



Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

6 Raymond Street, N.W.
Atlanta 14, Georgia

688-0331

Dear Madre and Cif,

I am sitting in the office-kitchen writing you while we wait for the boys to come in from the counties. We are going to a surprise party for Penny tonight. Surprise isn't really the right word, since Penny has long since found out about it. However, the high school girls who are giving the party, do not know she knows, so it's still a surprise party, officially.

Charlie's grandmother survived I guess you've heard from Charlie by now that his grandmother is very ill, and that she asked to see him for the last time. He took off for Petersburg at 2:00 AM this morning. He stayed down here to attend the meeting at which Sheriff Chapell had threatened to arrest him, and then, since no arrest occurred, he went on to Va. Since your package arrived Thursday afternoon, we all decided to open it (since your letter implied that food was in it, Madre), and have a gala time before he left, as he won't be here over Christmas. THANK YOU! YUMMY, YUMMY, YUMMY! The boys contentedly munched pistachios all through their political discussion of the afternoon. Food packages do more for morale than anything else, I think. They also were quite touched that you and Shai had thought of all of us at Christmas.

Christmas day will be spent in Lee County, where Agnew James and his wife are having us for Christmas dinner. We will definitely be well cared for, since everyone has offered to take us in over the holidays. Also, in the last couple of weeks we have been given enough patchwork quilts to keep an iceberg warm, and it's hog slaughtering time (excuse the harshness of the phrase) and several county opeople have given us meat. One man, Freeman Wright, if ^Sunter, gave us a barbecue last Saturday, and then sent ~~us~~ home with eight pork chops (each about the size of this page, or 3/4 of this page;) a pound or two of thick country bacon, couple of pounds of spare ribs; and some shoulder meat.

Mama Dolly is suddenly going great guns again. She had kept mostly to housing the boys (a courageous act in itself) and staying at home with her shotguns, since the summer. Recently she became disturbed and went to God, to find out what she should do. She told it this way, when she arrived at the first Lee meeting she's attended in a long time: "So, I finally got so distressed that I went to God, yes, I was so distressed. And I didn't actually see Him, no, but when I went to him in my distress, he let me see the flecks of light, you know. Yes, just the flecks of light." And then Mama started back to meetings; she is in her late seventies, I guess, and a whirlwind, like Aunt Marg as far as work goes. She's also very brave, considering that her memory covers the days of bloody lynchings and murders in Lee County. She manages a syrup factory on her place, drives a battered car all over SW Georgia by herself, and has only this year decided to stop farming her land and to rent it out.

*Love
Fate*

* Penny is leaving them to return to Swath more for the 2nd semester!

Did you get the newsletter? If you did, you have a pretty accurate picture of what work in Albany has been like the past couple of weeks. Those Deltas are amazing. A couple of them are working in a timid sort of fashion. Meanwhile Rev. Wells is about to kill himself with work. By the way, do you remember the article published in The NY Times Mag Section last September, after the injunction was broken? Sorry, not last September, last Summer, perhaps in early August. If you could pick up a copy of that, and save it for me, I'd appreciate it. Rev. Wells, since you haven't met him Madre, is the gentlemen leading the group in prayer in the picture that appears at the top of the article. He's probably the closest anyone comes to epitomizing what Albany Georgia was painted to be last year. He's militant, dedicated, and deeply religious. He was one of the few people who spoke out against the dirty politics that occurred during the Chatmon election; it was he who led the march that broke the injunction last summer (no other Albany Movement, SNCC, or SCLC leaders participated). He attends mass meetings four nights a week and has spent a couple of hours every night canvassing for the drive here in Albany for the last two weeks. He speaks of the injunction as "unpure", and describes law enforcement officers or officials who are thwarting the fight down here as "the uncircumcised." He told the Sumter County people, who are an exceptionally militant and articulate group, that he felt like "suffering on" with them.

I may not get back to you before Christmas, so Merry Christmas to both of you and every body in NYC.

Oh, congratulations on your budget, Madre! I am now managing the finances down here, which I abhor. I hate the work, and our finances are so frantic that it's really a devilish job. What did Ann Durrell finally say? Is she still playing tough?

I'm really glad I came down. Although I do miss NYC, or at least my family, I think it's worth it, especially since I'm doing a job now, with the drive here in Albany. I still sometimes wish I were in the counties, but someone has to keep the office here in Albany. Charlie, unlike last summer, has been in and out of Albany so much that although his authority is the greatest in the group, he's even more removed from us that he was from the staff last summer. He's told us that he plans to go back to school next September, and that he's preparing SW Georgia for his departure. He hasn't said how he plans to set it up when he leaves, but there's the possibility of someone who's spent time down here taking over, or, eventually, and ideally, local leaders will assume authority. The Albany Movement is beginning to take a more active interest in the counties. Or rather, we think they are about to take a more active interest. This will fulfill a dream of Charlie's.

Now I have to get back to work. Hope you have a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Love,

Smith