

COFO Community Center
Box 547
Shaw, Mississippi
July 15, 1964

Dear Ones,

Please forgive me for writing two letters at once by means of carbon paper, but I am so exhausted that writing even one letter seems an impossible task.

The library has been going great guns. I think that I checked out more than a hundred books today, and I know that I have over fifty library cards in the hands of Shaw residents now. This has been my busiest day in terms of the number of books checked out and returned. But tomorrow will be my only holiday for a long time. It is Freedom day for Mississippi's Second Congressional District which includes the Delta and a few other counties. We will be picketing the county courthouse in Cleveland in an attempt to get them to allow Negroes to register. Bolivar County could very well be the scene of an important test case on registration because the records are more complete here than is true elsewhere in the state. The registrars most places destroy the records periodically, but Bolivar's registrar has not been so careful.

If I am in jail by the time you get this, you will know about it. There will be someone in a position to notify you if anything happens. I doubt that I will be involved if anything does break, because I am not going up until the afternoon, and they think that if anything does happen, it will be in the morning. UPI will be covering the demonstration tomorrow, and they were here today taking many many pictures. It was interesting, to say the least.

About Jesse, he just forgot to check in, so he has not been missing. I had no one who could tell me anything about it until today, when one of the big wheels of the project was in town, so I asked him.

The bomb scare has resulted in no arrests, and I don't expect any. Slim named the men who tried to hire him, but they have not been the object of any police action, darn it. I hope they got their fill of it that night; I have no compelling desire to be blown off the map.

I finally got Paul's letter from Jackson. It had gone to Biloxi and then back to Jackson before coming here. I have no idea why, so don't ask me. But it was really strange to read his letter mailed before the first of July and then to read one from my folks mailed earlier this week.

Paul asked some questions about the Orientation, so maybe it would be interesting to the older folks too. The major purpose of the session in Oxford was to acquaint us with the kinds of situations that we would be facing in Mississippi. A large portion of the time was spent on non-violence, what it is and how it works. We learned how to react when we are beaten and when we are arrested. We spent a lot of time in roleplaying,

trying to make our knowledge more than merely knowing academically how we should react, we tried to make our reactions reflexes besides. We had to unlearn a lot of things, for example, non-violence means more than a passive reaction. The good non-violent strategist has the advantage over most people who do not think about what they are doing. Non-violence can be and often is very aggressive. Boycotts are an example, as is picketing. These can be either violent or non-violent, depending on the lengths to which the leaders are willing to go to see their plans carried out. Ghandi is the best example of how non-violence works. I don't suppose that it would be too effective against a totalitarian form of government, but most Americans pride themselves on being civilized enough not to really hurt someone who doesn't fight back. Thus non-violence puts the Southern whites at a disadvantage because they don't know how to react. It isn't foolproof, but it is the best of all possible ways to combat the current system down here.

A lot of our time in Oxford was spent in preparation for the specific jobs that we would be asked to do when we got down here; this is where I learned all that I really know about librarianship. All in all, I think that the session was very valuable and very sobering. Most of the kids didn't believe most of what they heard there, I think they do now.

No Mom, I don't think Wilma has any valid cause to complain about her dismissal from the program. There was a lot of warning that some people would be asked to leave for the good of the project, and if she had any good excuse for not attending the meetings, they would have asked her to attend last week's orientation in Memphis rather than asking her to leave. She had a talk with one of the psychiatrist's at Oxford, he seemed to feel that she was not emotionally stable enough to handle the situation that she would have to face here, and that she should try to help the project all that she could from the other end. That is all that I know, but I sincerely doubt that any favoritism was shown in her case. I wish that it hadn't had to happen, but I trust the staff more than I trust her.

I told my folks but not Paul that I was considering leaving the project if I were transferred. Remember, this was to be consideration, not actually leaving. My reasons for this are sort of screwed up, but I really think that they are valid. I have since found out that at least for now, I'll probably stay here, but some of the kids were saying that they didn't know who could do a better job or who would work harder. This of course raised my spirits about the prospect about three hundred percent, but I don't really like the idea even now. I haven't finished the library here yet, and there is so much apparently pointless and physically exhausting ~~book~~ work involved in sorting, shelving, and cataloging books that the very idea of doing it so soon again wears me out. I've got too much of it to do here yet anyway. Besides, I would hate to leave the place where I am staying now. Judy is such a sweetheart, and the woman with whom I am staying has been most kind and I think that she is beginning to feel more at ease with Judy and me than she did at first. The people here are so sweet, too. The kids come into the library and grab every book in sight. The adults are more selective; they want

to read Negro history or American Government books; these were

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all gone within about twenty minutes on the first day. The only ones left are a hefty book about the Reconstruction period and 2 copies of A Pictorial History of the Negro in America, which I won't let anyone check out. If you could let me have some books on this subject, it would surely be appreciated and used. I had 5 copies of Mr. Kennedy and the Negroes by Harry Golden, they are still out. I hope that I get a chance to read it this summer. Other things that they want are books by James Baldwin and Richard Wright. How are our chances?

Just heard part of Romney's nominating speech, his demonstration didn't sound too impressive, but then I guess that noone really cares too much. It makes me sick to think of Goldwater as the nominee for President of the United States of America by one of the two major parties. I'll vote, not so much for Johnson as against that PHYNQUE!

Tonight we had a mass meeting in preparation for Freedom Day tomorrow. It was the best that I have attended, and that means really good. The singing was very good, we had speakers from the community, and none of our speakers said anything that was too complex for the people. This has been a real weakness up until now. As a result, we had gotten no response from the people. Tonight we got very good response. Besides, there were more people there than there had ever been at a Shaw mass meeting before. It was great. I really wish that you could have been there with me, all of you. I can't remember many experiences in my life that have been more thrilling.

There was a good meeting this morning of the Volunteers. We ironed out most of the problems that faced us within our group and gained a new desire and purpose for continuing to work. It was really great. The thing lasted for four hours, but every single one of us really needed the chance to air our grievances and doubts. And a lot of the personality conflicts that have been eating away below the surface have come up and have become much more nearly manageable than they were before. They won't disappear, this is too large a group, and the people wouldn't be here if they were willing to accept authority without a fight. The people here are either leaders or loners, except for Judy and me. Neither one of us considers herself to be a leader, and I feel that our self-analyses are pretty good. But the rest of the kids are much less retiring (I don't want to imply a criticism of either kind of person, each is very necessary for the effectiveness of the group).

I really like the typewriter that Judy has been letting me use. You might consider one like it when you buy yourselves a typewriter, Parents mine. It is an Olympia, and the action is better than that of any other portable that I have ever used.

I still haven't gotten the package that was sent to Jackson; if it isn't here by Friday, I will have Dennis (our communications officer) ask Jackson about it. It bothers me that I haven't gotten it yet.

Mom, will you please call Jan Hurst and tell her that I haven't forgotten her, that I just haven't had the time or energy to

write to her, and that I will, as soon as I can. And Paul, will you please tell Sharon Kay that I got the double boiler and that I want to thank her properly, so that I cannot do it right now. I want her to know that I have been thinking of her, anyway. To all of you, please say that everything is going as well as can be expected and that I think of everyone often, whenever I have the time. That sounds very selfish, the only trouble is that I really mean it. I have been working at least six hours at the library, usually it is more like eight. And the people don't turn their books in when they bring them back, they just put them on the shelves. This means that when someone wants to check them out, I have to look through my central file, then through the files of the books that have been checked out before I can check it out to him. It is horrible. And most of the people who want to check out a book don't have library cards yet, so I have to fill those out yet. I haven't been able to find anyone who can help me in it. None of the local adults or teenagers have spent much time in the library as yet so I haven't had a chance to bribe anyone to take over part of the job. I'm still looking.

Donna, the girl who was my roommate in Ruleville, came over to here in a kind of disgrace; she is a really antagonistic person when it comes to accepting the rules that must be made for security's sake. But Donna cannot see the necessity for rules on security, she cannot see any reason why she has to obey the rules once they are made, she cannot see that it isn't just her safety at stake, the other people who have become connected with her are also threatened by any breach of the rules. Donna is a fantastic person but she will never be happy because she cannot see the value in sacrificing an immediate freedom to gain a long-range one. It is a real tragedy that she couldn't have come to grips with this before she came onto the Summer Project. The strangest part of it is, I can see Dee doing just about exactly the same things, down to the exact mannerisms. But Dee is more mature than is Donna, and Dee is more of a cynic. Donna is more able to sacrifice things for beliefs, and Dee is more practical. These are only differences in degree, however, and I doubt that there is much significant difference between the two. How do I manage?

I got a letter from Dee, she gave me the address of her parents in Georgia and a friend who is going to a college in Hattiesburg in case I ever needed a nearby friend. She has been working part time at one of the big department stores in Columbus but feels that she doesn't have much chance of saving enough money to be able to start work on her masters in the fall. I hope she does anyway, she has always managed before, and I'm sure something will turn up. The biggest problem that she has discovered is housing, apartments run \$125 a month unfurnished and without utilities. Isn't that absurd?

I suppose that I had better quit now.

Love to all,

I desperately need little kids'

Judy