

[To Francis Stuart Harmon]

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[May 1965]

Your letter of May 18 and I have had some trouble making connections. But finally we did. And I'm glad.

The fact that one with a campaign based on your premises could have received a majority in the counties you did in 1926 intrigues me. Today Yazoo is notorious for its resistance to our movement. And Rankin isn't far behind it. Madison and Hinds, because we've been there longer, are cracking; but their most recent history doesn't indicate that you would have had much support from them either in the twenties. I guess I have some checking to do into Mississippi history.

If you drew any of your socio-political values from your father, then the nature of the Canton Methodist pastorate has changed considerably, too. As probably you noted in THE LETTERS not even white civil rights workers were allowed to worship with the white Canton methodists. And -- as far as we could discover -- the pastor was fully in accord with the hulking ushers who repeatedly turned our people away. The minister at the Presbyterian church there was different. He went so far as to turn his entire congregation away one morning after three of our workers had been refused entrance to the services. By the summer's end, however, ~~had~~ had gone from Canton for good.

I just completed a 3 month stint in Neshoba Co, starting a communications and research center there for the fourth congressional district. The coming voting law, the anti-poverty bill and numerous other pressures are requiring deeper political knowledge and wider educational programs from the movement. If it meets the requirements, its immediate future could be as intellectually and socially exciting as its recent past has been physically challenging.

Unfortunately, I'll not be able to share in it for at least the coming year. Since San Francisco SNCC is more lucrative than Mississippi COFO, and since I have college loan obligations to meet, I'll be working in California for awhile -- just as soon as I have a little vacation here. The chance to compare the movement north and south, and to profit from whatever advanced organizational techniques the north has developed is something to be glad for, I think. But the pull away from Miss isn't too easy. And I doubt that it will ever be totally completed. So I'll remember you when I begin corresponding from there once more.

Yours in Freedom

[JoAnn Osman]