

THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

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Carlton Peebles
Civil Rights Unit
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Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
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Dear Mr. Peebles:

We understand that the FBI is reviewing unresolved civil rights murders and is gathering names of victims of what may have been racially killings. *The New York Times* recently reported that your field offices have already compiled a list of 51 victims in 39 cases. We applaud your efforts.

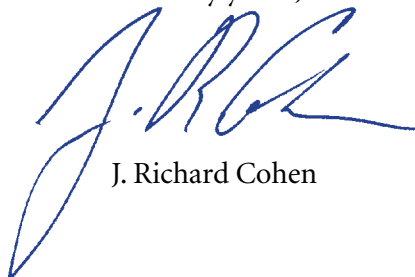
In the late 1980s, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) undertook research on racially motivated killings that occurred between 1954 and 1968, the era generally acknowledged as the modern-day Civil Rights Movement. The names of those who met certain criteria were to be inscribed upon a new Civil Rights Memorial. Designed by Maya Lin, the Memorial was dedicated by the SPLC in November 1989 here in Montgomery.

The stories of the 40 persons are told in *Free At Last*, published by the SPLC in concert with the Memorial dedication and updated in 2004. *Clarion-Ledger* writer Jerry Mitchell has said he used the publication as his “roadmap” as he embarked on his award-winning investigative reporting on unsolved cases. I’m enclosing a copy of *Free At Last* in case you are unfamiliar with the book.

While researching the deaths, we found dozens of additional victims of racial violence who could not be included on the Memorial because there simply was not enough known about the circumstances of their deaths. We suspect that some were killed by white supremacists to intimidate the black community or to thwart the Movement.

Enclosed is an alphabetical list of 74 of those identified victims with a brief description of what happened. We’re also enclosing a copy of our file on each of these individuals. Many contain FOIA requests we filed. We ask that the FBI use its considerable investigatory resources to uncover more information about these cases. Those responsible for these forgotten deaths — those who may still be alive today, like James Ford Seale, who was recently arrested for the murders of Henry Hezekiah Dee and Charles Eddie Moore — have gone unpunished too long.

Sincerely yours,



J. Richard Cohen

Copies to: James “Chip” Burrus
Chief/Criminal Investigative Division

Brett Hovington
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Civil Rights Era Deaths

Anderson, Andrew Lee – Marion, Ark., 1963

Anderson was slain by a group of white citizens and sheriff's deputies after a white woman said he had molested her 8-year-old daughter. A coroner's jury ruled justifiable homicide, and no arrests were made.

Andrews, Frank – Lisman, Ala., 1964

Andrews was shot in the back by a white sheriff's deputy. The county solicitor said the victim was attacking another deputy, and no arrests were made.

Banks, Isadore – Marion, Ark., 1954

Banks' charred corpse was found chained to a tree. Black press reports speculated he was killed by whites who wanted his land. His property was later rented by white farmers.

Bolden, Larry – Chattanooga, Tenn., 1958

Fifteen-year-old Bolden was shot by a white policeman. No arrests were made.

Brazier, James – Dawson City, Ga., 1958

Brazier was beaten to death in front of his wife and children by two police officers. County Sheriff Z.T. Matthews was later quoted in the *Washington Post* saying, "There's nothing like fear to keep niggers in line."

Brewer, Thomas - Columbus, Ga., 1956

Brewer was instrumental in forming a local chapter of the NAACP in 1937. He was shot seven times outside his office by white politician Lucio Flowers. A grand jury failed to indict.

Brooks, Hiliard – Montgomery, Ala., 1952

Brooks was shot by a police officer after refusing to get off a city bus when the driver claimed he had not paid his fare. Police were called, and then shot Hiliard after he got off the bus. A coroner said the murder was justified because Hiliard resisted arrest.

Brown, Charles – Yazoo City, Miss., 1957

A white man shot Brown, who was visiting the suspect's sister. The Justice Department handed the case over to the state.

Brown, Jessie – Winona, Miss., 1965

The 1965 NAACP annual report claimed white farmer R.M. Gibson killed Brown.

Brumfield, Carrie - Franklinton, La., 1967

Brumfield was found shot to death in his car on a rural road. He was shot once in the chest with a .22-caliber revolver.

Brumfield, Eli – Pike County, Ala., 1961

Police officer B.F. Elmore alleged self-defense after shooting Brumfield. Police claimed Brumfield jumped from his car with a pocket knife after police pulled him over for speeding.

Caston, Silas (Ernest) – Jackson, Miss., 1964

Caston was shot by a local police officer. CORE and NAACP filed a civil suit against Deputy Sheriff Herbert Sullivan. The result of that suit is unknown.

Christian, Thad – Anniston, Ala., 1965

Fifty-four-year-old Christian, a father of seven, was killed by a shotgun blast while walking home from fishing. A suspect was arrested, but result is unknown.

Cloninger, Clarence – Gaston, N.C., 1960

Cloninger died while incarcerated. Authorities denied him medical attention after he suffered a heart attack.

Countryman, Willie – Dawson, Ga., 1958

Police officer W.B. Cherry was cleared of murder charges after police said he shot Countryman “in self defense in the line of duty.”

Dahmon, Vincent – Natchez, Miss., 1966

Dahmon, 65, was shot in the head around the time of a march in support of James Meredith.

Daniels, Woodrow Wilson – Water Valley, Miss., 1958

Sheriff Buster Treloar, identified by four witnesses as the man who beat Daniels to death in a prison, was freed in 23 minutes by an all-white jury. “By God,” Treloar said after the trial. “Now I can get back to rounding up bootleggers and damn niggers.”

Dumas, Joseph Hill – Perry, Fla., 1962

Florida Governor Farris Bryant suspended constable Henry Sauls in connection with the shooting of 19-year-old Dumas. Sauls was indicted by a federal grand jury. Result of indictment are unclear.

Evans, Pheld – Canton, Miss., 1964

Medgar Evers identified Evans as having been killed under mysterious circumstances.

Evanston, J.E. – Long Lake, Miss., 1955

Evanston’s body is fished out of Long Lake in December. Evanston was a teacher in the local elementary school.

Greene, Mattie – Ringgold, Ga., 1960

Greene is killed when a bomb explodes under her house.

Greenwood, Jasper – Vicksburg, Miss., 1964

Greenwood was found shot to death near his car on a rural road. Police said the slaying was not racially motivated.

Griffin, Jimmie Lee – Sturgis, Miss., 1965

Griffin was killed in hit-and-run accident. A coroner's report revealed Griffin was run over at least twice.

Hall, A.C. – Macon, Ga., 1962

Hall was shot and killed after a white woman claimed he stole a pistol from her car. He was shot by police as he ran away.

Hamilton, Rogers – Lowndes County, Ala., 1957

Hamilton, 19, was taken from his home by a group of white men and shot to death. Hamilton was allegedly warned to stay away from black girls in the town of Hayneville. No charges were brought in the case.

Hampton, Collie – Hampton, Ky., 1966

Hampton was shot by police officers after allegedly threatening police officer.

Harris, Alphonso – Albany, Ga., 1966

Harris, a member of SCLC, died after allegedly organizing a walkout by black students at a school in Grenada, Mississippi. He was killed in Georgia in response to previous civil rights activity there.

Henry, Izell – Greensburg, La., 1954

Izell was brutally beaten a day after voting. He suffered permanent brain damage and died five years later.

Hill, Arthur James – Villa Rica, Ga., 1965

Hill was shot during an argument with whites. One suspect was held on voluntary manslaughter charge.

Hunter, Ernest – St. Mary's, Ga., 1958

Hunter was shot and killed while in jail following an arrest on charges he was interfering with an officer.

Jackson, Luther – Philadelphia, Miss., 1959

Jackson was killed by police after he and his girlfriend were found talking in their car, which was stalled in a ditch. Police claim Jackson attacked them.

Jells, Ernest – Clarksdale, Miss., 1964

Jells was accused of stealing a banana from a grocery and pointing a rifle at pursuing police officers. The officers were exonerated.

Jeter, Joe Franklin – Atlanta, Ga., 1958

A grand jury found police were justified in Jeter's slaying. Jeter was killed in front of his family, who were also arrested and convicted in connection with a gathering that police said turned into a melee.

Lee, John – Goshen Springs, Miss., 1965

Lee's body was found beaten on a country road.

Lee, Willie Henry – Rankin County, Miss., 1965

Lee was found beaten on a country road. He was known to have attended civil rights meetings. An autopsy revealed he died by strangulation from gas.

Lillard, Richard – Nashville, Tenn., 1958

Lillard died after a beating from three white guards at a local workhouse. All three were acquitted of murder charges.

Love, George – Indianola, Miss., 1958

Love was killed in a gun battle with police who believed he was responsible for a murder and arson. He was later cleared of any connection to the murder.

Mahone, Maybelle – Molena, Ga., 1956

Mahone was killed by a white man for "sassing" him. The man was initially found guilty, but later found not guilty by reason of insanity.

Maxwell, Sylvester – Canton, Miss., 1963

Maxwell's castrated and mutilated body was found by his brother-in-law less than 500 yards from the home of a white family.

McDowell, Bessie – Andalusia, Ala., 1956

McDowell was killed by a white father and son who were later indicted on first and second degree murder charges. The result is unknown.

McNair, Robert – Pelahatchie, Miss., 1965

McNair was killed by a town constable.

Melton, Clinton – Sumner, Miss., 1956

Elmer Otis Kimbell was cleared in Melton's death. Kimbell claimed Melton fired at him three times before he returned fire with a shotgun. No gun was found in Melton's car or on his body.

Miller, James Andrew – Jackson, Ga., 1964

Miller was shot by whites a few days after being beaten. The shooting suspect was cleared after the coroner ruled he fired in self-defense.

Mixon, Booker T – Clarksdale, Miss., 1959

Mixon's body was found lying on the side of the road, completely nude. Police claimed it was a hit-and-run, though family members cited his naked body and the extensive amount of flesh torn from his body as evidence otherwise.

Montgomery, Neimiah – Cleveland, Miss., 1964

Montgomery, 60, was shot by police after allegedly refusing to pay for gas. Police were acquitted, and the shooting was called justifiable homicide.

Morris, Frank – Ferriday, La., 1964

Morris, who owned a shoe store, was killed when a gas stove exploded during an arson. Morris, who lived in a room adjoining the store, was ordered to return to his room by the men who started the fire. An extensive justice department investigation was conducted, but the outcome is unclear.

Motley, James Earl – Wetumpka, Ala., 1967

Elmore County Deputy Sheriff Harvey Conner was cleared in the death of Motley, who died in prison after suffering three severe blows to the head.

O'Quinn, Sam – Centreville, Miss., 1959

O'Quinn, derided by some local whites for being "uppity," was shot after joining the NAACP.

Orsby, Hubert – Canton, Miss., 1964

Orsby's body was found in the Black River near Highway 51 in Canton. He was wearing a t-shirt with "CORE," written on it, representing the Congress of Racial Equality.

Owens, William D. – New Bern, N.C., 1956

Owens was found dead in his cell with a fractured skull. He had been arrested for being drunk.

Payne, Larry – Memphis, Tenn., 1968

Payne, 16, was the lone victim of the violence that followed Martin Luther King's sanitation worker's march on March 28. Payne was killed by a shotgun blast fired by a patrolman as he emerged from a basement in a housing development.

Pickett, C.H. – Yazoo City, Miss., 1958

Pickett was killed by an 80-year-old white farmer with a prison record for manslaughter. The farmer claimed Pickett was giving his sister too much attention.

Pitts, David/Albert – Monroe, La., 1960

A white employer was arrested and then released in the shooting of five of his employees. Two, David and Albert Pitts, died. The victims were accused of making threats. The employer is never charged.

Powell, Jimmy – Brooklyn, N.Y., 1964

Powell, 15, was fatally shot by a Brooklyn police officer. The officer's exoneration by a grand jury sparked riots in Harlem.

Prather, William Roy – Corinth, Miss., 1959

The 15-year-old Prather was killed in an anti-black Halloween prank. One of eight youths involved was indicted on manslaughter charges.

Queen, Johnny – Fayette, Miss., 1965

A white off-duty constable was named in the pistol slaying of Johnny Queen. The shooting was not connected to any arrest.

Raspberry, Donald – Okolona, Miss., 1965

Raspberry was shot to death by his plantation boss.

Robinson, Fred – Charleston, S.C., 1960

Robinson's body was found washed ashore on August 5. His eyes were reportedly gouged out and his skull crushed.

Robinson, Johnny – Birmingham, Ala., 1963

Robinson, 16, was shot in the back by a policeman on the same day as the 16th Street Church bombing. Police said the victim had thrown stones at white youth driving through the area.

Sanford, Willie Joe – Hawkinsville, Ga., 1957

Sanford's naked body was raised from the bottom of a creek where it had been wired to undergrowth in the water. The result of a grand jury investigation is unknown.

Scott Jr., Marshall – New Orleans, La., 1965

Scott was put into solitary confinement in a New Orleans jail. He died without receiving any medical attention. There were no arrests in the case.

Shelby, Jessie (Ollie) – Yazoo City, Miss., 1956

Shelby, 23, was fatally wounded by a police officer who alleged that he shot and killed Shelby because he resisted arrest.

Singleton, W.G. – Shelby, N.C., 1957

Singleton died from third degree burns suffered in an explosion and fire.

Smith, Ed – State Line, Miss., 1958

A grand jury refused to indict L.D. Clark in the death of Smith, who was shot in his yard in front of his wife. Clark later reportedly bragged about the killing.

Stewart, Eddie James – Jackson, Miss., 1966

Stewart was reportedly beaten and shot while in police custody. Police claimed he was shot while trying to escape.

Taylor, Isaiah – Ruleville, Miss., 1964

Thomas was shot by a police officer after allegedly lunging at him with a knife. The shooting was ruled a justifiable homicide.

Thomas, Freddie Lee – Batesville, Miss., 1965

Federal investigators looked into the death of Thomas, 16. Thomas' brother believed he was murdered as a warning against black voter registration. The result of the investigation is unknown.

Triggs, Saleam – Hattiesburg, Miss., 1965

The body of Mrs. Triggs was found mysteriously burned to death.

Varner, Hubert – Atlanta, Ga., 1966

Varner, 16, was killed when a gunman fired into a group of black teenagers. The gunman allegedly believed the teenagers made a comment to his white companion. The result of a federal investigation is unknown.

Walker, Clifton – Natchez, Miss., 1964

Walker was killed by a shotgun blast at close range. The result of a federal investigation is unknown.

Waymers, James – Allendale, S.C., 1965

A white man is acquitted in the shooting death of Waymers after entering a plea of self-defense.

Wilder, Robert – Ruston, La., 1965

A white policeman was accused of Wilder's death, and a coroner's jury ruled the slaying was justifiable homicide.

Williamson, Rodell – Camden, Ala., 1967

Williamson's body was recovered from the Alabama River after it snagged on a fisherman's line. Williamson was active in the Wilcox County branch of the NAACP, but local sheriff P.C. Jenkins said there were no signs of foul play.

Wooden, Archie – Camden, Ala., 1967

Wooden, 16, bled to death after either jumping or falling onto a sapling in a ditch. The cut sapling severed an artery. A newspaper report said the Mobile office of the FBI made a civil rights violation inquiry into the incident. The results of that inquiry are unknown.