

Transcript for Youth Participation

Reginald Thomas: My Dad was a professor and he was on his way somewhere in New Jersey. Uh, all these students that gotten arrested in Orangeburg turned around and went back home and when we got back home and I came home from school that day he was just standing there in his bedroom crying and I'm wondering what he crying bout' and he said because they have your sisters locked up downtown with all the other students and I really didn't understand why they were locked up for what reason and that's what they, what had happened. That's I think, that's like 1959.

I member being only ten one time I think it was down in Bowman I think that's where we were for three days and they was get to us these um piece of equipment every morning and I would have a pitch fork and somebody else have a shovel or whatever. But the first night I never forget it. It was an older person that told a white um, supervisor um, those kids aren't here not for what we're in here for they shouldn't be treated like we were treated. And he actually let us sit under the, on the shade tree and we did nothing for bout' three days. But um, eat um, sardines they give ya sardines and um, um saltine crackers every morning and that was your lunch.

At that time I think um, I still can't be correct on any of this but I think it was like 500 students who was arrested that day uh, in front of Crest downtown Orangeburg. And water hoses were put on em', um, and they were put in what we call Pink Castle they couldn't get into the cells and they were out in the yard, put in the yard and that night was very cold, I remember that cause we had to go down throw blankets across the fence to them.

And um, and in the next day or two, um history will, will, will, will prove that my Dad put up his house as mortgage um, to um, bond the students out of jail and a lot of students yet today when they see me they remind me of that and um, they never forgot that my Dad did that. Even the city jail, which we would um, it was considered solitary confinement because you had no beds you in this room, uh, just a square room, maybe a ten by ten um, um, a sink over in the corner, a stool over in the corner, no privacy, uh it was just filthy from maybe somebody urine on the floor before you gotten in there

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and till' the extent they had pipes, like water pipes running through the uh, ceiling. I took my belt and bout two other us guys belts tied it around the pipes and I would crawl up on the pipes and sleep on those belts, that's where I had stayed. Would sleep um, just makin' the best of what cha got. Others would take off their garments and lay on the floor. We would try to make like a carpet of our garments on the floor so we'll be up off that nasty filthy mess.

End of Video.