

Preliminary Statement: Information related below was compiled without consultation with Mrs. Hamer since she was absent from Ruleville this first week of the Miss. Summer Project. I will not discuss incidents, registration attempts, etc. that have occurred in the past in this region, since Charles MacLaurin has reported on these matters upon occasion and they seem to be a matter of public record. Correct me if I am wrong. I will focus on progress of the project, incidents that have occurred, and community and power structure matters. Research into the latter will unfortunately be limited since I have had occasion to have contact with the local mayor, law enforcement, local people, county sheriff, etc. and they are extremely sceptical of my function. I attempted to pass myself off as an "independent researcher" but I cannot do this anymore. Most of my information will henceforth be gotten from the Negro community, which in this area is a very fertile source. I will relate raw data I have obtained, with all apologies for how little this is, but have not begun to make the desirable connections and interpretations.

The Ruleville Community: General

Summer Project activities have initially centered in this community in Sunflower County. Town located on land "ceded" by Choctaws in 1844. The Rule brothers settled first here, hence name of town, building a cotton gin in 1886. City population is 1,902 (1960 census) and estimated currently at ~~2,100~~ 2,100. 60,000 persons live within a 15 mile radius of town. Agricultural products include cotton, corn, rice, soybeans, small grains, and livestock. Located at crossroads of U.S. 49W and Miss. 8; on main line of Illinois Central RR; Ruleville-Drew Municipal Airport located 4 miles to north (2500 foot runway). City administration is mayor-aldermen. Charles M. Dorrough has been mayor since 1952, former auto dealer and insurance man (more about him later under personalities). Police force of two full-time and one part-time. One Negro cop, name of Willy Martin, no power to arrest whites. Rumor he was put on to take care of any Negro demonstrations. Police patrol in pick-up with cage, and carry police dogs at all times. Fire department volunteer with paid chief, name of H.J. Grant, Jr. Utilities, Miss. Power and Light, United Gas Corp., Southern Bell. Two banks. New Negro school built 1959. Two light industry plants with Northern connections. City advertises: "Cooperative and friendly attitude of officials toward industry. No labor competition nor union disturbances."

Negro Community:

Three distinct sections compose the Negro community. At the northeast edge of town is the "Sanctified Quarters" (named for a church); at the southeast edge is "Jerusalem Quarters" (named for church); and the "Compress Quarters" (named for the nearby cotton compress). There is something of an economic division here. The Compress Quarters are composed of persons with steady jobs, persons working for the compress, and some company homes. One could say, then, that the highest Negro economic group resides here. Retired persons and persons on welfare compose the Jerusalem Quarters. The Sanctified Quarters represents a polyglot grouping, with a large proportion of day laborers. This breakdown of quarters

also has significance for the Movement. Little cooperation is obtained from Negroes in the Congress Quarters, and, in fact, this is a hotbed of Tomism and Negro informers in the employ of the mayor. Highway 8 separates Jerusalem and Sanctified Quarters. Since mass meetings, the "hard core" group of Negro women in the movement (including Mrs. Hamer), are both centered in the Sanctified Quarters, this section is the strongest for the Movement. There is less support in Jerusalem. It seems that if Mrs. Hamer's home and the Williams Chapel, site of mass meetings, (nearby to Hamer home) are the source of civil rights enthusiasm which decreases with distance from this source.

The Ruleville Citizenship Club has been the organization about which civil rights activity, specifically voter registration, has centered. SNCC workers who came into the community in 1962 inspired the club's formation. Before SNCC came in only a few Ruleville Negroes sought to express themselves, slipping off secretly to Cleveland in Bolivar County where the NAACP had some activities. Presently about 100 members compose the club, which is rather informally organized. No dues are collected but donations at weekly, Friday, mass meetings help defray expenses for transportation to Indianola where persons attempt registration. The officers of the club are:

Chairman.....Mrs. Irene Johnson
Vice-chairman.....Mrs. Mary Tucker
Sec'y.....Mrs. Rebecca MacDonald
Treas.....Mrs. Leonard Davis

All of these ladies are registered voters. They are exceptional individuals, as anyone who has the slightest familiarity with happenings in Ruleville since 1962 can testify. If one adds to this list Mr. and Mrs. Sisson, Mr. Joe MacDonald, as well as the Hamers, you have the names of the adults from which to initiate any civil rights activities in this community. Reverend Carter of the Independent Methodist Church in Ruleville has recently interested himself in the Movement, and he can be looked for to provide leadership in future. The striking thing about leadership here, as I imagine elsewhere in Miss., is the role assumed by the women. The reasons for this, I suspect, are ~~well~~ well documented sociologically.

The people here have been through the mill as regards economic pressure, and physical violence is no stranger to their streets. Literally thousands of pounds of food have been distributed from sources up North, and also large amount of clothing, which has partially alleviated conditions. Despite all their harassment, there are 29 registered voters in this community and none of them will turn back. This is true generally of the Citizenship Club; its potential can only be measured in greater militancy. For example, in Feb. of 1964 the Club carried about 400 persons to Indianola to attempt registration. They are now fearlessly housing about 40 white volunteers (some temporarily until quarters can be found elsewhere) despite the fact that Mayor Derrough personally made a house-to-house canvass before they arrived warning the Negroes that the volunteers were coming to beat and kill them, and despite the fact that they have good reason to expect economic reprisal. The presence of the volunteers is no secret to the white community.

White Community:

One can construct an hypothetical model of community structure to check out. Many town merchants are Jews, Italians, and Chinese. One knowledgeable Negro found it easier to enumerate those merchants which were

"White Americans" than count off all the "foreigners." These "Foreigners" are subject to pressures from more powerful individuals. The Negroes characterize the foreigners as not the element responsible for violence. Mayor Dorrrough is the individual who seems to speak for the groups putting on pressure. One man whose name seems to come easily to everyone's lips when economic pressure is spoken about is Sidney Livingston. I am just beginning to investigate this person, but he is somehow closely connected with the Planters Bank and Trust Co. of Ruleville and has a large plantation nearby. Noone seems to know much about Livingston, except that he is Jewish and powerful. None of the upper strata of power involve themselves directly in matters of harassment or threat. There are no known elements in the white community (the term elements comes easier than "people") that can be termed moderate. Contact has been made with two white ministers: E.A. Spencer, Methodist; and Wilbur Webb, Baptist. Neither is at all receptive. Webb indicated inhospitable attitude to having white volunteers attend his church, and Dorrrough was able to go over the head of Spencer to warn our Council of Churches minister to stay out of the Methodist church. Spencer then went along with the mayor's initiative. Generally, we are being given police protection; i.e., the police patrol the Negro quarters very regularly and have made an effort to keep out whites. The Mayor seems to be in charge of "handling" us in every way. The chief of police is so inconspicuous that noone can even give me his name for sure! Every matter of significance to the project is either referred to or comes from the mayor's office.

Citizens Council, etc.:

My most "accurate" source for information on this matter is Mayor Dorrrough. He states that the town maintain an "inactive" membership in the White Citizens Council. Also that they have not met in two years; i.e., since Moses, etc. came in and provoked trouble. There is a local rumour, humorously related, that when the fire alarm blares out one long blast, it is a signal for a Council meeting. Conspicuously displayed, namely in the mayor's sign-in book for visitors, was a W.C.C. pamphlet. The South Carolina Herald, a kind of phoney Negro newspaper, was also displayed prominently for visitors to see. Noone has any knowledge of KKK activities in recent years. No crosses have been burned, no robed goons, etc. It is clear, however, that there is a close-knit organization at work here, since they are able to speak with one voice--through Mayor Dorrrough.

Economic Matters:

I have a long way to go to get stuff of significance here. The two factories in town are The Ruleville Mfg. Co., and the Original Charms Toy factory. The Chamber of Commerce says that the former employs 120 and the latter 90, but I doubt that they employ 200 all together. No Negroes work at either place, although one Negro woman supposedly cleans up a few hours per week over at Ruleville Mfg. Co. The Ruleville Mfg. Co. makes jackets and insulated underwear. Nathan Primack runs the place and is, I believe, a New Yorker. I suspect the roots of the company will lead here. During the hard times that Ruleville Negroes had immediately after their first attempts at registration, Operation Freedom interested them in quilting so as to make a little money.

Some enterprising women discovered that they could gather cloth scraps over at Ruleville Mfg. and make use of them. Soon it became a policy of this firm to burn all scraps. The same is true for the toy factory, where some women were using waste stuffing to make hats, etc.

The Miss. State Employment Service says for May 1964 for Sunflower Co.: "There is still a shortage of male factory workers and young male trainees." Their unemployment statistics are based on applications for jobs. Moreover, these figures do not include applications for agricultural or domestic situations. Therefore, it is clear that Negroes are excluded for the most part from unemployment statistics. Thus the Sunflower Co. figure of 1.9% unemployment (270 individuals and a decrease of 100 from previous year's figure) is a white man's statistic. I would strongly suggest that some attempt be made to obtain a subscription to the following mimeographed booklet put out periodically by the state chamber of Commerce:

Mississippi Memos

c/o Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 790

Meridian, Miss.

It presents business summaries from all areas in the state and all kinds of tid-bits and names. I have the names of all the officers and directors of the State C. of C. If you don't have these I will send.

Enclosed find a policy statement of the Miss. Econ. Council, which is of interest.

There are two banks in Ruleville. The Bank of Ruleville is a new structure. Total resources nearly \$4 million. Eastland's office in the second story. The officers are:

President.....	Mrs. H.G. Beck
Exec. VP.....	R. W. Holladay
Cashier.....	J. M. Robertson
Asst. Cash.....	E.P. Tolbert

The Directors are:

A.L. Barber, Sr.
Mrs. H. G. Beck
H.W. Carver, Jr.
Eugene Fissackerly
R.W. Holladay
G.W. Manning, Jr.
Mrs. W.W. Robinson, Jr.
Ray Russell

I have not investigated the other bank, Planters Bank and Trust Co. I was unable to get their statement. I know only for sure that Ted Borodofsky is the Cashier. He is known to have made it difficult for Mrs. Hamer to cash checks from such risk personalities as Ralph Bunche.

I am anxious to know about the following men; if you know, let me: a Mr. Lindsey, who operates a gin with Eastland in Doddsville; W.P. Seruggs, who operates a big plantation next to Eastland; and Sidney Livingston. If I have over-emphasized the role of Jews here, don't get me wrong. I just think that these people may be more approachable than the "white A-m-e-r-i-c-a-n-s", and they do indeed seem to figure prominently in the economic power structure. Borodofsky is also Jewish.

The only other matter economic that I have any comment on presently is something probably obvious. Igniss not really economic, but anyway Southern Bell which services this area makes clear distinction in its

Phone Directories between White and Negro by use of courtesy titles for whites but not Negroes. Also nicknames are listed for Negroes. I wonder if A.T. and T. knows this. Ha!

Progress of Ruleville Movement:

The past week we have had mass meetings nightly at the Williams Chapel (Baptist), at Ob and Byron Streets. Attendance at 80 to 125, with different faces present nightly. Enthusiastic crowd. Registration is urged at these meetings and they are the life of the movement here. Meetings held under sponsorship of Ruleville Citizenship Club. On 22 June young people of community stayed after mass meeting to elect officers and form their own group. About 30 between the ages of 15-19 half boys, half girls involved. They will be known as the Ruleville Action Group (RAG). Officers are:

Chmn.....James Conley
V-Chmn.....Ore Doss (female)
Sec'y.....Bobby Cannon (female)
Treas.....Bobby Ford (female)

The young people are helpful in assisting volunteers in voter registration. They are a go-getter type group, and my feeling is that they may attempt public demonstrations in future, e.g. picket of the white (and Xonly library).

On 23 June Mrs. Rennie Williams and Mrs. Ruby Davis attended the Sunfl. Co. Democratic Convention, and Mrs. Williams managed to get recognized in the Caucus of the Ruleville delegation. She nominated Mrs. Davis for alternate delegate to the State Party Convention, and cast her one vote for Mrs. Davis. General confusion of the whites seems to have contributed to this rare occasion.

On 24 June nine Negroes went down to Indianola for registration application. The information on them I have is as follows:

<u>name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Times tried Previously</u>	<u>Sec. of Con</u>
Roberta Hackett	800 N. Division	35	1	11
May B. Campbell	721 E. Reden	50	1	50
David G. Smith	624 E. Harrison	54	11	30
Aileen Foster	809 E. Reden	67	0	14
Augustana Hicks	600 Weber	46	12	126
Fannie Lee	417 N. Oak	--	--	--
James Holman	----	--	--	28
Gertrude Rogers	---	--	--	31
Martha Conley	-----	--	--	--

The deputy registrar took only two persons at a time. Examination of the room they took the test in yielded the following information. This room is large enough for at least two tables of the size presently there. Now only one table about 6' x 3' is in the center of the room, with one chair at each end which seat the applicants. I observed several other chairs, 8 all together, around the table. There is clearly sufficient room to handle more than two persons at a time. The testing rooms opens on the Circuit Clerk's office and any noise or disturbance there affects the applicants. On this day, however, applicants reported courteous treatment. The door to the Circuit Clerk's office was, however, monitored by a Sheriff's deputy, armed, and no one issue into the office without passing him. Other armed guards stood at the courthouse entrance. Applicants awaiting their turn were seated on the court house porch.

During this time some local white youths were run in by Sheriff Hollowell's men because they were riding around the court house square and yelling. They were shortly released.

On 24, 25, 26 June we canvassed at Drew. Next to nothing had been done previously in this community. Petty harassment, yelling, by whites and Negroes seemed frightened. On second time there the police gave protection from whites. On the third time Police Chief Curtis Floyd remarked that he would not put up with our harassing the Negroes. Some success was yielded by these efforts, as we publicized our mass meeting and then two persons from Drew did attend on the 26. A small number have also promised to go down and attempt registration. Adults from Ruleville are making an effort to go to Drew and interest the population in our activities. Reverend Carter from Ruleville is behind this group. This may be an excellent way of paving the path in new areas; namely, to send in a small group of Negroes of nearby communities who have learned not to be afraid and have them circulate socially and dispell fears. In addition to the above, we have canvassed Ruleville for Freedom Regis. since 500 freedom registration blanks already filled out were confiscated when McLaurin was arrested in Columbus recently. This is now being repeated.

Incidents:

Night of 23 June and early morning of 24. Bottles thrown by occupants of white car. The incidents are as follows:

--Mr. and Mrs. Hackett, 800 N. Division St., had a coke bottle thrown on their porch at about 3:30 A. M. They are Negroes.

--A window was broken at the home of Mrs. Matilda Hicks, Negro, 615 Division Street. The persons who threw the bottle were out to the car and ran back to it after throwing the bottle. The time was approximately 3 A. M. She couldn't reach the police and called the Mayor. The Mayor called on her home at about 6:30 a.m.

--Mrs. Cleo Connally heard a loud crash on her porch after midnight. She is a Negro and lives at 644 Lafayette St.

--Mrs. Willie Mae Smith, Negro, 720 Center, had her car struck by a bottle at approximately 4:30 A.M., causing minor scratches. A loud car was heard driving away.

--The car of Len Edward, white GPOF volunteer, was hit and dented by a coke bottle at approximately 4 A.M. It was parked at 626 Lafayette.

--A bottle hit the car of Mr. Dudley Perkins, Negro, 627 Byron St., at approximately 2:30 A.M. At the same time, two pop bottles were thrown into his yard and two into the neighbor's yard. Mr. Perkins went to the door and yelled "hey."

--A bottle was thrown through a window at 641 Elm, the Henderson residence (Negro). We have not been able to talk with them yet.

--Mrs. Baylock (Byron and Division) heard a loud noise near Mrs. Sisson's house between two and three A. M. She described the noise as "Like a car without a muffler." It occurred again at 4 A. M.

--Mrs. Knight in the same area heard a similar noise at about the same time. She couldn't say where the noise came from.

--Mrs. Bessie Mae Harring, 820 Washington Ave., heard shooting between 3:30 and 4:00 A. M. in the direction of Division Ave.

--Mrs. Sisson heard a single shot at 2:30 A. M. at the same time she heard a car turn North on Division Street. This car passed her house. Later at 3:00 A.M. she heard another shot. This time she heard a car turn South on Division St. Both shots were fired South of her house on

Division St., 824 N. Division.

There were no reports of shots hitting anything.

On 25 June at approx. 2:00 AM a molotov cocktail was thrown at the Williams Chapel, charring the front steps and above the entranceway. Seven plastic bags of gasoline were found along the east side of the church and one other nearby. No damage was done to the interior of the church. The "swoosh" of the fire awakened Mr. Hamer who alerted our communications man, Dale Gannemeier, who in turn called the ~~fire dept.~~ firedept. and mayor. The fire dept was here in unusually quick order, about 10 min., and had the fire out in 15 min. The mayor was on the scene. The FBI investigated the scene and questioned people that ~~participated~~ same day. Attitude of local officials was that we had started fire ourselves. I found it impossible to locate the fire chief. As far as I know the FBI is still on this case.

On 28 June we investigated the killing of a Negro not related to our movement. The reason for our concern was that one of the new converts from Drew mentioned that the killing had deterred her participation. The enclosed statement represents our findings, just what I took down as it came out of Sheriff Hollowell's mouth. We are putting this in an affidavit form. Lawyers from L.C.D.C. were by and commented on the unusual rapidity with which the coroner handled the matter. He called it into the FBI, but I do not know what investigative procedures, if any, they have initiated. Witnesses other than those listed by the Sheriff were present, but we do not know their names.

Future activities: We will soon work in Indianola. Police Chief Bryce Alexander seems to be cooperative there and has furnished us with a copy of the ordinance against leaflet distribution. Lawyers are looking this over to advise us on what steps to take. It should not deter us from starting in Indianola.

Ruleville Personalities:

Charles M. Dorrrough: Mayor, since 1952, partner in Davis Insurance Agency of Ruleville, Vice-pres. of the municipal gov't. association of Miss. I've already said a lot about him. His son is G.M. Dorrrough, Jr., one of the ~~best~~ town doctors. We have reason to believe he has sterilized some women against their will (at least without their knowledge) and this is being discretely investigated. Dr. Dorrrough has treated a Negro for stroke, and this Negro is now an informer for the Mayor.

Amos Minor: Negro informant described above.

Grady Lee Buckley: Negro, Tom, attends mass meetings for Mayor.

Willy Martin: Negro cop.

Other Names of interest:

G.C. Campbell: County registrar.

D.G. Williams: Deputy registrar.

Jack Harper: Chancery clerk

? Bratley: Top Sheriff's deputy

J.S. Parker: Sheriff's deputy (always with him)

Excuse the incompleteness of this report. Please make suggestions freely.

Jerry Teeklin
p. O Box 275
Ruleville, Miss.

Addenda

Activities of Movement:

We will presently circulate the following questionnaire. Local people are not well informed on their overall situation, as we are not also. (excuse syntax). I am particularly interested in giving them ammunition for demanding equal treatment from utilities firms etc. Also there is a special investigation going on to document, in affidavit form where possible, all that we can about intimidation, etc. so as to throw this in Eastland's face after his lies on TV this last week.