; industry just doesn't move into this city as it does into other cities. However, until 1960, the Negroes and whites had experienced good working relations. The only difficulty we had in dealing with the problems of the city was trying to get through to the city fathers.

However, in 1960, the Movement started that was to change the historical viewpoints. Some eighty students marched through the streets of Savannah, on March 16, in the first in a series of demonstrations in Georgia. The Movement began to pick up momentum almost immediately because this was new to the Negro's experience in Savannah and it lasted for about six months. Then it fell apart after the successful desegregation of the lunch counters. The Negroes began to drift back into their seemingly nonchalant life.

Hosea Williams, a leading citizen, said that something should be done to bring more awareness to the political life of Savannah; so they organized the Chatham County Crusade for Voters — the organization that was to deal with voter registration and political aspects

Mississippi Freedom Summer. Photographer unknown.



James Forman
SNCC Executive Secretary.
Photo by unknown prisoner.



Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) “Snick.”

- Founded ~ 1960
- Student Sit-ins ~ 1960-1961
- Freedom Rides ~ 1961
- Voter-Registration, MS, AL, GA ~ 1962-1965
- Freedom Summer ~ 1964
- Selma & March to Montgomery ~ 1965
- Black Power ~ 1966-1968
- Dissolution ~ 1969-1970

SNCC Executive Committee Minutes, May 1964. Internal, unpublished.

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(P4-8)

Executive Committee Minutes
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

MAY
~~April~~ 10, 1964

Atlanta, Georgia

Those in Attendance included:

Courtland Cox	Don Harris	Judy Richardson
Marion Barry	Mary King	Gwen Robinson
Julian Bond	John Lewis	Mendy S al stein
Betty Garman	John O'Neal	Barbara Simon
Prathia Hall	William Porter	

Meeting was called to order at 12:30 by Chairman Lewis after several delays and quorum failures throughout the weekend.

Exec. Meetings

*Cox: move that Exec. Comm. hold its meetings last weekend of every month. The meeting place should be Atlanta unless otherwise decided upon by a majority of the Comm.
Motion seconded and accepted unanimously.

*Bond: recommend that we either follow parliamentary procedure or else have only motions recorded in the minutes.
It was the consensus that parliamentary procedure should be followed in future meetings.

Cox: an agenda and notice should be sent to Exec. Comm. members prior to every meeting by the secretary (Richardson).

Hall: we should determine some type of policy in attendance at meetings: if they're open they should be open only to staff and Exec. Comm. members. Any other people should be specifically invited by the Comm. This is really a question of security.

Barry: people should speak in meetings only if have something meaningful to contribute to the discussion. Meetings last so long because of repetition and long-windedness.

Hall: also a problem of security in the Atlanta office. Letters are left around, offices are left open. This lack of security carries over into the Exec. meetings. People who are not even on SNCC staff are allowed to attend meetings (she then

Unsigned, unpublished memo about organizational breakdown in SNCC.

March 1, 1967

Dear Staff

It is constantly amazing how the so-called lines of authority operate in this organization.

Once, I thought people were sincere when they voted to give this organization a new structure. People were given more authority in order to help us function better.

All I want to know is what happened?

that:

What is it/makes us decide, vote and assign people to carry out decisions and those decisions are started but never finished. We, myself especially, are getting very tired of trying to bear up under so much pressure.

Those in authority wait until a crisis situation becomes an impossible situation before they deal with it. There are people on staff who should be made to take a rest and our officers know who those persons are, but as usual, the situation must first become a desperate one before any action is taken.

Offices are closed, equipment and other supplies are lost... Why? Because there are no defined rules of how those offices should be closed and the equipment confiscated. If defined rules do exist, and we just don't know about them, then those assigned that job have definitely been lax.

People are fired, but they might as well not be. They continue to work inside the organization. What are the defined rules around that and who is supposed to be implementing the decisions about people who have been put off staff.

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