

Atlanta 14, Georgia

November 12-18

This week has been a very exciting, humorous and inspirational one for me, because I have been faced with many new tasks.

I have traveled through thirty of these United States, but only for pleasure. My trip here to Albany, Georgia is not a trip for pleasure, it's a trip to fight for freedom, equality and dignity for 20 million Negroes all over the United States. On the way to Albany, I thought of many things I would have to sacrifice, like dropping out of school for a semester, not being home to sing with the Howard Choir at Constitution Hall, something I have always looked forward to; being away from my family and friends. Was going to Albany, Georgia to work with Voter Registration worth all this? But then as I passed through shanty towns and big cities and gazed at the stars something crossed my mind. What good would it do me to finish school if I couldn't get the type of job I really wanted. The Civil Rights Commission has stated that most students graduating from a Negro college or University get the same type of jobs that white students get when they just graduate from high school. Maybe if we could get the right people in office something could be done about this situation. And then I thought about Constitution Hall, Washington's biggest concert hall. Sure it's great to get the chance to perform with one of the country's greatest choirs and with a world known symphony orchestra, but there was once a time when Marion Anderson had to sing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in freezing weather, because her skin is black and at the time no Negroes were allowed to perform at Constitution Hall. Nor were they allowed to go to any of the concerts given there. So why should I turn down a chance to fight for freedom so that I may sing at a place that was once Jim Crowed.

Then I thought about my family. Well, that was no problem. Because of the fact that both of my parents were born and raised in the South, they had to suffer the tribulations and heartaches caused by segregation. They wouldn't mind my leaving home for a few months to fight for equality.

So the decision wasn't very hard to make. My mind was at ease. "I am doing the right thing."

I arrived here with two other people on Monday November 14th. We hadn't been here fifteen minutes when someone called us and threatened to kill us if we came to Sumter County.

We have gone to mass meetings in Sumpter, Terrell and Lee. All of these meetings have been wonderful experiences for me. It's wonderful to see these people so determined to fight for their rights, no matter what gets in the way.

I have met many wonderful people since I've been here, such as Mara Dobbly, the KINGS, the Jordens, the Browns, and many of the students from Muncie High and Carver Junior High schools. I had the great pleasure of talking with Dr. Martin Luther King last Friday night after he gave a thrilling speech at a mass meeting in Albany.

And Saturday I went canvassing for the first time - for Thomas C. Chatmon. Chatmon is in a run-off for city commissioner tomorrow (Nov. 20)