

SOMETHING

NEW

SEWING

HEALTH

ARITHMETIC

SPELLING
and
READING



Freedom Schools

"It is like having the lights turned on after you have lived all your life in a darkened room." This is the way one person described the effect of CORE's Freedom Schools in Mississippi and other states of the Deep South. Freedom is more than the right to vote. Freedom means dignity; it means a sense of one's worth as a person.

This is what our Freedom Schools are working to encourage. We are trying to turn on the lights for people who have lived too long in the darkness of deprivation. But we need your help.

The future of our Freedom Schools, and the work they are doing, depends on your support.

JAMES FARMER
National Director, CORE

The following is taken from a report by Liz Fusco, Coordinator of CORE Freedom Schools.

At the beginning of the summer, with rare exceptions, the kids who were tentatively exploring us and the Freedom Schools were willing to express themselves on only one thing with honesty and passion. That thing was that as soon as they could gather enough money for a ticket they were going off to Chicago or to California. To leave the state was their ambition, and about it they were certain. They had not thought any further than that, not even in terms of where the money was to come from, and certainly not in terms of what they would find where they would go and what they would do there. Behind their passion for the north was some sense of "go home to my Lord and be free," some vague hope of a paradise beyond.

But by the end of the summer almost all of these kids were planning to stay in Mississippi.

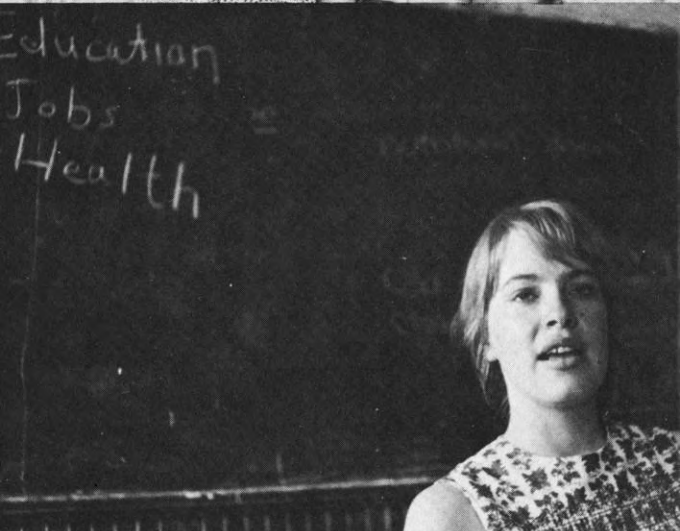
The transformation of Mississippi is possible because the transformation of people has begun. And if it can happen in Mississippi, it can happen all over the South. The original hope of the Freedom School plan was that there would be about 1,000 students in the state coming to the informal discussion groups and other sessions. It turned out that by the end of the summer the number was closer to 3,000, and the original expectation that we would attract 16-17-18 year-olds had to be revised to include pre-school children and people whose ages ranged all the way up to 70, all anxious to learn about how to be Free.

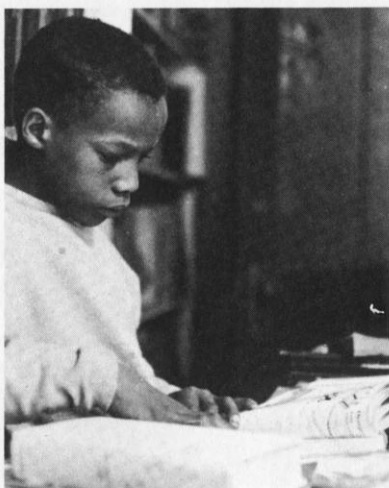
The subjects ranged from those originally planned—Negro History, Mississippi Now and black-white relations—to typing, foreign languages and other forms of tutoring. These aspects of the program were so successful that the continuation of the Freedom Schools into the regular academic year will involve a full-scale program of tutorials and independent study as well as exploration in greater intensity of the problems raised in the summer sessions and longer range work with art, music and drama.

To think of kids in Mississippi expressing emotion on paper with crayons and in abstract shapes rather than taking knives to each other; to think of their writing and performing plays about the Negro experience in America rather than just sitting in despairing lethargy within that experience; to think of their organizing and running all by themselves a Mississippi Student Union whose program is not dances and fund-raising but direct action to alleviate serious grievances; to think of their being willing to come to school *after school*, day after day, when their whole association with school has been at best uncomfortable and dull and at worst tragically crippling—to think of these things is to think that a total transformation of these young people can take place, and to dare to dream that it can happen all over the South.

There are programs now as well as dreams, and materials, and results to learn from. And it may well be that the staffs of the Freedom Schools in Louisiana and Georgia and other southern states will be the kids who just this past summer were students in the Freedom Schools in Mississippi, and who discovered themselves there.







*I am Mississippi fed,
I am Mississippi bred,
Nothing but a poor, black boy.
I am a Mississippi slave,
I shall be buried in a Mississippi grave,
Nothing but a poor, dead boy.*

— IDA RUTH GRIFFIN, age 12
Harmony Freedom School

CORE

38 Park Row, New York 10038