

Field Report of  
Bogue Chitto, Sardis and Selma, Alabama  
February, March and April, 1964

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Bogue Chitto is approximately 25 miles west of Selma, Alabama. My purpose for going into this area was to start the Organization to working again and to organize the Negro adults and high school students.

During September and October, this area was working hard to get its Negroes Registered to vote. The population of Bogue Chitto is 2,500 Negroes. The percentage that is Negro is about 65%. The Negroes in this area are mostly farmers. Most of them have fear of their financial problems and whether the white man will loan them money to get their necessities that they will need for their farm supplies. First of all they had to overcome their fears of the "white brother".

The average Negro in Bogue Chitto makes about \$15.00 to \$20.00 weekly, and has to work for that pay, seven days a week. Some of the Negroes that live on the "white man's" land make a salary less than this. Their average weekly salary is from \$9.00 to \$10.00 weekly, seven working days a week.

Mr. Kimbrough is interested in the movement and takes an important part in the Civil Rights activities there. Mr. Kimbrough owns a store in their community, and is considered, in their community, as "outstanding" among the Negroes.

Another outstanding Negro, Mrs. Anderson, owner of 4 acres of land and a settle aged woman, is very active in the movement in the Bogue Chitto area.

I anticipated they were still having Mass Meetings, but it had stopped. I also tried to get some for the 6th of April, which was registration day. I re-freshed their memory on the powers of the Ballot and their gains if they would secure this Ballot. I told them that "some of us must suffer for the cause of Freedom".

Sardis is about 9 miles South of Selma. We have about 20 people coming down for Registration. Most of these Negroes seem to be aware of the movement. If someone would go in this area often, we could secure many number of Negroes. Some have tried to register, but fail, but said they would go down again. Most of these people feel the Justice Department is doing very little in Dallas County on the suit. Some said they would write Judge D. Thomas and tell him he took little effort in the case. I also advised them to write him and tell him how many times they have gone down and how they feel and think they should been qualified, and because of being a Negro they were disqualified.

We are trying to use this method in Selma and Bogue Chitto and other parts of Dallas County. We may use the team as "Letter Writing" which may be the answer to their problem if we get enough to write. We passed out pamphlets reading, "Register! Register! Register! We have set a goal for 10,000 Register Voters. You can help us to reach this goal by going down to the Court House and register and vote".

After I have gone to Sardis three or more times and spoke there on coming down. Rev. Cook work along with me because he lives in Sardis and these churches he pastors. Rev. Cook is active in the movement. He was one of the Negroes that got fired from Cleveland Table Company for attending a Mass Meeting last year.

Most of the Negroes in Sardis farm or work on the White man's plantation, or here in Selma, some own their land and farm. Many of these Negroes are outstanding here in Sardis.

Selma, Alabama

We have been working here in Dallas County on Voter Registration. Mass Meeting has been going on here every week with about 300 to 600 people attending. For the last past month it has been raining here and very few Negroes have been down to the Court House to register.

Since there have been changes in the Questionnaire, it seems a little complicated to most of the people. Most of them have been asked by the Board of Registrar

to spell various words and some could spell and some could not. For the last past week we have been working along with Mrs. Boynton Campaign and the Dallas County Voters League. On Sunday, I went to Ataugaville County and spoke to a group of Negroes of about 300. This was at Rev. Cook's Church. Most of the Negroes are aware of Mrs. Boynton and said they would go down to register. Some are afraid because there is little work in this County. Some complained about having to go to Prattville where the Court House is to register and it was too far for them. Most of the people in the Rural do not have transportation. I told them we would try to work out some way to carry them down to Prattville if they would get a large number of people. The reason for this is, we are like of transportation here in Dallas County.

April 6, 1964, Dallas County, Selma, Alabama

Today is Registration Day. It is raining and very few Negroes went down to the Court House. Today I stood in line with the people who had come to register and to sign for them. Sheriff J. G. Clark called me out of the line and asked me what was I doing in it. I replied: I'm here to register, then Sheriff asked, "How long have you lived here", then I said "3 years, can't I register", he said, "I guess so" then walked away.

I took the names of the Negroes standing in line. It was total of 27 went down on this raining day; 18 Negroes and 9 Whites. Only 12 Negroes got registered. 6 were turned away because of the closing of the board at 4:00 p. m. All of the White got registered.

Marvin Griffin, who is blind, went down today to register.

About 150 attended the Mass Meeting. This meeting was most on "Clean Up Campaign" Mr. Huss from Talladega, Alabama, was the Speaker.

On April 20, 1964, is Freedom Day here in Selma, Alabama. We will try to get 500 to go down and stand in line to Register.