FREEDOM SCHOOL PLANS

PLEASANT GREEN

BOB GILMAN

JOAN O'BRIEN

July 6, 1964

9:00 Freedom Singing

9:30 Brief statement to the kids about why we're here & what
we hope to do; then divide the group into sections

10:00 In my section pass out notebooks & pens; have everyone
write his name, age, special interest if any, & a brief answer
to the question "what makes a man free?" Begin discussion
on that question by asking if anybody wants to read or talk about
what he's written.

At some point in the discussion I'll interject the
idea that freedom begins inside a man. We'll attempt explanation
of that idea by looking at pictures of Mrs. Harper & Billy Noble
& talking about the contrast in the expressions on their faces.

8 students of 14 years and above appeared; 12 students
ranging from 11-5 years came also. Sue Sanford worked
with the younger group. Bob Gilman & I began
a discussion along the lines mentioned above with the
older group (6 boys, 2 girls). The Episcopal
minister who is going to Carthage soon sat in
on much of the session & helped to keep the talk
moving. We decided that a man could begin to be
free only when he could "think Free" & was not a
prisoner of hatred or of the fear which causes hatred.

We talked about why white men hate Negroes so much
(one of the boys expressed special interest in this question).
Then the discussion became more specific, dwelling on
voter registration & some history - especially Reconstruction history.
with the emphasis on the fact that during
Reconstruction Negroes were able to vote. We also
focused on Negro origins in Africa.

We asked for some idea of what
they wanted to study for the rest of
the time. The answers indicate that we’ll
have to build our curriculum around math, science
and Negro history. One person wants art – Sue
Sanford will work with her. Another wants shorthand;
no of us is qualified & we’re hoping to make
arrangements with some other volunteer who is.

We plan to divide our mornings
into 4 parts in the following order: Algebra,
History, Science, Citizenship. Bob will be largely
responsible for Alg & Sci.; Sue & I for the
other 2. We’ll provide more detailed lesson
plans for tomorrow tomorrow morning. This
afternoon is devoted to canvassing for more
students.

Susan Sanford

10:00 I took those under fourteen; we began
by drawing for about an hour which
was met with quite a lot of
enthusiasm. We discussed why we go
to school, why I am here in Mississippi,
different colors of skin, and what the
North is like. We then played “Guess”
which was quite successful and
discussed what we will do tomorrow.
The younger children will be coming
in the afternoon. I expect we will
have about twenty tomorrow. We
had twelve today—most of whom didn’t
want to leave.
July 6

Earl Dessey

The first day of school at New Bethel Church was uneventful. We spent about 2 hours discussing general problems in Mrs. today, and organized the patterns with which we will treat the curriculum. I am responsible for lecturing & leading discussions on negro history for the week. This allows one person to concentrate on one area and get to know that area well.

A lady in the milltown neighborhood fixed us a lunch, for the second day in a row. Our student body grew on the day program. I hope to have 25 tomorrow. The most important thing is making the kids interested & letting them work for themselves. Right now I'm advocating the beauties of reading - reading anything. They all have comprehension problems - and if we make them read a lot - and we always do - they will improve their reading.

My aims in history are to awaken pride in their heritage and give them foundation for responsible active citizenship.