

SELMA FREE COLLEGE: THE 2ND MONTH-AUGUST 22, 1965

THIS BRIEF SUMMARY IS INTENDED TO FOLLOW THAT ENTITLED "SELMA FREE COLLEGE: THE FIRST FOUR WEEKS." IT IS TO BE FOLLOWED IN SEPTEMBER BY A LONGER, FORMAL REPORT ON THE ENTIRE SUMMER.

LIBRARY: OUR COLLECTION PRESENTLY NUMBERS BETWEEN 17-18,000 VOLUMES. 13,000-15,000 MORE ARE IN SAN FRANCISCO, PACKED AND WAITING ONLY THE MONEY TO SHIP THEM. HALF A STOREFRONT BUILDING AT 720 FIRST AVENUE HAS BEEN RENTED THROUGH SEPTEMBER AS A HOME FOR THE LIBRARY. THE LOCATION IS ONLY A FEW BLOCKS FROM R.B. HUDSON HIGH SCHOOL (NEGRO) ON A STREET BORDERING A MIDDLE-INCOME WHITE NEIGHBORHOOD. THE BUILDING IS BRICK AND CONCRETE, VERY SOLID AND FIREPROOF-LOOKING. I REGARD IT AS AN IDEAL HOME FOR OUR LIBRARY, THOUGH NOT ALL THE STAFF AGREES WITH ME. PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS HAVE BEEN THAT THE STOREFRONT LACKS THE "PERSONALITY" OF A LIBRARY, AND THAT WE COULD HAVE FOUND A BETTER PLACE AT A LOWER RENT. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE FIRST CRITICISM, BUT I THINK THE SECOND HAS NOT BEEN SUFFICIENTLY BACKED UP WITH FACTS FOR US TO RECONSIDER OUR DECISION TO STAY WHERE WE ARE. WE ARE GOING AHEAD WITH PLANS TO LEASE THE BUILDING FOR A YEAR.

CATALOGING OF THE BOOKS HAS PROCEEDED SLOWLY, WITH APPROXIMATELY 10% OF THE COLLECTION PROCESSED AT PRESENT. WE ARE DEVELOPING A TEMPORARY CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM SO WE CAN HAVE THE BOOKS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY AS SOON AS WE HAVE SHELVES FOR THEM. IT IS HOPED THAT LOCAL PARTICIPANTS CAN BE INVOLVED, TRAINED, AND SHOULD FUNDS BECOME AVAILABLE, EVEN PAID TO ASSIST WITH THE CATALOGING OF THE REST OF THE BOOKS.

WE ARE ALREADY CONSIDERING WAYS OF AUGMENTING OUR COLLECTION. ONE IDEA WE HAVE DISCUSSED WHICH MAY BE OF INTEREST TO OUR ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ READERS IS AS FOLLOWS: COLLEGE PROFESSORS AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE RECEIVE NEW BOOKS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS FREE FROM PUBLISHERS; WE WOULD REQUEST THESE PEOPLE TO SEND US ANY OF THESE BOOKS THAT THEY COULD NOT USE, HAD NO SPACE FOR, OR WERE DUPLICATED IN THEIR PERSONAL OR INSTITUTIONAL COLLECTION. INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS COULD BE CO-ORDINATED ON A DEPARTMENTAL OR COLLEGE BASIS AND SHIPPED TO US IN QUANTITY. SUCH DONATIONS WOULD YIELD US AN ADMITTEDLY HIGHLY SPECIALIZED, EVEN TECHNICAL SELECTION OF BOOKS, BUT MORE IMPORTANT, IT WOULD GIVE US PROFESSIONALLY RESPECTABLE, UP-TO-DATE COLLECTIONS IN AS MANY FIELDS AS WE COULD GET RESPONDENTS FROM. IF ANY OF OUR READERS ARE INTERESTED IN UNDERTAKING SUCH A PROJECT TO AID OUR LIBRARY, WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU RIGHT AWAY.

CLASSES: OUR CLASSES WERE MOST NUMEROUS AND WELL-ATTENDED DURING THE MONTH BETWEEN THE SECOND WEEK OF JULY AND THE SECOND WEEK OF AUGUST. THE SUBJECT "TAUGHT" (EXPLORED IS A BETTER WORD) WERE: ART, DRAMATICS, ENGLISH, FRENCH, NEGRO HISTORY, NEGRO LITERATURE, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, FEDERAL LAWS AND PROGRAMS, ETC. AT ITS PEAK, WE HAD A REGULAR ATTENDANCE OF 200 LOCAL PARTICIPANTS, MOSTLY YOUNG PEOPLE.

DURING THE MONTH OF OUR GREATEST ACTIVITY CLASSES WERE TAUGHT IN 7 DIFFERENT PLACES AROUND THE CITY; HOPEWELL BAPTIST CHURCH, IN WARD ONE, NOT FAR FROM SELMA UNIVERSITY; AT 213 ST. ANN STREET IN A HOME WHERE SEVERAL STAFF MEMBERS WERE STAYING, NEAR FAMOUS BROWN CHAPLE AME CHURCH; AT SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH IN EAST SELMA; AT A CHURCH ON THE EASTERN EDGE OF THE CITY ACROSS THE EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE; AND IN THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. THE DRAMATICS CLASSES WERE HELD IN A NUMBER OF LOCATIONS, CENTERING FINALLY ON R.B. HUDSON HIGH SCHOOL FOR REHEARSALS OF THE PLAY PORGY, TO BE PERFORMED THIS WEEKEND, WITH AN ALMOST COMPLETELY LOCAL PARTICIPANT CAST. THE GOVERNING BOARD OF SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH, AFTER CLASSES HAD BEEN HELD IN ITS BASEMENT FOR SOME WEEKS, VOTED TO GIVE THE COLLEGE PERMISSION TO USE

THE BASEMENT PERMANENTLY FOR CLASSES AND PROGRAMS. WE HAVE SINCE SPENT OVER \$100 REDECORATING THE BASEMENT AND MAKING IT INTO A PERMANENT CENTER FOR OUR ACTIVITIES IN THAT AREA. THE REDECORATING HAS BEEN UNDER THE DIRECTION OF OUR TWO ART TEACHERS AND IS PERHAPS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL OF OUR PRESENT CENTERS.

THE CLASSES AT HOPEWELL BAPTIST CHURCH, REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND AT THE CHURCH ACROSS THE BRIDGE HAVE LAPSED AS OUR STAFF DECREASED IN SIZE AND MOBILITY. THE CLASS CENTERS WERE SPREAD OVER A LARGE AREA AND TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS WERE COMPLICATED BY A LACK OF CARS, CO-ORDINATION AND POLICE HARASSMENT. WE ARE PRESENTLY CONTEMPLATING THE PURCHASE OF SEVERAL BICYCLES TO EASE OUR DIFFICULTIES. IF AND WHEN OUR STAFF STRENGTH MEETS OR SURPASSES THE SUMMER LEVEL, CLASSES THAT HAVE LAPSED WILL BE RESUMED AND, IF POSSIBLE, EXPANDED.

IN ADDITION TO CLASSES, SOME STAFF MEMBERS HAVE SPENT TIME DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ON THE GOVERNMENT'S WAR ON POVERTY. THERE HAS BEEN NO EFFECTIVE WAY UNTIL NOW FOR THE COMMUNITY TO GET THIS INFORMATION AND MAKE USE OF IT. WE HAVE ALSO ENCOURAGED PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE PROGRAM TO MAKE APPLICATIONS FOR PARTICULAR PROJECTS WE HAVE SUPPLIED WITH INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE HAVE INCLUDED THE PROJECTED EXPANSION OF A LOCAL NEGRO NURSING HOME-CLINIC, AND TO THE MEDICAL COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN FORMULATING A PROGRAM FOR INCREASING AVAILABLE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES, PERSONNEL AND EDUCATION IN A TEN-COUNTY AREA OF THE BLACK BELT. WE ARE ALSO DISTRIBUTING INFORMATION AND "OPPORTUNITY CARDS" FOR THE JOB CORPS TO INTERESTED LOCAL YOUTHS. THESE PROJECTS ARE STILL "ON THE DRAWING BOARDS" AND IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHETHER THEY WILL MAKE IT THROUGH THE GOVERNMENT APPLICATION BILL.

STAFF: OUR STAFF NUMBERED 17 AT ITS HIGHEST POINT THIS SUMMER, AND IS NOW DOWN TO 8. THOSE WHO LEFT DID SO BECAUSE OF MONEY OR PERSONAL COMPLICATIONS NONE EXPRESSED MAJOR DISSATISFACTION WITH THE COLLEGE PROGRAM. THERE HAS CONTINUED TO BE VERY LITTLE "ADMINISTRATION," AND MOST STAFF MEMBERS WORK PRETTY MUCH ON THEIR OWN. OUR STAFF THIS SUMMER HAS BEEN ON THE WHOLE A DEDICATED, MATURE, CREATIVE CREW WHO HAVE, IN THE WRITER'S OPINION, LEFT THEIR NONDIRECTIVE MARK ON THE COMMUNITY.

POLICE HARASSMENT HAS BEEN AN IRRITATION BUT NOT A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO OUR PROGRAM SO FAR. THREE STAFF MEMBERS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, TWO AFTER AN ILLEGITIMATE ATTEMPT TO TALK WITH A WHITE MAN (LATER REVEALED TO BE A "SPECIAL" DEPUTY OF SHERIFF JIM CLARK), AND THE THIRD IN LOWNDES COUNTY IN CONNECTION WITH THE PICKETING THAT LED UP TO THE SHOOTING MURDER OF THE REV. JOHN DANIELS. STAFF MEMBERS WORKING AT THE CHURCH IN SIM'S QUARTER HAVE BEEN HARASSED AND THREATENED BY NONDESCRIPT WHITES, BUT HAVE IGNORED THE THREATS AND CONTINUED TEACHING, WITHOUT INCIDENT. AFTER THE RECENT VIOLENCE IN LOWNDES COUNTY, SELMA WHITES ARE BUYING SHOTGUNS AND TALKING NERVOUSLY ABOUT HOW SELMA ISN'T GOING TO BECOME ANOTHER LOS ANGELES IF THEY CAN HELP IT. JIM CLARK HAS RE-DEPUTISED SEVERAL HUNDRED LOCALS TO BE READY FOR ANY ATTEMPTED COUP. GIVEN THIS TENSION IT IS LIKELY THAT HARASSMENT WILL INCREASE.

THE FACTS AND POSSIBILITIES OF HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE NEED TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY ANY PROSPECTIVE VOLUNTEER STAFF MEMBER. WE ARE NONETHELESS ENCOURAGING INTERESTED, COMMITTED STUDENTS AND OTHERS WITH A QUARTER, SEMESTER OR LONGER TO SPARE TO CORRESPOND WITH US RIGHT AWAY CONCERNING POSSIBLE STAFF SERVICE. WE NEED TEN TO FIFTEEN MORE VOLUNTEERS TO DEAL ADEQUATELY WITH THE PRESENT DEMANDS PLACED ON US. IT MUST ALSO BE UNDERSTOOD THAT WHILE LIVING IN ALABAMA IS CHEAP, WE CAN'T PAY ANYBODY.

~~XXXXXXX~~ WE STILL MAINTAIN OUR ORIGINAL CONCEPTION OF STAFF QUALIFICATION, I.E., ANYONE WHO CAN COMMUNICATE HONESTLY AND PROFOUNDLY WITH PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS THAN HIMSELF, IS POTENTIALLY AN EFFECTIVE STAFF PARTICIPANT. HOWEVER, WE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE NEED SKILLS WHICH CAN HELP MEET THE KINDS OF PROBLEMS WE HAVE BEEN ASKED BY THE COMMUNITY TO TACKLE. WITH THIS IN MIND, THE FOLLOWING KINDS OF SKILLS WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL: NEGRO HISTORY AND LITERATURE, FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION, ADULT LITERACY INSTRUCTION, BASIC HEALTH EDUCATION, LIBRARY CATALOGING, ART INSTRUCTION, POLITICAL ANALYSIS (HOW TO MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT) AND INSTRUCTION, COMMUNITY ANALYSIS AND ORGANIZATION, TYPING AND SECRETARIAL INSTRUCTION.

FINANCES: WE KEPT NO RECORDS OF OUR MONEY BEFORE JULY 26th. SINCE THEN WE HAVE KEPT STRICT RECORDS, AND A SUMMARY OF OUR FINANCES FOLLOWS:

TOTAL INCOME, JULY 26-AUG. 22-----\$372.00

TOTAL EXPENSES, SAME TIME-----250.00

BALANCE, AUGUST 22, 1965-----\$122.00

gone now

ALL OUR INCOME IS THE RESULT OF DONATIONS. EXPENSES INCLUDED ARE 2 MONTHS RENT ON THE LIBRARY BUILDING (\$30), REDECORATING FOR THE BASEMENT OF SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH (\$120) AND SUPPLIES FOR THE DRAMATICS PROGRAM (\$50). OUR ANTICIPATED EXPENSES INCLUDE RENT (\$40 PER MONTH), SOME FURNITURE AND SHELVES FOR THE LIBRARY, BICYCLES FOR STAFF TRANSPORTATION, OFFICE AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES. WE ARE IN NEED OF WHATEVER SUPPORT OUR FRIENDS CAN GIVE US. MATERIAL SUPPORT IS ALSO HELPFUL. THE FOLLOWING KINDS OF ITEMS WOULD BE ESPECIALLY VALUABLE TO US (IN ADDITION TO BOOKS):

SPIRIT DUPLICATOR SUPPLIES: MASTERS, FLUID, PAPER

TYPEWRITERS

CANERAS (35MM), FILM, DEVELOPING SERVICE

SPECIFIC KINDS OF BOOKS:

ENCYCLOPEDIAS, THESAURUSES, OTHER REFERENCE BOOKS

NEW INTEGRATED TEXTBOOKS AND STUDY MATERIALS

MATERIALS FOR ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

MAGAZINE AND NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTIONS

STAMPS

RECORDS - CLASSICAL AND NEGRO FOLK OR DOCUMENTARY

ART PRINTS - ESPECIALLY NEGRO - AFRICAN ART

FUTURE: WE EXPECT A PERIOD OF DECREASED ACTIVITY DURING THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER. OUR STAFF SIZE WILL THEN BE AT ITS EBB; MOREOVER, THOSE OF US WHO HAVE BEEN HERE FOR LONGER THAN THE SUMMER AND THE SUMMER VOLUNTEERS WHO PLAN TO STAY THROUGH THE FALL, ARE IN NEED OF A REST. LIFE IN ALABAMA UNDER OUR CONDITIONS IS NOT WITHOUT ITS PERSONAL COSTS, AND SEVERAL OF US ARE CONSIDERABLY IN DEBT. SYMPTOMS OF FATIGUE ABOUND: SOME STAFF MEMBERS ARE SO "PUNCHY" THAT THEY ARE NOT ABLE TO FUNCTION WELL IN STAFF ACTIVITIES; ON ANOTHER LEVEL, THE INTER-PERSONAL ENTANGLEMENTS THAT ARE INEVITABLE IN ANY CLOSE-KNIT GROUP (AND WHICH WERE HANDLED MOST OF THE SUMMER WITH MUCH UNDERSTANDING AND MATURITY) HAVE RECENTLY BECOME MAGNIFIED AND COMPLICATED INTO SITUATIONS WHICH SAP MUCH OF THE ENERGY OF THOSE INVOLVED. THESE THINGS ARE NOT SURPRISING TO THE WRITER, AND I FEEL THAT THEY CAN BE OVERCOME IF WE CAN FIND SOME TIME FOR REST, RELAXATION AND REFLECTION DURING THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS.

AT THE SAME TIME, PLANNING MUST CONTINUE FOR OUR FALL PROGRAM. THE CHARACTER OF OUR ACTIVITIES WILL CHANGE CONSIDERABLY ONCE THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OPEN, AS WE WILL VERY LIKELY BE ASKED FOR MORE CLASSES OF A TUTORIAL, COLLEGE-PREP NATURE AND MUST BE READY TO DEAL WITH THESE REQUESTS. WE HOPE TO CONTINUE AND EXPAND OUR INFORMATION-DISSEMINATING AND APPLICATION-PREPARING ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE WAR ON POVERTY AND OTHER

FEDERAL PROGRAMS. WITH THOUSANDS OF NEGROES BECOMING NEW VOTERS IN DALLAS COUNTY, SOME APPROACH MUST BE MADE TO THE TASK OF INFORMING THEM OF THE USES AND DANGERS OF THIS TOOL NEW-THRUST INTO THEIR WILLING UNPRACTICED HANDS.

WE ARE STILL DALLYING WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF BECOMING INCORPORATED. ONE OF THE POSSIBLE ADVANTAGES OF CORPORATE STATUS IS ELIGIBILITY FOR FOUNDATION AND GOVERNMENT FUNDS. I SAY IT IS A "POSSIBLE ADVANTAGE" BECAUSE THERE IS AT PRESENT MUCH DOUBT IN THE MINDS OF MOST OF US ABOUT THE ADVISABILITY OF RELYING ON SUCH SOURCES FOR OUR FUNDS. WE ARE ALL PRETTY MUCH "ANTI-ORGANIZATION" PEOPLE, DISTRUSTFUL OF TRADITIONAL METHODS OF SUPPORTING TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS; WE QUESTION WHETHER A PROJECT CAN ACCEPT THE FORMER WITHOUT BECOMING THE LATTER. THIS IS AN ISSUE WHICH IS YET TO BE RESOLVED.

IN CLOSING LET ME REMARK, AS I DID IN THE LAST SUCH PROGRESS REPORT, THAT THIS IS A SUBJECTIVE ACCOUNT AND SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES AND TRIBUNATIONS OF SELMA FREE COLLEGE, WHICH SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS EITHER EXHAUSTIVE OR AUTHORITYATIVE.

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MAIL ANY CONTRIBUTIONS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS AND CRITICISMS TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS. WE APPRECIATE THEM ALL.