

**C.T. Vivian – “St. Augustine Wade-in”**

I volunteered and went down to St. Augustine. Here's a whole ocean, God's entire ocean, and you can't step in it because you're black. We were ready to do a wade-in is what we called it, a wade-in. Because we had to open the beach, it's about 20 or 30 of us; they were out in the water waiting for us, that was the thing is that they had each other's hands, right, holding it like a net. And the deeper you came in, the more they backed up. Because they're waiting for us to get up to our necks and then they're going to jump on, right? One of them got anxious and they all jumped. So this guy jumped on my back and down I went. And my face was in the sand, and I started smiling to myself, I said, “This is it. This is it.” I'd gotten through all of the other things without getting killed, but this is it. Just moments after I said that to myself is that voom -- off this guy, I come straight to the top. A policeman had waded in and then suddenly the water was filled with them. So the policeman is going to arrest me. I said, arrest me? But then the cop turned out to be a nice guy.

**Rev. C.T. Vivian – “Becoming Non-Violent”**

In the fourth grade I became nonviolent. And then when I was in the fourth grade a kid sent me a Negro valentine. And it was an ugly Valentine, and I turned around in my seat and I pointed to him, and that meant in our school I'll meet you in the alley. And by the time I got out of school that day, he was down the street across the tracks, and I went looking for him. But all the kids were waiting, or a great number of them, and they followed me over and I caught him on the other side of the railroad tracks and I pushed him, I cussed him. In fourth grade, in that atmosphere during the Depression, you learned very well how to do it. And I just tried to belittle him. But there was something on his face, and I knew he didn't quite understand what this was all about. And I couldn't hit him. I could push him, I could call him names, I could try to belittle him, but-- and the crowd, oh they thought I was great. But I knew I had lost the fight. I knew I had lost the fight. Now I had never heard of nonviolence, but I knew I'd lost the fight. I felt as though, and I didn't understand it but I felt it, I felt that I was not the winner. And I never forgot that.

## The National Center for Civil and Human Rights – Atlanta, Georgia

### Rev. C.T. Vivian – “March to City Hall”

When they bombed Looby's home, attorney Looby's home, we were up in a church, Reverend Anderson's Methodist Church. We thought the noise sounded like a bombing, but we didn't think it was. We were not certain. We went on with the meeting and pretty soon somebody came in the meeting and said they bombed attorney Looby's home. So we immediately started planning what to do, how to respond to it, and immediately decided that this meant a major march to City Hall. During the noon hour is when we were going to start. It wasn't exact by the minute, but it was in the noon hour when everybody was out of school, at least for lunch. By the time we got ready there were so many kids who had eaten at the 11 and 11:30 time, right? And they were ready; they were out on the lawn, one of the lovely days. Nature was in our favor. And we started the march downtown. Diane Nash and myself and Bernard Lafayette were at the beginning of the line. We began that march. And we were singing one thing or the other, going down. At 18th and Jefferson, Fisk University joined us. At the next block down were the high school kids. They had come and cut across Fisk's campus and joined in right behind the Fisk students. So we were marching downtown. Then the people started joining us. Then the cars started to come. People came out of their houses and joined us. And then the cars began to go very slowly beside us. People just stopped from the traffic, and moved things down the street, so that everybody was involved. By the time we got really to right at the edges of downtown is when we made it a silent march. And as we marched downtown, there were small factories and so forth right before you got to downtown, to the heart of downtown. And guys were out, it was a good day and it was noontime, and they were out throwing a ball back and forth with each other, playing catch and having a sandwich and that sort of thing, and they saw us. And we were silently marching, you could hear the feet. And they began to back up. And they backed clear up against the buildings, and they knew something was going on that they weren't going to play with, right? And they seemed to be just flat against the walls wondering what this was about, and it just kept coming, and it kept coming, and it kept coming. Even when we, by the time we got to City Hall, people were still coming. And it must have been at least, what we would amount to about 15 or 20 blocks that are still coming. I remember people still coming up the steps that we had come up to get out on the plaza in front of City Hall. We waited until the place was just filled, and then we opened and started talking to the mayor. I gave the first speech, right? Opened it with a speech. And then Diane asked questions to him, especially to him, Do you believe, Mayor, do you believe that segregation is a right or wrong? Those weren't the exact words but that's what was involved. He backed up, and then he said, “No, I do not believe it's right.” And from that, the conversation was of such that we demanded the city open up. And he

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didn't say he would open it, but he didn't say he wouldn't. But we knew that he was going to try. And so we left. One week from that day, the whole city was open-- on everything. The end of segregation came to Nashville. That was the beginning of all the students knowing that nonviolence would work, and it would work for a lifetime. We were clear on that when we left the first meetings, right? When that week was up, we knew everything was going to be alright. And it proved to be true.

**Rev. C.T. Vivian – “Mississippi Jail”**

When we got to the prison, and they were sitting around the table, about four of them, sitting around the table. And you came up to the table, sat in a chair in front of it, and then they would ask you questions. So then they pulled one on me, turned right quick and said, Do you have Syphilis? And I said No. And then I laughed, like I am no. I said No, I don't have Syphilis. I didn't say No, I don't have Syphilis; I just-- No, right? Boy that was it. And they fell down on me. I didn't say Sir, right? And so they came down on me, beating on every hand. And this one guy, he had a flapjack, the guy that came out there. See, a flapjack is different. It's a flapping-- heavy leather on each side of a steel inner piece, right? A lead inner piece, really. And the edges of that heavy leather though are sharp. And you slap people with it; you don't hit them like you have a stick, right? You slap them with it, right? Well in this attempt to all fall down, you know coming down on me to beat me, it turned in his hand and it cut me. For years I had a scar there, right? Finally it went away. But the memory-- [laughs]. And it cut my head and I started bleeding, right? But that bleeding, they had to have a guy come and fix the bleeding. then Kelly Miller came and got me the next morning. The court had-- I don't think it was a court, I think it was a clear message from Washington that they'd gone and crossed the ground and they should not have done that. I was released, right? Kelly Miller was there the next day, as I mentioned. And that night when we got back it was for a mass meeting, because I was coming back, and naturally the only thing to really talk to them about was without the shedding of blood there will be no remission of sin.