

[1964]

July 16 - Mass point....Howie report to Ben.....13 appeared at court house to register.. 8 were allowed to take the test....5 passed...3 that failed were told to come back in 30 days. While one Negro was taking the test, a white man came in and took the test without waiting. The following Negro who came in saw that the white man was given considerable help by the registrar. One Negro applicant was kept waiting 20 minutes after having taken the test in order to have it administered.At 4:30 ~~4:30/4:30~~ a Negro woman applicant came outside the court house after finishing the test and said she had told that no more could register today. Howard Kirschbaum, volunteer, went to registrar's office to check and was told that the woman registrar had left. At 4:25 Howard saw the woman leave and asked her why it was closed. She said, "The circuit court was not closed but that she had to go home to cook supper for her son who was working 12 hours a day." "It would be working overtime for me anyway and I'm not going to work for nothing."Howard talked to reporters who seemed interested and want him to have dinner and later an interview...we have decided these interviews may be had with caution

There was a grand jury today; 11 Negroes were subpoenaed. It was very unusual for they discussed if COFO is needed. The intent seemed to be to determine how solid the Negro community was behind the program. They subpoenaed several people who work closely with us and some who house us, those that house us did not have a chance to testify. Those who did testify were well-to-do and on the fringes of support except for a couple. But no one spoke up in defense. This factor coupled with the multitude of arrest throughout the state, the police being around more often here, constant harassment on the phone, from passing cars, firings, etc. may indicate an increase in clamping down. We fear that the whites think they can do as they please without reprisal. (A rumor circulates that the guy that shot Miss Stallworth was known by the local authorities and was apprehended but immediately released by a judge who told him "don't kill any more niggers right now." Also at the grand jury, Ben Ridenour's name was read by the D.A. supposedly from an L.A. newspaper stating that he was a derelict, refugee subversive etc. and needed to be back in Calif. taking care of himself.....)

Our new telephone rings all the time and no one is there. I suspect the operator. We have informed the supervisor and manager and they say nothing can be done.

The FBI were here again and asked Ridenour more about his arrest of three weeks ago. They are still investigating.

Freedan school is having real problems....The parents don't want their children to come out; so many of those who would be here don't come often. But those who remain are enjoying and learning. The teachers are constantly creating innovations and finding stimulating activities.

Canvassing was slow today... (things in general are slackening off)....13 people committed to go to the court house. Few Freedom forms signed.

The law student, Allen Vernon came today. Will be here the rest of the summer.

July 17....10 people went to the court house today6 were admitted, 5 passed. Little activity in school, canvassing or anything.....Bad Day... Reaction from the jury and general intimidation in general..... We had a staff meeting and mapped out a plan of action.....