

MEMORANDUM

December 15, 1964

Re. IVANHOE PREMIER

To Friends of SNCC From Betty Garman, Northern Coordinator

Some weeks ago you all received a brief mailing about films and an indication that we would like the various Friends of SNCC groups to arrange for a "Premier" or "Opening" of the Ivanhoe film in your city. We are still hoping that the major cities at least will be able to schedule such an event. What follows below are suggestions for organizing it and a note on the mechanics of obtaining the film for the opening and for preview.

New York SNCC is presently in the process of arranging a January opening, probably on the 10th. Los Angeles has organized a showing for the 15th of January. Any date that you all may select after January 15th would be acceptable unless too many cities select the same night and the limited number of prints won't go around.

Both the New York and Los Angeles openings will include talent on the program since the film is short (one hour) for a program by itself. In New York there will probably be a reception for potential donors after the program -- and an additional collection will be made. For other cities, several possibilities exist:

1. A local art theater might be convinced to run the film for the opening and to turn the proceeds over to SNCC. You would probably want, in this case, to charge a higher price than regular tickets at that theater, to sell tickets in advance, and possibly to have a speaker, some local talent or another film (pick it well, though) on the program. If the art theater won't give the house free, you may have to negotiate a percentage of the admission price for the management. This would be ok if you felt the theater was the best place for the opening.
2. Or you may choose to show the film in a local high school auditorium, or a church (with good acoustics) -- which alleviates the problem with the theater management somewhat (and may also alleviate whatever problems there will be with distributor's rights to the film -- as I understand it Harold Becker, the producer, has yet to make definite arrangements with a distributor but may conclude a contract any day). The program still might include another film, local talent, or a speaker of some stature.
3. If your Friends group works in an area where there are several "communities", eg suburbs or cities nearby of some size, you may decide to "open" the film more than once.
4. After the New York opening the film will be available for various kinds of programs in your area. The details on this must still be worked out between SNCC and the producer, but if you feel you would want to buy a copy, send me a notice of that fact in writing before January 1st, 1965.
5. About the film: The film runs for an hour. It is centered around the field work done by Ivanhoe Donaldson (on our staff) in Danville, Va., Selma, Ala. and Greenwood, Miss. It has already won the Gold Prize in the Mannheim 13th International Film Festival and will be entered in several other documentary feature film competitions.

6. If you are planning to hold an "Opening", please let me know in writing what date it will be, where, what the program will be like, etc. Please send along as complete details as possible. I will then make certain that you have a print of the film...and whatever other help you need.

If you need a print for preview (as well as the opening), write a letter with details as to date, place, time, program, to Harold Becker (the producer), requesting a copy for preview and for your opening (with a copy to me). Be sure to be specific as to the exact day your preview will be and the exact day your opening will be. The film will be shipped from Becker's Studio in New York directly to you and you will be expected to return it to him. Also indicate how many days you will need to keep the film -- or when he can expect to receive it back. Remember that these prints are expensive and also limited. Also specify if you want 16 mm or 35 mm.

Harold Becker
295 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York

7. Think, too, when you are planning the opening of holding a special reception for potential donors, either after the opening -- or holding a special, small showing, for such people.
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For those groups who have not responded to the earlier memo: We still need to know what films you do have, what kind of shape they are in and which films you are interested in purchasing. Streets of Greenwood will soon be available. Since we are ordering in bulk lot (with a price reduction), I need to know immediately what cities beside Detroit, Washington, Philadelphia, Bay Area and Sacramento are interested in buying a copy (if the cost is about \$100.00). If I do not hear from you by January 1st, I will assume that you do not want to purchase a copy and will order on the basis of the replies to date. We will be purchasing several copies for general circulation and will work out a schedule so that each city can have the film for a month at a time -- in which period you ought to be able to show it every night to a different group.

Copies of a Dream Deferred are still available for \$60 including a film box and postage from the San Francisco SNCC office, 584 Page Street, San Francisco, California. Please let us know when you order. This film is a half hour in length and is primarily geared to tying in the role people in the North must play to support SNCC and the Southern Movement. The Bay Area office, I believe, can also loan you copies of the film for a specified period of time.

FILM PROGRAMS

1. Several groups have organized film festivals in the past and are working on that for the future. This involves renting a number of topical and/or well known films and planning several weekend film showings that are open to the community. The funds collected at the door -- and during a pitch (and short speaker) after the program -- are the proceeds. Films can be obtained from the large distributors, namely Brandon, for varying fees -- sometimes as low as \$7.50, sometimes as high as \$50.
2. Many of the Friends groups have also used the SNCC films very productively. Rather than waiting for requests to come to them, for example, some groups have planned a mailing campaign of pr material on the films to various organizations -- churches, clubs, etc and then followed up with a phone call asking if a SNCC speaker might come with the film to their next meeting. Some such showings net \$25.00, some \$100.00. But consistent working with "film showings" can bring in thousands in the space of several months. Special showings where admission is charged can also be organized -- in a housing project rec room, at a school, etc. Some groups have even trained their own projectionists and borrowed a projector to use for several months.