

Mrs. Chaney Speaking at the Schwerner-Chaney-Goodman Memorial Service

Held on the Grounds of the Burned Mount Zion Church

Philadelphia, Mississippi

August 16, 1964

Well, you all know that I am Mrs. Chaney, the mother of James Chaney. You all know what my child has done. He was trying so hard and he had two fellows from New York - owned their own house and everything - Didn't have nothing to worry about - They came here to help us. Did you all know they came here to help us? They died for us. They died for us. Now is we gonna let this be in vain? I can't let my child's work go in vain. And his two companions. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~. That boy Mickey Schwerner. He was just like a son of mine. He was just like my son. James was my son. James told me when he came in from Canton, he say:

"Mamma, you just don't know - there's a heap here that you don't know." I say: "Watcha mean?" He say: "Mamma, you just don't half know. I went to school two weeks in Jackson and Nossas, I learnt something. I learned more than I learned in nine months at Harris High and all the 16 years I went to school and I learnt something in them two weeks."

That's what my child said. He was just as well..... and I was glad of it. And I was layin' across the bed. He said: "You know what, Mamma?" And I said, "What?" He say: "Mickey Schwerner - I never knowed a man on earth who could live like him." I said, "Watcha mean?" He ~~EEEE~~ say, "Mamma, that man got sense. I'll go with him and I'll die for him. And I'll do anything he'll tell me to do," he say, "because, Mamma, he came here to help us and I'm not gonna let him do it by himself." He say, "I'm going with him and I'll be with him."

I say, "Son, - well, if that's what you want, I'm with you. I'm with you and Mickey both."

And that was my child. And Mickey and Andrew - they was mine too. And I don't want those children's ~~sy~~ work to be lost. They's gone - they was beaten, they was dogged. Now we gonna let all of that die? We gonna let that die? No sir. I'll never let my child's life go in vain. I wanna know if somebody's gonna help me. (Voices: yes!)

Is you all gonna help me? I said I wasn't gonna say nothin' - but I couldn't just stay here, stand up here, sit up here. I gotta say somethin'. My child go nights out here to this church - set up the first mass meeting. Right here. ~~¶~~ Next time he come back, here it was burned down. Who was it that burned this church so? For vdy? Now it's time for us to pray. It's time for us to be close now - and if we gonna do somethin' we better try to do it now. I want help. And I need all of you all. Everybody up yonder - they helpin us - they was behind me 100%. But right here at home. That's where I need help. And I'm lookin' for you all to help me. Don't let those children's life go in vain. They dead. Don't let their work die. That's when freedom started. When they beat, destroyed and 'baked my child and those other boys. That's when freedom started. You all don't know. You all got parents ~~EEEE~~ and they got lots of children that's gone. But none of em went like mine. It's hard. It's hard. But every time there is something about freedom - I go, I got to go. When the children come home this evenin', my head was hurtin'. They ~~¶~~ say, "Mamma, you goin?" I say, "Yes, I'm goin'." And I'm shore enough goin - if nobody else don't go. I'm goin.' And I meant to go. And here I am.