Thurdday,

Today is July 9. The Freedom Schools have been in operation four days, since Monday. There are five Freedom Schools, located at five different churches plus another which is just getting under way by popular request. Enrollment is six hundred, plus - we have lost track. The schools run a morning session from eight to eleven; this session is attended by children from eight to eighteen. There is an evening session from seven thirty to nine thirty, which is primarily for adults, although some older high schod students also attend. The courses taught stress Negro history and the constitutions of the United States and the State of Mississippi. Many students are enrolled in science and math, and typing is also extremely popular. Language skills are taught through the medium of writing; at present all the schools are preparing a newspaper. The Negroes here are extremely eager to learn and understand very well the ways in which they have been deprived.

The concerns of daily life all reflect the pattern of segregation. My students have told me of bus drivers who are rude to Negroes; many of them ride the busses as seldom as possible. In my adult class we read the Declaration of Independence, and they chose the grievances against the King of England which are the same as their grievances against the state of Mississippi. They believe that the one-party system in Mississippi is as tyrannical as a Communist State. They think that the methods of the Ku Klux Klan are as bad as those of the Communist Party.

We volunteers are exhausted. Teaching is unfamiliar for many of us and though exciting, it is exhausting. We manage, of course, without texts or any of the other aids teachers take for granted. We are proving that it can be done - all it takes to teach is students and a teacher, and lots of energy. We do have classrooms.

The people are kind beyond belief. There are now over fifty volunteers in Hattiesburg, all housed with private families, who risk at least their jobs; we are all very aware of the Freedom House which was blown up in McComb.

This aspect of things frightens us far more than it does the local people. As one woman told me, "They used to shoot us and treat us badly just for living, so there isn't any point in being afraid when you are fighting for your rights." News of arrests are laughed at - not "what did he do?" but "What are they accusing him of?" Bob Beech, who is the leader of the Minister's Project, is in jail right this minute. He was charged with cashing a bad check, of which he is guilty. He called the bank before he wrote the check to ask if he had enough money to cover it, and the bank assured him that the money was being placed in his account right that minute. But it wasn't. His bond is $2500. We are wondering what effect this arrest will have on his work. He has been extremely successful in contacting people in the white community who are sympathetic, and he has also been useful as a driver.

Other incidents: the night before we arrived two cars parked in front of the office were shot into; the FBI was out in the street investigating when we got here. A car containing five white boys and one Negro girl was stopped by a sheriff, who spouted profanity and finally slapped one of the boys; the FBI is investigating that, too. Monday night a group of local teenagers unconnected with the Project was arrested for "disturbing the peace"; they tried to get service at a tavern which sports a "whites only" sign and were driven off by the owner with a pistol. Three of the boys were beaten by the police; the FBI is investigating that, too. It is funny to think of the FBI as our friends. But Hattiesburg is comparatively quiet and safe, and these things are pretty much taken for granted by us, as well as by the local community.

We are staying with a Negro family who are also putting up two other workers - our hosts sleep in the dining room. They are old, but they are extremely involved in the Movement - our hostess is a registered voter and even attended a precinct meeting to choose delegates to choose delegates to the Democratic convention. The Negroes were not allowed to participate in this meeting, on the grounds that they had notpaid their two-year poll tax. My hostess also told me that when she voted in the national election her ballot was labelled with her name and address and that she was not allowed to put it in the box; she is sure that Negro votes are not counted.

Thursday, July 9

Teaching in Freedom Schools in Hattiesburg is in many ways ideal from a pedagogical standpoint. When we discuss the Declaration of Independence, our students can point out which grievances of the colonists against the King of England are the same as theirs against the state of Mississippi. They read the Constitution as a listing of rights they are denied. No one needs to teach them the importance of the vote; they understand that unpaved streets and inferior schools are tangible results of their political impotence. (The Negro schools are all new, brick structures, built since 1954; but the equipment is all hand-me-downs from white schools.)

The Negroes here are eager to register to vote

As a result, the campaign to get people to register to vote is more successful than one might suspect who sees only the obstacles, which are