

February 11-15, 1963

My wife and I arrived in Selma Sunday night, February 10, 1963. We made arrangements for the night at Torch Motel. However, the next morning we were informed of arrangements for us in the city at the home of Mrs. Margaret Moore 1414 Broad Street. Mrs. A.P. Boyanton made these arrangements for us.

Frank Holloway arrived in Selma on Monday morning at 11 o'clock. Colia and Frank were introduced to Mrs. Boyanton, her office staff, Attorney Chestnut, and the vice president of the Dallas County Voters' League. These people had become actively interested since I made my survey in November.

We were invited to make a trip to Birmingham, Alabama to attend a meeting where they were planning to participate in the completing the formation of an Alabama chapter of SCLC. We decided this meeting would ~~not~~ be of benefit to us on the voter education project in Dallas County.

James Austin, a young man I conversed with while I was here in November, has already started voter education classes. Austin is very interested in working on the V.M.P. Mrs. Boyanton and Mrs. Foster are assisting Austin with the classes.

We went down to Birmingham in a two car caravan to the SCLC meeting. When we arrived in Birmingham and met Andy Young of SCLC, Nelson H. Smith, pastor in Birmingham and newly elected president of the Ala. chapter, Rev. Solomon Osey of Montgomery, Rev. Q.D. Adams of Gaston, Ala., Mr. Rufus Lewis of Montgomery, Ala. There were approximately 30 persons in attendance.

We were introduced to the group by Andy Young of SCLC as members of SNCC working in Ala. We were not allowed to participate on either of the committees as far as discussion were concerned. The presiding officer, former president Jarrett made the statement, "The students might just sit-in on either (emphatically) committee, Just sit-in." I made the statement, "We can always do that well".

We did more than just sit-in on the committees, we also offered suggestions for the committee. Also the major proposals for the steering committee were suggested by us. Mr. Rufus Lewis, who was chairing the committee did not agree with the president so we were permitted to freely participate in the discussion.

Andy Young asked that the Alabama chapter decide what their relation would be to the student. It was his idea that the two organizations should work together, but the chairman Mr. Jarrett decided that it should be the same as it is on the national level. There were no concrete answers to this question.

SCLC of Alabama with Rev. NH Smith plan to have their next meeting at Selma, Alabama. Andy Young assured the group that if SNCC was in Ala. at Selma things would be happening. Andy also suggested to me that I bring young people to Dorchester to the SCLC school. I did not give him an answer to this question.

Andy Young was the main speaker at the evening mass meeting. I was asked to give remarks to the group, but asked that James Austin of Selma be allowed to speak. This was Austin's first time to speak before a large audience, and he did well.

Continuation:

- 1 Mr. Eddie Griffin Route 1 Box 137 Browns, Alabama.
- 2 Mr. Gus Tabb Route 1 Box 125 Browns, Alabama.
- 3 Mrs. Rebecca Anderson Route 1 Box 98 Browns, Alabama.
- 4 Mrs. Millian Tean Kimbrough Route 1 Box 113 Browns, Alabama.

Lutheran Academy and College is a small school run by the Lutheran church. The school is under constant threat because it has a bi-racial faculty. The Dean of the school is Mr. Hunter, who has his own little private school and theory as to how a large number of voters can be gotten, but refuses to let the students help in canvassing for voter registration. He suggested that we let the faculty help us canvass.

Mr. James Gildersleeve, a registered voter 1726 Green Street, is an instructor at the Lutheran Academy and College. Mr. Gildersleeve is also Personal Director of the school. He has been able to get meeting arranged for us in Wilcox County. He has given us a contact in Merringo County, Mr. Harper of the Booker T. Washington Insurance Agency. Mr. Harper is arranging a meeting for us in Merringo County.

Attorney J. L. Chestnut, the only Negro attorney in Selma, is a very determined young man whose influence can almost change the entire population of Selma. He is willing to do all possible to help the voter education program.

The conservative element of the community includes the larger percentage of the Negro teachers, ministers and the faculty of a small private institution called Selma University, called

Up to this point we have not been able to interview or even talk with any of the teachers other than Mrs. Moore with whom we are staying.

The administration at Selma University has advised us not to return to the campus. But after a blasting from Attorney Chestnut it is rumored that we will be invited to lecture to the teachers at the college. This statement was also made to us by the attorney himself. The results remain to be seen.

Mr. Wens, president of Selma University, has been living in Selma for the last eight years and is not a registered voter. He says he is a registered voter in Louisiana. Mr. Wens personally escorted Bernard off the campus and threatened to have him arrested if he returned.

#### Wilcox County

As before mentioned the contacts in Wilcox County were arranged by Mr. Gildersleeve. The meeting was the most inspiring I have ever attended. There were approximately 30 persons in attendance. The meeting was for the purpose of repairing an old county school in their neighborhood, but Mr. Brown, a native of Wilcox County, has started a voter education class in these meetings. Mr. Brown is a dynamic young veteran who thinks it is time that a Negro gets his name on the voters lists in Wilcox County. There are no Negroes registered in Wilcox County.

Other Negroes that are outstanding in the community are the Petaways. Everybody in the community seems to be named Petaway.

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Dallas County

The work we have done so far in Dallas County covers two cities, Selma and Bochtichita. Below is an outline of the contacts and personalities in these two areas.

Selma, Alabama, a small country town where all the old mansions built by slave labor still remain, is the home of the white citizen's Council. It is the county seat of Dallas county which is located in the center of the "black belt". All though the citizens' council has tried to frighten the Negroes of Selma, there are still some militant negroes in the city. Among those we have met are:

Mr. Samuel W. Boyanton, a registered voter of 1315 Lapsley Street, Phone-Trinity (TR) 45635, was the first Negro in Selma to start a voter education drive. Mr. Boyanton and his wife have a Real Estate business, Insurance Agency, the only Negro Employment office in Dallas County, and are both certified Notary Republics. He is the father of Attorney Bruce Boyanton, who was the plaitive in the famous "Virginia versus Boyanton" case. Mr. Boyanton has suffered a series of strokes and is at present in the Darwell Infirmary at Selma. He is the present president of the Dallas County Voters' League.

Mrs. Amelia Boyanton, a registered voter 1315 Lapsley Street, Phone Trinity (TR) 45635, is the wife of the aboved mentioned Mr. Boyanton. Mrs. Boyanton is a dynamic freedom fighter here in Dallas County and is known for her activities throughout Ala. Due to her husband's illness Mrs. Boyanton is having to carry on all of the responsibilities of their business. Despite all of these difficulties she is constantly attending voter education classes and encouraging others to attend.

Mrs. Margaret Moore, 1414 Broad Street is housing Bernard, Frank and myself. She is one of the teachers in Dallas County who testified before the Justice Department for discrimination in registration.

Mr. Jackson C. Lawson, a registered voter and retired school teacher, is the Vice president of the Dallas County Voters' League. He is also president of the State of Alabama Retired Teachers' Association (Negro).

Mrs. Marie Foster, a registered 1421 Union Street, phone Trinity (Tr) 23267, is a Dental Nurse. She is the chief instructor of the voter education classes. The first group from the class will attempt to register Monday, March 18, 1963.

Mr. John Greer, a registered voter 1209 Lapsley Street, is the Director of the Bosco Club and assistant instructor of the Voter education classes. He is quite young and apparently ready to move ahead.

Bochtichita, Alabama, a small community north from Selma might be of special interest for one reason. It was this little community which recieved special publicity when the Ku Klux Klan planned to stage a raid of the general area. There was no Klan raid because because the Klan were informed Negro farmers were interested in arming themselves.

We had four workers from this area who are willing to do canvassing in this area.