

ON ARKANSAS IN GENERAL

People have often asked: "How do Negroes live in Arkansas?" The question is simple enough and so is the answer - Negroes live under essentially the same conditions in Arkansas as they do anywhere else in the South.

On economics - Arkansas is 49th in per capita income, 49th in money spent per pupil in public schools, and 49th in teachers salaries. 55% of the students (black and white) graduated by Arkansas colleges every year leave the state. According to a survey by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare the Negro population of Little Rock was the poorest of any of any city in the United States with a population of over 100,000.

(Arkansas is first in one thing, however. The University of Arkansas has the number one football team in the nation).

Politically, Arkansas has the most powerful delegation, man for man, in the United States Congress. Representative E.C. Gathings is the third ranking Democrat on the Agriculture Committee and is the chairman of the subcommittee on cotton. Representative Wilbur Mills is the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Representative Oren Harris is the chairman of the Commerce Committee and Representative James T. Imble is the 5th ranking Democrat on the Rules Committee. Senator William Fulbright is the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and Senator Jon L. McClellan is the chairman of the Government Operations Committee and is the 3rd ranking Democrat on the Judiciary Committee.

On the state level, the Democratic machine is very strong. Orval Faubus is in his 6th term as governor and the members of the State Legislature make him look green. Arkansas is now under court order to reapportion both state and federal districts - this may change things considerably. In addition, the Republican Party is gaining strength and although it has nothing really to offer either the Negro or the poor in general in the state, it can break the seemingly unbreakable Democratic machine.

The state of Arkansas has two distinctly different areas. The northern and western parts of the state are in the Ozark mountain country. This area is very sparsely populated and has almost no Negroes. There are about ten counties in the state that have no Negroes living in the entire county. This is because the system of slavery never flourished in this section for the land was not conducive to the plantation system. (Possible plans for a white community project have been considered for this area).

The Negro population is concentrated in the southern and eastern parts of the state especially in the delta of the Mississippi River. It has been in this area of the state that SNCC has been working since it came into

Arkansas a little over two years ago.

After working briefly in Little Rock SNCC began working in Pine Bluff and the counties surrounding it in early 1963. Because we have been understaffed since we began, it was not until February, 1964 that we expanded our work to Helena and the counties in that area of the state. Late in 1964, we started another project in Forrest City and surrounding counties. The state headquarters was moved from Pine Bluff to Little Rock the 1st of this year.

At this point in early 1965 we have three main project areas with offices in Forrest City, Helena and Pine Bluff. Out of these three field offices, and the state office, we are now working thirteen counties with 512 staff members and one volunteer.

According to the 1960 Census Report, Arkansas has a total population of 1,786,222. Around 450,000 (25%) of these are Negroes. Somewhere in the vicinity of 210,000 of these are of voting age and as of Oct. 1, 1964 (the last time anyone could register), there were approximately 85,000 registered Negroes in the state. When SNCC first came into Arkansas, there were 67,000 registered Negroes.

As of this coming March 1st, all elections must be held under the provisions of a new registration procedure that was adopted in a state-wide referendum last Nov. 3rd. This new amendment to the state constitution outlaws the poll tax (people had to re-register every year*, sets up a system of permanent registration with only age and residence requirements, makes the county clerk the registrar instead of the sheriff, and puts in provisions to safeguard against election fraud which has been rampant in the past. (The incident cited in the Helena project report is only an example of what goes on throughout the state). At the present time the state legislature is considering changes in the amendment which are, the proponents claim, necessary for the implementation of the amendment. One such provision calls for a cut-off date for registration of 60 days prior to a primary election in even-numbered years. This effect has been designed to keep the number of voters (black and white) down to an absolute minimum and thus insure the politicians' re-election.

On the week-end of March 20th and 21st, we are setting up a state-wide meeting in Little Rock for about 100-150 people from around the state to get together and talk about what they would like to see happen in their state this summer and in the future. We hope that as a result of this conference, people will be more willing to go back and work in their communities knowing that others are doing the same in other areas of the state. It is also hoped that

this meeting in March will be the start of a state-wide association of some sort or another that will develop into a cohesive organization. The problem at this point is that we figure that the meeting will cost at the minimum, \$800. We have talked to people who run a Methodist camp in the Little Rock area and another group of Presbyterians who also have a camp and they said that we could use the facilities if we paid for them.

ON PINE BLUFF

Our project in Pine Bluff covers four counties - Jefferson, of which Pine Bluff is the county seat, Lincoln, Cleveland and Desha. The boundary lines for this project area, as well as the others, are not fixed by any governmental lines and can be changed at any time. Due to a lack of staff, we have had to do most of our work in the two years we have been there in only Jefferson and Lincoln counties. We started in Pine Bluff with sit-ins in early 1963 out of which was formed the Pine Bluff Movement. Since that time we have nearly doubled the voter registration of Negroes bringing the total to about 40% of the eligible Negroes. Jefferson County, and Pine Bluff in particular, some feel, has come a long way in the past two years. Civil rights workers are not arrested frequently any more and people are willing to talk about opening up job opportunities for Negroes, for instance. Of course, nothing much has been done, but we never lose faith. Our plans for Pine Bluff include opening a Library to go along with a Freedom School-Community Center. This center would include training workshops for the jobs that are opening up for Negroes.

Political strides have also been made in the area. Last fall, two local Negroes ran for positions on the School Board. One, Arthur H. Miller, won by approximately 600 to 540. (His opponent attempted to contest the election but never could prove his allegations). We also ran two candidates for state representative from Jefferson County (for two different positions). One was Ben Grinage, presently the project director for the area, and the other was James A. Bagsby, chairman of the Pine Bluff Movement. They both lost but we were encouraged by the voter turnout and look forward to 1966 with vigor.

Lincoln County has a more current history of harassment. We first went into Lincoln County in the spring of '63. SNCC workers were arrested constantly on minor traffic violations (once, four were arrested in a period of one week). On one occasion, a SNCC worker was arrested at 2 o'clock in the afternoon for not having a light over his license plate. On election day last

fall, one of our workers was beaten in front of a polling place while waiting for a Negro he had taken to the polls. Local people who have cooperated with us have also been threatened and harrassed.

Despite these handicaps, we have increased the registration and have been able to build up the Lincoln County Civics Club. In November, William Green, a local farmer, ran as an independent candidate for state representative from Lincoln County. Attempts were made to keep his name off the ballot, but failed. (92 names on the petition were challenged, but enough people came to court to testify that the signatures in question were in fact theirs). Mr. Green lost the election but is not through with his troubles. He has been a Justice of the Peace from his township since 1962. He had no opposition in the election last fall. However, when he appeared the 1st of the year to be sworn in for his second term, he was told that he was not the JP since his name could not appear on the ballot twice. This is a clear violation of the state constitution and Mr. Green spent the following month trying to locate the County Judge to so inform him. He finally reached him this week, but the judge passed the buck onto either the County Election Board or the Republican Party (Green ran as a Republican for JP). If no satisfaction is found here, we have an attorney who is prepared to file a formal charge.

In general, we feel that this project area has shown great potential for strong action on the part of the community if given the right leadership. The people are looking to SNCC for this leadership now instead of the establishment. With the proper staff we feel confident that a major breakthrough could be made here.

ON HELENA

SNCC first went into Helena in November '63 but because of a lack of staff and a lot of trouble that was had with the police there, we had to leave. Three months later, in February '64, two SNCC workers went into Helena and we have had someone there ever since.

For the first six months we had constant trouble in terms of harrassment from the police. On one occasion three staff members were arrested in the same afternoon. Two were charged with inciting a riot and the third was charged with car theft. The car in question belonged to one of the workers arrested for inciting a riot. On another occasion the police broke into the house where the SNCC people were living and arrested them for vagrancy. Their bond was set at \$1500.00 apiece even though the maximum fine for vagrancy is \$50.00 in Arkansas. The police are always arresting SNCC workers and people

who are working with them for minor charges which, when totaled up, has cost quite a bit of time and money.

The Helena project includes four counties bordering the Mississippi River (Phillips, Monroe, Lee and Arkansas), but the lack of adequate staff has limited most of the work to the cities of Helena and West Helena.

On three occasions the police have broken into mass meetings and intimidated the people attending and once they had three fire trucks, with sirens and lights blaring, speed up to the church where the mass meeting was being held. Last summer several houses were fired into by bands of marauding whites and there was an unsuccessful attempt to bomb the Freedom House. When a mob of about 150 whites gathered on the road in front of the house on a hot July night last summer the SNCC workers inside were forced to flee for their lives and spent the night sleeping in a corn field.

Despite all of this harassment they managed to get about 2,000 Negroes registered and also did some testing of the civil rights bill. The voter registration amendment just barely carried Phillips County and it was the increased Negro vote that did it.

A young Negro factory worker ran for city council as an independent and almost unseated the incumbent. With the last box uncounted, Alexander led by 48 votes. This was on Wednesday morning. It took until Friday for them to count the last box and when its results were made known, Alexander had lost by about 200 votes. It was obvious that those three days were spent stuffing the ballot box. From our investigation, we have found that much of this fraud was perpetrated by Jack Bryant, the local Uncle Tom, and his wife, Amanda, who runs a beauty salon. Representing Sheriff Hickey, the most feared man among Negroes in Helena, he approached many Negroes and told them to vote "absentee" at Amanda's beauty salon to avoid the crowds at the polls. Those that came were told to vote just for Johnson and they would take care of the rest. Bryant also voted for those who never came. By the way, Jack Bryant is the president of the new Phillips County chapter of the NAACP.

ON FORREST CITY

Two months ago in December '64, two SNCC workers moved into Forrest City, the seat of St. Francis County, to open up a new project. The Forrest City project covers an area of five counties (St. Francis, Mississippi, Woodruff, Cross and Crittenden), three of which border the Mississippi River.

Up until this point most of the activity has been involved in making contacts and talking to people about the kinds of programs that they wish to

to have in their areas. There has been some limited testing of public accommodations in Forrest City - this is what the people have wanted to do.

Forrest City has experienced a great deal of industrial expansion, for a city of 12,000, in the last few years. Two factories with a combined force of almost 2,500 have moved into the area. Both places hire Negroes but only in menial capacities and very few of them. One of the plants has a union but the other is unorganized. One of the things that the Negro residents of Forrest City talk about immediately is the fact that they want more and better jobs at these places. A week or so ago a letter was sent to the SNCC Research Department asking them for all the information possible on these businesses. We have also talked to the International Representative of the Teamsters in Little Rock about organizing the un-unionized plant. They want to do it so we are now in the process of setting up a meeting between some Teamster officials and some of the Negro employees.

PERSONNEL

Jim Jones	Little Rock	State Project Director. Overall administrator for the State Project. He works in any of the field offices when they need help. Since our two staff members who were working in Helena have both gone back to school, Jim will be handling the Helena project until replacements can be found.
Bill Hansen	Little Rock	Co-Project Director. Bill handles most of details of administration for the state. Bill also works in any project when he is needed.
Arlene Wilgoren	Little Rock	Project secretary. Takes care of most of the correspondence and other clerical duties for the state. Also handles all financial matters. Arlene is currently investigating the possibilities for a program in Little Rock.
Ben Grinage	Pine Bluff	Project Director, Pine Bluff Area.
Catherine Hope	Pine Bluff	Field worker, Pine Bluff.
Jerry Casey	Forrest City	Project Director, Forrest City area.
Howard Himmelbaum		Howard is the only volunteer in the state. Since he has only been here a little over a week, we do not know as yet what or where he will be working. It seems probable that he will be working in the field,

COUNTY	ARKANSAS POPULATION			MEDIAN INCOMES				
	Total	Nonwhite	% Nonwhite	Total	Male	Female		Nonwhite (both)
					Nonwhite	Total	Nonwhite	
Arkansas *	23,355	5,766	25	2,516	1,528	823	439	864
Ashley	24,220	8,847	37	2,001	1,167	1,055	390	698
Bradley	11,029	4,915	35	2,712	1,896	1,103	429	990
Calhoun	5,991	2,105	35	2,286	1,137	630	371	692
Chicot	18,990	10,807	57	1,702	790	712	400	554
Clark	20,950	5,424	26	2,466	996	987	480	732
Cleveland *	6,944	1,714	25	2,126	967	804	564	753
Columbia	26,400	9,518	36	2,760	1,041	986	489	746
Crittenden *	47,564	28,087	59	1,873	826	874	354	494
Cross *	19,551	5,883	30	1,786	785	769	374	499
Dallas	10,522	4,186	40	2,469	1,718	802	418	833
Desha *	20,770	9,966	48	1,974	842	881	404	603
Drew	15,213	5,155	34	2,104	950	1,281	470	756
Hempstead	19,661	7,343	37	2,118	862	968	422	631
Howard	10,878	2,260	21	2,694	1,092	1,224	448	757
Jefferson *	81,373	35,480	44	3,200	1,051	1,142	467	722
Lafayette	11,030	4,970	45	1,978	807	819	393	600
Lee *	21,001	12,819	61	1,203	705	731	378	495
Lincoln *	14,447	7,010	49	1,616	663	1,394	374	476
Little River	9,211	2,855	31	2,208	907	863	422	617
Miller	31,686	8,136	26	2,934	1,152	994	564	780
Mississippi *	70,174	20,735	30	1,908	780	880	366	510
Monroe *	17,327	8,423	49	1,617	723	872	373	501
Nevada	10,700	3,862	36	2,042	990	845	405	672
Ouachita	31,641	12,194	39	3,355	1,309	993	530	853
Phillips *	43,997	25,450	58	2,058	851	1,864	418	616
Pulaski	242,980	52,109	22	3,977	1,770	1,886	772	1,119
St. Francis *	33,303	18,996	57	1,487	743	873	375	505
Union	49,518	15,036	30	3,882	1,526	1,121	609	917
Woodruff *	13,954	5,744	41	1,466	774	1,036	385	558

* Counties in which SNCC presently has a project.

All information from the United States Census of Population, 1960 - PC(1) 50
Arkansas. General Social and Economic Characteristics.

ARKANSAS EDUCATIONAL FIGURES
NONWHITE FIGURES FOR PERSON OVER 25

	Total	No schooling		Under 6 yrs.		Completed 12 years	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Arkansas *	2,667	167	6.2	1,396	52.4	1,142	5.3
Ashley	3,706	315	8.5	2,172	73.2	2,138	3.7
Bradley	2,106	141	6.7	1,141	54.2	90	4.3
Calhoun	1,021	81	7.8	582	57.0	23	2.2
Chicot	5,300	593	11.2	3,230	60.9	211	3.9
Clark	2,544	138	5.4	1,100	43.2	128	5.0
Cleveland *	681	55	8.0	400	58.8	21	3.0
Columbia	4,340	390	8.7	2,418	55.7	190	4.3
Crittenden*	11,655	1,344	11.5	8,106	69.6	211	1.8
Cross *	2,408	232	9.8	1,579	65.5	51	2.1
Dallas	1,944	132	6.7	929	47.8	101	5.2
Desha *	4,491	585	13.0	3,147	70.0	105	2.3
Drew	2,310	119	5.1	1,318	57.0	101	4.4
Hempstead	3,525	207	5.9	1,672	47.4	235	6.6
Howard	1,094	39	3.4	6.8	57.5	77	7.0
Jefferson *	15,894	911	5.7	8,648	54.4	681	4.3
Lafayette	2,284	207	9.0	1,500	65.6	64	2.8
Lee *	5,591	520	9.5	3,613	64.4	155	2.8
Lincoln *	3,259	258	7.9	2,022	62.0	112	3.4
Little River	1,305	133	10.2	758	58.0	64	4.9
Miller	4,115	351	8.5	2,077	50.5	260	6.3
Mississippi*	8,864	996	11.2	6,159	69.4	301	3.4
Monroe *	3,614	259	7.2	2,109	58.4	112	3.1
Nevada	1,735	112	6.4	899	51.7	82	4.7
Ouachita	5,682	247	4.3	2,693	49.1	313	5.5
Phillips *	11,274	1,118	9.9	7,346	62.5	391	3.4
Pulaski	25,554	1,164	4.5	9,899	38.7	2,759	10.8
St. Francis*	7,807	593	7.6	4,781	61.2	217	2.7
Union	7,078	501	7.0	3,790	53.5	502	7.0
Woodruff*	2,460	83	3.3	1,430	58.1	124	5.0

* Counties in which SNCC presently has a project.

OP(1)04 - All information from the United States Census of the Population, 1960 -
 PC(1)5C - Arkansas. General Social and Economic Characteristics.

ARKANSAS EMPLOYMENT FIGURES

NONWHITE POPULATION WITH INCOME

	Total	Under \$500		Under \$1000		Under \$1500		Under \$2,000	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Arkansas *	2,527	858	34	1,415	56	1,704	67	1,976	74
Ashley	3,557	1,460	41	2,266	64	2,606	73	2,784	78
Bradley	1,891	577	31	953	50	1,114	59	1,237	65
Calhoun	959	386	40	629	64	703	73	757	79
Chicot	5,672	2,656	47	4,309	76	4,819	85	5,157	91
Clark	2,454	927	38	1,574	64	1,817	74	1,954	80
Cleveland*	603	227	38	374	62	442	70	503	83
Columbia	4,265	1,553	36	2,730	63	3,213	75	3,640	85
Crittenden*	13,470	6,819	51	10,111	75	11,560	86	12,215	98
Cross *	2,867	1,437	50	2,174	76	2,466	86	2,610	96
Dallas	1,741	578	33	1,017	58	1,122	64	1,269	73
Desha *	4,411	1,946	44	3,203	73	3,781	84	3,928	89
Drew	2,077	693	33	1,369	66	1,630	78	1,779	86
Hempstead	3,397	1,437	42	2,432	72	2,737	81	2,910	86
Howard	1,066	411	39	648	61	794	75	858	81
Jefferson *	16,491	6,338	39	10,630	65	12,450	77	13,535	83
Lafayette	2,040	902	44	1,490	73	1,730	85	1,823	89
Lee *	5,630	2,844	50	4,314	76	4,883	86	5,183	92
Lincoln *	2,540	1,334	50	2,042	77	2,340	87	2,424	91
Little River	1,374	601	45	970	71	1,095	80	1,146	83
Miller	4,119	1,355	33	2,614	63	3,123	76	3,400	83
Mississippi*	10,583	5,231	49	8,164	77	9,307	88	9,798	93
Monroe *	3,652	1,824	50	2,862	78	3,169	87	3,371	92
Nevada	1,698	716	42	1,093	64	1,289	76	1,444	85
Ouachita	4,895	1,528	31	2,829	58	3,445	79	3,762	77
Phillips *	11,504	4,988	44	8,292	72	9,424	82	10,014	87
Pulaski	24,588	5,585	23	11,394	46	15,179	62	17,608	72
St. Francis*	8,531	4,240	50	6,571	77	7,516	88	7,960	93
Union	6,751	1,835	27	3,684	55	4,600	68	5,126	76
Woodruff*	2,435	1,136	47	1,843	76	2,107	87	2,199	90

* Counties in which SNCC presently has a project.

All information from the United States Census of Population, 1960 - PC(1)5C
Arkansas. General Social and Economic Characteristic