

The Mississippi Summer Project

The Mississippi Summer Project is completed. Bridgeheads were established in the "closed society" of Mississippi, and this fall they will not be evacuated as some friends feared and opponents hoped; they will be held and extended. "The Negroes of that state are never again going to be abandoned," John Lewis, Chairman of SNCC, wrote in a letter to President Johnson. (The project was run by COFO, the Council of Federated Organizations, which is for all practical purposes SNCC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, aided by CORE).

The Summer Project was not fighting people but inequality and injustice; many of its participants have commented on the mood of love permeating it. Yet the images of warfare are not unjustified. The casualty list of the project shows the death of three staff workers and of five Mississippians connected with it; many wounded; at least twenty churches burned to the ground and considerable other property damage; the losses sustained by local supporters fired from their jobs or otherwise damaged; and the vast sums of ransom paid to the local authorities (they called it "bail"). The thousand volunteers -- students, ministers, doctors, lawyers -- who came to work with the project staff have shown conspicuous bravery in the face of the enemy, simply by sticking it out on a job which started in June under a cloud of violence perpetrated by its opponents. In a popular movie of some years ago, "Bad Day at Black Rock," Spencer Tracy showed admirable courage on the screen by staying around in a little town after some local characters had told him, "get out by sunset or we'll kill you." These same words were spoken by real-life villains to quite a number of young men and women freshly arrived from shottered campuses in Iowa or California, and they too stayed, almost as a matter of course. Local Negro children of twelve or thirteen, raised in the philosophy

of yielding and lying low, went out to canvas for voter registration, were harrassed, beaten, kicked out of jobs and schools, and went back to canvas some more.

The ways of opening up a state whose men in power had operated under the banner of "Never," were several and they were interdependent.

The Freedom Schools, with classes for all ages, and students from 8 to 82, were a first attack on the state of semi-illiteracy in which the "seperate but equal" myth of public education had left the Negro youth of Mississippi. There were classes in reading and writing, typing, arts and crafts, sewing, nutrition, French, citizenship, and history. Starting at the beginning of summer, when are supposedly glad to be let out of school, their overwhelming popularity proved how sorely they had been needed. And they did more than teach skills: for the first time, these children had teachers not afraid to give them an undistorted view of American and world history, to tell them what "really happened" during the Civil War and the Reconstruction period. Public schools in the Deep South endanger a proper character development of Negro children who are officially taught that the whites are the Master Race; the Freedom Schools began giving the antidote. They continued all through the summer, and are now kept going with evening and weekend classes.

The community centers provided social services and recreation for adult Negroes whose social needs until now had been virtually ignored by the state: libraries, children day care, health and citizenship courses, arts, music, ping-pong, dances, and whatever else was needed and could be provided for. More important than any of these seperate activities, the centers could begin to give a sense of "community," of common fate and common power, to scattered individuals. From the beginning, the centers were meant as permanent institutions, but in these first hectic months they have been housed in church basements, old schoolhouses, or at times even in a back room in the COFO office; new and attractive buildings are planned for several of them.

The aim of the centers and schools is not to make the Negroes of Mississippi more acceptable to the white community, not to help a young man who is studying French and wearing an Ivy League suit get service at the segregated counter of a 5-and-10; they want to assist the local Negroes in the reform of society as a whole. They lead directly and unavoidably to political activity.

The political action of the Summer Project was twofold: voter registration, and registration for the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. VR, as voter registration was called, is a long and uphill struggle. A century after the Emancipation Proclamation, less than 7% of the adult Negroes of Mississippi are registered voters, against more than 60% of the whites. In some counties with a majority of the population Negro, there is not one registered non-white voter. The courthouse registrar has an unchecked veto over any registration attempt and has used this consistently to keep out the Negro, no matter how well educated. COFO workers have helped local Negroes study the registration tests, have arranged Freedom Days to encourage registration, and have accompanied prospective voters to the courthouses; local authorities have used every form of violence and intimidation to keep them away. There have been arrests under the flimsiest pretexts or without any pretexts. Private and municipal and state employers have told Negro employees, "If you register, you're fired," thus openly breaking the Federal Law. Negroes who dared register have had their houses bombed and fired into. In spite of all this, COFO has found a continuing stream of men and women this summer willing to climb those courthouse steps and risk their livelihoods and even their lives. The work has not produced a great new number of Negro voters, but it has produced a solid file of affidavits signed by people deprived of this basic democratic, constitutional right. It has produced a whole arsenal of testimony with which the Federal Department of Justice could end the feudalism of Mississippi.

Because so few Mississippi Negroes are registered voters

(and even those few are consistently barred from the primaries), the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was founded. The party is open to all citizens, black and white, and it has pledged itself to the platform of the National Democratic Party -- unlike the Mississippi Democratic Party which went its own way as early as 1948, and which is not so much a political Party anymore as a power machine to fill certain offices with certain people. Using registration forms based on a northern model, the Mississippi F.D.P. launched a statewide "freedom registration campaign," and by mid-August the COFO head office in Jackson had counted 56,500 F.D.P. registered voters. Precinct, County, and State Conventions have been held, and one of the bright moments of this summer's work was the conditional recognition of the F.D.P. delegation at the Democratic Convention in Atlantic City, the retreat of the delegates of the Mississippi Democratic Party, and the definite commitment to truly representative delegations for 1968.

There was more. COFO brought folk singers, musicians, and the Free Southern Theater to tour the rural areas of Mississippi where few people had ever seen live entertainment. COFO distributed food and clothings to the unemployed, and took a special responsibility for all those who had lost their jobs or their land because of their stand for civil rights. COFO made the nation remember the Forgotten Man of Mississippi. Summing up, COFO started 24 community centers, founded at least 30 Freedom Schools with well over three thousand pupils, and conducted voter registration campaigns in forty towns and villages in the state. And this huge job was done, as a visiting minister from the National Council of Churches wrote home, "by young men and women in hot and crowded stores and homes turned civil rights offices, among the unpaved and battered roads of Negro Mississippi...amidst a climate of external savagery."

Traveling through the state, from north to south and from east to west, Holly Springs is the first project town, followed by the cluster of Clarksdale, Marks, Batesville, and Crenshaw. Coahoma and Panola counties have become familiar

names to everyone in the Summer Project. (Because of the power of the Mississippi county sheriff, and because there are very bad, bad, and not-so-bad sheriffs, county borderlines became as important to COFO workers as frontiers to the European Underground in World War II).

Clarksdale, which closed its two swimming pools right at the beginning of the summer rather than obey the law, put itself on the COFO map through its sheriff Ben Collins, a rather picturesque figure who used to spray civil rights workers with a room deodorizer. Reading about Mr. Collins in the field reports, one finds oneself thinking at first, "He's not such a bad guy, he has a sense of humor," but a more thorough study of the material shows how deadly wrong such an impression would be. There is nothing humorous about the intimidations, the firings from jobs, the beating of prisoners. Ben Collins is on the record as having said, "When those COFO boys are gone, I'll kill all the niggers here who worked with them." However, the COFO boys will not go. (It is certain that the three men murdered near Philadelphia at the start of the summer were martyrs to their cause in the most real sense; the national reaction to their disappearance saved the lives of many of their colleagues). Clarksdale had an extensive summer program, staffing four Freedom Schools plus a fifth one in nearby Marks; the community center was established in what was described as a "cleaned up former greasy spoon restaurant." COFO in Clarksdale had some completely dark hours after the city engineer pulled the light meter out of the wall; surprisingly, this man appeared one day at the end of the summer to tell the volunteers that he really liked them very much. Clarksdale also has the dubious honor of boasting a church, the First Christian Church of the Disciples of Christ, where a (white) northern minister of that same denomination was turned away because he was connected with the civil rights cause. One may assume that Christ's disciples themselves would have been unwelcome there too.

Coahoma and nearby Hancock county had an intensive VR and Freedom Registration Drive, inspired by the presence of

Dr. Aaron E. Henry, a veteran civil rights man and now chairman of the Freedom Democratic Party. Panola County was especially important because a federal injunction had sharply curtailed the veto powers of the circuit clerk there, and every day twenty to thirty men and women were found at the courthouse waiting to register; the county sheriff demonstrated local respect for the law by enlivening the proceedings with the presence of his police dog right in the courthouse.

Going downstream along the Mississippi in the Delta, the next centers of civil rights work were Sunflower and Bolivar counties, with the towns Cleveland, Drew, Ruleville, Indianola, Shaw, and Mound Bayou. SNCC workers came to Ruleville in 1962 and inspired the formation of the Ruleville Citizenship Club, around which voter registration has centered ever since. Fannie Lou Hammer has been the great leader here. (After the first attempts at registration, the Negroes almost without exception lost their jobs. Unemployed women were taught quilting to raise some money, the scraps for their work coming the Ruleville Manufacturing Company. After a while, the company -- which has a head office and president in New York -- made it its policy to burn all cloth scraps). Ruleville now has its Freedom School, community center, and Freedom Registration drive going. The Freedom School was particularly important, for here, as in several other counties, Negro children in public schools constantly missed classes because they were sent out to do "fund-raising" for the schools. From the age of eight on, children have to put in one or more days of cotton picking, with no one knowing where the money from the cotton goes -- peonage in 1964 America. Midway through the summer, the sheriff of Sunflower County told the volunteers that from then on all bail, no matter what the charge, would be \$500 per person or more -- something new in American legal history. Civil rights workers, arriving with certain illusions, tried to have talks with the mayors of Ruleville and Drew, but, they report, these talks broke down because at some point or other the town fathers started to ask low questions about the interracial orgies they

shot through the jaw on August 15; in the hospital, a police officer was overheard to tell a white woman, "They finally got the nigger Silas." The woman said, "Really?" The policeman answered, "Yes, isn't it wonderful?" Nevertheless, Greenwood had a hundred pupils in the Freedom School and the Freedom Registration gained all through the summer.

From Greenwood, U.S. highway 92 East leads to Starkville, West Point, and Columbus near the Alabama border. Starkville was virgin territory; no one from any civil rights organization had gone there before the summer. Its exploration began on August 1, when two volunteers (ages 18 and 19) asked to be driven there from Columbus, dropped in the morning, and picked up in the evening. There they were, standing alone on a dirt road, as lost as paratroopers in a jungle; but the local police chief took care of their public relations problem. As they were having a coke in a (Negro) cafe, he came in with two aides to tell them that the Negroes of Starkville didn't need any outside agitators. By the time he had finished, the cafe was packed with young people who thus found out what the two volunteers had come for. And they told them, "We've been waiting for you." Ten days later, 450 people in Starkville had registered for the Freedom Democratic Party; and the police chief had taken the license away from the cafe where it all started. Starkville now has a Voters League; at one meeting at the end of the summer that same police chief stood near the door and told the arrivals that anyone who went in would be in serious trouble. There were 43 people at the meeting; only two had turned around at the door and gone home. Nearby Columbus had a Freedom School, and also some prime police harassment. One COFO-er was put in jail on a parking summons and each day he was given another day in jail and another fine of \$50 as he continued to refuse to be fingerprinted. Finally he was bailed out; the COFO report states quietly, "it does not seem constitutional to put someone in jail for life on a parking ticket."

of August, plus one hundred and eleven arrests on July 16, Freedom Day. Police officers were reported active in slashing of tires on project cars and there is even an affidavit on file of two policemen trying to run down some volunteers walking along the public highway. Here is the text of a sworn statement in the Greenwood file; not chosen because it is particularly dramatic but rather because of its everyday-ness; it could have happened anywhere this summer in Mississippi:

"On July 20, 1964 at about 11:30 PM I was driving down McLaurin Street in Greenwood, Mississippi accompanied by S-----. We were driving people home from the mass meeting which had been held that evening.

The police car had been following us since we left the mass meeting. We parked outside Lula's Cafe on McLaurin. I got I got out of the car, intending to go into the Cafe. The police car pulled alongside. They asked me for the registration papers on the car. I showed them. Then they asked for my drivers license. It was in the glove compartment of the car. I went to the car, searched in the glove compartment for the few seconds, and then the policeman said "You should have had them in your pocket. That's too long to wait." They arrested me. I gave the keys to my car to S-----, but the policeman said "Take the keys with you."

They took me down to the station, charged me with having a faulty driver's license and running a stop sign and threw me in jail. COFO workers arrived some time later and banded me out for \$35. When I got the envelope back containing my valuables (taken from me when I was arrested) all of the papers I had been carrying loose in my pocket were missing. These include gas receipts, repair receipts, etc. My wallet was in the envelope, but it had been stripped of all identification cards and papers.

I went back to Lula's Cafe where I had left my car. The car was gone. People in Lula's Cafe told me that after I left, other police came, searched the car, strewed papers around and towed the car away.

We went back down to the station to ask about the car. I was told they didn't have it. I told the desk sergeant that I had seen the car parked in the lot outside. He said: "Go get it then." I got it and drove back to the office.

The next day the car would hardly run at all. I took it to Gray's Service Station. The mechanic thought it was the float stick and fixed that. The car still wouldn't run at all. I took it to Leroy's Garage. The mechanic there told me it was sugar in the gas tank. The car is now a total loss."

Another report tells of an eighty-two year old gardener who told a project director, "I am too old to register," but who was finally convinced to sign the Freedom Democratic Party rolls "not for himself but to make a better world for his grandchildren." Shortly after, he was fired from all four gardening jobs he held in town. Greenwood is the town, also, of the McGhee brothers, young men who had the courage to go alone to a movie theater filled with hostile rednecks. One of them, Silas McGhee, was

visualize taking place in the COFO offices. (A good psychiatrist would have his work cut out for him in the places of Mississippi law enforcement). Drew has a community center too, now, and a Freedom School which had fifty pupils is possibly the first American community to try out the Gestapo gimmick called Schutzhaft, which means arresting people "for their own protection." Local COFO people who found themselves in the town after sunset, were simply put in jail till the following day.

Much more serious and far-reaching than this police harassment are the Sunflower and Bolivar County plans of various "white citizens" groups for "complete mechanization" and for "the removal of all dilapidated houses". In Bolivar County, a "Planters Club" seeks to do away with a thousands dilapidated houses a year. Since the Negro farm laborers have nowhere else to live, the real purpose of this plan to beautify the countryside is clear enough. Mechanization, that is to say mechanized farming in the Delta, would lead the attack from the other end; one COFO man wrote, "The people we are reaching now, will have left in five years time." The point is that while mechanization of farming is in itself a natural development, which could bring greater welfare, the Delta has no plans for retraining the laborers, and Federal plans in this area are made unworkable. Here the urgency of COFO becomes very clear: while sheriffs keep themselves happy with roughing up prisoners, the more "visionary" segregationists foresee a forced mass exodus of unskilled Mississippians out of their own state.

Continuing farther south, Greenville is reached, and more inland, Greenwood, where SNCC had its national headquarters this summer and a command part of WATS lines (Wide Area Telephone Service) which played a vital part in the communications and security arrangements. The telephone triangle of Greenwood, Jackson, and Atlanta, Georgia, provided a nerve center for the battle of Mississippi, for keeping track of the whereabouts of every COFO man, woman, and car, and for calling on the F.B.I. and the Justice Department in Washington when danger loomed--and on a bad night the hectic Jackson office at 1017 Lynch Street, and the smaller office in Greenwood looked and sounded like one of those underground operational rooms of the U.A.F. during the Battle of Britain.

Greenwood was a tough town for the volunteers: there were forty arrests from the first week of July until the first week

Still farther down the Mississippi comes Vicksburg, a tourist town and a center for federal projects and thus a relatively peaceful place. At least, these early reports say; then comes the somewhat jarring note that the community center was burned down. (Warren County Sheriff Vernon Luckett, no Sherlock Holmes he, advanced the theory that the fire must have been caused by smoldering garbage, although a torch was found right on the spot). Vicksburg had 650 people attending its Freedom Party precinct meeting. A newsletter was started, a food bank, and a survey in depth of one precinct. Vicksburg also distinguished itself because some successful contacts were established with the white community.

Then, east of Vicksburg, comes the capital, Jackson. Jackson was a center of CORE administration for the Summer Project; it also had four hundred pupils in eight Freedom Schools, and a big voter registration campaign. A community center is being founded. There will be several Freedom Schools this fall, one of them a mobile unit. Jackson does not stand out in Mississippi the way New Orleans stands out in Louisiana; it is simply a somewhat larger town than the others. But the "Northern presence" of volunteers, newspapermen, and the F.B.I. had its effect on the mood of the town; before this summer, Mississippi was the only state in the union without its own F.B.I. office (a strange situation for a state which had more than its share of unsolved arson, murder, and defiance of federal law). There is a connection between this summer's work and the recent quiet integration of Jackson's first-graders.

East of Jackson lies the Fourth Congressional District which was the special responsibility of CORE (Districts One, Two, Three, and Five were run by SCCC), with Canton, Carthage, Harmony, Meridian, --and Philadelphia, where James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner were murdered. The major and minor incidents in this district make a long list; a report of July 17 tells of a New York law student and a reporter for Jet Magazine beaten up by Philadelphia toughs in full sight of swil-

Freedom Schools and Community Centers. Philadelphia, where Mrs. Rita Schwerner now works, is building its center as a memorial for its three dead, and even here volunteers had the stomach to set up a new Freedom School. In Carthage, COFO-ers scrubbed and hammered to fix up an empty school building, only to be told when the work was finished that they could not use it; they started afresh somewhere else. In Carthage, too, COFO had contracted with radio station WAG for a series of spot announcements of the Freedom Democratic Party county convention; a day later an embarrassed station manager came to ask out since he feared "for the safety of the station and his employees." In Harmony, after running up against the usual real estate problems, the project volunteers and local helpers built their own community center for less than fifteen hundred dollars. Meridian had a large Freedom School program, and also, surprisingly, a City Attorney with enough backbone to restrain some local agitators harassing the volunteers.

The most successful Freedom School program of the summer was that of Hattiesburg, eighty miles south of Meridian. Freedom School registration started on July 1st, and six days later 582 adults and children had signed up. Schools were set up in six churches; there were courses in music, in citizenship, Negro history, hygiene, prenatal care (given by a registered nurse). In the rural center called Palmers Crossing, three miles out of town, a community center offered day care for small children, recreation, and classes in literacy, health care, and sewing. The Freedom School teachers talked about the Freedom Democratic Party, and afternoon "precinct teas" were held for those who didn't attend the schools. The library became so large that it could be distributed over several separate ones.

Hattiesburg had an average of sixty volunteers all through the summer, half of whom taught in the Freedom Schools. There had been apprehension about where to house all of these people, for several of the Negro families who had originally offered rooms had been in-

timidated into withdrawing. But once the volunteers showed up, the local people, seeing "how they had come all that way," quickly rallied. Many ministers - counselors from the National Council of Churches came to Hattiesburg, and here as elsewhere the new Mississippi Student Union, made up of local high school students, worked with COFO on voter registration. Nearby Laurel had its Freedom School too, a community center, and a strong voter registration program.

Mississippi's Southwest is a no man's land of violence, and it is a major triumph that voter registration was actually undertaken in Natchez and McComb, and that McComb had a small Freedom School. Natchez is the episcopal see for the Roman Catholic Church in Mississippi, but so far the bishop has not seen fit to welcome the northern priests who want to help in his state. Thus Catholic priests can come only as "tourists," in contrast to their Protestant and Jewish colleagues, who, under the National Council of Churches, helped the volunteers with moral support, visits in jail, with chauffeuring them around, and trying to get them to eat a regular meal when possible.

The Southeast of the state did better than the Southwest; perhaps the sea wind helps somewhat to blow the cobwebs out of people's heads. Moss Point, Pascagoula, Gulfport, Biloxi, and Ocean Springs, all saw COFO in action, and the creation of schools and centers. (Wiggins, 25 miles inland, had a sheriff who simply announced that white volunteers could not enter Stone County). In Biloxi, COFO undertook a White Community Project of contacts with the ministry, journalists, labor leaders, and personnel of the nearby Keesler Air Force Base. The W.C.P. had rough sailing, but enough was achieved to warrant a wider spreading of this project. An apartment had been leased in Biloxi to serve as headquarters, but at the last moment the landlord (white, and afraid) canceled it, and the project ended up on the third floor of a hotel "misleadingly named The Riviera." Biloxi had eighty Freedom School students, and Ocean Springs thirty. The M.S.U., Mississippi Student

Moss Point near Pascagoula is a town of bitter police harassment and strong civil rights enthusiasm. A quote from a report -- again, it could have been anywhere in Mississippi:

"The five of us plus one young lady from the community, who is very interested in working for Civil Rights, went to Hattiesburg for some much needed supplies. At this point, we had no materials, money, office or many people. After stopping at the Court House to see T----- from a distance of course -- we arrived at the Hattiesburg office where we were very impressed with the spirit of the Movement that is so apparent there. We really have something to work towards in organizing ourselves in Moss Point.

"We also learned that the 3 civil rights workers were arrested in Phil. Miss., released at night and are now missing. The car was found burned. The press and the FBI are everywhere. The 3 went there to investigate a church burning and beatings of Negroes. We returned to Moss Point about 6 P.M. and attended a lively (civil rights) meeting.

"When we left the meeting, R----- and I went to a cafe and were going to call Hattiesburg about the recent trouble. I was told by community people about whites throwing poisoned candy and gum around the community. Two small children were supposed to have been poisoned badly. I called and they were to call me back within the hour. R----- left the cafe to see C-----, I walked next door and sat on the lawn when I saw a constable coming. The constable put R----- in the car and came over to me. "Whatcha doing here boy?" A short dialogue followed, and I was put under arrest "for investigation."

"At the jail, we met Highway Patrol, Pascagoula and Moss Point city police, sheriff's deputies and others. The general conversation was one of harassment and intimidation. ('We treat our niggers well as long as they stay in their place...we don't want you commie outside agitators coming in...people get killed for less.') Then we went up the elevator, were made to face the elevator wall and a highway patrolman took out his billy club, smacked it on his own hand, and said, 'You boys are in for a good whooping.'

"Upon entering cell block we were taken to "nigger bull pen." They were shoved inside and officers said, 'Here they are, get 'em boys.' This is very unusual practice for whites to be put into the Negro section. The Negroes expressed confusion and fear. They were moved to beat us. Five minutes later, two officers took us into a white cellblock. This was about 12:30 a.m. Wednesday. At the white cell, the officers tried to incite white prisoners to take out their aggressions on the volunteers. ('It's whooping time.') The officers left and white prisoners gathered about. R----- opened a conversation with one, and eased some of the tension. At this point, a Mexican spoke up and R----- spoke to him in Spanish to help develop a rapport. After several minutes, a Mississippian announced that he hated all niggers and nigger-lovers and that COFOers were there to be beaten by the whites. However he was going to let us go.

"We lay down and listened to the argument, that lasted about three hours, on whether or not to beat us up. Sporadically, police officers and trustees would enter argument, attempting to incite white prisoners to "do justice." Morning arrived without real incident.

"About 10 a.m. officers took us out of the cell into fingerprinting room. As they were fingerprinting and mugging me, the officers told R----- sordid stories about brutality that had been imposed upon fellow COFOers since the day before. An officer told

but R----- didn't know it) and that a fellow white girl worker had been brutally raped and was on her death bed. At this point R----- fainted. Upon awakening, the back of his head bleeding, we both were escorted to the lobby where attorneys from COFO in Jackson were waiting.....Local police refused to return personal papers, mainly handwritten notes, and denied they had ever taken them...In a subsequent interview, FBI agents expressed no interest in the mental harassment which occurred during the 12 hours spent in jail..When taken to jail, R----- had been told he was being arrested on a vagrancy charge. The following morning the sheriff said there were no charges."

In Moss Point, as in other towns, there are a few Negro policemen on the force. These get no salary, only a bonus of four dollars per arrest. They are not allowed to book whites, but early this summer they were informed that it was all right to bring in white civil rights workers. At least one of them said he might not care to, and was fired.

Moss Point had many mass meetings; shots were fired into one during the singing at the end, and three girls were hurt, one badly. Nevertheless, five-hundred people showed up for a meeting scheduled the very next evening. "There was a moment's hesitation when the singing began, because everyone thought of what had happened the night before, but then they raised their voices and sang, 'We Shall Overcome.'"

On August 10, the Freedom School at Gluckstadt in Madison County near Canton, was burned to the ground. A thirteen year old Negro boy wrote about this later, "I think it's a shame how all the good books got burned, how the pencils and tables got burned, how the church piano and all the good church benches were burned to ashes." A girl wrote, "And to the one that burned down that building - you are not hurting us, you are building fire on your own back. Because don't you know God was looking at you? God is going to have your trial one day, and your aunts and uncles are not going to be on that jury seat to declare you innocent. It don't make any difference with God what color your face is. Brother, you will get what's coming to you."

And a boy of seventeen: "...when I returned from the play In White America, they told me that our school had been