

FAYETTE COUNTY WORKCAMP

Newsletter

5541 Hanley Road
Cincinnati 39, Ohio

May 23, 1963

"Work is love made visible." --Kahlil Gibran

(Quoted by workcamper Roger Conant at January workcamp appreciation at (for John Harris home)

JUNE WORKCAMP will be in Haywood County June 1-13, for old workcampers only, in addition to two groups which had arranged to go some weeks ago. One group is from Columbus, Ohio, with Rev. Robin Tetzloff, who visited the spring workcamp, as its leader. The other group will be an exchange group from Philadelphia. Stan Boyd, leader of the first week's workcamping in Fayette County in March, will drive them down, and pick up a microbus load of Fayette and Haywood County young people and bring them back to Philadelphia for a week there. They will be entertained by the Social Order Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends and have an opportunity to tell their story via radio, television and personal appearances in Philadelphia. There will be swimming, workcamping, visit to Fellowship Farm, sightseeing, living in homes there.

Plans for the project in Haywood County are tentative, hence we must limit numbers. Originally we had been asked by the Workcamp Committee of the Haywood County Civic and Welfare League to conduct classes in voter-education. We appealed for help on this assignment which is somewhat beyond our experience as workers with our muscles. Rev. Otis Ross, Cincinnati representative of Southern Christian Leadership Conference, responded by promising to meet with the League May 31. Septima Clark of SCLC's Citizenship Education Program promised us a field worker for a week, to hold sessions with workcampers, and I presume League members who can come, each morning. The worker will also bring materials for voter-education.

Then we were later informed that a new development had changed workcamp plans. A biracial committee had at last been set up in Haywood County to discuss some of the issues the League has long been wanting to discuss. The League expects to ask for school integration, job opportunities, everything else it is concerned about. They should be holding those meetings now. The Workcamp Committee thought this would not be a propitious time to be holding a workcamp, especially not one focused on voter registration and held in Brownsville. Not all agreed with this policy, which assumes from the start that they have no right to have northern white visitors. And it seems possible that the very presence of workcampers in April might have helped to bring on these biracial talks. They may even want to discourage the League from having workcampers by threatening them that if they keep bringing in those outsiders they won't negotiate with them. Workcampers have written a lot of articles exposing the situation there.

It was, however, the feeling of the Workcamp Committee that we change our plans. So David Brown, who is back in Fayette County and living with Art and Carolyn Emery and family in their "naw" sharecropper cabin on Negro-owned land, arranged with Art Emery for us to work instead with the Tennessee Organic Vegetable Producers Cooperative. We should be doing some work on farms and living in homes. However, because of the interest in voter-education we are still planning to have the SCLC field worker, meeting somewhere out in the county, training all who wish to be trained, and meeting with any groups that invite us to come.

All these changes of plans, changes of dates, etc., have greatly delayed this newsletter and the news release and thank-you notes and personal letters still unwritten.

Old workcampers who want to go should contact me as soon as possible. Since our greatest wish is to establish a kind of "community of concern," there is always room for old workcampers. They have a background which makes them more effective. And in the minds of the local people, they are friends; others are still strangers. "I'm always glad to see your face in the group," one woman said, revealing a hidden fear of white strangers.

Cost for food and local expenses is \$1.50 per day. Bring sleeping bags for sleeping on the floor. Please collect food to bring for preparing our meals and for giving to our families with whom we will be living.