

Michener Report on Kent

New York

Author James Michener concluded from an on-the-spot investigation that National Guardsmen were not under attack at Kent State University when four students were shot last May.

He also said that 25 per cent of the 400 students he interviewed told him their parents thought it might have been a good thing for the nation if they, too, had been shot.

Michener wrote in a report in Reader's Digest that the national wave of anti-student sentiment after the shooting of the students was particularly virulent among the parents of Kent State students.

A mother with three sons on campus and herself a high school teacher said it would have been better "if the guard had shot the whole lot of them that morning."

Asked if she would permit one of her sons to be shot because he wore his hair long or went barefooted, she replied "yes," according to Michener.

"Of the 400 students who were interviewed during the research for this book, at least 25 per cent declared that they were told by their own parents that it might have been a good thing if they had been shot," Michener wrote. He said many of these students told him, "I doubt that I'll ever bother to go home again."

Michener said research and photographs indicated that there were no students nearer the National Guardsmen than about 200 yards when some of the guardsmen wheeled and aimed their rifles toward the students. However, the guardsmen had inadvertently marched toward a steel link fence which more or less hemmed them in.

"It seems likely that at this time some of the troops agreed among themselves that they had taken enough," Michener reported, citing a "secret report" containing this passage: "As soon as the troops marched up Blanket Hill, someone among the

guards said, 'if they charge us, shoot them.'"

Michener said he investigated dozens of reports of

snipers but that "no shred of evidence was found to support any of them."

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