

100 Rust Avenue
Holly Springs, Miss.
May 14, 1965

Dear Friends of Freedom,

Well, here we are in our usual desperate straits, only more desperate than usual. As we write, Howard Jeffries is sitting in jail. His bond is \$100. That's only the beginning. Insurance on the freedom house expired on May 5. The insurance man told our landlord, Mrs. Neal that he couldn't continue insuring the house because it's run down. It's not. The porch is a little caved in from numerous shipments of books having been unloaded on it, but otherwise it's in good shape. And we've spent a lot of money on it - having the whole house rewired, etc. The old insurance rate was \$100 for three years. The new quoted rate is \$300 for one year. If we can't raise the money we'll be evicted! Can anyone help? Either money or a cheaper policy or both.

NEWS: Somehow we forgot to mention in the last newsletter that St. Joseph's Church in Marshall County was burned on February 22. There's a picture enclosed. The church had been used weekly for freedom school and voter registration classes, so as usual it was probably no accident - though, as usual, there were no clues as to who might have done it. The local people really want to rebuild their church; but, of course, they don't have enough money. We're also sending a picture of beautiful new Antioch Church which the Oberlin kids rebuilt during Christmas vacation. The other picture is the Baptist College that was burnt last summer after some union organizing meetings.

Might as well get all the bad news over at once. Bobbi and Frank are leaving Saturday to go to school in California. They have their Negro history book finished and it will be printed by the next newsletter. We hope to sneak you all a copy. We hope everyone thinks it is worth a little money, too.

James Batts, a local Benton County Negro, has gone to school in Pennsylvania. We lost 3 workers but gained 4. Chuck and Sherrie Wanner came from Denver, Colo. Ron Carver and Eddie Mackey came from other projects. Kathy (Dalh) and John Pappener have just spent a week of their honeymoon with us. Tomorrow they will be on their way to California. It seemed like the good ol' days with her back.

A number of the old staff have been asking us if the summer project will be like the one we had last summer. Plans for Mississippi are to have a summer project run through FDP rather than COFO. Partly because some people have been dissatisfied with the way last summer's project evolved through the year. But the main reason is that we feel that the local people are ready to organize for themselves. We can supply some knowledge and skills (and time) they don't have, but they'll be in charge of operations. Workers will live with local people rather than in project houses. Local people will decide what programs the volunteers are to work on. For further information, write to:

Freedom Democratic Party
507 1/2 Farish Street
Jackson, Mississippi

The state office was here in Holly Springs. It was moved back to Jackson but three staff decided to stay here and are planning a summer program. What the project gained from this whole maneuver was a little cottage that is perfect for the married couples.

Desoto County has finally been opened up to Howard and Ron. They have two mass meetings each week. The first Negro since last summer went down to register at the courthouse today. Ron, a white worker, visited the Negro school today.

There were 9 staff people that went to a meeting Thursday night in Desoto County. This was the first time that anybody had ever been able to have a meeting in that part of the county. So the sheriff with 4 others in the car came out to the meeting and just pulled up in front of the church so we would be sure to see them. Well, wonder if the next meeting will go that smooth.

The students and parents of old Salem School, Benton, County, carried on a successful school boycott. They asked for a new principal, a committee (which they elected) to advise the principal and four teachers fired. They will have a new principal and teachers fired and the committee is serving as a liaison between the school and community. They are now filing to have the schools integrated.

Another thing about Benton County. You can get the "Benton County Freedom Train" for \$10 a year. All the back issues will be sent too. "Supporting Subscriptions" might be an interesting way for somebody you know that is interested in the movement. Send money to "Benton County Freedom Train", Route 2, Box 100, Holly Spgs. Specify whether you want the subscription to begin with the latest issue or to include all back issues.

The kids in Tippah County tested several restaurants with no incidents.

Suppose you heard about our little run into Fayette County, Tenn., last week. Sid, Hardy, Chuck, Howard and John (Kathy's husband) went to help give the Fayette County Student Union a little backing at their request. During the integration of one of the restaurants in Somerville, some fighting broke out. Two local and two staff people were beaten, one staved and one man had scalding coffee poured down his back. Later three warrants were finally sworn out against men who were in the cafe.

Two weeks ago a white man shot at Hardy with a shot gun. Hardy reported it to the sheriff. The sheriff said that the man was shooting at black birds. Hardy is black but I don't know about the bird.

U.Z. finally has his driver's license. He tried eight times. I wonder how many times Howard will have to take the voter's test? As U.Z. was leaving the sheriff's office Ash stopped him and asked him what did he want.

U.Z. said, "I came to take my driver's test."

Ash, "Did you pass?"

U.Z. "Yes."

Ash, "Nigger break your jawbone and say 'yes sir'."

U.Z. "Yes, sir."

Moral of the story, we are all Tom once in a while.

There has been a big addition to the COFO family. Our bird dog has just had 10 pups under the freedom house.

FROM THE NEEDY GROUP OF MISSISSIPPI