

News Letter

YELLOW SPRINGS, OHIO

January 20, 1965

OUR VOLUNTEERS ARRIVE

Our six Antioch College students have already arrived in the South: five in Mississippi and one in Louisiana. The five Mississippians spent four days in training at Batesville before moving to their project locations. DICK HEITLER and HOWARD HAMMERMAN are at work in Hattiesburg (see map); LOIS REIVICH has begun work in Columbus, CHARLES CARPENTER in Greenville, and BEN OVSHINSKY in Tupelo. These five took vitally needed office supplies with them for use by the COFO and project offices: typewriters, mimeograph machines and mimeograph paper. They also took our moral and financial



support with them. Each volunteer will be paid \$10 a week for support except STEVE MILLER, who is providing his own support. A veteran Mississippi worker he is going to a CORE project in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. In this newsletter (which will be issued monthly) we will try to report to you on their activities. These reports will be in their own words, for each of the six is corresponding with a local group who will pass on their observations to the Newsletter editors. The groups who are corresponding with the six volunteers are:

(Cont'd middle of next column.)

EXCERPT OF A LETTER TO DR. ROBERT HARDMAN FROM HOWIE HAMMERMAN, ONE OF OUR VOLUNTEERS IN HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI:

The one thing that I really need right now is some help with my landlady, Johnie May Walker. She is about 35 years old, very, very militant and rather articulate. She has been fired from a laundry job because she went to Washington for the challenge. She is willing to work full time with the movement if she can be supported in some way.

She can contribute more than three COFO workers and we hope you people can send the money to keep her working in

(Cont'd bottom of next column.)

FINANCIAL REPORT

The money raised in the December fund drive (now over \$11,000) has been tentatively budgeted as follows:

1. Direct support of volunteers at \$10 a week (5 Antioch students and 6 other volunteers).....\$5500
 2. Transportation to and from Mississippi.....\$1000
 3. Purchase and shipment of clothing and supplies, etc......\$ 500
 4. Support of COFO (Council of Federated Organizations).....\$1000
 5. Support of Holly Springs Project.....\$1000
 6. Newsletter, Advertising, and other cost of communication.....\$ 500
 7. Not yet committed.....\$1500
- \$11,000

OUR VOLUNTEERS ARRIVE (Continued)

- STEVE MILLER - Springfield City Wide Sunday School Union (Henry Tapp)
- LOIS REIVICH - Six Sillouettes of Yellow Springs High School (Ruth Wright)
- CHUCK CARPENTER - Friends Unitarian H.S. Youth Group (Helen Stewart)
- DICK HEITLER - Miami Township Fair Practices Committee (Paul Graham)
- BEN OVSHINSKY - Junior Chamber of Commerce (Sid Davis)
- HOWIE HAMMERMAN - Methodist Commission on Social Concern (Dr. Hardman)

In addition to these six students, the Project has agreed to provide \$10 a week for a number of workers already in Mississippi who for want of subsistence will otherwise have to drop out. These are: ROBERT GILMAN in West Point, Miss., ALBERTA WATKINS in Natchez, Miss., WARREN POLEDANO in McComb, Miss., and JOHN ALLEN in Tchula, Miss. (none of whom have been assigned correspondents yet); and LINDA DAVIS in Ruleville, Miss. who writes to Eugene and Jean Hopson; BOB NEWELL in Indianola who writes to Yolie Mayne and GEORGE WINTER who writes to Beulah Champney.

Two of these workers can only be temporarily supported until other means of support can be found for them. If you have suggestions of individuals or groups willing to help take over their support call Ken Champney: 767-1331.

(LETTER CONT'D)

the movement rather than going to work as a maid or something. Especially since one of the Antioch kids didn't go. The Yellow Springs group should have the extra money to send for Johnie May.

Her address is 1312 Coit Street, Hattiesburg, Miss.

I am very excited about my work here. I appreciate the opportunity you have given me.

Yours for Freedom,
Howie Hammerman

WHAT DO OTHER PROJECTS DO:

*****Dayton*****

The Dayton Friends of the Mississippi Project plan a fund drive similar to the one carried on in Yellow Springs in December. The Dayton group decided to launch the drive at a meeting held January 7th. Willa Dallas and Ken Champney attended and described the Yellow Springs drive to the group. Ken agreed to help the Dayton group plan the drive and Isabel Newman and others have offered to help print literature for the Dayton group. Dayton also plans to organize a Hootenanny to kick off the drive, probably for sometime in February. The next meeting of the Dayton group will be held at 7:30 P.M. on January 28th at St. Margarets Episcopal Church. Anyone who would like to attend is welcome. If you would like a ride call Ken Champney (767-1311).

Springfield

The Springfield City-wide Sunday School Union, which has been working very closely with the project has assumed support of two volunteer workers in Mississippi: JOSEPH RATEMAN and SAMUEL JACKSON, both working in Marks, Mississippi.

Xenia

Mr. James Glasco and Mrs. Eula (Sally) Payne are trying to create a Mississippi Project group.

Wilberforce

At Central State College, ANNE SMITH of Huntington, N.Y., plans to go to Mississippi next summer. The college will give credits in sociology to those who volunteer and serve. At Wilberforce University, JOYCE HARRIS plans to go to Mississippi in February and stay till June.

Approximately a third of the people financially supporting the Friends of the Mississippi Project have done so by pledging an amount to be paid during this calendar year. In order to remind people of their pledges, postal cards will be sent to the pledgers around the middle of each month. The due date indicated on the card is an effort to gain some predictability as to the income and thus make it possible to plan expenditures. Since the cards do not state the amount, if there are any questions regarding your pledge, call Paul Graham (767-7612) or Eugene Tashima (767-1321).

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The Clothing Committee has had generous help from Ruth Wright, Mary Morgan, Margaret Landes, Essie Hyde, Janet Benning, Peggy Champney, Mrs. Lowell Nesker, and many, many others.

THANKS (cont'd)

Thanks are also due to all who gave so generously.

HOW WE GOT STARTED

The Yellow Springs Friends of the Mississippi Project Group was formed in November, 1964, with the expressed purpose of providing continuing support to the Civil Rights workers in Mississippi. A fund drive was launched in early December in which both contributions and pledges were solicited. The handling of these pledges and the earmarking of funds for the many needs in Mississippi is a continuing job. Every contributor is urged to help in this long term program and is urged to attend the Project meetings and the committee meetings. The individuals coordinating the project are:

- ALBERT STEWART, Co-chairman
126 W. North College 767-5561
- EDWARD CLARKE, Co-chairman
218 Gardendale 767-1101
- WILLA DALLAS, Vice-chairman
110 E. Whitman 767-7549
- KEN CHAMPNEY, Secretary
Hyde Rd. 767-1331
- MARIE PAYTON, Treasurer
W. North College St. 767-3781

Persons wishing to receive further information or to offer their services may contact any of these individuals directly or via Rt. 1, Box 273, Yellow Springs, Ohio. Contributions may still be sent to P.O. Box 84, Yellow Springs, Ohio. Offers to help on specified committees may be made to:

- PLEDGE RECORDS COMMITTEE
 - Eugene Tashima, 401 S. High St. (767-1321)
 - Paul Graham, 202 Fairfield Pike (767-7612)
- SOLICITATION RECORDS COMMITTEE
 - Betty Ford, 201 E. Herman (767-4231)
 - Henry Dyer, 304 W. South College (767-1744)
 - Shelley Wing, 420 President (767-1468)
- CLOTHING COMMITTEE
 - Margo Ensign, 602 S. High (767-7749)
 - Judy Ellison, 130 Glen St. (767-2681)
 - Barbara Davis, 615 Omar Circle (767-7816)

- NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE
 - Edward Clark (see above)
 - John Wing (see Shelley Wing)
- All of these committees can use your support in one way or another.

The next meeting of the Friends of the Mississippi Project is scheduled for 7:30 P.M., Wed., Feb. 3rd, at the Senior Citizens Center, 231 Xenia Ave., in Yellow Springs. ALL ARE WELCOME!

CLOTHING ARRIVES

Over 2,700 lbs. of clothing arrived in the South. Another 800 lbs. is being shipped. Mrs. Oscar Giles of Indianola writes: "...it made me feel so good to know somebody cares about us. This is Friday night and the truck hasn't arrived yet, but I can't wait to tell you how much we thank you." Mrs. Giles reports they still need boys' pants, children's shoes.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: "Sunflower Project"
(see map on page 1)

(This is the first of a series of newsletter articles on specific projects in Mississippi: where they are, what problems they face, and what progress is being made. -Eds.)

In the heart of the Mississippi Delta is Sunflower County. It is rich cotton and Soybean country and contains 63% Negroes, most of whom are farm laborers. Some few are sharecroppers, but the number has steadily declined under this system because half the profits go to the owner and the other half is lost in paying exorbitant credit rates at the owner's store. Field laborers work three months cotton-picking (up to \$5 day), two to three months cotton-hoeing (\$3 day), and the rest of the year at odd jobs. Only a few are able to find factory or other jobs.

Sunflower County is considered a key county in the Delta for measuring progress in civil rights. It is the home of Senator Eastland. It is where the White Citizens Council formed in 1954. A large number of landowners belong to WCC as well as many law enforcement officers. As a result, the interests of the owners may be directly served by mayors, sheriffs, and deputies through their common tie to the WCC. If economic reprisals do not discourage Negroes who try to demand their civil liberties, then police brutality may. And there has been much brutality. Even so, last September leaflets were passed out deploring the "soft policy" of WCC and demanding more violent action. Two cross-burnings in Ruleville suggested that the KKK (previously not strong here) had taken hold.

In the summer of 1962, the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) set up a voter registration drive in both Ruleville and Greenwood. After careful canvassing six Negroes were found who agreed to go the 26 miles to Indianola to register. One of these was Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, a bookkeeper at a local plantation. She was asked to withdraw her name or get out; that night she moved into Ruleville. On August 31 the house she had been staying in was shot up along with two houses which belonged to two others of the original six. Two teenage girls were seriously wounded. But this was not all the pressure which was to be applied in an effort to prevent these Negroes from becoming full citizens. Insurance was then cancelled on the church where voter registration meetings were being held, and the deacons closed the church. Eventually it was re-opened. In the winter of 1962-3 food and clothing were shipped from the North and distributed to those who had lost their jobs. During this time Mrs. Hamer and others travelled outside Mississippi to tell their story.

Throughout the rest of 1963 and early 1964 the Ruleville efforts gained

momentum. In February, 1964, 400 people attempted to register, and by June over 700 had tried. A good number of Negroes tried many times, but only 11 passed.

By June 1964 the Sunflower Project had become part of the Mississippi Summer Project. Thirty Northern students had now joined the effort in Ruleville. A community center and Freedom School were set up in a rented house. Now, too, the Project spread out into the towns of Drew, Indianola, Sunflower and Moorehead. In Drew the meetings were held outdoors since no one dared lend a building. The second meeting was broken up by police who hauled 40 people off to jail and charged 25 of them. Despite this intimidation 140 people signed freedom registration forms for the fast developing Freedom Democratic Party. In Indianola a schoolhouse of the Negro Baptist Convention was used for mass meetings and classes. The Sunflower Project now moved into these quarters. By September 120 Negroes had gone down to register and 700 had signed freedom registration forms. 550 people were attending mass meetings. Negroes from Sunflower and Moorehead were also beginning to respond; many signed the freedom forms and some few also tried to register. By September, 1964, the Project could look back on two years of solid work: fear had not been broken (the fear has basis in real, not imagined, threats), but enough fear had been overcome for Negroes to act in behalf of their own rights.

And progress continued. The Freedom Democratic Party was now organized county-wide, with precinct meetings in Drew, Ruleville, and Indianola and with 2,000 persons. Local civil rights groups are now taking over in these communities, and on September 20, 1964 400 delegates from Ruleville, Indianola, Sunflower, and Moorehead formed a county-wide group: Sunflower County Civic League. Sunflower County was changing and the change was now coming from the local people of Sunflower County.

By January 4, 1965, so much progress had been made that Charles MacLaurin, 23, SNCC field secretary, told 275 people assembled in front of the Sunflower County Courthouse: "This is the beginning of a new day in Sunflower County." The listeners had been picketing the courthouse for over six hours, demanding the right to vote. Although state law prohibits picketing, no arrests were made that day. The pickets were also celebrating "Freedom Day"--a day in which the demands for civil rights by Mississippi's Negroes would be indelibly impressed on the entire community.

In the next newsletter, IN THE SPOTLIGHT will tell the story of the Holly Springs Project. Larry Fubin, an Antioch College student, has just returned from Holly Springs where he served as the project co-ordinator. He will give a first-hand description.

If you have not yet sent your contribution or pledge, do so now: P.O. BOX 84 Yellow Springs, Ohio

If you have not already made a pledge or contribution, cut out the card below

Contribution and Pledge Card

FRIENDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI PROJECT
P.O. Box 84, Yellow Springs, Ohio

Name -----

Address -----

Phone: _____ Date _____

___ I contribute the following amount _____

___ I pledge the following amount for one year beginning _____ :
(month)

Check one:

___ One Dollar	___ Five Dollars
___ Two Dollars	___ Ten Dollars
___ Three Dollars	___ Fifteen Dollars
___ Four Dollars	___ Twenty Dollars

___ Other Amount (not shown above)

Signed _____

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