

**Jackson State University  
Margaret Walker Center  
Archives and Record Division**

**Manuscript Collection**

**Collection Title: Womenpower Unlimited Collection**

**Dates Covered:** 1946-1976

**Collection Number:** AF004

**Volume:** 0.42 linear feet

**Original** ( )

**Duplicate** ( )

**Microcopy** ( )

**Photocopy** (x)

**Provenance:**

This collection was presented to the Institute for the Study of History, Life and Culture of Black People in 1976 by Ms. Deborah Denard to meet a class requirement for Dr. Alferdteen Harrison.

**Restrictions:**

None

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## History:

Womenpower Unlimited began on Friday, May 26, 1961, when a delegation from the Mississippi Annual Conference (Central Jurisdiction) of The Methodist Church attended the first hearing for freedom Riders in City Court in Jackson, Mississippi. Bishop Charles F. Golden, resident bishop of the Nashville-Birmingham area of the Methodist Church, sent the delegation from Waveland, Mississippi session of the conference. He was concerned because of the nature of the information he was receiving from Jackson and specifically because some of the ministers of his area were among those arrested. Because it was impossible for Bishop Golden to leave annual conference sessions, he sent a delegation of three persons, representing the Methodist General Board of Christian Social Concerns and the Annual Conference Board. The Jackson, Mississippi pastors- the Reverend E. A. Mays and S. L. Webb and Jackson businesswoman Mrs. Clarie Collins Harvey.

From observation at the trial and later in conversation with Mrs. Jack Young, wife of the legal counsel, for the riders, Jack H. Young, Sr., Mrs. Harvey determined there would continuing needs that must be met for our “community guests,” since they were determined to remain in jail for 39 days and longer rather than to post bond. The divine inspiration and revelation of how these needs might be met came to her on the following Saturday night. Sunday morning, May 28, 1961, Mrs. Harvey telephoned a few key ministers asking that offerings be taken for the Freedom Riders and that two ladies sent from each church to meet with her. By Sunday afternoon, the response was both enthusiastic and financially rewarding.

In cooperation with the interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, Womanpower Unlimited was organized May 29, 1961, in Central Methodist Church, Jackson, Mississippi.

The significance of the name lies in the inner, divine power of each women, as all women work together for peace among the peoples of a given community, nation, and in the world. This power is unlimited to God. He is infinite in wisdom, love, and power just as is that bit of himself that he places in each of us. Using this power within us, we can help to make life what it should be for any place.



Womanpower In Action, general activities include approximately 200 women committed to the womanpower idea have used thousands of dollars sent to them by persons all over America, as well as sums from speaking engagements of Mrs. Harvey, to extend hospitality to 225 freedom Riders. Through Reverend E. A. Mays (Methodist pastor), Attorney Jack Young and others, the riders were supplied with clothing, toilet articles, cigarettes, stationary, stamps, and as many personal needs as there jailers would permit. While the riders were in the State Penitentiary at Parchman, Mississippi, some 180 miles from Jackson, Mississippi, no acts of hospitality were permitted. Upon their release, however, the ladies awaited them with their cars and station wagons and took them to their homes for hot baths, change of clothing, and home cooked meals. The home of Mr. And Mrs. S. L. Logan, at 1142 Biloxi Street, was home for many months for visiting leadership. The local beauty and barbershops gave beauty and barber service charged to Womanpower funds. When the groups were too large for meal service in private homes, local churches cooperated by opening their facilities to us. While being served at a local church, one rider asked that he might be baptized. The minister of the church performed this rite.

Nothing has united the Negroes of Jackson more than the presence with us of the freedom Riders. Social consciousness was born to many for the first time. Our young people's imaginations were stimulated. They found new meaning and hope for their lives and had fleeting visions of a good future in Mississippi. Here was a cause with which most could identify. So we salute the Freedom Riders in the words of the popular song:

#### Freedom Train Leaving On Tracks 1961-'62

Ride on Freedom Riders, if you want to be free

Verse 1 My father died for free,

That won't no show

Verse 2 Take time, that's too slow,

This old jazz has got to go

Verse 3 Freedom ain't freedom, If a man ain't free,

Ride On, Freedom Riders, Ride On

M A R G A R E T  
W A L K E R  
C E N T E R



When students from the Burgland High School, McComb, Mississippi, were expelled because of their participation in the Sit-In Demonstrations, Campbell College, an A M E Church school in Jackson permitted them to enroll and continue their education. Their student leader, Brenda Travis, was committed to the Oakley Training School, Oakley, Mississippi. Womanpower assisted by financing these students and providing morale service for them and Miss Travis.

Later in 1961, the Pearl River in Jackson, Mississippi, flooded and refugees were assisted in many ways by Womanpower lades and funds. In addition cooperation was shared with the United Negro College Fund in its drive for educational funds; with the City Federation of Colored Women's Club in seeking the reopening of nursing school opportunities in Jackson; with inter-faith Freedom Rider sessions at Tougaloo College, where the Reverend Mr. Martin Luther King was the featured speaker; in many mass meetings with the NAACP, under the leadership of Mr. Medgar Evers, State Director; under the Leadership of Mr. Medgar Evers, State Director; with CORE; the Jackson Student Non-Violent Movement; Southern Leadership Conference, etc., including the one for 170 freedom Riders who were returned to Jackson for trials; with fellow Mississippians of all faiths and races in the reactivation of the Mississippi Chapter of the Southern Regional Council; in downtown store boycotts, driving during city bus boycotts, extending hospitality to Mr. James Meredith and his marshals, etc.

During 1962, womanpower's Vice Chairman, Mrs. I. S. Sanders, a Jackson woman's apparel owner, was arrested in the Memphis, Tennessee airport restaurant as she returned from a buying trip. Because of the non-violent philosophy and techniques and civil rights information gotten in Womanpower sessions, she was able to remain in command of the situation and later the trial against her was dismissed. Mrs. Sanders headed the Hospitality Committee of Womanpower Unlimited. She and her committee had a most efficient plan for serving the groups of Freedom Riders on the shortest of notices. Many riders said their sanity was maintained through the tortures at Parchman because they knew awaiting them in Jackson was a group of women who appreciated what they were doing and were helping the local community to understand.



Some Financial support to the Freedom Riders was given by a few whites in the community without identification of themselves. There was a feeling by those of Womanpower that to do an effective job ALL WOMEN within the community should work together and that there must be some persons of courage and good will who were willing to identify themselves openly. This opportunity came when Mrs. Wallis Schutt, Episcopalian and a member of the Advisory Committee to the Civil Rights Commission, sought Mrs. Harvey as a representative to the Southern Regional Council sessions of the Fellowship of the Concerned met annually in Atlanta, Georgia. Because of conflicting engagements, Mrs. Harvey talked with Reverend and Mrs. G. R. Haughton, Pastor and wife of Pearl Street AME Church, and secured their agreement that Mrs. Haughton should represent Womanpower in this experience.

The outgrowth of this desire is the Interracial Prayer Fellowship that Mrs. Schutt and Mrs. Haughton returned to organize. This is a cooperative program of Womanpower Unlimited with representatives of United Church Women and with the Prayer Band of Pearl Street AME Church. The various observances such as May Fellowship, World Day of Prayer, World Community Day, etc., by United Church Women of The National Council of Churches are kept. These observances involve many man and women in semi-monthly study and sharing on a level of contact, which most do not have the opportunity to experience in segregated communities. It's good to note that the locally organized United Church Women are beginning to recognize this fellowship.

### **Scope and Content:**

The Womenpower Unlimited papers consist of photocopies of varies aspects of the organization.



This collection was arranged into series and sub-series.

- Series I: Correspondence
  - Sub-series A: Personal
  - Sub-series B: Organization
- Series II: General Office files
- Series III: Subjects files
- Series IV: Programs
- Series V: Serials
- Series VI: Miscellany

### **Womenpower Unlimited Collection [AF004]**

#### **Series I: Correspondence, 1946, 1961, 1963, 1964, 12 items, 3 folders**

Personal and Organization

Box 1

Sub-series A: Personal

F1 Letters written to Mrs. Rosie Holden, n.d.; 3 items

Sub-series B: Organization

F1 Mississippi Council on Human Relations-Jackson, Mississippi, 1962-1964; 37 items

F2 Dear Friends (An S-O-S), n.d.; 3 items

F3 United Church Women, 1964; 2 items



**Series II: General Office files, 1962, 1975, 1976; 14 items, 3 folders**

- F1 Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Mississippi Council on Human Relations, 1962; 1 item
- F2 Minutes 1946, 1964, 1965; 11 items
- F3 Receipts from The Salvation Army, Rosie Holden donation, 1975, 1976; 2 items

**Series III: Subjects Files, n.d.; 14 items, 6 folders**

- F1 Research Paper on “Educational Conflicts in Jackson Public Schools in conjunction with desegregation.” n.d.; 1 item
- F2 Paper on Woman power and the Jackson Movement, n.d.; 1 items
- F3 My Life by Albert Lee, n.d.; 1 item
- F4 Negro Bank of Mississippi, n.d.; 1 item
- F5 KUDZU Jackson State Massacre, Article on “Underground In Mississippi” by David Doggett, n.d.; 10 items
- F6 Local Women send youngsters to Eastern Camp site Vicksburg, MS Volume 39 in Number 13, n.d.; 1 item

**Series IV: Programs, 1961; 2 items, 2 folders**

- F1 Program (Woman power Unlimited Organizational meeting), 1961; 1 item
- F2 Program Committee Others Unassigned to Committees, 1961; 1 item

**Series V: Serials, 1955; 1 items, 1 folders**

- F1 The Eagle Eye-The Woman’s Voice-“America’s greatest newspaper bombarding segregation and discrimination”, 1955; 1 item

**Series VI: Miscellany, 1964; 12 items, 7 folders**

- F1 Brochure-United Church Women National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. n.d.; 1 item
- F2 Food Project Woman Power Unlimited, correspondence and fliers, 1964. 3 items
- F3 Jackson School desegregation Pioneers, n.d.; 1 item
- F4 Data on School Project Families, n.d.; 2 items
- F5 Members of Woman Power Unlimited, n.d.; 3 items



- F6 List of names to be interviewed, n.d.; 1 item
- F7 List of interviewee, n.d.; 1 item
- F8 Articles and materials on Human Relations, n.d., 1960, 1962-1964; 41 items
- F9 Mississippi Council on Human Relations, n.d., 1964; 6 items

