

University of North Carolina at Asheville

“Genocide in Mississippi”:
Mississippi’s 1964 Sterilization Bill and SNCC’s Response to It

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By

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One of the things that happened in Sunflower County, the North Sunflower County Hospital, I would say about 6 out of the 10 Negro women that go to the hospital are sterilized with the tubes tied. They are getting up a law said if a woman has an illegitimate baby and then a second one, they could draw time for 6 months or a \$500 fine. What they didn't tell is that they are already doing these things, not only to single women but to married women.¹

Civil Rights activist and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) member Fannie Lou Hamer participated in a public hearing at the National Theatre in Washington, DC on June 8, 1964. At this hearing, Hamer and twenty-four other individuals testified about the violence and intimidation African Americans were facing in Mississippi. Hamer's testimony addressed a bill proposed by the Mississippi legislature earlier in the year regarding coerced sterilization, a major issue in the African American community. This bill would have made giving birth to a second illegitimate child a felony and required parents to choose between being sterilized and spending one to three years in prison. In response to this bill, SNCC published a pamphlet titled "Genocide in Mississippi," which argued that these bills were an attempt to limit the African American population. This bill and SNCC's response to it received significant media coverage that captured the attention of the nation.²

Both the introduction of this bill and SNCC's decision to respond to it were caused by multiple factors. This bill is considered a continuation of a trend of sterilization legislation that was proposed in Mississippi during the 1950s and 1960s. The legislators in the House of Representatives who initiated this bill were motivated by a desire to reduce criminality and welfare abuse. Some of these representatives were also motivated by a desire to encourage African Americans to leave the state. Additionally, these representatives may have wanted to

¹ Fannie Lou Hamer quoted in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights- Black Power Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 161.

² Julius Paul, "The Return of Punitive Sterilization Proposals: Current Attacks on Illegitimacy and the AFDC Program," *Law and Society Review* 3, no. 1 (1968): 88-92.

intimidate SNCC and push it to cease its activities in the state. SNCC's motivations for responding to these bills were equally complex. Sterilization abuse was a major concern for the black community and SNCC members were worried this bill was an attempt to coerce blacks into submitting to sterilization. Furthermore, SNCC viewed this bill as an attempt to silence African Americans in the state. SNCC's involvement in Mississippi and their use of a variety of media to highlight the 1964 sterilization bill helped draw attention to the state in preparation for their voter registration campaign, known as Freedom Summer.

Historians have published significant scholarship on coerced sterilization, including on the proposed law in Mississippi. Most scholars agree that sterilization abuse was an issue for many poor women and women of color during the early and mid 1900s. In her book, *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*, Jennifer Nelson focuses on the lack of attention to the sterilization abuse of African American women by individuals outside the African American community. Nelson argues that white women involved in the women's rights movement focused on access to contraceptives and safe legal abortions. Nelson indicates that poor women and women of color were concerned with the ability to have children and how to financially support them. Women of color believed that the women's liberation movement also needed to focus on anti-sterilization abuse, childcare, health care for the poor, and welfare rights. Additionally, Nelson explores the debate over forced fertility control among people of color. During the 1960s and 1970s, Black Nationalist men were opposed to birth control for black women because they believed that the larger the black population, the easier it would be to fight racism. Black women were viewed as responsible for producing future participants in the revolution. These men believed that all forms of birth control, especially sterilization, were attempts to commit genocide among people of color. Black women, however, criticized black militant and nationalist

positions opposing birth control and argued that they could contribute more to the civil rights movement than children.³ Nelson's book reveals that women of color felt that white women and Black Nationalist men did not understand their wants and needs in regard to reproductive control. Her book also illustrates why SNCC reacted strongly to the sterilization law proposed in Mississippi in 1964. Sterilization abuse was a serious concern for the African American community, but it received little attention by other individuals. Moreover, SNCC's leaders at the time were mostly men, some of who were beginning to turn to Black Nationalist and Black Power ideology in order to find solutions for dealing with the constant racism and violence they faced.

While many scholars agree that coerced sterilization was a problem during this time, they often disagree about the motives of those who supported coerced sterilization. In *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States*, Mark A. Largent maintains that support for coerced sterilization was widespread. He suggests that early proponents of sterilization often saw it as a way to prevent the transmission of genetic defects or physical disorders/weaknesses to the next generation. They also believed it was a way to end complex social problems, such as producing future generations of criminals or people with sexual perversions.⁴ Unlike Largent's work, Harry Bruinius' *Better for all the World: The Secret History of Forced Sterilization and America's Quest for Racial Purity* suggests that proponents of coerced sterilization had prejudicial motives. He maintains that American sterilization programs constituted a "quest for racial purity" and claims that eugenics programs were created

³Jennifer Nelson, *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 1, 2, 57, 58.

⁴ Mark A. Largent, *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 2, 3.

to establish biologically superior groups of men and women.⁵ Bruinius' work refutes Largent's assertion that proponents of coercive sterilization had good intentions. Bruinius suggests that these individuals believed that whites were superior to blacks and thus wanted to eliminate the African American race. Largent's and Bruinius's works are significant because they illustrate common opinions of proponents of sterilization and these arguments are similar to those made by Mississippi House Representatives when justifying the initiation of the 1964 sterilization bills. Additionally, Bruinius offers evidence that corroborates SNCC's belief that proponents of sterilization were attempting genocide against the African American race.

Scholars differ not only in their ideas about the motives of proponents of coerced sterilization, but also in their opinions about SNCC and why it became a radical organization, to which SNCC's campaign against the Mississippi sterilization bill contributed. In her book, *The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee: The Growth of Radicalism in a Civil Rights Organization*, Emily Stoper argues that in a matter of a few years SNCC went from being "a religiously oriented group with moderate, integrationist goals to a cadre of political organizers dedicated to Black Power." She asserts that SNCC'S history is different from most radical organizations at that time because members of SNCC did not adhere to any formal ideology, and authority was divided among many members of the organization. However, Stoper argues it was precisely these characteristics that allowed SNCC to change so quickly.⁶ In *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC's Dream for a New America*, Wesley C. Hogan agrees with Stoper that SNCC underwent a major transformation during the mid 1960s, however he believes this transformation

⁵ Harry Bruinius, *Better For All the World: The Secret History of Forced Sterilization and America's Quest for Racial Purity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 15, 19.

⁶ Emily Stoper, *The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee: The Growth of Radicalism in a Civil Rights Organization* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1989), 2, 121, 122.

was the result of changes in the cultural perceptions/attitudes of SNCC members. Hogan also maintains that SNCC began to lose public support due to increasing resistance from the government to its policies and the development of the view that SNCC was a threat to American traditions. Hogan suggests that this lack of support from the government and the public led to tensions amongst SNCC members and the rapid decline of the organization.⁷ Both works indicate that tensions among its members played a role in the radicalization of SNCC. The initiation of the 1964 sterilization bill and SNCC's response to it contributed to this conflict within the organization, which drastically impacted the future goals and direction of the organization.

The work of historians on SNCC, sterilization laws/policies, and the reproductive rights movement contributes to an understanding of the proposed 1964 Mississippi sterilization law and SNCC's response to that law by illustrating the perspectives and experiences of the proponents and opponents of coerced sterilization. Their work illustrates why the legislators who proposed this law were so adamant about its passage and why SNCC reacted negatively to the bill. Scholarship on SNCC also indicates that the significant strain the organization experienced in the mid 1960s resulted in major changes within the organization. SNCC's campaign against this bill and the organization's other activities in Mississippi in 1964 contributed to the tensions in the organization. While scholars have published significant material on the topics of SNCC and coerced sterilization, no historian to date has examined this particular sterilization law in depth, SNCC's response to this law, and what may have prompted SNCC's response.

During the mid to late twentieth century, coerced sterilization in the United States arguably affected poor women and women of color more so than other individuals. However, men were initially the target of coerced sterilization. Forced sterilization was first proposed by

⁷ Wesley C. Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC'S Dream for a New America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 3, 4.

doctors, such as Gideon Lincecum, who were interested in limiting procreation by criminals. Lincecum proposed a bill for the Texas legislature in 1849 that would have replaced execution with castration for certain crimes. He argued that castration was as good a deterrent as execution and that castration prevented criminals from propagating more criminals. Despite being ridiculed at the time, Lincecum's idea of sterilizing criminals quickly caught on and within ten years, it was a common practice in some states. From the late 1800s through the late 1920s, men who committed "crimes against nature" (homosexuality, masturbation, sodomy), or men suspected of or convicted of sexual crimes were also targeted for coerced sterilization. Prominent proponents of sterilization believed that castration could be used to decrease the perceived threat of sexual violence by African American men and coerced sterilization began to be viewed as a way to solve perceived racial issues. The belief that African American men posed a threat to white society continued well into the 1900s and as these views developed, so did ideas about the sterilization of African Americans.⁸ Not only was sterilization forced on black men and women in order to reduce criminality and sexual perversions, it was also used as a way to lessen other social problems to which individuals felt blacks were contributing, such as welfare abuse.

The increased popularity of coerced sterilization after the turn of the twentieth century was largely due to the development of the eugenics movement. Advocates of eugenics believed that society could be improved by adjusting the genetic composition of the population. These individuals knew that many traits were hereditary and believed that the reproduction of certain peoples and traits should be encouraged, while others should be discouraged. As a result, individuals with characteristics that were considered unfavorable, such as the mentally ill, mentally disabled, blind, poor, and members of certain racial and ethnic groups, were labeled as

⁸ Largent, 11, 12, 20, 21, 27.

“unfit” or “degenerates.” The reproduction of these individuals was limited in a variety of ways, including through sterilization. Charles Davenport is often hailed as the founder of this movement. While Davenport was an advocate of eugenics research and is often blamed early support for coerced sterilization, he actually opposed compulsory sterilization laws for several reasons. He believed many of these laws were based on inaccurate or incomplete information about heredity. Additionally, in the case of those classified as “feebleminded,” he felt that this definition was not specific and thus, could be applied too broadly, and instead favored the segregation of the feebleminded.⁹

The first compulsory sterilization legislation was enacted around the beginning of the twentieth century in response to the Eugenics movement. In 1907, Indiana became the first state to legalize compulsory sterilization. Some scholars argue that the number of individuals coercively sterilized in the United States as a result of sterilization laws was low and reflected a small percentage of the nation’s population. California reported the highest number of sterilizations, which affected less than 0.2 percent of the state’s population. Nonetheless, at least 63,000 reported sterilizations were performed and the number of undocumented sterilizations remains unknown.¹⁰ By 1937, 32 states had enacted compulsory sterilization laws, with Mississippi enacting its first sterilization law in 1928. Mississippi recorded 683 sterilizations between 1907 and 1983; it ranked 18th out of 32 in the number of states that performed legal compulsory sterilizations. Only 31 recorded sterilizations were performed in Mississippi after 1960, and no additional sterilizations were recorded after 1965.¹¹

⁹Largent, 59, 60.

¹⁰ Largent, 66.

¹¹ Largent, 73, 76-80.

While Mississippi's 1964 sterilization law received significant attention at the time it was proposed, it was not the first of its kind initiated in the state. The 1964 bill was part of a trend of sterilization legislation initiated in the state, which also included a bill introduced in 1958 by Representative David H. Glass. House Bill 479, titled "An Act to discourage Immorality of Unmarried Females by Providing for Sterilization of the Unwed Mother Under Conditions of This Act; And for Related Purposes," would have allowed the court to order the "temporary or permanent sterilization" of unwed women who gave birth to a second or subsequent illegitimate child. One of the ways a woman could avoid sterilization under these proceedings would be to pay a bond of \$3,000, maintain that she would financially support her children and "cease and desist from such immorality." However, the bond would be forfeited if the woman had another child out of wedlock. The only other way for a woman to avoid sterilization was to prove she had married and was residing with her husband.¹² This bill was never passed, but it suggests the desire of many in the state to decrease Mississippi's African American population. In a letter to Julius Paul, an authority on coerced sterilization, dated October 11, 1958, Representative David H. Glass stated

During the calendar year 1957, there were born out of wedlock in Mississippi, more than 7,000 negro children, and about 200 white children. The negro woman, because of child welfare assistance, [is] making it a business, in some cases of giving birth to illegitimate children... The purpose of my bill was to try to stop or slow down, such traffic at its source.¹³

While it is unknown where Glass got his data, it is clear that he believed the number of African Americans giving birth to illegitimate children was a serious problem in the state of Mississippi and therefore wanted to limit it.

¹² Paul, 88.

¹³ Quoted in Paul, 89.

Concerns about rising illegitimacy rates in Mississippi continued throughout the early 1960s and in 1962 another sterilization bill was proposed in the state. This piece of legislation was deemed the “planned parenthood bill” and it would have required the mother of every illegitimate child delivered at state expense to attend a family planning clinic. If the mother failed to attend the clinic, she would have been guilty of a misdemeanor. Individuals convicted under this law would have faced up to six months in prison, a fine of not more than \$500, or both.¹⁴ Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, the president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America at the time, mentioned the bill in the organization’s book, *Birth Control Services in Tax-Supported Hospitals, Health Departments and Welfare Agencies*. Guttmacher claimed that this bill was part of trend of punitive legislative aimed at mothers of illegitimate children. He maintained that

This approach is not only unworthy of a society which considers itself humane, but it is futile: Birth control cannot be imposed on anyone by edict or official pressure; it is a self-administered medical procedure which requires the continuing cooperation of the individuals concerned. The kind of approach embodied in this Mississippi proposal betrays an appalling insensitivity to the human dignity of even the least of us.¹⁵

Although the bill failed to pass, it illustrates that legislators in the state were concerned about welfare abuse and illegitimacy rates.

The introduction of the 1964 sterilization bill two years later was another attempt to address concerns about illegitimacy and related issues. However, the choice to use coerced sterilization as the solution to these perceived issues is curious. According to the reported data, only a small number of sterilizations were being performed in Mississippi after 1960 and by this time forced sterilization was becoming less popular. This information raises one question about

¹⁴ Planned Parenthood Federation of America, *Birth Control Services in Tax-Supported Hospitals, Health Departments, and Welfare Agencies* (1963), 3.

¹⁵ Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 4.

the 1964 sterilization bill: “Why would legislators propose a bill offering sterilization in lieu of imprisonment if a relatively small number of forced sterilizations were being performed in Mississippi during this time?” Therefore, there are likely other factors that motivated the proponents of the 1964 sterilization bill to initiate it.

Some of the other factors that motivated the initiators of the 1964 sterilization bill were racial tensions in the state of Mississippi at that time and the presence of SNCC in the state. SNCC activists had been working in Mississippi for several years and wanted to expand on the progress they had already made. In 1961, SNCC established voter registration drives in McComb, Mississippi and nearby counties. Also during that year, SNCC organized workshops in nonviolent direct action that were geared towards high school students. SNCC established “Nonviolent High,” an alternative high school for students who had left their schools to protest racial discrimination, which was shut down when its organizers were arrested for contributing to the delinquency of minors. Subsequent efforts in Mississippi dwindled until SNCC launched the Freedom Vote campaign in 1963 in an attempt to draw Northern public opinion to the discrimination in the state. Freedom Vote consisted of hosting a fake election and relied heavily on white college-student volunteers, who drew the attention of the media to the program. Although many blacks participated and the program received the national attention SNCC had hoped for, it resulted in violent reactions from many whites.¹⁶ Encouraged by the success of this project and realizing that much still needed to be done in the state, SNCC decided to plan a related project in Mississippi, called Freedom Summer, which was slated for the summer of 1964. James Forman of SNCC, James Farmer of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and Robert Moses of the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), announced the project on

¹⁶ Daniel Perlstein, “Teaching Freedom: SNCC and the Creation of the Mississippi Freedom Schools,” *History of Education Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (1990): 300, 301. *JSTOR*.

February 29, 1964.¹⁷ The project was announced less than one month before Mississippi's 1964 sterilization bill, House Bill No. 180, was introduced.

The initiation of Mississippi's 1964 sterilization bill was likely a response to concerns about rising illegitimacy rates and SNCC's involvement in the state. House Bill No. 180 was introduced by Representative W.B. Meek and six others and this bill made it a felony for any person to have a second or subsequent illegitimate child. This offense was punishable by one to three years in prison and unlike many sterilization laws at the time, both parents could be punished under this law, not just the mother. An additional conviction under this bill was punishable by three to five years in prison. Representative W. Todd McCullough added an amendment to the bill that allowed convicted felons to submit to sterilization in lieu of imprisonment. The bill passed in the House by a vote of seventy-two to thirty-seven.¹⁸ The motivations of the individuals who initiated and amended this bill are varied. There is evidence to suggest that some wanted to reduce the burden on welfare benefits. In a letter to Julius Paul dated May 16, 1964, Representative McCullough stated that he amended the bill to include the sterilization option "with the hope of curing the disastrous results of the crime" instead of trying to punish those individuals.¹⁹ In their response to the bill, SNCC indicated at least some of the representatives also wanted to force blacks to leave Mississippi. It is also likely that the representatives wanted to intimidate SNCC, which was publicly planning Freedom Summer and very involved in the state.

¹⁷ John R. Rachal, "The Long, Hot Summer?: The Mississippi Response to Freedom Summer," *The Journal of Negro History* 84, no. 4 (1999): 315. *JSTOR*.

¹⁸ Paul, 89, 90.

¹⁹ Quoted in Paul, 90.

While some of the representatives in Mississippi who proposed this bill were concerned about the rising illegitimacy rates among African Americans, they failed to address underlying factors that had led to its increase. One issue was a law passed in 1958 that made it more difficult for Mississippians to obtain marriage licenses. The new requirements imposed by the law included premarital blood tests, a waiting period of three days before issuance of a license, and documentation of age, via birth certificates, school records, baptism certificates or driver's licenses. The law also increased the minimum age for marriage from fourteen for boys and twelve for girls, to seventeen for boys and fifteen for girls and required that individuals under the age of eighteen obtain parental consent. Additionally, female residents under the age of twenty-one had to obtain the marriage license in their county of residence.²⁰ In his 1966 article, "The Impact of the Amendment of Marriage Laws in Mississippi," Alexander Plateris discusses the decline in marriages in Mississippi after the 1958 law was passed. He offers data to suggest that marriages declined from an average of 60,000 in the years leading up to its passage, to an average of 20,000 in the years after its passage. Overall, marriages of in-state residents declined twenty percent and marriages of out-of-state residents declined ninety percent, with out-of-state marriages making up a greater percent of the total marriages. Furthermore, Plateris cites a decline of fifty-six percent in the number of marriages of nonwhites and he maintains that nonwhites constituted a smaller portion of out-of-state residents than whites.²¹ The new requirements for obtaining a marriage license could have discouraged African Americans from marrying because they had issues obtaining proper identification, they could not obtain parental consent, and they feared blood tests. This last problem may have been tied to a fear of all

²⁰ Alexander Plateris, "The Impact of the Amendment of Marriage Laws in Mississippi," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 28, no. 2 (1966): 206.

²¹ Plateris, 207, 208.

medical and surgical procedures as a result of the history of coerced sterilization against African Americans. Additionally, the increased minimum age for marriage as a result of the 1958 law meant that very young sexually-active couples could no longer marry. Therefore, the children of these couples were not considered legitimate.

Lack of access to birth control and sex education were other issues affecting the high illegitimacy rates, and they were not addressed by the proponents of this sterilization bill. In their 1968 article, “Family Planning and Public Policy: Is the ‘Culture of Poverty’ the New Cop-Out?,” Fredrick S. Jaffe and Steven Polgar examined the cultural-motivational and the accessibility approaches to studying poverty and their relation to family planning. The cultural-motivational approach maintains that poor individuals do not use birth control because they do not want to or for other cultural reasons. The accessibility approach suggests poor people do not use birth control because they encounter barriers when trying to obtain it. Jaffe and Polgar indicate that income is inversely related to family size and that poor individuals do want and attempt to limit family size, but they have obstacles to getting and using contraceptives, which family planning programs can help overcome.²² The authors also suggest that public policy during this time, as represented by changes in social institutions and the allocation of resources, was severely lacking in the area of family planning and tended to represent the cultural-motivational approach. This cultural-motivational approach promotes a “culture of poverty” idea that suggests improper values lead the poor to resist family planning services and have large families. Jaffe and Polgar reject this idea and argue that a lack of accessibility to contraceptives is a major factor in the large family sizes of the poor.²³ This article offers evidence that refutes

²² Frederick S. Jaffe and Steven Polgar, “Family Planning and Public Policy: Is the ‘Culture of Poverty’ the New Cop-Out?” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 30, no. 2 (1968): 228-235.

²³ Frederick S. Jaffe and Steven Polgar, 230-235.

Mississippi State Representative Glass' argument that poor African American women were having significant numbers of illegitimate children for economic profit. The article suggests that certain systemic problems resulted in high rates of illegitimacy, not an attempt to get more welfare benefits. Furthermore, it indicates that the representatives who initiated this bill may have ignored important factors affecting illegitimacy and instead unnecessarily chose an extreme course of action for dealing with the situation.

SNCC responded to the 1964 sterilization bill by publishing "Genocide in Mississippi." The pamphlet starts with a description of article two of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide by the United Nations General Assembly. Subsection "d" of this section indicates that genocide, as defined by the convention, includes "imposing measures intended to prevent births within a group."²⁴ The pamphlet indicates that the sterilization bill was passed on March 11, 1964 and was initiated by seven representatives, one of which, Representative Pierce, was the staff assistant to Senator James Eastland. SNCC claims, "In arguing for the passage of the bill, Rep. Buck Meek, of Webster County, who managed the bill on the floor, provided a list of statistics purporting to show that Negro illegitimate births far outnumber those of whites. He made no attempt to disguise the anti-Negro nature of the bill."²⁵ The pamphlet also includes some other discussion by the proponents of the bill, which SNCC claims illuminates the bills' racist nature. They quote Rep. Stone Barefield as saying, "When the cutting starts [Blacks in Mississippi] will head for Chicago."²⁶ They cite this as evidence that the

²⁴ Quoted in "Genocide in Mississippi" by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee *The University of Southern Mississippi Digital Collections*. 1964. <http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/manu&CISOPTR=940&REC=3>, 2.

²⁵ Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, "Genocide in Mississippi," 4.

²⁶ Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, "Genocide in Mississippi," 4.

proponents of the bill wanted to force African Americans to leave the state. The pamphlet claims that the House Representatives who initiated this bill were trying to eliminate the black race.

SNCC sums up this idea by maintaining “Thus the Mississippi House made it clear that HB 180 is directed against Mississippi Negroes; that it is an attempt to reduce the number of Negroes in Mississippi either by destroying their capacity to reproduce, or by driving them from the state.”²⁷

Thus, SNCC believed that Mississippi legislators wanted to reduce the number of African Americans in the state and this bill illustrates that they were willing to take drastic steps to do so.

SNCC’s belief that whites in the South were trying to eliminate the African American race was evident long before they published “Genocide in Mississippi.” In August and September of 1963, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* published a symposium written by prominent African American leaders. This symposium included a piece written by James Forman, who was the executive secretary for SNCC at the time, titled “Many Negroes Reject Material Values, Work for a Better Society.” In this piece Forman describes the challenges African Americans face, which he suggests begin before an African American child is even born. Forman maintains, “The Black Baby’s very right to be born is denied when white doctors- the only doctors in Fayette County, Tennessee- tell a pregnant Negro mother they cannot deliver her baby. Negroes in that county were blacklisted because they tried to register to vote. The mother was then faced with the choice of driving 50 miles to a Memphis hospital while in labor, or having an unclean wet-nurse deliver her child.”²⁸ Forman goes on to assert that African Americans were forced to go to inferior schools, or in some states, were prevented from attending school at all. He

²⁷ Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, “Genocide in Mississippi, 4.

²⁸ James Forman, “Negroes Reject Material Values, Work for a Better Society,” in *The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Papers, 1959-1972*, (Sanford, NC: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1982). Davis Microforms Collection Microfilm 1-2303, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Originals at the King Library and Archives, The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Atlanta, GA, 15.

expresses disdain over the way blacks were treated in Mississippi's cotton fields and were prevented from voting in many states in the south. Forman states, "Denied the right to be born, to be educated, to grow normally and humanely, to live decently- denied these things, the Negro finds it no surprise that he is denied the right to participate in democracy."²⁹ Forman clearly believed that blacks in the South were being denied basic civil and human rights, which included "the right to be born." And this opinion continued among SNCC members well into the late 1960s. In a SNCC meeting held on June 13, 1966, Stokely Carmichael, who was Chairman of SNCC at the time, was discussing the organization and its involvement in the south. Carmichael, in an attempt to indicate the serious nature of the situation in Mississippi declared, "The White Citizens Council [an American white supremacist organization] has a ten-year program to get 500,000 Negroes out of Mississippi, and they've almost succeeded, because at one time the population was 57% Negro in the state."³⁰ SNCC members' long held belief that whites in Mississippi were attempting to force blacks out of the state is no surprise, given the violence and abuse they faced since they began working in the state. The constant threat of attack felt by many SNCC workers in Mississippi made the need to convey the serious nature of the situation in the state urgent and thus "Genocide in Mississippi" was published.

The serious accusations levied by SNCC against Mississippi legislators in their pamphlet received attention by the media and academics. Proponents and opponents were vocal about their opinions of the bill. *Newsweek* ran a story on the bill in its March 30, 1964 issue in which one of the bill's authors, Representative Buck Meek, was quoted as saying the bill was "morally sound." However, a number of organizations and other individuals disagreed with Meek. The

²⁹ Forman, 15.

³⁰ Transcript of June 13, 1966 meeting, in *The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Papers, 1959-1972*, 7.

article indicates that the Human Betterment Association for Voluntary Sterilization disliked the bill because the organization believed that it was compulsory in nature. The magazine also quoted the state welfare department as opposing the bill because “it would cost more than three times as much to put a child in a home, if the mother chose jail or sterility, than if the mother received a dole to care for the child. And that didn’t even include the cost of jailing the mother.” A state statistician countered the argument of proponents of the bill that African Americans in the state were having more illegitimate children than whites. He claimed, “a lot more white women give birth to illegitimate children than we report because many of [them] check into the hospital as Mrs. So and So, and nobody questions them.” The bill was not only opposed by sterilization organizations and medical professionals, but a number of religious leaders spoke out against the bill as well according to the magazine.³¹ The story was also covered by many leading newspapers and media outlets in the nation.³²

SNCC’s campaign against the sterilization bill was successful in many ways, including by provoking significant changes in the bill. When the final version of the bill was signed into law by Mississippi Governor Paul B. Johnson on May 27, 1964, the sterilization option had been removed. Additionally, the charge of illegitimacy was changed from a felony to a misdemeanor. The punishment for a first violation of the law was reduced to up to 90 days in jail and a fine of \$250 or less. Subsequent convictions under this law carried a punishment of up to six months in jail and up to \$500 in fines.³³ While SNCC was not successful in keeping the bill from being passed, it did manage to get it drastically altered because of the negative publicity the bill faced.

³¹ “Mississippi: Nipped in the Bud,” *Newsweek*, 30 March 1964, at 21.

³² Nelson, 68.

³³ “Bill To Curb Illegitimacy Is Signed in Mississippi,” *New York Times*, 28 May 1964, at 28.

SNCC's efforts to use the media to garner support for their position on this issue and to put pressure on the Mississippi legislature were critical in getting the bill changed and reflected a success on the organization's part. SNCC's campaign against the bill also helped draw the media's attention to Mississippi in preparation for Freedom Summer, which began less than a month after the final version of the 1964 sterilization law was passed in May.

Although Freedom Summer did not begin until June of 1964, the campaign was announced in early 1964 and was heavily publicized in the months leading up to the project. On February 29, 1964, representatives of SNCC, CORE and COFO confirmed rumors that they would be attempting another voter registration drive in Mississippi during the summer. This project would be larger than all of SNCC's previous projects in the state and thus required a significant number of volunteers. Documents from SNCC's communication files indicate that by the beginning of March of 1964, SNCC was actively recruiting volunteers. In a letter to David Wolf, dated March 10, 1964, SNCC activist Mary E. King invites him to apply to work on the Freedom Summer project and indicates that she included information about the project and an application with her letter.³⁴ SNCC's communication files also reveal that the organization was encouraging other groups to advertise opportunities to participate in Freedom Summer. In a letter to Lisa Anderson, dated March 17, 1964, Mary E. King indicates that she received latest newsletter from the Civil Rights Commission of Cornell United Religious Work, which Anderson published. King also suggests that Anderson feature a story on the Freedom Summer project in her next newsletter. King provides Anderson with detailed information about the

³⁴ Letter between David Wolf and Mary E. King in *The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Papers, 1959-1972*.

project and writes that she has included a brochure on Freedom Summer with her letter.³⁵ The timing of SNCC's announcement and early promotion of the project is significant because it occurred right before the 1964 sterilization bill was passed in the Mississippi House of Representatives. Thus, it is likely that the initiators of this bill proposed it in response to the announcement of Freedom Summer and wanted to use it to encourage SNCC to cease its activities in the state.

The Freedom Summer Project received a significant amount of attention because most of the volunteers were Northern whites from wealthy, middle class families, and who attended the top colleges or universities in the country. The volunteers usually identified themselves as politically liberal, however they were not radicals. They were also idealistic, and many were not prepared for the violence and discrimination going on in Mississippi.³⁶ Furthermore, the project included two types of volunteers that played very different roles in the project. The first kind of volunteers consisted mostly of young people who dedicated their entire summer to the project. The second category of volunteers consisted of older professional men and women who utilized their skills to assist the project for a very short time.³⁷ SNCC leaders believed that having large numbers of white volunteers would help draw media attention to the project and it did.

The Mississippi Freedom Summer Project attempted to increase political independence and representation for blacks in Mississippi, as well as gain the attention of the government and northern whites, through the establishment of a number of voluntary associations and a new political party. Some of the institutions and organizations that developed in connection with the

³⁵ Letter between Lisa Anderson and Mary E. King in *The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Papers, 1959-1972*.

³⁶ Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 11, 12.

³⁷ Mary Aickin Rothschild, *A Case of Black and White: Northern Volunteers and the Southern Freedom Summers, 1964-1965* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), 31, 32.

Freedom Summer Project included the *Mississippi Free Press*, the Mississippi Child Development Group, farm cooperatives and Freedom Schools.³⁸ Although the establishment of Freedom Schools and several other smaller voluntary organizations were important aspects of the Freedom Summer Project, an initiative to create a new political party in Mississippi was also a crucial element. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) was created in April of 1964 because the regular Democratic Party had prevented blacks from registering to vote and from becoming involved in the party. In this election year, COFO decided to use this opportunity to protest Mississippi's all white delegation to the Democratic National Convention. COFO, SNCC and the MFDP leaders claimed that African Americans were denied access to the Democratic Party precinct meetings in June of 1964, which contributed to the selection of the final delegates for the Democratic National Convention. However, most of the precincts never held their meetings and those that did either prohibited blacks from being present at the meetings or from participating in the decision making process. The MFDP was able to become a legal political party due to the disenfranchisement of black voters at these precinct meetings. The MFDP helped register voters and held meetings to select their own delegates to the Democratic National Convention.³⁹ The actions of the MFDP outraged many whites in Mississippi and spurred further violence.

SNCC workers in Mississippi were constantly attacked in a number of ways, but the violence had started even before the Freedom Summer Project began. On February 28, 1963 in Greenwood, Mississippi, the SNCC field secretary at the time (and later co-director of COFO), Bob Moses, survived a bold assassination attempt. The violence in Mississippi escalated as the

³⁸ Hogan, 168.

³⁹ Hogan, 156, 178-181.

efforts of SNCC workers increased and in early 1964, two black males, Herbert Lee and Louis Allen, were killed because they tried to register to vote.⁴⁰ Once the Freedom Summer Project actually began, the threat and use of physical violence became overwhelming, costing several individuals their lives. On June 21, 1964, as Freedom Summer was beginning, a SNCC volunteer and two CORE members were reported missing and feared dead. The SNCC volunteer was a white man named Andrew Goodman and the two CORE members were James Chaney, a black man from Meridian, Mississippi, and Michael Schwerner, a white man from New York. The bodies of Goodman, Chaney and Schwerner were recovered six weeks later, on August 4, in Philadelphia, Mississippi.⁴¹ The implementation of the Freedom Summer Project only exacerbated existing hostilities and increased the rate of violent attacks.

Tensions surrounding the Freedom Summer Project reached a high point in August 1964 at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. It was during the convention that the violence and discrimination in Mississippi was brought to the attention of the nation. On August 22, 1964, the MFDP challenged the regular Democratic Party of Mississippi by having members testify before the Credentials Committee of the Democratic National Convention. The climax of the meeting came when Fannie Lou Hamer, SNCC activist and Vice Chair of the MFDP gave her testimony. Hamer testified about the difficulties she had trying to register to vote in August of 1962, an incident that cost her job as a sharecropper on a plantation in Ruleville, Mississippi. She also discussed how she was arrested on her way back from a voter registration workshop after her bus stopped in Winona, Mississippi on June 9, 1963. In her

⁴⁰ McAdam, 26, 27.

⁴¹ Hogan, 162-164.

appeal to the credentials committee to recognize the MFDP, she described how she was savagely beaten in jail:

I was carried out of that cell into another cell where they had two Negro prisoners. The State Highway Patrolmen ordered the first Negro to take the blackjack. The first Negro prisoner ordered me, by orders from the State Highway Patrolmen, for me to lay down on a bunk bed on my face, and I laid on my face. The first Negro began to beat, and I was beat by the first Negro until he was exhausted... The second Negro began to beat and I began to work my feet, and the State Highway Patrolmen ordered the first Negro who had beat to set [sic] on my feet to keep me from working my feet. I began to scream and one white man got up and began to beat me in my head and tell me to hush... All of this on account we want to register, to become first-class citizens, and if the freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America.⁴²

The testimony of Hamer and other SNCC members did not move the Credentials Committee and the MFDP failed to unseat the regular Mississippi Democratic Party delegates. However, SNCC considered the project a success because the project was able to highlight the disenfranchisement and violence African Americans in the state encountered on a daily basis. SNCC's campaign against the 1964 sterilization bill between March and May of 1964 prepared the nation for this project and made 1964 a critical year in Mississippi.

The publicity the 1964 sterilization bill received resulted in the bill being criticized and condemned for years after its passage. In his 1967 article, "'Population 'Quality' and 'Fitness for Parenthood' in the Light of State Eugenic Sterilization Experience, 1907-1966,'" Julius Paul offers a history of the Eugenics movement and the problems with a number of state sterilization policies. Paul mentions Mississippi's proposed 1964 bill criminalizing illegitimacy and how a subsequent version of the bill did pass, but without the option of sterilization in lieu of

⁴² Fannie Lou Hamer, "Testimony of Fannie Lou Hamer Before the Credentials Committee of the Democratic National Convention," in *Documentary History of the Modern Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Peter B. Levy (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 140, 141.

imprisonment.⁴³ Paul attacks this and other sterilization laws for several reasons, including the “fitness for parenthood” standard, which refers to the idea that those who are not deemed qualified to be parents should be sterilized. Paul writes

In a nation that takes such pride in its adherence to the Anglo-American traditions of due process of law and fair procedure, such standards, which so intimately affect an individual's participation in marriage and family life, as well as freedom of movement, should be constantly scrutinized and re-assessed not only in terms of their precision and definiteness, but also in terms of the right of the individual to question or even to contradict their application in the particular case.⁴⁴

Paul argues that public health officials had too much control over reproductive rights. His opinion of coerced sterilization has clearly been influenced by Mississippi’s 1964 sterilization bill. This bill and criticism of it were well known in the years immediately following its passage and this trend has continued up to this day. Mississippi’s 1964 sterilization bill and the media outcry it produced are mentioned in many works on sterilization published in recent years.⁴⁵

SNCC’s campaign against the 1964 Mississippi sterilization bill was successful in other ways. In addition to getting the bill amended, SNCC was a very powerful organization at the time, which led people to pay attention to its media campaign. Additionally, the organization skillfully used the media and their public relations department to create a frenzy that resulted in pressure from around the nation to drop the sterilization provision of the bill. Furthermore,

⁴³ Julius Paul, “Population ‘Quality’ and ‘Fitness for Parenthood’ in the Light of State Eugenic Sterilization Experience, 1907-1966,” *Population Studies* 21, no. 3 (1967): 297.

⁴⁴ Julius Paul, “Population ‘Quality’ and ‘Fitness for Parenthood’ in the Light of State Eugenic Sterilization Experience, 1907-1966,” 288, 289.

⁴⁵ See Jennifer Nelson, *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2003) and Mark A. Largent, *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008).

SNCC's previous involvement in Mississippi and their plans for Freedom Summer had the nation's attention already focused on Mississippi, so their success with this campaign was likely.

SNCC campaigned against the bill for a variety of reasons. First, sterilization abuse was a major concern for African Americans. Moreover, SNCC was already involved in Mississippi because African Americans were being denied basic rights and liberties. SNCC's campaign against this bill was not unusual, because this measure was viewed as another attempt to silence African Americans in the state. SNCC also took on this endeavor because they felt that they had a chance of producing the results they wanted. The organization had reason to believe they would be successful because they were very powerful at the time, they were already involved in state and they knew how to use the media to their advantage. Lastly, SNCC was motivated to participate in this debate on coerced sterilization because they wanted to draw the nation's attention in preparation for Freedom Summer.

SNCC's response to Mississippi's 1964 sterilization bill was a critical moment in the state's history and the organization's history. The negative media attention the bill received because of SNCC's response to it resulted in the sterilization provision being dropped from the bill. It was a victory for the organization and African Americans across the state. The attention the organization received helped increase the power and presence of the organization and drew attention to Mississippi in preparation for Freedom Summer.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

“Bill To Curb Illegitimacy Is Signed in Mississippi.” *New York Times*. 28 May 1964. At 28.

This article by the *New York Times* discusses the passage of Mississippi’s 1964 sterilization bill. It details the changes that were made to it before its passage and indicates those changes were a result of the negative attention the bill received.

Forman, James. “Negroes Reject Material Values, Work for a Better Society” in *The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Papers, 1959-1972*, (Sanford, NC: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1982). Davis Microforms Collection Microfilm 1-2303, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Originals at the King Library and Archives, The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Atlanta, GA.

The piece was part of a symposium written in August and September of 1963 by prominent African American leaders. Forman, who was SNCC’s executive secretary at the time, details the threats African Americans in the south face throughout their lifetime. Forman suggests that this often includes a denial of the “right to be born.”

Fannie Lou Hamer quoted in *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights- Black Power Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 161.

This book contains articles about several African American Civil Rights activists, including one about Fannie Lou Hamer. Hamer’s testimony at the National Theatre about the violence and mistreatment of African Americans in Mississippi is referenced. At this hearing, Hamer discussed the 1964 sterilization bill.

Hamer, Fannie Lou. “Testimony of Fannie Lou Hamer Before the Credentials Committee of the Democratic National Convention.” In *Documentary History of the Modern Civil Rights Movement*, ed. Peter B. Levy, 139-141. New York: Greenwood Press, 1992.

This source is a collection of documents relating to the Civil Rights Movement and it includes a section of documents about Mississippi and the Freedom Summer project. One of those documents is the testimony of Fannie Lou Hamer before the Credentials Committee of the Democratic National Convention. Hamer testified about the violence she faced as a result of her efforts to increase voter registration among African Americans in Mississippi and as a result of her participation in other SNCC activities.

Jaffe, Frederick S. and Steven Polgar. “Family Planning and Public Policy: Is the ‘Culture of Poverty’ the New Cop-Out?” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 30, no. 2 (1968): 228-235.

This article examines the cultural-motivational and the accessibility approaches to studying poverty and their relation to family planning. Jaffe and Polgar indicate that income is inversely

related to family size, that poor individuals do want and attempt to limit family size, they have obstacles to getting and using contraceptives, and that family planning programs can help overcome those obstacles. This article challenges the argument of Mississippi State Representative David H. Glass that poor African American women were having significant numbers of illegitimate children solely to profit economically from them.

“Letter to David Wolf from Mary E. King, March 10, 1964” in *The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Papers, 1959-1972*, (Sanford, NC: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1982). Davis Microforms Collection Microfilm1-2303, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Originals at the King Library and Archives, The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Atlanta, GA.

In this letter, Mary E. King invites Wolf to apply to work on the Freedom Summer project and indicates that she included information about the project and an application with her letter. This letter is one example of early promotion of the Freedom Summer Project.

“Letter to Lisa Anderson from Mary E. King, March 17, 1964” in *The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Papers, 1959-1972*, (Sanford, NC: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1982). Davis Microforms Collection Microfilm1-2303, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Originals at the King Library and Archives, The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Atlanta, GA.

In this letter, Mary E. King indicates that she received the latest newsletter from the Civil Rights Commission of Cornell United Religious Work, which Anderson published. King suggests that Anderson feature a story on the Freedom Summer project in her next newsletter. King provides Anderson with detailed information about the project and writes that she has included a brochure on Freedom Summer with her letter. This letter is another example of early promotion of the Freedom Summer Project.

“Mississippi: Nipped in the Bud.” *Newsweek*. 30 March 1964. At 21.

This article by *Newsweek* magazine discusses the proposal of Mississippi’s 1964 sterilization bill. It includes details about the bill and information about how various organizations and individuals reacted to it.

Paul, Julius. “Population ‘Quality’ and ‘Fitness for Parenthood’ in the Light of State Eugenic Sterilization Experience, 1907-1966.” *Population Studies* 21, no. 3 (1967): 295-299.

This article offers a history of the Eugenics movement and the problems with various state sterilization policies. Paul mentions Mississippi’s proposed 1964 bill criminalizing having illegitimate children and how a subsequent version of the bill did pass, but without the option of sterilization in lieu of imprisonment. Paul attacks this and other sterilization laws for a number of reasons, including the “fitness for parenthood” standard and the significant amount of discretion public health officials have in controlling reproductive rights. This article provides arguments against compulsory (and some noncompulsory) sterilizations, which were practiced in a number of states during this time.

Paul, Julius. "The Return of Punitive Sterilization Proposals: Current Attacks on Illegitimacy and the AFDC Program." *Law and Society Review* 3, no. 1 (1968).

This article details a number of sterilization laws passed in various states throughout the 1960s. Paul includes a section on Mississippi's 1964 sterilization bill in which he describes the details of the bill, its passages, and SNCC's response to the bill. He also mentions the negative media attention the bill received.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America. *Birth Control Services in Tax-Supported Hospitals, Health Departments, and Welfare Agencies*. 1963.

This book consists of several entries by medical professionals and social workers about birth control. The book discusses the benefits of birth control and family planning programs, as well as the problems many individuals at the time had obtaining birth control. The book includes an introduction by Dr. Alan. F. Guttmacher, in which he details Mississippi's 1962 sterilization bill and his opposition to the bill.

Plateris, Alexander. "The Impact of the Amendment of Marriage Laws in Mississippi." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 28, no. 2 (1966): 206-212.

Plateris discusses the decline in marriages in Mississippi after the passing of a 1958 law that added new requirements for obtaining a marriage license, including premarital blood tests, a waiting period of three days before issuance of a license and documentation of age. The law also raised the minimum age for marriage from fourteen for boys and twelve for girls, to seventeen for boys and fifteen for girls and required Mississippi female residents under the age of twenty-one to obtain the marriage license in their county of residence. Plateris offers data to suggest that the Mississippi law resulted in a significant decline in marriages in Mississippi, including a decline of fifty-six percent in the number of marriages of nonwhites. This article suggests barriers to marriage that may have had an impact on the increase of illegitimate children in Mississippi.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. "Genocide in Mississippi." *The University of Southern Mississippi Digital Collections*. 1964. <http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/manu&CISOPTR=940&REC=3>.

This seven page booklet was published the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in response to the initiation in the Mississippi state legislature of a bill, House Bill No. 180, that would make it a felony for any individual to have two or more illegitimate children and that offered sterilization in lieu of the one to three years imprisonment. The booklet offers a definition of genocide obtained from the United Nations General Assembly that includes a section on preventing births within a particular group and argues that House Bill No. 180 was an attempt at the genocide of African Americans. The booklet also provides information about the individuals that initiated House Bill No. 180, evidence that this bill was meant to target African Americans and how this bill related to other events going on in Mississippi at this time that affected African Americans, thus providing justification for SNCC's campaign against this bill.

“Transcript of June 13, 1966 meeting” in *The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Papers, 1959-1972*, (Sanford, NC: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1982). Davis Microforms Collection Microfilm1-2303, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Originals at the King Library and Archives, The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Atlanta, GA

This source is transcript of a meeting between SNCC Chairman Stokely Carmichael and various other SNCC members. Carmichael discusses the future of the organization and its official position on certain issues. During the meeting, Carmichael argued that African Americans were being pushed out of Mississippi by whites and offered evidence to support his position.

Secondary Sources

Bruinius, Harry. *Better for All the World: The Secret History of Forced Sterilization and America's Quest for Racial Purity*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.

Bruinius' book is a monograph about the origins of the eugenics movement and how it was conducted in the United States. Bruinius maintains that thousands of individuals in the early twentieth century were sterilized because they were considered “genetically defective.” Bruinius discusses the impact of religion on the beginning of the eugenics movement. He suggests that white Puritans viewed themselves as God's “promised people” and thus superior to all other groups of people. Bruinius argues that American sterilization programs constituted a “quest for racial purity.” He claims that eugenics programs were created to establish biologically superior groups of men and women and to prevent “inferior” people from reproducing.

Hogan, Wesley C. *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC'S Dream for a New America*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

In this book, Wesley C. Hogan discusses the development of SNCC, the organization's many projects and programs, and why SNCC dissolved. Hogan maintains that SNCC underwent a major transformation during the mid 1960s and that this transformation was the result of changes in the cultural perceptions/attitudes of SNCC members. Hogan also asserts that SNCC began to lose public support due to increasing resistance from the government to its policies and the development of the view that SNCC's support of “a more democratic society” was a threat to American traditions. Hogan suggests that this lack of support from the government and the public led to tensions amongst SNCC members and the rapid decline of the organization.

Largent, Mark A. *Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008.

In this book, Largent details the history of coerced sterilization in the United States from the middle of the nineteenth century through the twenty-first century. Largent discusses the attacks on coerced sterilization by different groups. This includes SNCC's actions against Mississippi's proposed 1964 law that would have made sterilization in lieu of imprisonment an option for individuals convicted of having more than one illegitimate child. The author also mentions

important legal cases relating to sterilization, such as *Buck v. Bell* and *Griswold v. Connecticut*. This source provides an excellent background on compulsory sterilization laws and the development of voluntary sterilization programs.

McAdam, Doug. *Freedom Summer*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

McAdam's work is a detailed history of the events leading up to, during and after the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project. McAdam argues that the project dramatically transformed the country and caused significant controversy throughout the United States. He also argues that the project had a significant and lasting impact on its volunteers, by resocializing and radicalizing them.

Nelson, Jennifer. *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.

Nelson discusses the various issues addressed by the reproductive rights movement, such as abortion, contraception and sterilization. Nelson argues that white middle-class women in the reproductive rights movement focused much of their attention on promoting safe abortions and access to contraceptives. She also argues that women of color felt that the movement needed to address health care for the poor, child-care, and welfare rights in addition to fighting sterilization abuse. Nelson also explores the debate over whether fertility control, including in the form of sterilization, among women of color equaled genocide. Nelson specifically mentions the legislation proposed in Mississippi in 1964 and SNCC's response in the form of the pamphlet "Genocide in Mississippi." She also discusses Fannie Lou Hamer and the various speeches that she gave in which she discussed her own sterilization and the sterilization of other women in Mississippi.

Perlstein, Daniel. "Teaching Freedom: SNCC and the Creation of the Mississippi Freedom Schools." *History of Education Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (1990): 297-394. *JSTOR*.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/368691>.

In his article, Perlstein describes the creation and decline of Freedom Schools in Mississippi as a part of the Freedom Summer Project. Perlstein maintains Freedom Schools allowed blacks to receive an education they were not getting at regular schools, as well as encouraged blacks to participate in the Freedom movement. Perlstein also indicates that while the Freedom School was a valuable tool at the time it was created, its failure was inevitable.

Rachal, John R. "The Long, Hot Summer': The Mississippi Response to Freedom Summer." *The Journal of Negro History* 84, no. 4 (1999): 315. *JSTOR*.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2649035>

This source outlines Freedom Summer and discusses the aims of the project. It includes information about how whites in Mississippi responded to the announcement of the project and suggests that legislators in the state initiated a number of laws at this time in order to discourage the project.

Rothschild, Mary Aickin. *A Case of Black and White: Northern Volunteers and the Southern Freedom Summers, 1964-1965*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982.

Rothschild's book discusses the experiences of black and white volunteers who participated in the Freedom Summer project of 1964 (and voter registration efforts in 1965). She details the debate amongst members of COFO about whether to utilize white volunteers and the reasons why this was ultimately done. Rothschild argues the Mississippi Summer project provided the catalyst for the shift from blacks and whites working together on civil rights issues to "self-determination" for blacks.

Stoper, Emily. *The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee: The Growth of Radicalism in a Civil Rights Organization*. Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1989

Stoper's book provides a history of the establishment of SNCC and the various programs and activities the organization conducted. It also discusses the changes in the goals of the organization and the attitudes of its members during the 1960s. Stoper argues that in a matter of a few years SNCC went from being "a religiously oriented group with moderate, integrationist goals to a cadre of political organizers dedicated to Black Power." Stoper maintains that during the mid 1960s, SNCC stopped supporting nonviolence and cooperation with whites and developed into a radical organization. However, Stoper asserts that SNCC'S history did not follow that of many radical organizations that existed at that time. She claims that members of SNCC did not adhere to any formal ideology and that authority was divided among many members of the organization. Stoper argues that because of these and other characteristics, SNCC quickly became a radical organization.