

Penny

From: Mississippi Staff

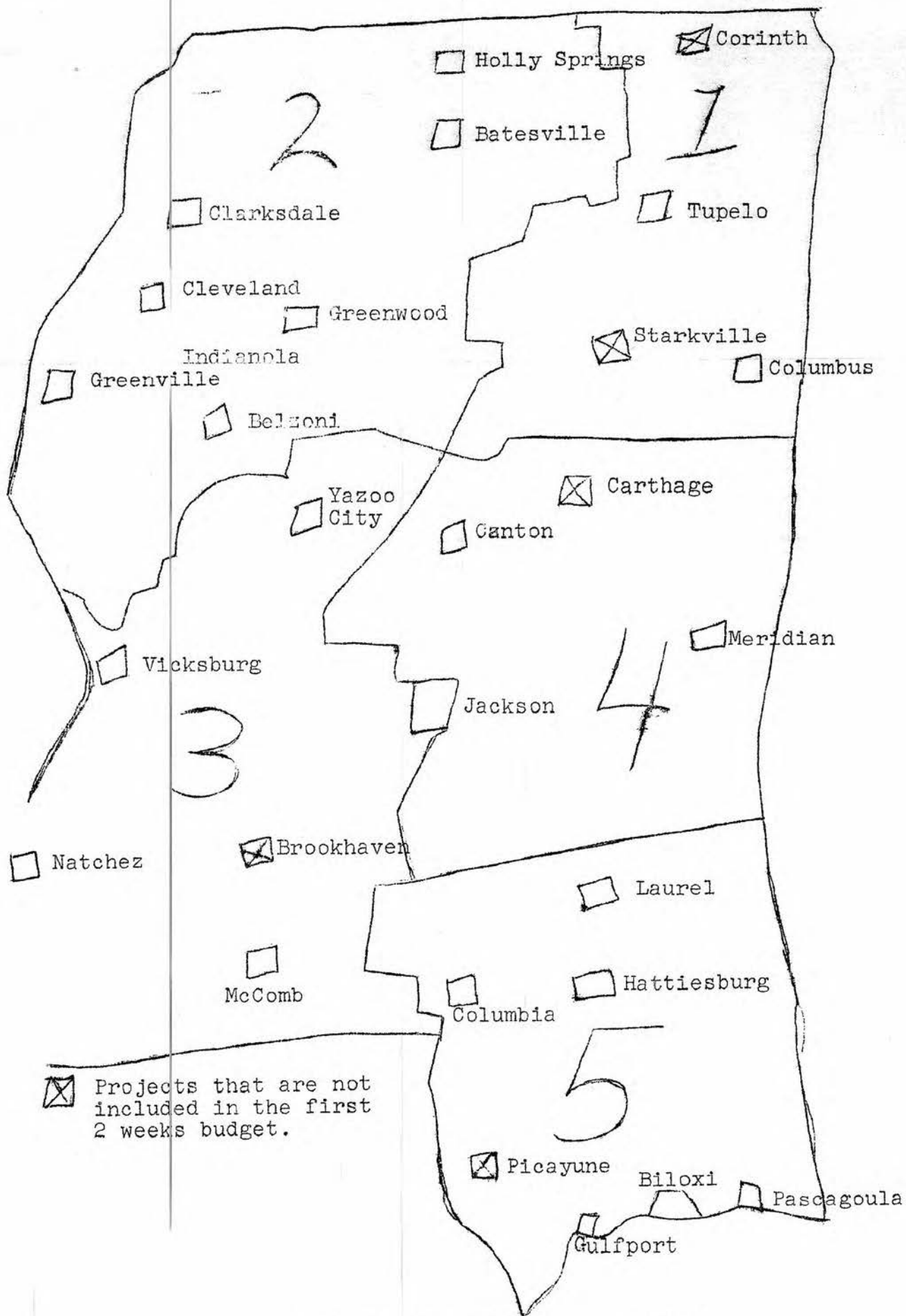
To: Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Re: Operation Mississippi

The following is a statement of proposed operation and program for the next year of operation in Mississippi. The statement of proposed operations is also accompanied by a minimum budget for each project. It is our hope that SNCC will realize the importance of the project and magnitude of the operation and honor our requests.

Yours in the Struggle,

Mississippi Staff



In a mock election conducted by voter registration workers in Mississippi during the second Democratic primary held August 27th, more than thirty-eight thousand Negroes - ineligible to vote according to the discriminatory voter registration requirements in the state - cast their ballots for gubernatorial candidate J.P. Coleman. Despite the limited area of the state participating (namely: Greenwood, Jackson and Clarksdale), Negro leaders felt that the response of Negro citizens was indicative of a strong desire among Negro citizens across the state of Mississippi for their voting franchise.

Apparently, the political potential of a voting Negro population in Mississippi is being felt in state political circles, for just recently, the Mississippi Democratic Executive Committee in stating their opposition to a two-party system in Mississippi said: "a two-party system would split white conservatives and open the door to Negroes holding the balance of power."

Voter registration workers, who have been conducting a vote drive in the Mississippi Delta, operating out of Greenwood, know the urgent need for Negroes across the state to protest existing conditions:

- (1) the inherently discriminatory state voter registration requirements which (with the misuse of these requirements by voter registrars) have consistently made it impossible for Negroes to register or vote;
- (2) the myth that Negroes "aren't ready" and don't want to vote;
- (3) the failure of the federal government to recognize that Negroes have long wanted to vote, but continuing economic and physical reprisals against Negroes attempting to exercise the right to vote makes the decision to try to register virtually a choice between

life and death as long as the federal government refuses to act to protect the right to vote.

Voter registration workers in Mississippi have begun laying plans for a statewide mock election, with the goal of getting 200,000 Negroes (or more) to vote for a Negro candidate running for governor. For the first time, there is a strong Republican gubernatorial candidate running, and with his bid for the governorship, there is a real chance that the conservative Democratic voting bloc that has dominated Mississippi politics will be split. If the Democrats split, 200,000 Negro votes (if they were registered) would probably be more votes than either candidate would get; and, if registered, these mock votes could certainly swing the election to either candidate. With a showing of this kind by thousands of Negroes across the state of Mississippi, the myth that Negroes are not "ready" and don't want to vote would be dispelled. An electoral turn-out of this size could pressure the Justice Department to press more forcefully on the voting suits it has pending - particularly the one asking for the removal of the literacy test, poll tax and good moral character requirements. Negroes would more clearly recognize their political potential through the reactions of whites - as for example the Democratic Executive Committee's recent statement - and be encouraged to register to vote.

The state of Mississippi was broken up into five different areas. Each area has a director and each director has a number of people assigned to work along with him. These area assignments were made to correspond to congressional district lines.



This breakdown facilitates a more diversified and concentrated program. The various directors will establish a rapid communications system and will work closely with each other.

Each director shall also have the responsibility of finding and maintaining close relationship with the leaders in his district so that these leaders can be asked to run for public office. The director shall travel from one project to the other within his district, coordinating and helping the people working with him. He shall be responsible for ascertaining all of the available information pertaining to his district, and meet with other directors frequently, to map strategy and programming for the entire state.

The following is a list of persons who will be working with the directors in their respective districts. Enclosed is a map indicating the breakdown of district areas.

DISTRICT I

Frank Smith, Director

- A. Willie Blue
- B. Claude Weaver
- C. Donald White

DISTRICT II

Samuel Block, Director

- A. Charles Ray McLaurin
- B. Dicky Flowers
- C. Willie Shaw
- D. Willie Smith
- E. Fannie Lue Hamer
- F. Amzie Moore

DISTRICT III

McArthur Cotton, Director

- A. Jesse Harris
- B. Dick Frey
- C. Dave Greene

DISTRICT IV

George Greene, Director

- A. William McGee

DISTRICT V

Lawrence Guyot, Director

- A. Carl Arnold
- B. John O'Neal
- C. Jerry Bray
- D. Jimmy Lee Prewitt

We are suffering from a shortage of many things including money and personnel. The directors have set a minimum number of people needed to work with their particular district. So far Frank Smith (Dist. I) needs three (3) people, McArthur Cotton (Dist. II) needs five (5) people, George Greene (Dist. IV) needs five (5) more people and Lawrence Guyot (Dist. V) needs five (5) more people. If there are good young people, please direct them to Mississippi, the most rewarding and essential project around.

Euvester Simpson, Willie Peacock, Chico Nebblet and Elizabeth Vasser are going to New Orleans, to work with the VEP project there. With Emma Bell assigned to finances in the Greenwood office, we have unassigned only James Jones, who is still undecided about school.

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From Frank Smith re the 1st Congressional District Project:

I, Frank Smith, shall direct the first congressional district and the Northeastern half of the second congressional district. We shall begin shortly with three men besides myself. They are Donald White, who will work in Columbus (Lowndes County), Willie Blue, who will work in Batesville (Panola County) and Claude Weaver, who will work in Tupelo (Lee County). We shall establish an office in Holly Springs (Marshall County), from whence I shall direct the project. All of these other counties are accessible to Holly Springs by car in a matter of hours. These areas are

already familiar to me because I worked in them during the past fiscal year. The plan is to develop a task force of SNCC'ers never before equalled. Men who are experienced in the actions and interactions of their own areas; who will be familiar with the various aspects of the whole program.

The recruitment of these workers will be accomplished through the following means:

- I. Mass meetings are the only way that we can talk to large numbers of people at one time. To attain mass meetings we shall have to pass word of the meetings within the community by word of mouth, leaflets, announcements, etc.
- II. Organizing block captains, in cities wherever possible. We shall encourage people to organize their own blocks and encourage the people within that block, until every resident of voting age has gone down to register and vote. The captains are to list names of everyone and to contact them personally and to worry them until they will then turn over a list of the registered, potentially registered, and all of the persons from the block who have gone down to try to register, to the field secretary working in that particular area.
- III. Organize all clubs, fraternities, churches, bars, etc., and ask them to get their membership registered. To do this, the field worker must contact all organization heads personally, and try to make them take a personal interest in getting their member registered. The vote may be suggested as one of the criteria for becoming a member of the club.

IV. The process of intensive canvassing, by both students and adults, will be used often. It will be utilized with the idea of making local leaders recognize and realize the fact that the fight for the vote is their own personal battle, that they should wage their own personal Non-violent war, that they and everyone else must be allowed to vote by '64. The problems and needs of the local community will be emphasized to make people understand the necessity and advantage, as well as the constitutional guarantee, of voting.

V. We shall develop a task force of six SNCC'ers to work in the 1st Congressional District that will be able to move into any given area within the district, and go to work in a matter of hours. This means that there must be a great deal of communication among the members of the task force. These people will familiarize themselves with all aspects of their area and district. One person will be immediately assigned to familiarize himself with the workings of the Agriculture Department and one other will become familiar with the Dept. of Labor.

VI. We shall organize people in District One around the idea of a mock election. It is our feeling that this will (1) give people experience in the procedure of voting; (2) make the world understand that we really want to vote and, if given the chance, we will vote; (3) give the field worker a chance to observe the final process of organization in action, and (4) give an added feeling of pride to the individuals exercising the right to vote, though in a mock election.



The budget for the individual projects in District One is as follows:

Transportation	\$25.00/week
Salary	\$10.00/week
Telephone Calls	\$ 5.00/week
Supplies	\$10.00/week
Room and Board	<u>\$10.00/week</u>
Total for each project	\$60.00/week

Total for four projects	<u>\$240.00/week</u>
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This budget is based on a minimum weekly requirement for each individual project. As I plan to operate four projects in my district, I request a sum of \$240.00 per week. There will be only one car in the district, which covers an area of about 200 miles. This means that a worker is going to be about half as efficient, because of the lack of transportation. If we had cars we could do twice as much work. We could get twice as many people registered to vote. The awesome problem of transportation which plagues virtually all SNCC workers, especially in Mississippi would be solved. We cannot walk all over these big rural counties

Respectfully,

Frank Smith  
Director, District I

From Ssmuel Block-Director 2nd District  
Re: Operation Mississippi

The Second Congressional District is one of the most important Districts. It has a greater  $\frac{1}{2}$  percentage pf Negroes than any others, and the seat of the Congressman has already been challenged.

At the present time I, Samuel Block, am in ;charge of the second District. In the second District I shall have seven persons working with me. The seven people and the areas in which they will be working are as follows;

- a. Charles Ray McLaurin.....Indianola (Sunflower Co.)
- b. Willie Shaw.....Belzoni (Humphrey's Co)
- c. Matthew Hughes.....Belzoni (Humphrey's Co)
- d. Willie Smith.....Charleston (tallaharchie)
- e. James Jones.....Clarksdale (Cohoma Co)
- f. Dickey Flowers.....Tunica Co.
- g. Fannie L. Hamer.....Ruleville (Sunflower Co)
- h. Amzie Moore.....Cleveland (Bolivar Co.)

There are other people who will be working with us who have not yet been assigned. These people will be assigned as soon as some judgement has been made as to which areas they are most needed and would be most effective.

It is our intention to develop a closer working relationship among all of the workers of the five congressional districts. Some ideas on how to do this follow:

a. Have one person who will be responsible to our national office for all staff members.

b. Organize a group of ministers in each area that will be responsible for getting churches to use for mass meetings in their areas. We feel that mass meetings will best serve the purpose of meeting people in the city and rural areas if called by the minister rather than by us. We do feel that this is possible, for Dr. Jackson reported at the National Baptist Conference that all Baptist churches would be expected to cooperate with Civil Rights activities in the South.

c. Organize Block Captains where it is possible, in each city and have them organize a committee of block captains. Then it might be possible to designate a district block captain to meet about once a month, to discuss strategy being used in each town or city. The purpose of having block captains is 1) to introduce them to the program of work that they will be engaged in; 2) to work with them until they have realized the basic importance of having the full cooperation of all persons within their blocks and emphasizing their goal of registering every voter. They will list names of each person in the block using a form saying whether or not the person is registered to vote and shall be responsible to turn in a daily report to the SNCC worker in that particular area.

d. Get responsible and respected people of the city to help organize, along with the worker in charge, clubs, churches, juke joints, beauty salons, etc.

e. Have some person in the area organize the students of that area to also be active in all programs that are being carried out. In turn, let them have a program and an organization of their own.

The students shall be used for the following: 1) holding mass meetings; 2) evening and week-end canvassing; 3) office work; 4) speaking to church groups; 5) running errands; 6) talking to their parents and friends; 7) turning in weekly reports.

f. The person in charge of each area will be expected to turn in his or her own report and see that he has a person that could be in charge in case he or she has to leave at any time.

g. If at any time another staff member asks for help in any area we will have people to send out from any part of the 2nd district as an emergency force.

h. Each person in charge will familiarize himself, in all aspects, with every town and county in the district, in case he has to move around within the district.

i. He will have an understanding that salaries will be dependent upon the filing of reports each week.

j. He will organize, first, around the idea of a mock election. We feel that since so much has been going on all over the state concerning voting that people will want to learn more about voting. We will familiarize them with the Justice Department suit that has been filed in Mississippi, explaining what it means to Negroes as a whole, when and where the suit will be heard.

k. We think that the mock election will ease the minds of people who have had some apprehensions about what happens when a person goes to vote. It will also let the world know that Negroes do want to vote. It would also imply what would happen if Negroes could vote.

We will need a list of the following supplies: 6 cameras to take pictures; 5 small mimeograph machines; 6 boxes of typing paper; 6 boxes of mimeograph paper; 6 packages of stencils; 12 ball point pens; 6 small file cabinets; 6 dictionaries; 12 letter baskets; 6 brief cases; 6 paper cutters; 6 electric radios; 6 boxes of index cards with 5000 cards per box.

The budget for each person per month shall be as follows:

Telephone calls	\$ 25.00/month
House rent	\$ 25.00/month
Transportation	\$ 20.00/month
Food	\$ 30.00/month
Supplies	<u>\$ 20.00/month</u>
Total per person	\$120.00/month

Total for 8 people for 2nd District      \$960.00/month

It has not yet been ascertained as to whether people will be able to survive on these "minimum" budgets. We hope that we shall be able to live within said budget and that SNCC will see fit to grant to us said sum.

Samuel Block



From: Charlie Cobb  
Re: Economic Needs and Aids in Rural Areas

Key to the success of the vote drive in Mississippi is going to be our ability to handle certain pressing economic needs among Negroes in the state. Steps in this direction were made in at least two instances last year, with results that have been positive aids in the registration effort as well as first steps toward the elimination of the widespread economic poverty among Negroes in the state: (1) the sending of Negroe farmers and sharecroppers to the National Sharecroppers Conference held at Brinks, North Carolina in November of 1962; (2) the food and clothing distribution program was a major factor in the significant breakthrough in the Leflore County (Greenwood) vote drive.

Several factors must be considered - the increasing mechanization of cotton fields which is resulting in the deprivation of income for thousands of Mississippi Negroes; the feudal system under which Negroes on plantations are still living; economic reprisals against Negroes participating in vote drives across the state; the consolidation of farms in the state forcing out the small farmer; discrimination against Negroes seeking aid under certain federal programs; and the general lack of knowledge among Negroes of what aid they can get to help solve their economic problems. I believe that it is time for SNCC to begin to direct a part of its energy toward the solution of these problems. Certain steps can be taken at once:

A. Getting familiar with existing and available government

agricultural programs.

B. Simplifying these programs in order that they might be effectively and comprehensively presented to Mississippi Negroes.

C. Organizing, educating, and mobilizing local groups to utilize federal and state aid programs.

1. State-wide conference of farmers and sharecroppers.

2. Getting delegate from Mississippi to attend the NSF conference in South Carolina on September 22nd.

D. Documenting discrimination in federal programs (which are administered locally).

E. Documenting discrimination in state welfare programs (i.e. Leflore County, Sunflower County, and Amite County).

F. Keeping the Department of Agriculture informed of these discriminations and seeing to it that pressure for the removal of discrimination is maintained.

G. Documenting of economic reprisals that have occurred as a result of civil rights activities.

At least one staff person should begin work on this, and more should be added as the year wears on, for the job gets bigger.

### Finance

Right now, I believe this program can be operated from within the structure of existing voter registration projects. The main expense would be transportation. Perhaps some organization such as the National Sharecroppers Fund could be persuaded to subsidize this project.

Transportation per week	\$10.00
Personal Expense	<u>\$10.00</u>
Total	\$20.00

From: McArthur Cotton, Director 3rd District  
Re: Operation Mississippi

The third congressional district includes some of the large cities in the state of Mississippi - namely, Jackson, Yazoo, Vicksburg, Natchez, McComb, and Brookhaven. The Negro population is about 47%, which means that the Negroes could be extremely instrumental in determining the outcome of elections.

My plans are to establish projects in Hinds County, which includes the state capital; Warren County, which includes Vicksburg; Natchez, Adams County; and McComb, Pike County. Contacts will be made in the surrounding counties, but since they are predominantly rural, and this and the coming two months are harvest months, little emphasis will be put on them for the time being.

In the third district there are three Negro senior colleges and three Negro junior colleges. We plan to use the college students and teachers to help conduct voter registration workshops.

Hollis Watkins, who will attend Tougaloo this semester, plans to organize the campus in order to help in voter registration activities in the surrounding areas.

The project heads will be as follows: Jessie Harris, Hinds County; Dick Frey, Natchez; Dave Greene, Vicksburg. I will head the Pike County project, which will also be the temporary head office.

McComb (Pike County) is an historical site for SNCC - being that it is where the first SNCC voter registration project started - it also represents all of the mistakes that were made in that particular project. Since I had the opportunity

to be a part of that project, I feel that I will have a good understanding of the problems to be faced there.

The total weekly budget will be \$50 per project:

Transportation	\$15.00	(\$25.00 for traveling director)
Room	\$10.00	
Food	\$10.00	
Supplies	\$10.00	
Telephone	\$ 5.00	

Plus at least \$10.00 salary for personal expenses of project heads

There is a desperate need for a car for each of the 4 project counties; there is only one car in the third district.

From: George Greene, Director Fourth District  
Re: Operation Mississippi

The fourth Congressional District is one of the most important districts we find in the five districts in the state. The towns we will work from are: Canton, Philadelphia, Forest, Newton, Meridian (George Greene will be stationed there), Mendenhall (Magee will be stationed there).

It is our intention to develop a close working relationship among all the workers in the five Congressional Districts we intend to work in.

1. In the area that we are working, a person will be responsible for other staff members to our National Office in case of any emergency.
2. Students shall be used for: holding mass meetings, evening and week-end canvassing, talking to parents and friends, and speaking in churches.
3. Adults will: speak in churches, talk to friends and other people, and canvass whenever they can.
4. Mass meetings will be held. The mass meeting is the other means we have of talking to large numbers of people at one time.
5. Workshops will be held on week-ends for students. We hope to inform the students, so that we will be able to canvass. The workshops will be held in various cities.
6. Get the leaders of cities and towns to the COFO meetings. These will make them aware and informed about what is going on in the state.



7. We shall organize first the idea of mock elections. We will fill them in on the Justice Department suit against the state of Mississippi. We are going to gain the ballot by 1964.

The budget for each person per month follows:

Food	\$ 30.00	
House	\$ 25.00	
Supplies	\$ 20.00	
Transportation	\$ 20.00	
Telephone	<u>\$ 25.00</u>	
Total for each person	\$120.00	
Total for seven people per month		<u>\$840.00</u>

George Greene

From: Laurence Guyot, Director Fifth District  
Re: Operation Mississippi

The following is the budget for District V:

Transportation	\$25.00/week	
Salary	\$10.00/week	
Telephone	\$ 5.00/week	
Supplies	\$10.00/week	
Room and Board	<u>\$10.00/week</u>	
Total for each project:	\$60.00/week	
Total for 4 projects		\$240.00/week

This plan is for operating four projects each of which will cost a minimum of \$60.00, which makes a grand total of \$240.00 per week for the entire operation in the Fifth District.

Yours in the struggle,

Laurence Guyot