

Dec. 18, 1964

Dear Friends:

I'm trying to recall where I left off - I think it was a week ago Wednesday - as alot has happened which kept me from writing. On that day I ran around trying to get the nursery school petition of incorporatin complted and the usual hassle ensued, but after many trips between the courthouse, publisher, and office, it got straight. I just got it back from the Secy of State today, and the Albany Georgia Nursery School, Inc. is now officially in existence.

Along the same line, that is to say the way they do you here, we got a bill from the newspaper for an add CB's wife placed in the paper. The bill read "Mrs. C.B.King" but the "Mrs." had been carefully erased by an overzealous racist who wouldn't let any opportunity escape him for venting his hate. So C.B. mailed it back with a note explaining that he was C.B.King and he didnt have anything published in the paper, and perhaps if the bill were Addressed to Mrs. C.B. King it would be paid - and it came back two days later with Mrs. written in in ink. So you play the game of irrelevancies along with them.

And again on Thursday - back down to Tifton (I believe I mentioned that we were there earlies in the week on a civil suit between some white folks and a Negro couple). Tifton is a 52 mile drive one way. We got there at 9 a.m. and presented a motion based on systematic exclusion of Negroes from the trial jury - in a civil matter - and the Judge says that he will give opposing counsel time to study it so w case is continued to tomorrow. Now this was the Judge who said this; and not at the request of opposing counsel. So we drive back to Albany, 52 miles.

Saturday, December 19: I stopped writing liast night because of a phone call from my parents infomming me that I just got a letter from the California Bar saying that I passed the exam. So the letter had to wait while Wendy and I went out to dinner at the DAV (a club out on River Road with very good steaks). Back now to a week ago Thursday and our adventures in Tifton, Georgia. On the way back to Albany we have to drive through TyTy, Georgia, a town of some 461 people, and whose major claim to fame is that it is the home of a virulent racist Baptist preacher who once ran for Governor of Georgia on the sole platform of ridding the state of communitst, and promising that when elected he would use his office to take Koinonia Farm by eminent domain and run a highway through it to be done with the "reds and race-mixers" forever. Oddly enough he lost. Since we have been driving through TyTy for the last w few days we have noticed a building along the side of the road where pecans are sold. But it doesnt look like the ordinary pecan or fruit stand. It is a copy of pre-Classical Greek architecture (we later learn) with columns, etc. It is called the TyTy Plantation. As you approach it there are signs advertising its wares. One sign says something like "Carya Illionises"(this isnt exact) which I thought to be Greek. Anghow it was something of an enigma to us so on CB's suggestion I drove in on the way back to make inquiry as to th meaning of the sign. A very distinguished looking gentlemen in an expensive sport jacket came over to the car and asked if he could be of service. I was driving and explained that we had seen the sign and were wondering about its translation. He explained that it was the latin term for pecan, and then we got into a conversation about the building, etc. He invited us to come inside and we did. He was an extremely cordial person, and very fascinating. Turns out he is a graduate of Yale and taught there for a while, and has now come back to TyTy to cultivate and crossbreed pecans - telling us that hhere is no reason why pecans cant be as large as coconuts, etc. He is also a painter, designed the Greek building himself, and a very intellectual person. We were both fascinated by his apparent ease and charm, and that someone like this would be living in TyTy Georgia. After about 15 minutes of conversation about pecans and art

he told us that he wanted us to see the thing of which he was most proud. After viewing his many accomplishments in terms of horticulture, art, and architecture, I couldn't imagine what this could be. It turns out to be "the only bomb shelter in this part of the country, completely lead lined, and stocked for two months duration". He had a wry sense of humor and I was sure he was putting us on but damn if the man didn't have a bomb shelter in the cellar of the pre-classical Greek pecan stand. This put somewhat of an edge on the conversation and we left soon afterwards. When we got back to Albany we learned that the Judge called to inform us that the other attorney was ready to go to a trial and he wanted us back ~~ed~~ down at 2:30 but we told him we couldn't get there until Friday.

Friday was a really grotesque experience in "southern justice". The Negro couple who we were representing were being sued by a white man. They were represented previously by a white attorney when sued by the white man's wife, and she got a verdict of about \$1000 (which they don't have). Now the husband is suing and he amended his petition from \$5000 damages to \$25000 damages - they are real po white trash these people. Our client was towing his wife's car behind his truck when the white couple ran into the car. She was cut up a little. He claims "back pains" tho his whole medical testimony concerns two trips to a doctor, both times he was treated for an ulcer condition (which had absolutely nothing to do with this) and a third visit to a chiropractor. The medical men did not appear. He didn't bring medical bills. He sued for "pain and suffering" - \$25,000. We argued the demurrer to the motion to quash the jury because of exclusion of Negroes and when we asked the Judge to rule he said that we should just continue to try the case on the merits. He didn't rule at that time. The only thing he said was "the demurrer is good". CB pressed him for whether he was overruling our motion, or merely taking it under consideration but he ignored the question. Then we tried the case - which was a complete travesty. People perjured themselves all over the place. The jury went out and came back in 30 minutes with a verdict against our clients for \$5000. CB then asked the judge to please certify his overruling of the motion so that we could go up on that point to appeal. The Judge said "I'll let you in on a little secret - there is a fatal defect - the motion was never filed". What happened was that CB had tendered the motion to the Judge to read, and the Judge ordinarily hands it over to the clerk to file. When we got there CB asked the clerk if it was in fact filed and she told him it was. She now says she thought he meant whether the other attorneys papers were filed and to this she responded affirmatively. And the Judge just grinned. It was amazing. Here the Judge himself took part in this kind of deceitful conduct. I mean we expect the bastards to be biased as hell and to rule against you on everything, but this was a little too much. We have since talked to our clients who advise that as almost all of their property is in the names of their children, they won't appeal but will just let the crackers try to collect this judgment. The only thing in their name is a 1/12 interest in property worth \$2000. maximum - so it is really worthless as far as a judgment creditor is concerned.

We spent the weekend at a SNCC conference called for the staff of southwest Georgia and attended by Courtland Cox, Charlie Cobb, and Ralph Featherstone from Atlanta. I only went to two sessions, and let Wendy go to the rest and take notes. I have a terrible habit of having to interject my opinions, so to avoid being one more "smart ass white" who the Negro SNCC kids are having their fill of anyhow, I find it better to just learn about it through Wendy who has the virtuous quality of being able to sit and listen to people, without interjecting her own thoughts on everything that is discussed.

The first session on Sat morning was filled with criticisms of each other and it was a very good because a lot of the pent up hostility of people who work under these conditions was finally released and let them work in a clearer atmosphere. On Sat afternoon I attended - by this time they were beginning to be able to discuss things and were going over the

different things happening in each county where SNCC has people. SNCC went out into 12 counties around CB's congressional campaign, and still has people developing projects there now. However, very little seems to be happening. The guys are very tired and disipated, and find lots of excuses for why nothing is happening. Perdue seemed to sum it up when he said that we are effective while the cops are beating our heads and harrasing us but when the pressure lets up and we havem nothing pushing us, we cant move at all. We dont act, but only react. They also started to get hung up in the idea of organizing people into unions and this wa talked about for a long time until it finally became clear thatpeople didnt really know whoat uninnns were, or how to organize them, or if this is really what was necessary. But this was good because Cox drew a kind of diagram on the board and started talking about it and made people answer questions and made them explain themselves and the more people talked and asked questions the more they realized that the word "union" wasnt an answer - the answer was bringing poepee together to realize their common strength, and if this was to be called union, or movement or anything else was irrelefant, butthat they couldnt sit around and say to themselves that what they needed was a union but because they didnt know hbw to organize a union they couldnt move - and this was a very good thing. Cox is a kind of genius. He doesnt have much to say but ~~the~~ when things bog down hopelessly he will force ~~the~~ people to talk to answer questions and to finally explain themselvs and what they are thingang to the group. Cobb is also very sharp but he tends to make too many assumptions and to carry on too much of the ~~the~~ dialogue hamsel. I found that much of the time Cobb and I were discussing questions that had to be faced by people working here by themselves, and it was only the two of us talking back and forth about them, so I decided not to get involved in the disasssion and the easiest way to accomplish this was to stay home.

When Wendy got home we went over her notes: The most exciting thing happening is the Congressional Challenge. Without knowing it I am sure that it is the genius of Kinoy at work. The idea is that Mrs Hamer, Devine, and Gray, all of whom ran for Congeess from Miss on the MFDP ticket last election will go to Congress on the opening day and challenge the racists who were elected because Negroes were excludede from voting. They have filed a challenge based on federal statutes (which I havent had time to read yet but if Kinoy did it Im cettina it is right) and this will involve taking depositions in Miss, etc. In the meantime the women will opan Congressional offices of their own - after all they are the real representatives of Miss as they were elected by people who weren't excluded because of race - and they will go around visiting Govt offices, Cong. committees, etc. They will really be a kind of pressure lobby on the federal government. From what I have heard about Mrs Hamer she knows instrinctively when she is being bullshitted even when it comes from smooth p Establishment professionals, and she just wont stand for it. If she didnt take it from the crackers in Miss she isnt going to let the phonies push her around in Washington. All of this happens Jan 4-6. There are supposed to be around 1000 people coming up from Miss and some will also come from SWGa - tho SNCC is completely broke again and I dont know how they plan to finance all of this. The idea for the SWG people is for them to visit their conggressmen, eg ONeal and Russell and ~~Wannan~~ Herm Tallmege - and as Don Harris envisions it they wont be nice middle caass folk, but old mean tired men with red mud on their workshoes and old ladies with walking sticks and kerchiefs and they are going to tell, not ask, Sen Russel what he can do for folks in SWGa. They are going to tell the big shots in washington that they are sick and tired of being promised pvoerty bills and all that crap and wind up with nothing, and that they are going to keep coming back to washington, with all that tv coverage and world-wide press and embarras them to death unless something starts to work forthem. This whole discussion seemed to be the turning

point of the confernece as the kids now saw something concrete that was happening and something that they could organize people around. The conception of all these people telling Sen Russel what they wanted was a pleasant one. The really big hangup in SWGa among the SNCc people is the idea of a project director. There is a wierd history here as the first one was Sherrod who was a Christ figure, but a dictator in a wierd way, and the other was Harris who was just a dictator, but who was rarely wrong and saw that things got done. The hpeople learned to depend on hi judgment and now when he doesnt want any part of people project director they really cant function without being told, not so much what to do, but told who is right when there is an argument - like who should use the car to go where, and who has a right to charge gas and forwhat reasons - stuff like this. But hopefully from this conference people will come away with the idea that they must each do what they think is necessary and if a director is in fact necessary, one will grow out from among them - so now they are continuing without any project director.

On Monday night at Mass Meeting Harris explained more about thh Cong. Challenge. Mrs Hamer, Devine, and Grey will try to get their beofer the Miss Congressmen and sin-in in their seats, and if not will ask them to get up when Mrs. Hamer and the others arive later. Also big pressure against this is being put on by the Demo Party officials - the same people who sold the MFDP out in Atlantic City. I am beginning to see much more clearly what the story was in Atlantic City. The SNCC people knew intuitively that they could only deal with Rauh up to a point but to use him as leverage to get inside. But the actual delegates of the Miss Freedom Deom Party, who arex not SNCC kids, butare just regular Miss Negroes who never had any political education, and are jus learning as they go along - they really believed (and I use the past tense) in Johnson and Humphrey, and they believed all the trade union cats who fly down from Detroit with turkeys for them - but they are learning: this comes by way of Penny Patch, a SNCC worker in Miss who is passing through SWGa on her way to NY to visit her parents. This stuff is only foryou Phil - I have the feeling the only reason I goto Mass Meeting is to have news to report to you.

On Monday night at Mass meeting Harris told of his adventures at the State unemployment office. Last wekk he was at the Poverty meeting and we talked about him going down to find out how they do people who come in to apply for training underthe Fed Manpower Dev. Training Act. He and three other guys went down and they played like down-home Negroes. He went up to the man at the desk and told him he wanted an application to register for training. They had him sit for a while and shuffled him from desk to desk and told him they would try to get him a job - he told them he wanted to be trained for a good job, not just to get some janitor job - and they finally sent him to another man to fill out an application of form. The man asked him where he had gotten the idea there was some kind of training program and Donald told him, "a white man told me" - which means that the man at the State Unemp. Office had to figure out something because he couldnt tell Don that a white man told him a lie. He told him there was only one program going now - I have been told this isnt true there are several - and also told him that he couldnt get into it until June and maybe it wouldnt start again anyhow, and stuff like that. He told him he wuld take an aptitude test and when Don said what for, he said to see if you can make cabinets - Don said, "that's why I want the training, because I dont know how and I want to learn" and a whole lot of funny put on dialogue like that. The Don told him that he saw President Johnson on tv say that there was going to be alot of money for poor folks and Don wanted to find out how he could get some of that money, and the guy told him that the Poverty Bill wasnt in effect yet but when the Atlanta office got a letter about it they would tell Albany and then something could be done. Don asked how he would know when the Poverty Bill came to Albany and the man said he

Anyhow there was alot of funny stuff like this but the upshot of it is that Negroes are certainly not being informed of whatever programs the Labor Dept has. I plan to go in Monday, dressed like a cracker and ask them about training programs - see what happens when a white wants the same information]

Getting out of chronology - a couple of nights ago we were sitting around with Goldie Jackson and shewas telling us how bad the Negro schools are - not only in terms of education, but in that they are completely without discipline, that the teachers and principals are afraid of the students and that they are set up almost like prisons where the cons really run everything underneath the surface. She told how when she taught highschool in South Carolina she was threatened by boys with knives several times and once took a knife away from a senion who threatened to slit her throat. Yesterday we saw another example. The Negro highschool had a christmas party (one in each homeroom). Two 15 year old students, a boy and a girl, were arguing over what records were going to be played. They had smuggled in some liquor and put it in the punch. Anyhow the boy whipped out a knife and stabbed the girl in the throat - killing her.

I'm going to cut this off here and send it off. I'll try to finish up the rest of this week tomorrow. We are going to move in to our new house today, so I have to go home and start moving furniture.

Dennis