

HATTIESBURG; 575 Sign Up For Freedom Schools  
(reported by Bill Light)

SNCC office in Hattiesburg reports that by Thursday, July 2, 575 prospective students had registered for the five freedom schools about to open in the area. The students range in age from 8 to 82 years.

The first to register was an old man of 82 who has taught himself to read and write. He now wants to learn how to pass the voter registration test.

The Freedom Schools will be staffed by at least 33 volunteer teachers. Local teachers are also being recruited to help out. Several voter registration workers and office workers in Hattiesburg project have offered to help in night time teaching to alleviate the shortage of teaching staff for this unexpectedly large number of students.

During the past two weeks, voter registration workers in Hattiesburg passed out Freedom School applications as they canvassed the Negro community. On one day alone last week 175 of these forms were mailed into the SNCC office.

As the students registered at one of the 6 registration centers set up in the local churches, they checked off their choice of courses. The youngest group, aged 8 to 12, have no choice. They will all follow one curriculum which includes the following subjects: language arts, reading writing spelling (2) Negro history (3) General mathematics.

Those 13 and over could choose three courses from among the following: (1) language arts including not only basic skills but creative writing and public speaking as well (2) related American history, a course which will correlate general Am. history with Mississippi history and Negro history. (3) Social Studies a course which will include studies of the Mississippi and U.S. Constitution as well as some local and national geography. (4) Science survey course (5) general mathematics.

The courses for the older age groups will be repeated during a two-hour night session. However, the approach to the subject matter may be somewhat modified. As the night sessions are geared for adults. About 1/3 of the registrants are over 35. The night session will also contain courses in advanced science and math and in typing. More than 25 typewriters have been secured but many more are needed to cope with the flood of people who wish to learn to type.

Morning classes run from 8 to 11 am, evening classes from 7:30 to 9 30 pm. For those who wish to participate, there will also be programs scheduled for the hot afternoons. Informal discussion groups on social topics, selected by the young people themselves, entertainment, movies, etc. are tentatively planned for this time. Although the Freedom School registration books have had to be closed because of the unexpectedly large number of applicants, many people continue to phone in requests to be admitted. The staff is considering opening registration for the second session scheduled to begin in four to five weeks.

RULEVILLE: JULY 3 FOUR U.S. CONGRESSMEN PAID AN UNANNOUNCED VISIT TO A MASS MEETING SPONSORED BY THE SNCC SUMMER PROJECT AND THE RULEVILLE CITIZENSHIP CLUB.

The Congressmen, Rep. William Fitts Ryan of NY's 20th District (D), Rep. Don Edwards, California's 9th District (D. San Jose), Rep. Gus Hawkins, Calif 21st District (D. Los Angeles) and Rep. Philip Burton, Calif 5th District (D. San Francisco) joined in the singing of freedom songs, and gave speeches of encouragement to the audience of 125.

The meeting was held at 8 pm at Williams Chapel Baptist Church; only a week and a half earlier a Molotov cocktail was thrown at the church and tonight the Congressmen walked up the still charred steps. John Lewis, Chairman of SNCC, introduced three of the liaisons; Len Edwards, a SNCC summer volunteer, working in the Ruleville project and a 2nd year law student at the U. of Chicago, introduced his father, Congressman Edwards. Mrs. Irene Johnson, President of the Ruleville Citizens Club, the local CR organization, chaired the meeting and welcomed the "people we thought would never be here."

Ryan, reform Democrat from New York State told the Summer volunteers that they were in Mississippi on a "mission of conscience." He told the local Negroes "today we have been traveling in a state particularly to see the people in Miss. who are oppressed. There is no reason why Miss. should not join the rest of the nation in living up to the ideals of this country."