

MEMORANDUM

TO: Southern Field Staff

FROM: Hosea L. Williams, Director
Southern Field Program

RE: Field Reports

DATE: January 23, 1967

Enclosed you will find a copy of the report that I recently received from Mr. Albert Turner, Alabama State Field Secretary, outlining a few of the current activities in the State of Alabama. I hope that this report will be informative to you, and in some cases, will open ideas for new programs in your particular area.

Those of you who are project directors may want to contact Mr. Turner or myself to obtain additional information on farmer co-ops.

Another note to all project directors: I should be receiving similiar reports from you regarding current activities in you project.

January 14, 19 67

Marion, Alabama

Dear Mr. Williams:

I related your message to Mr. Gilmore and other persons in Greene County. Everyone was acceptable, but Mr. Gilmore. He was supposed to contact you himself and see what he could work out with you, but I have not heard from him yet. I found out that he plans to drop the case against the County concerning the May primary if he is allowed to run as an independent candidate. Of course, he has not heard anything yet about the disposition of the election.

In the meantime, we have worked up a very hot case with the farmers of ten counties in Alabama. We are trying to organize a ten county farmer co-op where we will do truck farming on a very large scale. We have about one thousand farmers involved. We haven't found a market yet, but we have had some promises. Maybe you can help us with a market in Chicago.

We are dealing with the heart of this problem here in the black belt now. We plan to hire those farmers that have been evicted and we feel we could improve the total income of the Negro tremendously. We also would need a considerable amount less land. This would settle the problem of not having land to farm because of the evictions. As you know, the politicians of this area are planning to drive us out of this area so they can be in a voting majority. This is done by building factories and not hiring Negroes. They also plan to bring other whites in to increase the white population. So, with a combination of evictions and factories that hire only white, or mostly white, they plan to change the voting age population. We feel that this vegetable farming will combat this problem.

We held a meeting yesterday with the following private agencies: Joe Bradford, Rural Task Force, Washington, D. C.; Mr. Miles Hollister, Deputy Director, Community Services, Office of Economic Opportunity, Cooperative Planning, Washington, D. C.; Mr. Clyde Markeson, U. S. D. A. Farmers Cooperative Services, in charge of fruit and vegetables, Washington, D. C.; Mr. Ailue O. Gunter, Commerce and Economic State Co-op Extension Service, Auburn University; Dr. Asa Sims, Southern University Horticulturist Consultant; Mr. Orville L. Shields, Chief of Operation Loans, Alabama F. H. A. Office; Mr. E. H. Waldup, Chief Community Services, Alabama F. H. A.; Dr. Mayberry, Dean of Agriculture, Tuskegee Institute; Mr. R. T. Blackwell, Southern Rural Action Director, Atlanta, Georgia; James Mays and Michael Renny, National Sharecroppers Association; Mr. B. F. Ihlenfeldt, Director of Cooperative Leagues of U. S. A., Chicago; and Mr. Al Ulmer, Southern Regional Council, Co-op and Rural Director, Atlanta, Georgia.

We took all of the people and presented them with our program and asked what they could offer in terms of help. We got fair commitments from them all with the exception of the Federal agencies. Some promised staff and others money to help us out. The OEO failed to come through and the F. H. A. but they did promise us some help that is needed. The entire report is too long, so I will finish informing you later.

Of course, I would like SCLC to help us in some way, so take this up with the staff. At the present, Mr. Lewis Black, Albert Turner and Shirley Mesher are the coordinators. I hope you can read this report. My secretary is still on leave, so accept all mistakes in love because I went to a segregated school.

Yours truly,

Albert Turner