

[1964, April 27]

Report Week of April 27 Meridian, Miss. Rita Schwerner

More books received for library, among them several more James Baldwin books, which are extremely popular. Material received for sewing project. It goes only to people who agree to go to the court house and register. Number of women have been registered in this way. Received promise of a sewing machine from a friend in New York. Expect it soon.

Box of children's games sent to us, and were extremely popular when used on Saturday for the children's hour.

We are having a meeting tonite, May 4, for the purpose of organizing the Miss. Student Union here in Meridian. Expect a large turn-out. The students have become extremely active lately, and have been coming up often to help.

*Started
May 1 st*

Started a boycott of one of the local stores (Bill's Dollar Store) as they refuse to hire Negroes or discuss the matter. Boycott going well. Students helped on Saturday, passing out leaflets and talking to people on the street. Police threatened arrest but did not bother most of the people, either local or staff. They picked up two young men for "investigation" but released them about 2 hours later when neither would talk without their lawyer present. We have been instructing people as to procedures to follow if arrested.

~~On Monday, May 4,~~

On Thursday, April 30 one of the young men who has been working with us was arrested and charged with "obscenity." He allegedly wrote the words "shit" and "shited" on a voter registration form at the Lauderdale Co. courthouse. He is being held in the county jail with \$500 bond, for trial on Wed. May 6. Howard Moore, of NAACP Legal Defense is to represent him.

On Monday, May 4, 3 more people were arrested, this time in connection with the boycott. Leroy McCall, a local man, was charged with vagrancy, after talking to people about the boycott. He is being held in the city jail with \$15 bond, for trial Wed. May 6. Mickey Schwerner was arrested and charged on two counts of blocking a crosswalk. His bond is \$50 and he's being held in the city jail for trial Wed. May 6. Lenora Thurmond was arrested and charged with interfering with a man's business and is being held in the county jail with \$500 bond, trial Wed. May 6 (trial date not definite). Legal Defense has agreed that Howard Moore will handle these cases also.

We have gotten strong support from part of the community; part is now severely frightened. Boycott is continuing, and few Negroes are entering the store. We have been offered one or two churches to speak in as a result, and a few ministers have come out strongly in favor of our work. There has been some change in the type of people coming up here. We originally got people who 'didn't want to get involved' but did want to use the facilities of the center. Now these people are staying away, but we are getting more people who want to take an active role in the struggle. This may somewhat change the tone of the community center if it continues, but we will be able to somewhat provide for the needs of people hurt by activity in the movement. The sewing project may be able to play a large role in this manner.

We need money to pay our many bills. Don't know the exact amount of our debt, as Mickey handles the books and he is in jail, but I believe we owe well over \$100.

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Addition - -

Mike Schwerner was found guilty at trial May 6, fined \$20 and given 10 days to pay which he plans to do and not appeal. He was in jail 48 hours, Monday to Wednesday

Lenora Thurmond's charge of interfering with a business stemmed from her asking people to participate in the ~~4%~~ selective buying campaign. At her trial, May 6, she was also found guilty and fined \$50 which she has already paid. She was in jail 49-50 hours, Monday-Wendesday.

don't know about the other two because the Schwerners are somewhere in Greenville at a staff conference. If it is important that you know you could probably call them direct tomorrow, when they should be back.

Ed Hollander