

FACT SHEET ON SUNFLOWER COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

The population of Sunflower County is 45,750 -- 14,730 whites and 31,020 Negroes. Negroes make up 67.8% of the total population and 60.6% of the voting-age population (8,785 whites and 13,524 Negroes).

In 1960, only 1.2% of the county's voting-age Negroes were registered to vote; in 1964, 7%; and presently about 14%.

Sunflower County is in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. The economy is based on cotton, with about 70% of the labor force employed in agriculture. 90% of the Negroes employed in farming are non-owners -- laborers and tenants. Between 1950 and 1960, the number of agricultural jobs fell off 48%, which accounted for the migration of 20% of the population from the county. This trend accelerates. The Mississippi Bureau of Employment Security predicts that this spring 6,500 tractor drivers will be out of jobs in the Delta. The number of unskilled laborers without jobs will be many times that number.

Poverty is the rule in Sunflower. For Negroes, the median income per person is \$443 a year. Most of those Negroes who are employed work in the cotton fields for 30¢ an hour or in kitchens for 20¢ an hour. Over half of the homes in Sunflower have inadequate plumbing and well over a third have no running water. There is only one 80-bed hospital in Sunflower to serve the county's population.

Sunflower County is the birth place of the White Citizens' Councils and the home of Senator Eastland. Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer also hails from this county.

The average number of years in school completed by the Negro citizens of Sunflower is 4.7. A comparison of Negro and white infant mortality rates for the year of 1963 shows that almost 2½ times more Negroes die within one year of birth than white children.

On February 7, 1966, the Office of Economic Opportunity announced a \$27,704 grant to Sunflower County Progress, Inc., for use in developing a program in that county. The director of the program is Bryce Alexander, former police chief of Indianola (Sunflower County). In testimony taken by MFDP lawyers during the Congressional Challenge, Mr. Alexander admitted under oath that he had broken up voter registration meetings and jailed civil rights workers for distributing leaflets.

Sunflower City: Population 650, about 70% Negro. Majority of Negroes are on welfare. Registered Negroes (estimate) 25%. A number of whites who are not eligible for municipal elections are registered.