

Aaron E. Henry Oral History Interview – JFK#2, 05/13/1969
Administrative Information

Creator: Aaron E. Henry
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Biographical Note

Henry was a civil rights activist; co-chair of the Executive Committee of the Mississippi Democratic Party; the president of the Mississippi State Conference of the NAACP from 1953 through 1993; one of the creators of the Council of Federated Organizations in 1961; one of the founders of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964; and a member of the Mississippi House of Representatives from 1982 through 1996. In this interview Henry discusses how he first got involved in civil rights activity and how he became an active leader in the NAACP; contact with the Justice Department during the Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration; the FBI investigation into Henry and into the civil rights movement; Henry's relationship with Medgar Evers; voting rights and voter registration campaigns; beatings and killings of activists in Mississippi; the NAACP and the 1960 presidential election; Jim Silver; Martin Luther King and other civil rights leaders; labor movement leadership and the NAACP in the sixties; the relationships among the various civil rights organizations, including the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, SCLC, and SNCC; organizing boycotts of certain stores; Henry's arrest in 1961; and the disappearance and murder of Andrew Goodman, Mickey Schwerner, and James Chaney in 1964, among other issues.

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Oral History Interview

Of

Aaron E. Henry

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Second Oral History Interview

with

AARON HENRY

May 13, 1969
St. Louis, Missouri

By Dennis J. O'Brien

For the John F. Kennedy Library

O'BRIEN: When did you really get involved in
Civil Rights activity?

HENRY: Well, Dennis, it's hard to pin point
a date. I would probably say,
if we have to get to a point of
before and after, maybe around the
year of 1952. Probably of course as
a college student, I was highly involved
in civil rights activities on the

college campus.

O'BRIEN: Where was that?

HENRY: I went to ^{Xavier} Dillard University in New Orleans.

Frankly ^I ~~it~~ was a part of the genesis
of the organization of the National

Students Association. And I ^{want you to know} won't let-

^{was} you-in-on that one before the CIA

[Central Intelligence Agency] ^{took} takes it

over. [Laughter] ^{Allard K. Al Lowenstein and [Will}
Bill Welch, and many of ^{B.]}

the other guys that I know, that are
still around, were also involved in the

same movement. ^Q But, of course prior to

that, I had the great fortune of having

^{as} a junior high school with a junior in

high school ^a History and ^{civics} Physics instructor,

A young lady who had gone to school at

Dillard University by the name of Minna Shelby

At that time, she was ^{izant and} positively aware

of what wasn't right. She had some ideas

about how it ought to go and what we could

do to straighten it out. She had us reading supplementary material like W.E.B. DuBois De Vie de Dubois and Soul Black Folk.

O'BRIEN: Where was that?

HENRY: In Coahoma County, the Agriculture High School in Coahoma County.

O'BRIEN: In Mississippi?

HENRY: In Mississippi, my home county. I lived in the county I was born in. You might

They call me an agitator, but they've got to say an inside agitator, not outside, because I've always been here with them.

We did Black Boy by Richard Wright and Native Son by Richard Wright, And, of course, a whole bunch of other stuff. This is some of the early literature that began, I think, to help mold an attitude in this area. The next thing she did, was to talk the total incoming senior class into taking out a junior membership in the

NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]; this is

back a long time ago, in 1942. Having done this, after some six or seven months out of high school, being drafted into the second World War, and going into area after area, or shall we say camp after camp, and finding the segregations and discriminations over there against black soldiers... I guess much of it perhaps still exist, but then it was terribly overt. Of course, ^{Most} black guys lived in separate sections of the camp, usually always the worst sections of the camp; No PX sharing, hospital segregated, day rooms completely segregated, and that was an anathema for black soldiers and white soldier's to be associating at all. It was in this light that I found an identity with the local NAACP Chapter where we

WOU

would go. They were always a source of assistance in helping to overcome the problems that you faced. This was as much involved in church segregation as it was in the day-to-day activities of the camps. So what we're trying to say is where you began, where you start or where you put a peg, it's hard to, because I suppose you really go to the day you were born, when you realize that there have been in your life these attitude situations of blacks being, shall we say, discriminated against by whites. And I've always had a personal resentment toward it, having or picked cotton on a big plantation belonging to the big white man and all the rest of us lived in shacks. Working in the stores of my home town. After we did a little bit better than having to catch trucks every morning, going to the

been cotton chopping

Picking cotton

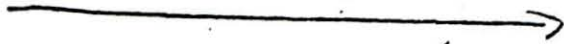
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fields and pick cottons, after we moved into the 'city, Here you were constantly demeaned and insulted, many times.

Finally, I went to work as a night porter out at Cottonball ^{Bowl} Court, ^[Hotel] which is in my home town; and it's still there.

There you really get to see what the other side is like, in a way. Prior to my employment at Cottonball ^{Bowl} Court, ^{my} mother was a typical black southern woman who had ideas about the white community in terms of its betterness than blacks, in ^{the} a way

that you associate that with most of the store owners were white, most of the doctors were white, most of the people that you saw doing things that really made a difference were white. We were really seeing the white establishment in action. She was, as most other black people were at that time, hung-up on a notion that 

white people were morally better, to some extent, and they were the example you ought to follow, and all this jazz. [#] She was telling me sometimes, "white people ^{don't} didn't act like that." But after I went to work at Cotton ^(ball) Bowl Court, ^{and} I told them, "baby, you'd better get up off of that shit," as I see where it's at, ^{you know.}

They were just normal human beings, but the big difference was, what a black guy didn't have money to pay for, in terms of seclusion and a hide-away, ^{in the country} the black guy usually ended up on a turn-route counter somewhere with his ^{gal} girl and his beer, having his ^{evening} usually fun. The white guy would go to the motel. The white guy wasn't caught out on the road for indecent exposure and all this. But everybody was doing the samething. The biological ^{syndrome} of the human body is pretty much the same, whether you're your black 

or white, and I learned that, as I say, fairly early in life and I'm glad I did, ^{that} The color of a man's skin has little to do with his conduct and his attitudes; it's more or less how he thinks and what he feels and what he responds to, which makes each man different from the other. Although this was what she felt, she now, years ago of course have come around to the fact that this was an illusion, the great white hope wasn't necessarily real.

O'BRIEN: When did you first become associated with the NAACP? ^{Well, you joined as a young man, but} as an active leader?

HENRY: I was with the NAACP all the way through the services from '43 to '46. Whatever town we hit we identified with the NAACP of that area. And coming back to Mississippi, going to school in New Orleans, entering in '46 ^{Xavier} Dillard University, of course identifying with the total civil rights movement that was there, the NAACP and the other organizations of the area.

Then ^I got out of school in '50. Around ^{the} latter '50^s or early '51, we had, well, I guess a typical situation, ~~A~~ couple of black girls were accusing a white fellow or rape and the difficulty of getting a lawyer in town to take the case. Frankly, the guy charged us two thousand dollars to even take it. Ofcourse the guy got off free but he was ^{to go} ruled for indictment. It was, as I said, a two thousand dollar tag. Few of us knew about the NAACP and there were some members at home who had been members of the NAACP for sometime. You don't have to be in a chapter, you can simply send your dues into the office, if you want to identify, and they'll send you a card back. After we struggled with this rape case, I guess six or eight months then we came around to the point that perhaps we ^(d) had better get an organization in the community with the national →

^{import}
headquarters of the NAACP. We had several
 local organizations, one was called the
 Coahoma County Negro Citizens League, and we had
 the Progressive Voters League, and of course
 all these were ^{indigenous} kinds of things ^{and} I
 identified with all of them. ~~When~~ When we got
 ourselves into such a box, trying to deal
 with this rape report, we wrote a letter
 to Mrs. Ruby Hurley, who at that time was
 the Field Director of the region where
 we are, and we had a Reverend in the
 Methodist Church over in Amory by the
 name of Amos Holmes. He was at that time
 the President of what was called the
 Mississippi ^{State} Conference of the NAACP. They
 had, I guess, some seven or eight chapters
 even back then, or more. Amos and Ruby
 came over one night and we assembled a
 mass meeting, and there were enough people there
 who decided that they wanted to be members.
 We got the branch started and this was

January of 1952. It's been pretty much the focal point of civil rights activity in our area ever since then.

O'BRIEN: Did you have much contact with either the Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration, the Presidency, or the Justice Department, during those years?

HENRY: Well, we had quite a bit of contact because you see this is the area of Emmett Till; this is the area of George W. Lee, who was killed in Bilzoni; [Lenor] Dippy Jimmy Smith who was shot down at a court house in Brookhaven after he walked out after he reported. This is the area of a whole solid mass of violence and of course, the agents from the FBI Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Justice Department were coming in fairly rapid, but we got no real relief from any of this. I think the agents were largely doing of a functional duty. At that time you could

find the average FBI agent constantly in association with) and in contact with the local police department. Ofcourse they explained this by saying that this is the way they are able to resolve much crime is by working with the local police; But in many instances the people who were doing those ends were the police. So how do you expect the FBI agent to although he might know that it's the guy that he knows that did the bombing or did the shooting or did the killing to turn his own buddy in, The guy that he plays golf with, goes fishing with, visiting families back and fourth, and all this?

So we have really not been able to completely break that association, yet, between the FBI agents and the local police; It's much better than it use to be. I have much more confidence in the FBI agents that

are in Mississippi now, generally, than shall I say the ^{Sixties} '60's, early ^{fifties} '50's, late ^{fifties} '50's. But it has been a long brutal thing to analyze ^{psych} psychologically, because you just think about the department in Washington call^{ed} "justice." And when it really means, no more than a town in Mississippi called "liberty," it's a real ^{facade} verge.

O'BRIEN: Did you ever have the feeling that the FBI was investigating you?

HENRY: Oh sure, I've been investigated by the FBI. I walked into the drug store one day, this was something like '53, '54 ^{I guess} I guess I've forgotten. Well, what had happened, we'd had a black head who had been held by two policemen and shot by the third through the brain; And this had enraged the black community again. We went down to the Mayor's office, his name was ^{[Kinchen] O'Keefe} O'Keith, and we had a chief of police by the name of Howard ^{Sherk} Shirk.

I don't recall now exactly who was in the black group. I'm pretty sure it had to have been R.L. Drew, who was one of the ^{stalwart} soul supporters of the movement ever since

I can remember the movement going on that must have been ^[James] Jim Gilliam, probably

Charles Stringer, maybe Rev. S.L.A. Jones; this was ^{in the early} somewhere around '55, '54, ^{in there} what

happened after they shot this guy, we went in and had an argument about it. I was very

adamant about an assassin, as far as they were concerned this was pretty much ^{the report} today

that they utilized. Then I raised the question of

^{why} what was it that we had a hiring policy with the police department that required

three policemen to arrest one man, and couldn't bring him in? So we argued ^{about it} for a while

I said, "Well, you mean to tell me that three policemen were ^{physically weak} so busy for the week that they can't bring in a 165 pound guy? there's

something wrong with the hiring policy."

So then they explained that the guys felt that they were in danger of losing their lives, that's why they killed him.

"Well, we have the same trouble; you've got three guys who are so mentally weak that they can't size up a situation and deal with one man so that none of them won't get hurt." So

we argued back and fourth while there I remember the chief of police said, "He

speaks like he's been trained to refute us,"

So I paid no attention; I just knew what he didn't like about it was a black guy not saying "okay,

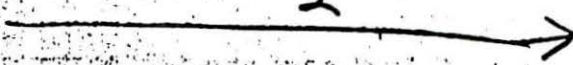
I'm going along with him." And about three

weeks after I was going home to lunch and came back,

I walked into the store, Three guys walked in behind me. One I knew was a local policeman

and the other two turned out to be FBI agents.

They wanted to know who I was, and I told them,

and they said, "I'd like to talk to you for
 a while." I said, "Well ok, come on back" and
 we went on back into the office by the prescription
^{room} and we sat down. ^{So} they pulled out their
 badges and showed me they were FBI agents and all
^{that,} and they wanted to know where I'd been for
 the last six or seven years. ^{Of course,} I
 told them the service and in school and then
 back home. They wanted finger prints, and this
 whole grilling lasted ^{for} about two hours. ^{So}
^Q when we finally got through, the finger prints
 and all, the guy said, "You know," you don't
 have any idea about who we thought you were? ^{do you?}
 I said, "No, who did you think I was?" He said,
 "Have you read anything about twelve communists
 up in New York who jump^d bail? ^{one} guy's named
 [Benjamin J.] ^[Jr.] Davis, and a whole bunch more?" I said, "Yes,
 I've been reading about ^{it} them." And the
 policeman ^{turned to me and} said, "You don't know ^{none of them,} nothing, do you?"
 I said, "No" 

They had felt that I was one of these guy^s and just having come back home after being away so long, they really thought they had captured public enemy number one, I suppose.

So this is the only time I was grilled by the FBI.

O'BRIEN: Did you ever have the feeling that perhaps the FBI has investigated the civil rights movement, ^{That} perhaps in some way or another, ^{they} channeled that information to the, perhaps, southern Governor^s, police forces, and things like that?

HENRY: Well, I feel very definitely that the FBI agents who would come in when people had a problem, and talked with them, and they would tell, blacks would tell the agents what their problems were. That many of them that I know have been visited by the sheriff the same day and they said, "What the hell you tell this guy that for?" which was certainly reporting service back to the sheriff by the FBI, and this

is really a part of a ^{psychic} ~~physis~~ hang-up. I guess I still have about the FBI, because I do know, in many instances, there has been this reporting to the local sheriff's, and people are afraid to really level with an FBI guy unless you know him now. ¶ Now, in my home town, I think we've got two guys that are pretty fair. What the problem is, they will go after it and deal with it in a normal manner; but this has not always been the case.

O'BRIEN: Were there any specific, particular instances in which, not only including yourself, but including other people like Martin Luther King and other members of the civil rights movement, who may have been in some way or another investigated by the FBI and, tell that it has been communicated to

HENRY: Well, I know Martin has had G2's many times, you know, government investigations. ¶ Frankly you know

Martin, and (J. Edgar) Mr. Hoover were bitter enemies for a long time, in fact, they were not at all friends when Martin died. (And of course) J. Edgar is one of the few americans ^{who was in} that really prominence in terms of government, ^{who} sent no word ^{of condolence} from those at all after Martin had died. I was with Coretta after Martin died, some three or four days, and of course, (Robert F.) Bobby Kennedy was out there, too, ^[Robert F.] and Mrs. Kennedy with Coretta, and we all were involved with trying to help sort the mail. And Ethel and Coretta got to be pretty ^{tight, pretty} close because they had feelings similar, I'm sure because each of the guys that they were married to, they knew were the possible targets ^{in a} any moment of any kind of violence, and so the women of those of us who are involved in civil rights movements are just as close ^{really} related as the men are, ^{now} At home

Of course, it would have been facetious for him to have knowning... Let me retrace that.

[Mrs. ^{J.} Charles EVERS] / Nan and [Mrs. Aaron E. Henry] / Noel^e got on the phone and talked

for hours and Charles and I have to put in separate lines if we want to get conversations out sometimes because the women keep the lines jammed talking to each other.

Well, that, find^e, we're proud of this kind of relationship you know, between them. Nan is Charles' wife and my wife's Noel^e

So I'm sure that Charles has had his investigations, you know I can't pinpoint time, dates and places, but I know that if there was any hint of sub^uversion in any of us, that still more^o will involve them still more in the move-

ment, like Fann^{ie} Haymer, or Amzie^o Moore, or the guy up at Marks, Holab^y, Ingram, and Robert Bowes out in Rural Hill^o, Lucy Boyd in Charleston

and ofcourse down in the southern end of the state. You've got Don and Mason^o well, I

guess two or three hundred people that keep the civil rights movement in the state buzzing,

and I know that the guys who would love to get something in terms of ^{up} subversion on us. But like I say, "It's a hell of enough being black, but being black and red at the same time!"

O'BRIEN: Well, when did you first meet Medgar Evers?

HENRY: I met Medgar in 1952 or 3. He had just gotten out of school, and I'd been out two or three years ahead of him. And we had a small insurance company we were trying to get off the ground, Magnolia Mutual Life Insurance Company, Mound Bayou, Mississippi.

And Dr. T.R. M. Howard, who was a long time fighter in the struggle who's now in Chicago, the pressures finally got to him and he left; I won't say he had to leave, but he left

But anyway Dr. Howard went down on the campus of [Sr. College], at Holmes where Charles and Medgar both were students, and was looking for some young man to come to work for the company as an agency director. Charles and Medgar both were

interviewed for the job. Charles didn't agree to come and Medgar did agree to come. So Medgar came aboard Magnolia Mutual. That's how we first got to know each other. ~~That~~ That must have been around '52 or '53, because in 1954, that's the year I'm sure that the NAACP opened it's state office. And again there was decisions to be made as to who would be it's field director. Charles and Medgar were the two guys we wanted again. so it was such a ^{... We knew the} sweet little possibility ^{ies} of survival were not good ⁱⁿ and neither the volunteer ^{or} the paid staff area, ^{so} Charles and Medgar decided that well....

A Charles had gone to work in the meantime for a radio station down in Philadelphia, Mississippi. He was zeroing in on ^I get out and vote, every now and then ^{e. He was just a} discjockey, ^{but} he was doing his thing, while getting the message over, while doing the discjockey bit.

So they finally decided that Charles was too much of an agitator, liberal Mississippian. The guys began to put pressure on him and zeroed in on his mortgages, and so rather than lose everything, Charles decided to leave, too.

So he went to Chicago, but of course he promised us then that anytime we needed him, he'd return. So Charles, Medgar and I became friends around 1952 or 3, in this area. I was vice president of the [Mississippi] NAACP when Medgar came aboard as field director. I worked with him something like three or four, five years in various capacities and then I became president of the NAACP in 1959, I believe, and have been president ever since, and was president when Medgar died. And, of course, since Charles has come back, Charles came back in 1963; Medgar was killed May 12, '63. Charles came home for the funeral of course and never went back; he's been here ever since.

So I've had the wonderful opportunity of working close up with both of them, more with Medgar than with Charles. Of course I hope and feel somewhat assured that the association with Charles will be longer, I hope than with Medgar, because like I said Medgar was killed early in life and maybe Charles and I ^{are} bad grass, and you know it's hard to kill bad grass.

O'BRIEN: Anything particular that you remember about that association with Medgar Evers?

HENRY: Well, yes. Our first real adventure was in the Emmett Till killing. Emmett Till was a young black boy from Chicago who had come down to Mississippi to visit his grandparents, and had been kidnapped by a couple of white guys by the name of ^[J.W.] Miles ^{and} ^[Roy] Bryant. He was murdered and thrown in the river with a gin fan around his neck, ^{and} finally surfaced after the body ^{blotted} ~~blotted~~ ^{and} old man Moses [WRIGHT].

his grandfather, knew Milen^{am} and Bryant to identify them as the killers. of course, they went to court and were acquitted. But the investigations that we went ^{through} ~~to~~ in trying to find out who the witnesses were, who saw what. Day after day, going into the cotton fields and chopping cotton with the hands and picking cotton with the hands, wandering through the crowds just to find out what we could about ^{Emmett} the murder. Ruby Hurley came in with her cotton sack, ^{and worked along} the same way. And here, I would say, was the first real close up activity that Medgar and I had, as an investigative team working together on a particular project. Of course after Emmett Till there were numerous more; there was George Lee; we worked on that one. As you know Medgar was married to Mrs. Medgar Evers Myrlie, who not too long ago, maybe three years ago made a book call For Us the Living, ⁱⁿ which she

sets out quite a bit of the wonderful years
 that she and Medgar had ^{had} together, and it was ^a pretty
 pretty reminiscent kind of thing ^{when a} ^{kind of thing of}
family ^I remembers that and ^I remembers this. And
 Medgar, after a couple of years, was ^{as}
 human personalities are in close contact
 and develop, ^{I guess} there became a little bit of
 friction between him and the [NAACP] Presi-
 dent, each guy thought that the other guy ^{one}
 was invading his territory. Luckily for
 Medgar, ^{and me, and} Charles and me ^{these are the only}
 two guys I've worked with ^{as friends in NAACP with me} ^{being} ^{director}
 Neither of us had any boundaries. Wh^ever
 was to be done, the other one always considered
 himself the next man in line, whether it was
 President or Vice President, whether it was
 the top spot, or second spot, it made no
 difference ^{if} the job had to be done and
 you're here you do it. Certainly I'm glad
 that Medgar, Charles and I never had any problem

on this line. But Medgar began to have some difficulty with the guy that ^{preceded} ~~preceded~~ me as president, and it got to such a point where he said, "No, I'm not going to stick with it; I'll still be with the movement but just can't take this." So he asked me if I would run for the office. I said, "I didn't want to bother with it, I was president of my own branch and I had my own thing up in my area."

As much ^{with} of an opportunity ^{for} participation on the state level as you wanted, which ^{an} ~~me~~ that you could when you wanted to, and when you didn't want to, you didn't have to; and ^{there} ~~there~~ wasn't any responsibility attached to it if you didn't. But, once you become president of the state conference then every branch's problem is your problem; And you've got to be spread as thin as you've got branches throughout the state.

This is one of the difficulties of the

Presidency is you get in trouble at home
 a lot because you're somewhere else. But,
 you don't belong to your home town anymore;
 you belong to the state and every branch
 has as much [&] ₁ ^e acclaim on your time and energy
 as does anybody else; And this is hard
 for home town folks to see. [&] So anyway, "okay,
 I'll run." The first year I ran and lost by
¹⁰
ten votes. I believe it was something like
^{1,040} ^{1,020,}
one thousand forty to one thousand twenty, it
 was a very close race. Then the next year,
 it was a funny kind of thing although the
 President has in the state conference ^{not} in
 the branch but in the state conference ^{the}
President has the right of appointing the
 nominating committee that brings in rec-
 ommendations for the conference; On the
 branch level the nominating committee is elected
 by the people and the President doesn't have
 a chance to stack it. What ever people ^{want} ₁ who ^{is}

gets on the committee, and therefore his chances of being nominated are as good or as bad as the people he elected. I feel that

these DARDEN - ^{you've got to see his point} Charles Darden, now, he sent out nominating

committee, ^{that} came back with a nomination that didn't include him. ^[Laughter] There ~~were~~ ^{was} really no contest the second time, and as I said I've remained the President ever since.

O'BRIEN: Did you have any contact in those years... did the NAACP in Mississippi, yourself, Medgar Evers, ever have any contact with the democratic party nationally, or, in with the last in '59, '60, with anyone on the Kennedy camp, either senatorially ^{aides} or campaigning...

HENRY: Well, yes, ~~we~~ had not as political entities, but beginning with the Kennedy years, certainly there was [Theodore C.] Sorensen, who was very much involved, Mack ^{LITZ} who always identified with us, and of course the two guys that came aboard with John Fitzgerald, that to my mind has given me a much better image

and perspective of the federal system. ^{Two} fellows John Doar and Robert Owens. Now prior to John's and Bob's first visit to the state ^{well} I don't know if it was ~~there~~ ^{their} first visit to the state or not, but it was ~~there~~ ^{their} first visit to me.

O'BRIEN: Now this was after the election?

HENRY: Yes. This was after the election. John Doar was a Kennedy appointment to the Justice Department and the day that John and Bob came in we were sitting around the store, about like it was when you were there the last time. And they told us who they were and they wanted to know what was wrong. So the people of the movement drifted in and out of the store all day long just like customers do. Besides being a drug store, it's a ^{Synthesis} symphysis mill where ideas are developed and plans are laid, things get done. ^[Laughter] When they came in, I'm pretty sure a couple of

guy's who were close up to the movement were there, ^{then said} "I'd like to have a talk with you and some of your friends about conditions that are here and what we might be able to do about it."

O'BRIEN: You remember when that was?

HENRY: I can't date it, but it's something like three or four months after Kennedy was in office.

So I told them, "Now look we're going to talk to you, but we don't think anything's going to happen because you guys have been coming around here for the last four or five years, and all you do is take notes and study us, we've been studied enough, you ^{all ought to} ~~should~~ know us by now. And we've had guys come in and talk with us half the day and get up and leave notes on the table. ^{The} next guy comes down sometimes, although he might have carried his notes with him, the guy that follows him to further investigate the complaint we've made, has no idea what the original charges were. When you start talking

to him you find out he hasn't even been briefed on what he's down there to see about. And you've already talked to four or five guys in the department about it, you know there shaking you, so you might as well forget it. We're never going to let it be true that we didn't get cooperation from you because we wouldn't cooperate with you; so we're going to give you a session, we're going to sit down and talk, ^{but we want to} and let you know how we feel, that we've had enough of this. ^{So,} we went upstairs ^{to a} room over the store, we sat there, I guess we must have had ^{about} an hour or two and they gave us some phone numbers, ^{on} home numbers, Justice Department numbers, where you can get them anytime ^{of the} day or night. And of course they told us that they ^{don't} often do this as far as giving out their home phones, but they felt that some kind of opportunity of getting to them after closing hours of the

shining star and ^{you're} your going to tell the world the truth, and you get out here and find that the guys who are doing the wrong most are the people who are the most knowledgeable about what all happens. It's a real wired world, man. But I say with John and Bob; and then we remained ^{good} a bit close personal friends since then. And of course, after John and Bob Owens [Nicholas de B] came, we had a good identity with, Nick Katzenbach; that came on, and following Nick you had [Ramsey] Clark from Texas, as Attorney General, who was kind and available and carried on the same kind of an activity. I don't want to prejudge but I'm, at this point, not too sure that [John Newkin] Mr. Mitchell is going to be as sensitive to the problems of the south as the three previous Attorney Generals, ^{have been}

O'BRIEN: Have they made any candid effort to make the kind of contact that . . .

HENRY: No, ^{And} we've constantly made contact with them.

There response is just not there. I know
 we've had three killings in Mississippi in
 three weeks, we had a kid killed in ^PFort Gibson;
 we had a ^{follow}father killed in Grenada, and ^{one}up
 in Crenshaw ^{all by}a policeman. And when I left
 home, although we had sent numerous wires
 to the Justice Department and the Democratic
 Party, ^[VANXC]HARTKE, Fred Harris, who at this level
 had asked of Mr. Mitchell, ^{||}what were you
 doing in terms of investigating and correcting
 these things? ^{||}he hadn't answered them either.
 I really don't know what we're into and
 we've had ^{....}the people who are aboard now, who are
 serving in Mississippi from the Justice
 Department, this does not at all match to
 my mind the ^{caliber}and the integrity and
 empathy that ^{the}men before them have ^{showed}shut us
 in ^ewithin the last six or eight years.

O'BRIEN: Did you try to get into Presidential politics
 in 1960 at all? Or did the NAACP or Medgar

Evers try to get ^{involved} into presidential politics at all in 1960?

HENRY: No, You see the question of the right to vote really was not available generally in Mississippi prior to '65. Prior to '65, you had all this jazz about being able to interpret any section of the constitution of the state, and you had to be able to do it when you walked into the office, and you didn't know what the guy was going to ask you until you walked in. This was a way of registering who they wanted to, and not registering who they didn't want to. So figure we had something like a 10,000 ten thousand failure, as compared with something like 400,000 four hundred thousand whites. You were sometimes a balance of power in your own local area, but you had no ^{you know,} move, state-wide, and after the passing of the Voters Right Act of 1965, we have been able to move. Of course, we did several things trying to stimulate people to

go down and register to vote, or try, even when it was so rough that you couldn't make it.

We conducted a project known as the freedom vote campaign movement, where I ran for Governor in 1963 along with Ed King, ^{write-in} And

we had the freedom vote in one division as a main thrust to show how many people who couldn't vote, would vote for you, if they

had the opportunity. And we anticipated the ^{turn-out} town something like ⁴⁰ forty or ^{50,000} fifty thousand

and, surprisingly, we got more than ^{ninty} 90,000 ^{thousand} people involved in this thing,

which had its effect ^{also I'm sure on} of all the Voters Right Act of 1965 because of the demonstration

fact that people would vote if they could, and

here we've ^{you are} running a freedom vote campaign where you can't possibly win the damn

Governorship and, in spite of that, every-

where we went we were intimidated, the fire trucks would circle the building you were

speaking in and use the sirens half the night

until you were through, drowned out your voice. People were arrested, beaten, shot, shot at, and all they were involved in was an educational experience without any possible formal political consequences. Of course, they perhaps understood what the results of what we were doing maybe better than we did, because it aroused them so, and again this is an identification with Al Lowenstein. Al and I were in college at the same time, we were involved in the . . .

O'BRIEN: Well, was this back at ^{Xavier} that year?

HENRY: Well, no. I'm talking about the freedom vote campaign now. Al came in to help us organize the freedom vote book. Al had ^{finished} Finch, law and of course he and I have always stayed in touch with each other. He was one of the guys, I liked and he liked me, so we had a friendly relationship all the time. So

Al was able to get something like twenty ²⁵ five or thirty kids from colleges campuses.

I remember there were some people ^{from} Stanford, Dartmouth and Yale, Yale primarily.

And this was one of the first times that you had seen any kind of strong support of the black movement by whites from anywhere. This was '63. And the kids came in to help out with the campaign, and that was their business there. They were for the most part sons and daughters of senators and congressmen, sons and daughters of people from the news media who had entrees and we got the best press in the world on what we were trying to do.

The word really got out and of course again, I guess, what helped us was the vengeance ^{with} on which the white community responded to the white kids who were there to identify with us. They began to put them in jail just like they put us in jail. But there was one thing that was peculiar about this, although it might sound cynical it's true and I still have this kind of gut reaction, as long as

we were having a problem with the whites,
 with whites abusing blacks, we complained to the
 Justice Department ^{and} they will tell you, "we can't
 send nobody down to guard no house to keep
 it from being bombed, we can't give you no
 protection at ^{no} any meeting, they couldn't do
 any of this. We asked for presence in the
 court room sometimes simply to listen to the
 testimony and to observe the verdict and the
 sentences that the judges were handing out.

But In 1963 when these white kids got thrown in --
^{then} and started throwing them in jail and hitting
 them up side the head, hell we had FBI agents
 coming out of our ears; All of a sudden
 there were plenty of them. So it really says
 a this is to
 that ^{to} a large part true today unless it's
 the white american being victimized, The
 system really doesn't seem to respond effciently
 to it and I hope one day I can over come this
 feeling by learning differently and, of course,
 I'm trying to learn it differently, but the

same syndrome ^{is here} skipping a lot, but
 up in Chicago ^[National Democratic] at the convention, although
 there was the Edmond Pettys bridge thing,
 there was the Selma-Montgomery march, the
 [James] Meredith march where black kids had
 been beaten all over this country, never
 have you heard the cry and ^{the} great uproar
^{over} of violence by policemen that you heard in
 Chicago and the reason ^{that} it ^{was} there was
 because it was white kids out there in the
 park getting ^{their} heads beat. ^I I think I
 lost maybe a friend; I haven't seen him
 since but I'm going to try because I realize
 to some degree an error on my part here.

A fellow came down to the Mississippi section we
 head at the convention one night, and we
 fought and struggled and just ^{said} "John Bell Williams
~~as John Doe~~
 went back home" and that this damn thing we
 had was being held together with chewing
 gum and ^{cord} ~~cord~~ string, anyway, ^{into} flying all kinds
^{parts} of ^{the} points. It was ^{the} Mississippi delegation at

the convention, ^{to the} a fellow came down to our section and said to me, "You mean you all going to sit here and let them kids up there in the park get whipped"? We^{'d} been fighting this thing for four years, since 1964, trying to get in and I said, "What's that got to do with us"? He said, "You know Mississippi ought to lead ^a the walk out of this convention". I said, "Man, you crazy as hell, we've been fighting four years getting into this damn thing, and this is the first time we ever got in here and you think we're going to walk out"? He said, "Yes, but you've got to respond or act out there. The police are out there beating kids." I said, "Look fellow, black kids have been getting their heads beat all these years, and you white folks ain't said nothing". ^{And I said, "Now,} ^{if anybody} ^{leads a} needs to walk out of this convention you white folks going to ^{lead} leave this ^{one} room because I'm going to stay right here". So he finally told me, "Well you know I don't have to take that off of you". I said, "Well you know

who we are don't you, ^{is} we're the Mississippi delegation and ^{I'm} the chairman get out! That was cruel, but it was a reaction subjectively and I'm sorry I responded to him so, shall we say, harsh, but that was ^{wh. + I was} a good feeling, ^{the point is,} but I still see america responding really to the acts of difficulty when it's the whites

that are being victimized, and still not sensitive to the questions ^{of the blacks}

O'BRIEN: Were there any outside ^{meetings,} reasons ^{outside} Mississippi, that the NAACP, that you attended in those years before the election of 1960 that might have in some way or another focused on the presidential campaign ^{and} on the Kennedy candidacy?

HENRY: I can't recall at this moment, of course any meeting that would be tied to the Kennedy campaign, of course, the NAACP certainly had its regional and national meetings, others of them,...

I was on board of directors of the Voters Right Southern Christian Leadership

Conference, still an and this is a strange
^{continuum} continuum, because no other guy in the nation
 is on both boards, NAACP and SCLC, but I find
 absolutely no conflict of interest as far as
 my attitude and action is concerned. Each
 organization sometimes do^s things differently,
 but I think one comple^ments the other rather
 than one is negat^e to the other. ¶ I would say
 though, that it was in this kind of context that
 the Kennedy-Nixon image was discussed and
 debated, and it was in these kinds of activities,
 not necessarily programmed around politics,
 but politics being a part of the general thing
 that ^{entailed} most of us on the side of Kennedy,
 and watching the debates on TV and sitting
 up all night and watching the results and
 being glad as hell that he ^{id} won.

O'BRIEN: As I recall ^a your civil rights plank in ^{the} 1960
 platform, as I recall Kennedy also put out
 @ specific releases on civil rights, and things

like this, [?] were these things given to you ⁱⁿ ⁶⁵⁰ contact with regard to this before the election?

HENRY: I would certainly ^{that} say, not as a document, but in terms of expressing the difference between the two people, ^{and} certainly Roy [^] Martin and most of the people who were involved in the leadership of the movement had ^{their} there moments of proselyting for the Kennedy side, and there was no doubt about where the black community stood in the Kennedy election.

O'BRIEN: They were optimistic ^e than, and followed the Kennedy candidacy with some interest?

HENRY: Yes.

O'BRIEN: I don't know ^{what that} I should ask this, now or later. There are a number of personality things

HENRY: ^{ahead.} I'd like to asked ^{James W.} how about Silver? ^{what do you recall of Silver} when

O'BRIEN: did you first meet Jim Silver?

HENRY: Well lets see, Jim left the state in '66, so I guess I must have met Jim somewhere around '63 or 4, and ofcourse he really made the introduction himself of me. He showed up at

the house one night, and he told me who he was and what he was doing, and he would like to establish a friendship and acquaintance with the place, relation and wanted to know if I would be the reciprocal. So I was glad to ofcourse it was a one-way street kind of straight count thing.

through most of this time,
BRIEN: Rather than you

Most of the times that I met with Jim and other members of the faculty from the University of Mississippi, including Jim's family, ^{was} they came to visit me. HENRY: Yeah.

Now, although whites visiting in the homes of the blacks was pretty much the thing that was very much despised by the whites' police structure of this ^{our} area, But I was just always determined that my house is mind, and who ever wants to come in and I want them in are welcome. There are some white's ^{rights} that are hard for me to surrender.

A couple of times ^{I've} had to cut my civil rights and put it in my pocket and walk off, But I feel dirty and guilty about it everytime you do it. ^{I've done a couple of things} In the last couple of

years I had to respond in this ^{would} ~~was~~ but,
 neverthe less, Jim would come over at night
 many times after we got to know each other
 and he'd always come in somewhere around
⁸ eight to ¹⁰ ten o'clock, and when several came
 I knew it was an all-night session; we'd sit
 and talk, talk, talk, ^{talk, talk talk} and of course, he was
 getting his book together, and he was trying
 to find out as much as he could about the
 black community, I'd say, with the least amount
 of dangerous exposure, I guess, and there
 were times when he wanted to talk to other
 blacks. I would have them up at the house
 at ^{the same} a certain time and he would talk to them
 there and this kind of stuff. ¶ I remember
 the first night he brought his son over. [James W.

Silver] Jim, Jr. had finished Harvard, I believed,
 undergrad, and they'd all come over for dinner
 that night, Russell Barrett and a couple of
 other guys, and we sat around and talked.

Going out to the car, you say the normal kinds

of things, I said, "It was" glad to have you
guys over, and I hope you enjoyed yourself.
They said, "Sure, we had a good time," and left.

you see. So the next couple of times I

saw Jim he said; "Man, I tell you, I was never
more ashamed of my father that night than

I've ever been in my life". "What you talking
about?" He said, "you know" perhaps you don't

remember, but when you came outside and said,
"I glad to have you guys over, and I hope you had

a good time," the thing my father was supposed
to have said, was, "why don't you come over and

see us sometimes," and he didn't say it, and he
really was disturbed with his daddy about not

returning what he would consider a normal
platitude of courtesy, that his father had

taught him to do. So I got ^{to} within explaining
it to him that it would ^{love} really caused him

more problems than ^{it would have} he could solve because
I don't take friendship and invitations lightly.

if Jim had said, "Come over and see me sometimes".

I'd find myself doing it. So I still think he took the best course because it would have been a real rough situation for him.

Ofcourse you know what happened on the campus during the riots when Jim was trying to get in school; And Jim was considered pretty much government liason on the campus and he had his real tough moments. Ofcourse Jim has been up in Notre Dame, he's really tried to make up for the years that he couldn't have a possible relationship, that it was a symbiotic kind of thing, and I've been up to speak for him, I guess three or four times. I know I'm not that damn informational, he just likes to get me up there and like I tell him, "I know your problem, you got the responsibility of free me from bondage, but I'm freeing you from your damn guilt. I know what's going on." [Laughter]

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE II

O'BRIEN: When did you first met Martin Luther King, and in somewhere out of association with the SCLC?

HENRY:

Well, I really met Martin through ^{the} NAACP contact that I had known in Montgomery and I think this is really one of the untold stories about the Montgomery boycott. I think that was 1965. Of course, Martin would speak of it often but somehow historians, contemporary writers don't seem to deal with it at all. ^{There} It was a black guy in Montgomery by the name of ^[E.D.] Ed Nixon who was a pullman car port^er, highly respective of A. Phillip Randolph. I met A. Phillip Randolph back in those days through him. And Ed was disturbed continuously about the bus thing in Montgomery.

X You might not know, O'Brien, but at that time when a black ^{guy rode} ~~road~~ a bus in Montgomery, he got on at the front and paid his money; he got off the bus and went around to the back door to get in, and many times the bus even took off while he was making his circle although the guy had paid his fare. And ^{David Abernathy} the request of Martin, Ed Nixon, Ralph, and

the leaders of the movement initially was that ^{not} this practice even be eliminated, but ^{That [PARIS]} if Rosa had been arrested for not getting up, Rosa was not a part of, really a civil rights activist movement. Ed had for years preached and preached and preached that this bus thing, "we ought not put up with it ^{no} anymore." He was one of the few guys who had enough, shall we say, employment security. ||.||

and this is really where I gained a great respect for organized labor, through Ed Nixon, because the only way the ugliest sore ^{here} of Montgomery was being exposed was through Ed; And Ed felt that he could only do it because the ^{Pullman} program company couldn't ^{fine} fire him, because the union wouldn't let it. Of course this gave me an across-the-board image of labor that has not panned out in all instances, but again, it's a first love affair and therefore my gut reaction ^{to} of labor is always positive instantly in what ever project it's about,

until I find that this is something that I ought not to be involved with. There have been labor projects that I have identified with and later didn't because ^{... Wall,} the Plumbers Union, as you know, that George Meany comes out of and I saw George the other night and I need ^{to} talk to him about a couple things, too, ^{but} I didn't know we had ^a problem with him that we have now. His local ^{still isn't integrated.}

Then down in Mississippi much of the bombings ^{Laurel} in law ^{been} have many of the guys who've been tried for crimes of violence have come out of the labor movements. ^{It} So I'm saying, certainly labor's good and bad, but my first impression of labor came to me through Ed Nixon ^{and} he, as I said, for at least three or four years prior to the Montgomery Boycott, was the guy that was putting out ^{memo}graph sheets, and speaking in churches and on street corners, and calling on everybody, "let's not put up with this."

It was ^{Ed} Nixon that created within Montgomery the sentiment of the total population that sort of blossomed at the time that Rosa took her stand. Frankly, it was Ed that encouraged Rosa (not to) get up out of her ^{secret} ~~side~~ she didn't even know Martin at that time. Martin had just come to town, really, as the ~~Pastor~~ of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church; This was his first year in Montgomery. Ed called the night they were having the meeting; he was working with us and we were working for him; we had a thing going between the two of us.

And he said I could come over because we finally got this bus thing on the road, and he was over with us when we were fighting the Emmett Till thing. So we had, shall I say, debts to which we owed each other because when ~~every~~ we were in trouble he came, and when he got in trouble we went. And that night they were trying to decide on who should

lead the movement because they first wanted Ed Nixon. Well, Ed felt that the job that he had kept him out of town so much and he never really knew from one day to the next where he would be with the Pullman job that he had, that he felt that he just couldn't get adjusted. We need^{ed} really somebody that's here all the time, ^eand ^ethan they centered their attention on the minister^s of the full-time church^s. Now, in the average Baptist church in the south, you'll have a guy who will have ^emaybe church service at a church twice a month, he'll be at this church one Sunday and that church one Sunday, then back to this church and back to that church. Well, the minister^s of the two best-known church^s in Montgomery, ^ethe Baptist was was Ebenezer ... was First, pastored by Ralph and Dexter that was pastored by Martin. Well, then they began to jostle around to find out who was going to lead us in this

town crisis. You see, the NAACP had been outlawed in Alabama at this particular time and there was no organized civil rights movement as such, but people were still doing

the business of civil rights under various ^{guises} guy's and agencies and this kind of thing.

So they ^{wanted} brought Ralph, that night that's when I first met him, to lead the movement.

So Ralph took the position and said, "Well I tell you what, there's a young man in town that I've grown to love, ^{to} know and ^{to} understand.

I think that he has real leadership ability, and I think we ought to give him a chance".

And he said, "I'll tell you, if you go along with this young man, Martin Luther King, who has just come into Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, I'll stand behind him all the way". And so

the people brought Ralph's position, "if you're going to be there with him" then they figured they had Ralph, too. So this is how

Martin really emerged as the leader of the Montgomery Boycott Movement, and he had already gotten his Doctor's Degree from Boston U. [University]; he'd been to Crozer [Theological Seminary] of Morehouse [College]; he was very well prepared, a real gem of intellect and a wonderful guy to have. I wish that we could have had such a man in my town, you know, we'd meet others other places, b. The thing that most people don't seem to know at all, or don't bother to document is the role of Ed Nixon, and the fact that this is the guy that really created the atmosphere in Montgomery to get rid of bus segregation, and the reaction that the community immediately responded to when Rosa refused to get up and got put in jail. Ed was the guy that was making the clarion clearing call; and were it not for the fact that he didn't have the time at home to be the leader of the movement, it -- of course, I can't force it, but it might have been that the great talent of [night now been -

Martin, the great contribution that he'd made would probably have not come about. And I imagine that there are ^{thousands, maybe} millions of people in this world who have the potential of making a great contribution, who never get the opportunity to do it.

O'BRIEN: Well, how about organized labor in Mississippi in your relationship with the NAACP, have you had much cooperation, did you have much cooperation in the ^{sixties} '60's during the Kennedy years?

HENRY: Yes. In terms of the leadership of the labor movement, yes, but in terms of the ranking and file, no. ^{Now,} Where you have a union that's predominately black, there is the affinity with the the civil rights struggle. But, where you've got a union that's predominately white, it's just as likely to be a microcosm of the community that it's in, just a reflection of it.

O'BRIEN: Did they ever make contact, or did statewide leadership ever make contact with the NAACP?

HENRY: Yes. Carl Brown and I are good personal friends.

[Mississippi]
Carl Brown who is, president of the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor and Congress ~~of~~ Industrial Organizations], We've been tight

since 1959 ¹⁹⁶⁰, in this area, and he, himself has always taken the right position on the questions of the problems of racism, ^{and} well, naturally on ^{un}employment, ^{the} but ^a total spectrum?

^{So} but he's not really been able to bring into any kind of real action program the union movement. You see, Carl has a peculiar kind of relationship, I guess, in that he seemingly is financed by the National AFL-CIO because the local is not able to take care of him, just like with Charley Evers, his salary is paid by the National Office, ^{of course,} because he does work for the state. And of course, unlike Charley, Carl has the problem of getting

elected, ^{So} this sort of balances him off a little bit, which means that there are some things that in his heart, he wants to do that he just can't do, ^{of course} Carl's a typical laborman; you know, sometimes he feels it ain't been said until he said it, and it ain't done until he done it. Of course he knocks my head off and I knock his off, back and fourth because I'm pretty, shall I say, forward myself and I have a lot of ego and think I know all the answers, and so we sort of knock each other down every now and then with this kind of confrontation.

O'BRIEN: Was he getting much pressure from the national unions to work with you during the Kennedy years?

HENRY: Yes.

O'BRIEN: Did you get any insight into the people who were directing this? was it Meany, people like Meany, people like?

HENRY: Well, no. I don't think Meany, I think more Walter Reuther, although George Meany was the head of the movement. Frankly it's been my good fortune in the last five or six years to have a close up relationship with them, [I.W.] ^{Abe} ~~Averell~~ and [Paul] ^{Joseph} Jennings, you know, pretty much the establishment labor structure and have no hesitancy about raising any issues with them that I think are pertinent. That's what I was telling you about. I saw

George the other night at the A. Phil ^{Philip} Randolph dinner and George was one of the speakers, and of course he said, ^{all of} the right things.

and A. Randolph and George have had their ^{cuttings} cut ^{down} down and they've had their knockouts, too.

I remember one night we were in a meeting and George asked A. Phil ^{Philip}, "who the hell would have known that you were the spokesman for the black community?" And Phil came back with his favorite statement and said, "I might not speak

I'll give you one of them. He was 80 years old and we had a birthday party for him --

for all of them, but I speak for a damn sight more than you do." It's been my privilege to have appeared at ^{conferences of labor as a speaker} various activities, I'll say for for the last, maybe ten years, and take a lot of . . .

O'BRIEN: This is in Mississippi?

HENRY: Well, in Mississippi and out, more out than in, frankly you go speaking to your steel workers for municipal employees, IUE [International Union of Electrical Radio and Machine^{Works}], Jack Conways' IUD [Industrial Union Department of the AFL-CIO], and it's been mostly a good relationship with a bunch of great guys, particularly nationwide but as far as Mississippi is concerned, and the guys who are involved in labor, I would say you probably have, in terms of leadership, maybe around ⁵⁰ fifty guys that are white, that you can count on.

O'BRIEN: How about other white liberal groups like the Anti-Defamation League, the Inhat Birth, did they have any activities in Mississippi?

HENRY:

Well, ^{they're} their there, but certainly the Jewish population knows that once they get their ^{they're} foot off our necks, that ~~their~~ probably next. It's a matter of personal survival; they just don't get involved. We happen to be very unfortunate in Clarksdale, to have a Rabbi who is pretty much considered the leader of the conservative movement ^{of the area} ~~there~~, and this is highly unusual in the Jewish community, but we got it.

O'BRIEN:

Jackson has Rabbi [Benjamin] Schultz? ^{too, don't they}

HENRY:

No. I've got Rabbi Schultz — Yes, Clarksdale. Jackson has ^{P.E. Nussebaum} 1, but I've got Rabbi Schultz, — baby, I've got Rabbi Schultz to deal with.

O'BRIEN:

^{Chowell, I see what you mean.} ¶ What's the ~~infer~~ ^{intra} structure in a sense of the civil rights movement in 1961, '62?

The ~~infer~~ ^{intra} structure, it's basically you, ^{you're} Medgar Evers, your getting cooperation out of the . . .

HENRY: You're talking in the 1961 and 2 you're talking about a real good relationship between, not only the NAACP ^{and} in labor, but you're talking about the NAACP ^{and} in SNCC [Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee], and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference the NAACP in SCLC the NAACP in CORE [Congress of Racial Equality]. Frankly we've amalgamation formed an of the organizations in 1964 called the Council of Federated Organizations which was a combining of the forces of all four groups.

O'BRIEN: Did this group have a meeting with Barnett one time?

HENRY: Yes.

O'BRIEN: When was that, about...?

HENRY: The CFO met with Barnett when ever he went

O'BRIEN: That was '59. HENRY: into office for the first time '59. You see, we did this, for two reasons the original organization of CFO was an amalgamation of church, civil rights, social, civic clubs,

that we knew that it would be difficult for any of the ^{se} civil rights organizations and people to get into and see Barnett. If you say, "I want to come from CORE," "I want to come from NAACP," the urban league, any of this, so you mash your movement and you write him a letter from COFO, ^{a name} something he's never heard of; So this can't be all bad, because it ain't on the list. So he'd ^{say} said, "OK you guys, come on?" So in walked the same guys ^{he was just saying he} and this was the way we got in to see Barnett, was through this kind of maneuvering.

Well, the council remained a paper organization largely from '59 until we pulled off the long-hot-summer program in '64. And here again, although there were many smaller organizations identifying with the ^{COFO} movement, the big four in it were the four major civil rights groups. It was here that we brought in a thousand kids from all over the nation

for the long-hot-summer program. I think that this is one of the physiological metamorphoses of our time; that community has never been, I would say, changed more by perhaps the single kind of act that just lasted three months than did the summer program of 1964. Frankly we were pretty much the model of the nation in terms of the organizations working together, because everywhere else if you were CORE, you couldn't sit down with the NAACP, and this jazz. It just so happened that the guys who were there in Mississippi, who were the leaders of the various groups in the state. . . .

O'BRIEN:

Who were they at that time?

[Robert Barris]

HENRY:

We had Bob Moses from SNCC; we had Dave Dennis from CORE, ^{Arnel} Ponder from SCLC, and me and Charley from the NAACP. We were all good friends anyway, and all of us belonged to everything. We all belong^{ed} to CORE; we all

belong^{ed} to NAACP; we all belong^{ed} to SNCC^{ed} in other words, what^{ever} was going on, nobody was to^o concerned about who^d get the credit, because usually it was a bullet at the end

There was nobody out there waving a flag. This is pretty much the comedy of it. "This is my thing," you know.

it. So it wasn't a situation where anybody was ^{claiming} collaborating to claim credit for having challenged the establishment, but still the establishment had to be challenged. And

Of course, who^{ever} the establishment blamed, all alright, but you don't call up the person press and say, "I've just done this." If they find

out you did it and write it, ok, ^{not} but like now with your press releases^s, what you going to do. And in those days it was always what

had been done. It was after the fact, rather than before, like now. Much of it is before the fact. So, ^{And the} nation responded to us

very well. Of course you had an idealism within the young people in SNCC^s, that

caused us a little bit of a problem. We To give you really what I'm saying, we

decided that the central committee of CFO would be made up of the staff personal^{ly} of all the organizations that were involved. So what happen, SNCC would hire kids say for ten dollars a week, and if they spent one hundred dollars they had ten guys on the staff and this was voting strength, you see for a while. It got to a point where SNCC was pretty much called^{ing} most of the shots, in the movement, in the CFO situation. There was some difference in our approach to problems, particularly within NAACP, our philosophy was and the state board supported this that you need to know how you're going to come out before you get in it, and if you're going to do a march, if you're going to do a boycott or sit-in, whatever it is, have a plan for the outcome as well as for the ingoing. Of course the kids from SNCC were less incumbered than many of the older people in other organizations,

And they could afford to not worry about how they were going to come out, ^{you know,} "We'll get in and than worry about that than." ^{So} this got us into several very difficult financial situations where you'd have a jail-in of two or three hundred people over an item that the NAACP would consider unimportant, but the NAACP was the only organization functioning that had any money, and it was our responsibility to put up the bail. ^{So} we became the financiers without voice in what was being done, ^{So} this is just a part of the syndrome of working with different ^{ideologies} night hours and different philosophies. But the 1964 summer project, I think, was an outstanding success in spite of the fact that you had these personalities to contend with. ^{And} since '64, it has been largely the NAACP as a ^F focal point of the movement in the state with the combined elements of SNCC, well, with

those persons who felt that they just couldn't come with the NAACP usually identifying with what was known as the Freedom Democratic Party which challenged the democratic convention in Atlantic City in 1964, still maintaining a civil rights kind of image as a possible action front but, you know it's the nation, I guess, particularly the white community usually wants to be able to identify a leader in the black community but, they don't realize white folks ain't got no leader, Jew's ain't got no leader, Italians, no ethnic group actually has any one guy speaking for them. And there ain't no black leaders, I guess Booker T. Washington in his time probably ^{set} sent this image into motion, and most white guys still think that there is such a thing as a black leader, The black leader is what I mean, but many guys are involved in city decisionmaking.

O'BRIEN: Well, getting back to that point in particular, was there any pressures or at least encouragement on the part of either the Kennedy Administration people, individuals, Justice Department people, for a coalition of interest to come together?

HENRY: Yes. Frankly we had the encouragement from both the Kennedy's, both Bobby . . .

O'BRIEN: When did this begin?

HENRY: '64.

O'BRIEN: Do you remember any particular contacts with any individuals . . .

HENRY: Al Lowenstein was pretty much the guy that enters the picture, and it was him that was more involved in helping to get this thing together than any of us could have done in our home. He was pretty much used as the liaison between the Kennedy establishment, as well as the white liberal establishment, and the forces in state to see if such a project would work. We started to put this thing

together in '62.

O'BRIEN: And Al was involved from that point on?

HENRY: Yes.

O'BRIEN: Anyone else?

HENRY: Robert Mosses.

O'BRIEN: But anyone from the Kennedy staff, the White House staff?

HENRY: No. Not visibly, not visibly.

O'BRIEN: How about invisibly, I mean . . .

HENRY: Well as I said, I don't know. If so, they were not in touch with me or I did not identify them as Kennedy staff. I became more in touch with the Kennedy's after Medgar was killed, June 12, 1963. You remember we buried Medgar at Arlington and John Fitzgerald was President at that time.

And of course he opened up the White House to us, ^{and} There ain't ^{that} many black folks spent the night in the White House. There was me and Charles, Myrlie and all the kids, who were the guests of the President, you know.

while we were there until we were ready to leave.

O'BRIEN: You remember anything about the contacts you made with the Kennedy staff or with President Kennedy?

HENRY: Well, there was Theodore C. Sorensen, was there. Well as you know, Bobby was the attorney general at the time and Katzenbach was on the staff. Of course John Doer was also in the picture. It was largely, "what are you doing and what methods are you using to work on this problem or that problem?" And the traditional thing: "anything we can do for you let me know." I think that that's one slogan they'll never forget because we really let them know in time if we had something we wanted them to do. John Fitzgerald was available to us on call, collect. This is one of the things that really, I guess, got Bobby into hot water by the with the southern element, because telephone operators are

not the best secret keepers in the world, you know; And when you pick up a telephone down here in Charleston, Mississippi, calling the White House collect, and the guy says, "Whose talking?" And you tell him who you want

This: really go around, The word got around, and of course this kind of rapport and relationship, I'm sure had a lot of ameliorating effects on a lot of people.

I recall being arrested, ^{I think I told you, at home} one night and the

Chief of police wouldn't tell the family where they were taking me. After getting down to the jail, in ^{town} whole, and being carried

to the jail in the next county, Bolivar County, Bob Drew, again, the guy ^{who's} whose been with us,

stood by me all the way, ^{and} John Melcher, Vera Piquee, ^{[James] Jimmy Puyford,} ^{Piggy} Jenny Raford, H.Y. Hackett, —————>

and numerous others that I can't think of at this point. Charles Stringer came on down to the jail to see what the problem was.

I know that they were very much disturb^{ed} they were as much disturb^{ed} as I was scared.

Because as I say, when we walked out of the jail, the guy wrap^ed a chain around my body and locked it. I just know^e, I'm ^{ending} laying^{ing} up in a river somewhere^e on a railroad track, on the side of the road. And ^{nit} they would tell

them wouldn't tell anybody where they were talking^g ^{me} them. So ^{it} Drew called Bobby, and told him what appeared to be the situation.

So Bobby called the sheriff of my county and the sheriff of the ^{ad}joining county, Bolivar County, and told him^g that, ^{he understood} I was staying ~~that Aaron was arrested and there and was resting~~ ^e That, "you wouldn't" won't identify where you got him^g, ^{so} I just want to let you know, that the United States Department of Justice is holding both of you responsible for his safety." I'll always credit that call to the fact that I'm alive today, because you just don't, I'd say, have these kinds of actions taken against you

unless the guy really planed^N on doing something with you. ~~X~~ The whole thing got to be a comedy situation. ^{First,} It was on a Saturday afternoon, and I'd been home, I guess I got home something like ⁵ five o'clock. Prior to that, we'd had a boycott of the town. It came about over Mayor ^[H.B.] Cincaid denying the black kids the right to march in the Christmas Parade, the ^{nativity} activity parade. This has been going on since I was a kid; We usually ^{were} on the last band in it, ^{but} the hell, we was in it. But Cincaid came bossing his way: "we're not going to have this no more." Okay.

So the merchants, where the parade would be held, we felt had let us down, because as you know the Mayor really doesn't run the city. The city's run by the Chamber of Commerce, and the Kiwanis, ^[International] the Rotary, ^[International] the Exchanged Clubs, the Country Clubs, and the Banks; these are the people who make

the decision, the Mayor goes by, because these
 are the people who elected him, ^{who determine who} So we ^{gets elected.}
 boycotted the whole town because this was
 our only response. The Mayor shrewd^{ly} enough
 is a manufacturer of head bolt heaters that
 starts cars up in North and South Dakota.
 He has a plant that hires some 60 to 70
point, high people,
 And we couldn't do much to him because
 we going to buy them head bolt heaters, ^{don't} nohow,
 because it's come out ^{a commodity we don't use.}
 So he's pretty much what you call an absentee
 landlord. We boycotted the whole town, ^{and}
 the county attorney called me down to his
 office and told me, "I understand you've
 been getting up ^{and} making speeches about
 boycott^{ing} He said, "Don't you know that
 that's against the law"? I said, "Well
 if it is, that's too bad, I just feel like
 I've got a right to do it". He said, "You
 ain't going to stop it ^{now}"? I said, "No".

So he had the chief of police waiting ^{in a} on the other side of the room and he called him out and said, "Come on and take this nigger to jail, he ain't going to act right". So he had called me and asked me to come by his office that morning, on my way to the store, so we could talk about it. I said, "Ok^{ay}. ^{How} about coming around ^{if I come by} about seven-thirty ^{7:30} and we'll talk about it for an ^{an} half hour, and I can get to ^(on) the store when it opens ^{at 8?} at eight. ^{See we open at 8 o'clock.} So he didn't tell me he was going to put me in jail. So the chief of police carried me to jail, instead of using it in the way that he promised. Well, that was okay. So the boycott kept going, and then, we're in jail. ^{until I come up} had come out for trial, the trial was a long time coming. ^{& will anyway.} The thing I was getting to was, on this particular Saturday evening, we had a session down at a friend of mine's, John Melcher's, who operates, Delta Burial, which

is a funeral home not far from the store.

BRIEN: I think I

remember it, the funeral home. HENRY: all this. ^{So} they were tired to some degree

of the pressures that it really takes to keep a boycott going, ^{And} the hand bills you've got to put out ^{and} the speeches you've got to make. You ^{do it} never know, ^{if} the white guys had any idea, how much energy it takes to keep these things going, they'd give us a break, ^{But} they really keep the civil rights movement alive. ^{If} The white community

^{would} will move back and stop its ^{opposite} opposition, black folks would get just as ^{complacent} good places as white people and ^{the} things would be over.

Everytime there is an action by the whites there's a reaction by the blacks. ^{So} we was argued ^{ing} and I didn't see where we ^{how} nearly accomplished ^{our} a goal, and what was happening, many of the guys who were leaders in the movement of the boycott were personal friends

of some of the guys downtown and many of
them, we put some ¹² twelve to ¹⁵ fifteen stores
out of business. ^{You see, 65} Sixty-five per cent of the

country is black, about half, I guess, of
the trading area is black. They were
trying to show me the place where maybe

it's time to call it off, and we argued
a couple hours. ^{And, "No, no, no, no" So anyway,} They realized that the
majority ^{would} voted to keep the boycott going,

that I had ^{the} ~~the~~ votes to do it, as far as the
members of the branch were concerned, because
we really hadn't succeeded in accomplishing

our mission. ^{there's} And ^{you're} ain't no need in stopping,
if ^{you're} you're going to stop before you get your
point accomplished. So I left the store

something like ⁴ four o'clock and we argued
till about ^{5:30} five-thirty and I went on home.

The other pharmacist in the store, ^{at} at that
time we were staying, I believe, until twelve

¹² o'clock at night. This was during the era of '61,

'62. This was during the era when we had many more people living on the farm than we do now, More people downtown on Saturday nights, And you stayed open as long as the traffic ^{was} is there. Now we've cut back to ten 10 o'clock on Saturday and eight 8 o'clock every other night, ^{formerly} when ~~formally~~ we were ten 10 o'clock every night, and midnight on Saturdays.

I had gone home and had dinner and got into bed and went to sleep, ^{and} the police knocked on the door. ^{No,} I noticed there ^{were} flash ^{ing} lights out side. Our daughter, Rebecca, ^[Henry] came back into the bedroom where her mother and I were taking a nap, and said, "Daddy," she ^{said} "the flash ^{ing} lights out there", I ^{try} tried not to become involved in excitable situations with her, although she's had her share of it, And she's ^{through it} become pretty good. I said, "Ok baby, don't worry about it, it's there ^{they're} they're lights and ~~there~~ ^{they're} not going to hurt anybody".

So after a while the knock came on the door and Noel got up and went to the front door. It was the chief of police, ^{and} He said, "Where's your husband?" She said, "In bed". He said, "I'd like to see him". ^{Let's} So she came back and told me the chief of police was up front, she threw me a robe, and I got up and went to the front room to see what ^{he} they wanted.

He said, "I've got a warrant for your arrest". I said, "Ok, ^{what} what's the charge?" He said, "I don't know but it's something down in Mound Bayou". I ^{hadn't} ain't been to Mound Bayou. I don't know if you know where Mound ^{Bayou} is; Mound Bayou is an all-black town, that's down 61

DIBRIN: Right. I work through it.

sixty-one highway, between Clarksdale and Cleveland. ^{HENRY} So I said, "Ok, let's go; all I need to do is change clothes". So I went on in the back room and Noel ^{re} said, "What's the matter?" I said, "I don't know what it is but don't worry about it, ^{mine} man's got a warrant for my arrest, I'm going down to the

jail and check it out". So when I went back in the room to dress, he came back in the room to watch me dress, like I was going to jump out the window or something. He stood up in the room; I pulled off my pajamas and then told him, I wanted to make a phone call. He said, "Go ahead". So I called Drew first, couldn't get him, and then I called John Melcher and told him, "to meet me down at the jail, I'm being arrested." He said, "What you getting arrested for?" I said, "I don't know, man, the guy told me come on and go to jail". He said, "OK, we'll meet you there." So that's when, ^{as} I say, when I got there, there was Drew and Stringer, a dozen folks. So we get inside the jail and they carried me into a room where there's a round table. I guess the investigation room, where there's something like, I guess, a dozen white guys sitting around the table. I knew three of them. I knew under the Mayor, ^{the} chief of police, and the

county attorney.

O'BRIEN: And all of this was about ¹one o'clock in the morning, or something ^{like that}

HENRY: Yes. ^{And} the guy said, "We ain't ready for him yet" So they carried me back out. They arrested me about ⁸eight o'clock and the investigation started some three or four hours later. Then they brought me back; ³⁰after about thirty minutes after they said, "We aren't ready ready for him yet," they brought me back in.

O'BRIEN: Now this is in Clarksdale?

HENRY: Yes. ^{So} we sat there, Lee Pearson, who at that time was county attorney, said, "Where you been all day, what you been doing"? Now, I knew enough to know that I didn't have to tell him ^{nothing} because there had been no explanation of my rights as a citizen, you know, you don't have to answer no questions, ^{and all that} but I still didn't want to be a party to a

delaying of an investigation, if a crime had been committed, ^{So} therefore I went on and voluntarily told them everything they wanted to know. They wanted to know what time I'd come to work, and where I'd been.

all day, and what had I been doing, who I was with. ^{So} I told them all of it. ^{So}

he still; I said, "What ^{am I} are my charges ^{d with?}"

He said, "Well, I don't know yet", ^{I said, "Okay."} After he got through with this investigation, that's

when they turned me over to the authorities from Bolivar County ^{and} Mound Bayou is in

Bolivar County, ^{So} that's when this chain locking business came off. ^{I was carried to jail} ^{So} the next ^{down there}

morning, I was trying to find out from the guys who were, well, I guess you'd called them

trustees or something, ^{people who were frequently put in jail.} I said, "What's the

matter?" ^{So} they said, "They have this little white fellow up here who told them

that you had tried to get him, to get you a

white woman, and since you couldn't get him to get you a white woman, ^{you said} than he'd have to substitute." So this became the humble

bumble thing, and I remember when we went up stairs, ^{the} the guy behind me says, "Since

this son-of-a-bitch likes white women, ^{so well} told Well's, let's put him in a cell with

them". I said, "I know ^{there's} it's going to be hell now" but what can you do about it?

So they carried me up stairs ^{in the cell of} with the white women. So the guy unlocked the door and said,

"Go on in". So I went on in and it just so happen'd ^{there} it wasn't no white women in jail that

night. So I had the penthouse of the jail, you know, because certainly the jail cell

where they keep the white women is the best thing they've got. It's clean ^{with} and bed, you

know, and ^{I was} by myself. It was late that night, one or two ^{this was} 10'clock in the morning, when

Drew got hold of Bobby, ^{and Bobby was working on it.} The next morning,

^{Jess} R.G.S. Brown, who was a NAACP lawyer, at that

time, and Medgar, and I guess, thirty-five or forty other people, came down to the ^{Cleveland} jail

where I was to get me out. And Jess asked the desk man, what was the charge ^{and} or what was the bond. ^{He} I said, "I ain't got no charge and I don't know what the bond is".

So he said, "What was the arrest all about"? So ^{He} I said, "To tell you the truth, I don't know" they were just trying to put something together, but they couldn't get it. So

he finally said, Judge Rowe had signed the affidavit. So how did Judge Rowe sign the affidavit, you know, for a charge

that he's not knowledgeable of nor present when ^{it} happen^{ed?} But still, they never found

an affidavit that the young fellow that made the ^{accusation} had signed, the only thing

they had was an affidavit, not on information and belief, but an affidavit to fact, signed

by the attorney, Jess. So the records

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got so filed up, we had a trial and they had produced a kid that was there and did so testify. The thing that ^{still} is comical to me, the guy stood me up and said, "What's your name, ^{Is your name} Aaron Henry"? I said, "Yes". "Where ^{do} you live? sit down". Then he turned to the kid and said, "Do you see the guy in here that picked you up"? The guy said, "^{Yeah} yes, that's him right there". He just stood me up, so he couldn't miss me, you see, wasn't no way in the world. So as I ^{say} said, there was no line up or anything where somebody picks somebody out from among a lot of other guys; it was a situation where the only suspect ^{of} possible committer of the crime was the one guy.

O'BRIEN: What ever happen^d about that ^{one} that went to the Supreme Court, didn't it?

HENRY: Well, yes. It went to the Supreme Court a couple of times.

O'BRIEN: Well, it was actually the libel suit that went

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that want to take
supreme court

to the ^{1,111} wasn't it the libel suit?

HENRY:

Well, the libel suit grew out of this.

Because you see the next morning I went down to the jail and cussed out ^{Jess,} just the county attorney, and the chief of police. I called

him all kinds ^{of....} like I say, I shouldn't have done it, but I did it. I had ^{most everybody,} at least

¹² twelve or ¹⁵ fifteen others who went down to

really find out what's doing, What's the name of the game you ^{all are} ll playing now? I

remember, I called Ben ^{Benjamin Collins} a bastard, ^{Ward} hell, I

didn't know he was born out of wed lock

that ^{the} chief of police, and he sued me for libel.

The county attorney, Lee Pearson, he got

his dogs, too. When Pearson was interrogating

me, ^{I felt --} and ^{Ben} then arrested me, ⁻⁻ I felt that all along they knew, ^{tors} they were the instiga of

what ever was going on, because they were from my home town and they knew me personally.

Now the guys from Bolivar county, I could feel that they at least had dubious feelings

or something, not knowing me. ^{The other} But, yet two
 guys I ^{rew} grown up with me and Ben grew up
 on the same plantation, so like I say, we've
 known each other all our lives. So they sued
 me for ^{\$40,000;} forty thousand dollars; the Supreme
 court threw it out, ^{saying} They knew you guys
 are supposed to ^{be} public officials, you got
 to lead a life so clean that what ever they
 call you, that won't nobody believe it." This
 is the rationale.

The state Supreme court threw out the charges.
 They finally made a formal charge of misconduct;
 this was actually the charge ^{of} which I
 was tried. Then as I ^{said} the local court, ...
 I was convicted in the Justice of the Peace's
 court, convicted in county court, went to the
 circuit court on a ⁶ six-month, ²⁵⁰⁰ five hundred
dollar fine, ^{I believe.} And ^{the} that the circuit court ^{argument}
 the Judge refused to ^{give} sentence ^{to me} you, in open
 court. ^{he} he calls you back to his chamber.

So I went back there, he said, "Son, I see

and the verdict...

what they're doing to you". I said, "Well that's ^{all} alright". He said, "The jury found you guilty, I've got to fine you". I said, "Well, ^{ok} judge, that's ^{all} alright". He was really a fairly decent Joe, but he had to go along with the system.

O'BRIEN: He expected this to be appealed? then didn't he?

HENRY: Oh sure, he knew that. Yeah.

O'BRIEN: ^{So} he really gave you grounds for appeal, didn't he? ^{in that respect?}

HENRY: ^{I don't know,} Well, ^{he said,} maybe so, but the only thing he told me, "What sentence are you under now"? I told him, "Five hundred dollars and ⁶ ~~six~~ months in jail." He said, "Well, I'm going to cut that to ^{\$200} ~~two hundred dollars~~ and ² ~~two~~ months in jail."

O'BRIEN: Did you ever serve that time, or pay the fine?

HENRY: No. Then this went up to the State Supreme Court. The State Supreme Court threw it out. The lawyers then moved for suggestion

[Thomas Pickens]

of error and Judge Brady at that time had been admitted to the court and this was the Ross Barnett's Governor's year; and Hell, he couldn't afford to lose me. The state politics got mixed up in it.

O'BRIEN: In what way, how he couldn't afford to lose y

HENRY: Well, if you got an attorney general of the state that can't convict the worst son-of-a-bitch we got down here, what kind of a governor is he? This is how state politics got into the picture. However, the Supreme Court did throw it out. From the pressure from the governor and others the court reversed itself on a suggestion of error and an end-bunk hearing and reinstated the two months and the two hundred dollars. Of course we carried this to the US Supreme Court and they sent it back to the State Supreme Court for a determination of an illegal searching, several other points. The Supreme Court

sent it back to the county court to find out if the charge of intentional waiving of rights was used as a ^{strategy} by the lawyers in the case. Of course, the county judge ^{again} ruled that there was no rule waive of rights and sent his opinion back to the ^{state} Supreme Court, and without a hearing at all, the state supreme court overruled their own judge. ^{Maybe we got...} So they reinstated the thing and ^{we} sent it back up and they refused to hear it but gave us another route to go, [?] habeas corpus. About a week ago, Judge Ready knocked it out. Of course the state has the opportunity of retrial ^{now} if they desire. Of course, we ^{dy} go for double-jeopardy situation in the ^{event of} that. But that's the long story.

O'BRIEN: Well, before this tape runs ^{cut} off, I know that you were very close to (James Earl) Chaney, (Michael H.) ^{Chweinski} and (Andrew) Goodman, and I wonder if there's anything that you'd like

about them

to add at this point?

HENRY:

Well, I knew Chaney longer, because he was a native kind from Meridian, And he worked in the movement a long time. I knew Schwerner for about two years, as one of the first white activists that had come into this thing and ^{had} remained. Most of them had come in and stayed a few days and got out. But really in terms of ^{empathy} ~~empathy~~, of all three, I feel more involved with Andy Goodman. Then of course, I had only known Andy, I guess at most a week. I'd spoken at Queens College ^{iz} proselyting students to come into the state for the program. And I talked to Andy and several other young fellows into coming down. And they gave a party for us, one night there in New York, and their parents and us were having a get-acquainted session. I carried Andy back home with me ^{to Clarksdale} and the only night that he spent alive in Mississippi,

was at my house. ✓ The assignments for the young fellows were made at Jackson, the headquarters of the movement, and you wanted freedom to move people anywhere you wanted to. They had to go where they were assigned; we had to keep a pretty tight discipline, so we knew where everybody was. So when although Andy came back with me, he called up and wanted to know where ^{he had to go} have you got him. They told him Meridian, ^{and they} put him on a bus, ^{and} sent him to Meridian. The following morning, he got to Meridian about noon. When he got there, Schwerner and Chaney were preparing to go over to Philadelphia to investigate a burning church. The churches had been burned, ^{and} of course you know that we've had something like ⁶⁰ sixty more burned by now, but this was the beginning of the church-burning situation. ^{Every 20} and a twenty-year-old boy ^{would} who wanted to identify with it, so

he got into the car with Schwerner and Chaney,
and they were arrested on ^{their} ~~there~~ way back home.

⊗ We tried to get the FBI to become involved ⊙

⊗ and this is one thing, I'll forever hold

against them, I guess, because they told
us unless we could prove that they had been
carried across state lines, or that they had

been missing for ²⁴ twenty-four hours, they
couldn't do a thing. ^{well,} All we were trying

to do was to get them to make phone calls

⊗ into the various jails between Philadelphia,

and Meridian, realizing that if the guys
felt that the FBI was on top of it, that
they would at least not beat them up and
harm them. But when we couldn't even get

that, then of course the kids were taken
out of jail that night ^{some time} and killed. ⊗ Well, like

I say, Andy's ^{mama} mother never saw him alive again,
and I brought him from his ^{mama} mother's house.

Consequently, we found the bodies some six weeks
later or more. I carried Andy back to

New York to his ^{mama} mother and buried him. And, of course, everytime, I go into New York, I go by ^{and see them,} and let them know that ^{the} people that Andy gave his life for haven't forgotten him. It's a wonderful relationship between [Robert Goodman] Bob, [Carolyn Goodman] Carolyn and me.

O'BRIEN: Did you have any contacts with the Justice Department, Robert Kennedy? Robert Kennedy had left at this point, or had he?

HENRY: ^{This} The was '64 ^{yes} Bobby Kennedy was Attorney General then. ^{John} Certainly Bobby was informed, and to tell the truth we picketed the Justice Department over the issue and Bobby Kennedy was down there, so he gets out and walked in the picket line with us. Because ^{he's} insenced ^{incensed} over the situation, ^{and} his ^{his} just as determined as we are that the Justice Department does it's job, and clear this thing up. So although he is the attorney general, he identifies with us out there with picket

lines around him. But you see J. Edgar Hoover, although it's ^{technically} under the Justice Department, he runs his own damn shop.

The ^{empathy} ~~empathy~~ that we've had, I'll say, for the past ¹² ~~twelve~~ years, I guess, ⁸ ~~eight~~ or ¹² ~~twelve~~ with Justice has not nearly been as good with the FBI as it has been with the Department of Justice, and I just hope that what I see, or what I think I see in terms of ^{the} Justice Department faking out on this whole situation now, is not real, but this is what I see so far. Maybe it's a question that John Mitchell just doesn't like me; that's all right ^{life!} I can give him somebody else to be in contact with. I don't give a damn who gets to him and gets some kind of a rapport going, but I can't seem to break it.

O'BRIEN: We're just about out and we've really covered a lot of things, but we really haven't gotten down to, I'm sure that you could do a lot on ^{things like} the Freedom Writer Rides

and voting,
and some of the early voting rights activity.

Coming to Washington soon?

HENRY: I don't seem to have any plans that I know of at this moment for Washington; of course you never can tell, anytime, ^{kind} of a crisis situation, ^{and} you might end up there. As far as I can remember at this point, I'm going to be in Boston, ^(that's not too far away) in August, the first week, from the ^{14th} fourth to about the ^{8th} eighth. The National Pharmaceutical Convention; it's at the ^{celebration of} Sheridan, something.

O'BRIEN: Well that's a good place to catch you. -- after spending an I know that, afternoon in your drug store -- you've really got a lot of things going for you, ^{there} when you're there and it's . . .

HENRY: It's hard, ^{It would be} much more practical to do it at the house after the store closes . . .