

"Will We Overcome?"

"...copies of my thoughts of what happened to me in the St. Johns County Jail (St. Augustine, FL) initially written on paper towels then later were transcribed to pages in my scrapbook 47 years ago..."

by Delores Miller, 1964

I, Delores Miller, have been arrested four times. This last experience is what I'm writing about. I was arrested at, well, at the moment I can't recall the restaurant¹. It was five of us, all hungry, wanting something to eat: two whites, three Negroes including myself. The Manager came out and asked what we wanted. We told him we were hungry and wanted to eat. His remark then was, "*We don't serve Negroes*". That didn't bother us, because we don't eat Negroes. We only wanted a coke and a hot dog. The Manager closed the door in our face and asked us to leave. It was there we decided we would rather go to jail than walk away. We sat there in the front exit until the police came and dragged us off to jail. My knees were as sore as could be, for the policeman had dragged me on my knees. Once at the jail, we were put into dirty and smelly jail cells. The Adults were on one side and the teenagers on another.

I was really glad to see quite a few of my friends already in jail when I got there. One night after most parents had gotten their kids out of the jail on probation (my mother couldn't get me out on probation because I had been there too many times: this time I was supposed to be sent off to a girl's home). The Adults began to sing and pray. L.O. told them to be quiet, but they refused. He then put them in the sweat box. They sang all the way there. I began to think, "Should I let them suffer alone?": "NOT!" I hollered upstairs and told the boys what happened. They began to sing and sing until L.O. took them across the street to another sweat box. Then, I began to sing, holler, and beat on the table. The other three girls in the cell joined in with me. L.O. then put us in the sweat box with the adults. The 'sweat box' was made for six, but there were twenty of us in there. Believe me, it was "*HELL!*" I managed to squeeze in a corner, and began thinking about what Rev. Young had told us about, "*Wade In the Water*", the day before. I began to sing this song to myself and all of a sudden the box wasn't hot anymore. I began to Pray and a few minutes after that L.O. let us out of the box.

We all returned back to our cells and talked about what had happened. We all came to the conclusion that, "*The Lord Was On Our Side*".

Today is June 10, 1964¹. This is the 11th day I've been here in jail but I really don't care about the time because with God, nothing can go wrong. "Will We Overcome?" God and only God can really answer this question but I do believe that we will get that chance to say, "*FREE at last! FREE at last! Thank God and only God, We are FREE at last!*"

¹According to Fred Martin's notes: SATURDAY, MAY 30, 1964 @ 5:45 PM – A group of three consisting of Miss Annie Lee Cooper, Miss Willie Mae Conner, Miss Delores Miller (captain) went to the Monson Motor Lodge to eat and was arrested.

July 16, 1965

Today is July 16th, 1965. We are having many massive demonstrations this year. I am now working with the tutorial Project tutoring fifth graders. Tomorrow we are going to St. Augustine Beach. Will there be violence? Tomorrow will tell---

---There was violence on the beach but God was with us. We are going back to St. Aug beach and we will continue to go back until the violence cease.

Tutorial school is over and I was chosen as the best tutor. I was given a free two week trip with all expenses paid to Darien, Connecticut---I had a wonderful time. I lived with a white family² and they treated me as though I was one of theirs. I visited Washington, D.C., New York, Harlem, Arlington Cemetery, Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, White House, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, boat riding, movies, a Play entitled, "*The Taming of the Shrew*", the beach, different swimming pools and the United Nations building. They were *Just Wonderful!*

²*Delores Miller stayed in the home of the Lukens' Family of Darien, Connecticut during her two-week all expense paid trip to the North.*