

Citizens INFORMER

Tribute to George Wallace, page 9.

Vol. 38 No. 4 ★ October - December 2007

www.cofcc.org

News Stand: \$1.50

The Myth of Jimmie Lee Jackson, and the Trial of Former Alabama Trooper James Bonard Fowler

by Nathan Hoss Rager

On Sunday, March 7, 1965, a nationwide television audience witnessed a conflict between Alabama law enforcement and a group of 600 defiant “civil rights” marchers at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma. Organizers hoped the illegal march would end in Montgomery. It was organized in memory of Marion’s so-called “civil rights martyr” Jimmie Lee Jackson, and was designed to garner support for a Congressional “voting rights” bill. Today, many refer to this day as “Bloody Sunday.”

But what was the story behind Jimmie Lee Jackson, the Marion demonstration where he was wounded, and the fallout of his death? Why were Gov. Wallace and his citizens outraged by this march? And why did Alabama law enforcement come to the bridge in Selma in riot gear?

On Feb. 18, 1965, Alabama Trooper James Bonard Fowler of Geneva (a small town in south Alabama) reported to the small Black Belt town of Marion for riot duty. There, Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) field secretary



Former Trooper James Bonard Fowler on the day of his court hearing.

James Orange was held in the local jail. Albert Turner of Marion, a Student “Nonviolent” Coordinating Committee activist, joined by Rev. James Dobynes, planned a march from the black Zion Methodist Church to the jail to break Orange free. Their given reason: they feared that local Klansmen, who were holding a rally in Marion that night, were going to lynch Orange with the approval of local

law enforcement. Little did Trooper Fowler know that on said night in Marion, a confrontation inside a wild black café would forever change his life and alter the course of history.

FBI Agent Coleman Keane of Chattanooga, Tennessee was on assignment in Selma, Alabama in 1965, and drove north to observe what history calls a “voting rights” march. When he arrived in Marion, he found

stock-piled bricks and glass bottles behind the black Zion Methodist Church, where the marchers were holding a pre-march service. Across the street, Alabama state troopers were lining the sidewalks in front of the county courthouse. Standing on the street with troopers along each side were the local sheriff and police chief, waiting along the anticipated route to explain to organizers that their march of roughly 400 couldn’t continue. And when the marchers finally reached law enforcement, leaders of both groups had a peaceful conversation until Dobynes knelt as if to pray and the street lights suddenly went out.

Just then, Keane remembers the demonstrators savagely attacking law enforcement with the bricks and glass bottles. The troopers defended themselves with their batons in a “well disciplined” manner to push back rioters, which he says is standard in such situations. Then some marchers ran into nearby Mack’s Café, a popular restaurant for the local black community. A short time later he heard a gunshot, and then watched a

Please turn to
COVER, page 7

Robert B. Patterson offers a eulogy to legendary Citizens Council leader Bill Simmons, page 13.

Feds Raid Liberty Dollar Headquarters

by Peter Hallock and
Joel T. LeFevre

INSIDE

- ▶ It’s News to Me . . . 4
- ▶ Ron Paul 5
- ▶ Pat Buchanan 5
- ▶ Brent Nelson 7
- ▶ Council News . . . 10
- ▶ Letters to the
Editor 18
- ▶ Rev. Robert Slimp . . 21
- ▶ Classic Writings . . 23

Please turn to
HALLOCK, page 8

COVER: Trial of James Fowler

Continued from Page 3

wounded Jimmie Lee Jackson come running down the stairs of the café and onto the street. Troopers told him there that, “the gentleman who ran down the stairs had been shot when he tried to get a gun from a trooper.”



Jimmie Lee Jackson

Inside the café, he found Trooper Fowler severely cut from a blow to the head with a glass bottle. Another trooper, Frank Higginbotham, was down and dazed.

After the event, Keane investigated the incident for evidence of a Federal civil rights violation and found that “the officers were justified” in their handling of the riot. Both Federal and State grand juries looked into charges against Trooper Fowler, but found he acted in the right.

A day or two after the incident, Keane visited Jackson at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Selma. There, Jackson admitted he had tried to take Trooper Fowler’s gun, was in “big trouble” for it, and asked for FBI help with the charges of assaulting a police officer. Jackson died a week after the incident, before he ever went to trial. Keane objects with the pro-black account of the events, both of police misconduct in the Marion march as well as the false claims that police attacked news reporters to avoid bad press. Despite the claims of “civil rights” historians, local white residents spray painted camera lenses and not the police.

Nancy Lassiter of Huntsville, Alabama, who was married to the late Alabama trooper Frank Higginbotham in 1965, vividly remembers the terror this incident caused her family. They lived in nearby Greensboro at the time, where Higginbotham was stationed. Then-Mrs. Higginbotham was frightened when her husband was called to riot duty that evening. She recalls her husband returning home from a local hospital late that night, with his head heavily bandaged and his clothes soaked in his own blood from head to foot. He recounted his experience to her, which climaxed inside Mack’s Café. Along with Trooper Fowler,

Trooper Higginbotham followed some unruly demonstrators into the already chaotic café under the orders of Highway Patrol director Al Lingo.

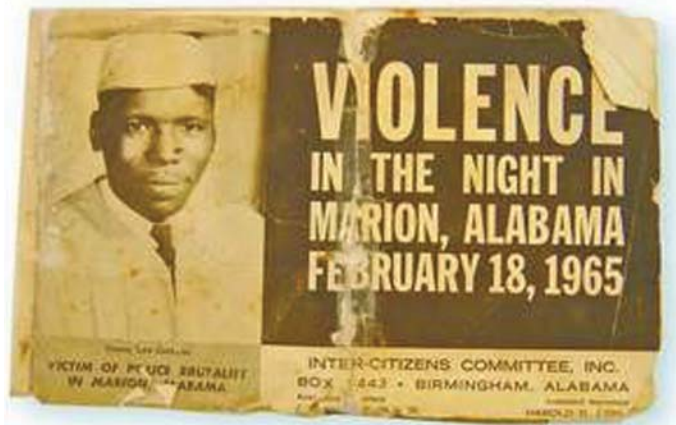
There, Jimmie Lee Jackson and one or two other black men viciously assaulted Trooper Higginbotham. Then, Jackson broke a bottle over the head of Trooper Fowler, and tried to take his gun. And just as Fowler has always said, the shooting was self-defense.

In the wake of countless threats to the personal safety of her family by local blacks directly following the riot, then-Mrs. Higginbotham took her two small children to Anniston until everything blew over. Anniston is a city well outside the Black Belt, 150 miles away from Marion. Although extensive medical records were kept on the injuries of the troopers, they have been lost to time.

Although Jackson’s medical records have also been lost to time, we do have the account of the attending physician at the black Good Samaritan Hospital in Selma that night. Dr. William Dinkins (now deceased), gave an interview to the makers of the *Eyes On The*

of the time—though we haven’t heard any of their accounts until now. However, the statements of Martin Luther King, SNCC leader John Lewis, Marion SNCC activist Albert Turner, and the family of Jackson have all become gospel in the fraudulent “civil rights” legacy.

After Jackson’s death, Civil Rights, Inc. designed the myth of martyrdom. They claimed they were marching to the jail to sing hymns, and to stand between the jailed James Orange and a lynch mob. They said it was the cops that savagely attacked the demonstrators, clubbing them without provocation. Inside the café, they said, the troopers were beating blacks at random. Trooper Higginbotham completely disappears from history. And despite the huge scar that today remains on Trooper Fowler’s head from Jackson’s attack with the glass bottle, it is said that Jimmie Lee was merely trying to restrain Trooper Fowler from clubbing his mother and grandfather.



Jim Bevel, an organizer of the funeral, said “it would be fitting to take Jimmie Lee’s body and march it all the way to the state capitol in Montgomery.” This was where the Selma-to-Montgomery march was conceived. However, Gov. George Wallace vowed to stop this march.

They planned to begin the march at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma. There, State and local law enforcement dressed in riot gear met the marchers. Over a bullhorn clearly audible to television cameras and marchers alike, the announcement was made: “It would be detrimental to your safety to continue this march. You are ordered to disperse, go home or to your church. This march will not continue.” However, marchers led by SNCC leader John Lewis continued to approach the police. Then, every major television network interrupted their regular programming to broadcast the conflict that ensued.

In the wake of what many call “Bloody Sunday,” John Lewis and Martin Luther King planned a second march. After liberal Federal judge Frank Johnson ruled that the march must occur, President Lyndon Johnson federalized the Alabama National Guard to “protect” the marchers. The President and congressional liberals used the “Bloody Sunday” incident as political capital to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

After his time in the troopers, former Trooper Fowler served his country with distinction in Vietnam. Following his time in the service, he returned home to Geneva in South Alabama. Other than having his name falsely tainted by “civil rights” mythology, it appeared as if his confrontation with Jimmie Lee Jackson was behind him. However, in 2005 former Trooper Fowler granted an interview to John Fleming, a writer for an Anniston, Alabama newspaper. In the article, Fleming misquoted Trooper Fowler, cut out his most substantive accounts of the incident, and published the accounts of discredited black “witnesses.” After this article reached the Black Belt, local politicians would begin the next stage of their crusade against former Trooper Fowler.



A funeral procession in Marion attended by M.L. King.

Prize “civil rights” documentary series in 1979. In it, he says, “In my opinion, Jimmie Lee Jackson died of an overdose of anesthesia” during a botched surgery a week after the shooting. Dinkins did not perform that second surgery, but says he felt it unnecessary. He says that Jackson was in fair condition when brought to the hospital, and experienced no difficulties over the week. Of course, these inconvenient facts were left out of the documentary.

The night of the Marion riot, Martin Luther King, Jr., wired US Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach: “This situation can only encourage chaos and savagery in the name of law enforcement unless dealt with immediately.” Katzenbach immediately replied that the Justice Department would launch an investigation. FBI Agent Keane was questioned in this investigation, as were many famous Alabamians

Martin Luther King, John Lewis, and several other “civil rights” leaders attended Jackson’s funeral in Marion. They then had a second funeral in nearby Selma, where above the entrance was a banner saying “Racists killed our brother.”



And another funeral in Selma.

Please turn to COVER, page 8

COVER: Trial of James Fowler

Continued from page 7

In 2004, Michael Jackson was elected the first black district attorney for the Marion and Selma area. No relation to the so-called "victim," his campaign was fueled and largely funded by two local black politicians: State Senator Hank Sanders, who has repeatedly spoken of bringing "justice" to the "killer" of rioter Jackson; and Perry County Commission Chairman Albert Turner, Jr., the son of Marion's deceased SNCC activist and himself a vocal adversary of his white constituents. Working with the Alabama Attorney General's office, prosecutor Jackson reopened the case in 2005.



DA Michael Jackson

In August of 2005, Alabama Gov. Bob Riley's office put out a statement offering a \$5000 reward for information leading to an arrest and conviction in the 1965 case. "The person responsible for this murder should be brought to justice," Riley's office said. The Attorney General's office soon came to the conclusion that they had no case against former Trooper Fowler. However, local prosecutor Michael Jackson continued his move toward an indictment. A 2006 article in a Selma newspaper reported that prosecutor Jackson had "dreamed" of bringing "closure" to the community since his earliest days as an assistant prosecutor.

On May 9, 2007, a reportedly all-black grand jury in Marion handed down two indictments against former Trooper Fowler: one for murder in the first degree, and one for murder in the second degree. Prosecutor Jackson has refused to comment on the racial composition of the grand jury. Trooper Fowler's attorney, George Beck, is petitioning Judge Tommy Jones to either dismiss the charges (because too many witnesses have died, and too much evidence lost) or to move the trial out of the Black Belt (because of the "civil rights" memorials that exist there, many paying tribute to Jimmie Lee Jackson).

On Nov. 8-9, 2007, a preliminary hearing on the case was held at the Perry County courthouse in Marion. As you drive to the courthouse, just outside you see a road marker referring to the "Jimmie Lee Jackson-

Albert Turner Memorial Highway." This is the road that leads to Selma. Inside, the first day saw the cross-examination of several local residents and elected officials, among them was black County Commissioner Albert Turner, Jr. George Beck questioned Turner on his hostility toward another commissioner for discussing racial power sharing, on his statements that Perry County was unlike "the rest of the country" because it is "divided by race" with no "racial harmony" to be found, and on his fundraising activities in memory of Jimmie Lee Jackson.

The head of the Perry County Chamber of Commerce, John Martin, also testified about the chamber's visitor's guide. In it, they specify the locations of the "murder" place and gravesite of their local "victim of the civil rights struggle." On the stand, Martin stated that "In my personal opinion, he (Trooper Fowler) cannot get a fair trial in Perry County."

Sgt. Johnny Tubbs of the Alabama Bureau of Investigation, along with the Marion police chief and the Perry County sheriff, all testified on their inability to find records or witnesses for the case. They are all currently serving in these posts. However, State Senator Hank Sanders and John Fleming of the *Anniston Star* newspaper were unable to attend the hearing to testify.

On the second day of the hearing, FBI Agent Coleman testified of his experience at the Marion riot. After recounting what he saw that night, prosecutor Michael Jackson asked him, "Are you a product of that era?" Judge Tommy Jones asked the prosecutor to rephrase his question, to which he replied, "never mind." After the hearing, prosecutor Jackson said of Keane's testimony, "That's completely a fairy tale. It completely contradicts history."

Nancy Lassiter also testified about the experience of her deceased husband from the time, Trooper Frank Higginbotham.

Arguing that too many witnesses have died, and too much evidence has been lost, Beck made his case that the

defense is too prejudiced to get a fair trial. Jackson argued that, "Any delay has hurt the state far more than the defense. We're the ones who have to put this case together." And in response to the motion to relocate the trial out of the Black Belt, prosecutor Jackson referenced the prosecution of the Birmingham church bombing to make his case that a fair trial could occur in Marion. All of the Birmingham defendants were found guilty. Both motions are pending, as is the motion to make prosecutor Jackson testify as to who encouraged him to pursue the case, as well as his motives for moving forward without the Attorney General's office.

If Trooper Fowler is found guilty, then prosecutor Michael Jackson will emerge as a hero of Alabama's black community. And if the Medgar Evers

and the Neshoba County shooting cases are any indicator, then Michael Jackson will probably even be the topic of a Hollywood film. However, if the jury finds Trooper Fowler innocent, then much of the "civil rights" mythology will be shown to the country as fraudulent. As the facts of the case are laid out before a jury, perhaps those at Alabama's "civil rights" museums will come to regret putting so much stock on the myth of Jimmie Lee Jackson. After all, a not guilty verdict for Trooper Fowler would not only restore dignity to our justice system, but may even generate interest in debunking "civil rights" mythology for a new generation.

❖ *Mr. Rager is a college student and webmaster of the Alabama CofCC's web site, www.alcofcc.org.*



One of several "memorials" to the "martyr" for "civil rights."