

[1961]

July 15, Mass Point.....

Roger was the court house reporter today.....8 people went to the court house to take the test.....3 people were not admitted because of the late hour..... 3 people failed and 2 passed.....While at the court house, Roger was taken to a circuit court Judge by a detective because Roger wanted to go inside the court house. The judge told him that if he went into the court house, he would be held in contempt of court. Roger was released and continued his work outside.....

In the morning, Linda conducted 3 meetings for black captains about 20 women and 2 men came...most of the men were at work.....The black captains will be working in their neighborhoods...Jerry Jefferson was made Registrar.....

From canvassing, 10 people were committed to go to the court house in the near future...to date we have taken 100 to the court house;;;40 were admitted...only 15 passed.....57 freedom registration forms were signed.....

Linda conducted a MSU meeting in the afternoon.. about 30 attendance..discussed how to get more kids and adults involved in the struggle. Formed a committee to see about using the Masonic Temple for meetings....These same kids are mostly in the youth council of NAACP, the only organization open to them to date. The MSU wants to continue through the school years doing CR work....

Freedom School conducted a role play of the Dred Scott case and the abolitionists underground railroad.... 15 students participated..in the afternoon, special classes were held as usual..about 30 present.

Our pay phone was finally installed today...475-9069--it only cost us \$30.

Mass Meeting in the evening.....300 attendance..oriented meeting around getting canvassers. The adults were timid, but the youth reled played canvassing scenes. The general COFO program was explained. Announced Freedom DP precinct meetings for July 26. Later there was a lot of participation from the audience.....

Late in the evening, WVCN from Chicago had a live radio program with Ren over the phone about the program, results etc.

July 14-----Fred put an ad in the local newspaper (Chronicle) advertising the "region Democratic Party and the coming precinct meetings, on the 26th of July. The ad will run for 10 days and the cost was \$22. Charles and Regor went to Biloxi to see FBI about the bad time we have had at the court house and about the shootings. Their attitude was receptive but non-informative. They were doing "all they could." Freedom school.....in the morning there was a role playing of "Assisted Living." Local students played the parts. In the afternoon a new class on art was offered. 14 people old and young attended. Drawings and collages were made..... Guyot spoke at the Moss Point Masters and Beauticians union and received a warm welcome plus a check for \$150.00 which will go to Jackson office.....

Report from Howie on court house scene.....during the whole day, 17 people went to the court house to register. 11 were allowed to attempt to take the test, 5 passed, 4 of the 6 who failed were told to come back in 30 days to retake the test. Although many of the Negroes had to wait over 5 hours, and then 6 didn't get to take the test anyway, it was reported by many who were inside the court house that at least 5 whites had been immediately ushered in to take the test without any waiting whatsoever. I even saw the registrar helping a white applicant. 1 of those who was told to come back in 30 days was told so because there are so many coming to register; said the registrar. But the "one at a time" policy still exists for Negroes even when this same woman was taking her test with 4 other whites..... A white layman asked Howie where his beard was. He then said he just wanted to get a good look at him so that he could remember him. Sheriff "Christy" tried to scare Howie by clinching his fist and saying "just lift your hand at me. I just want you to lift your hand at me, I'd like to blow your head off."/.....One of the local Negro girls went into the court house bath room. A deputy came by and told another Negro girl to get her friend out of the "White" bathroom.....

July 18 - Sat. Moss Point

Worked on Freedom Registration files. Canvassed for people to attend prayer meeting of SFCO's tonight at First Baptist Church. Talked with reporter from local newspaper "Chronicle" about the grand jury statement that "Leading Negroes testify don't need civil rights workers.".....

Young Negro girl from community was walking home from the store during the day, a white 1959 Kenneville with 5 or 6 whites drove by and threw several bottles of beer at her.. she was seriously hurt...hit several times in the lower part of her back. When taken to the hospital, no one waited on her...she was in deep pain..... Finally a local Negro CR girl got the hospital Negro Dr. Morris to help her..the white doctors generally refuse to help Negroes....The police were there and wanted to know why the other girl was there..They showed no concern for the hurt woman only why the other girl was there. A witness to the incident was there and tried to give the details to the police. (The incident happened in Moss Point, the hospital is in Pascagoula so the Pascagoula police would do nothing...) The Moss Point police tried to confuse the witness, but finally took down the information.....

Early this morning, our local registrar was stopped by the Pascagoula police and told to come down to the police station next Monday to talk to them. This has been happening to several people.

Early this morning, a white man came by the office who works for Mayor Pierce of Moss Point and was interested in what we were doing. He seemed genuine. But some of us think he was sent.

Last night, two girl COFOers had to move. Fear is permeating the atmosphere; jobs are being threatened and lost.....

Police stopping COFO cars demanding that they get Miss. Tags.

Those jailed in Biloxi, are now out. The trial was removed to federal court.

Prayer meeting was fair; a lot of strain on part of COFOers and not much local attendance or participation.

MSU meeting seems to be going well.

July 19 - Sunday..... About 50 local people and COFOers went to the beach today. It was a freedom school excursion. Very successful both free moral, mixing and politicizing. Only two cars came by and yelled at us and one cop approached only wanting to know if we were together so that there would be no trouble between black and white. Later the COFOers from Gulfport came by also. No other type of work was done today, except a few went to church in the morning.

July 20, Moss Point

A lot of work was accomplished today. Our first newsletter was written by Ron and distributed at the mass meeting. Freedom Registration forms were made up in lieu of the fact of not having any. The bus depot will not give us the packages since we don't have the shipment papers.

Bernie McKay talked with the director of Moss Point Chamber of Commerce today. The director's general attitude was one of congeniality. She thinks that everything is all right and that the COFO people are immature and communistic. She says that one of them (Ron) is a known communist and that they are investigating him. She did cooperate by giving some general information about Moss Point....

The law student, Allen Verson, talked with a captain of Moss Point police about the use of a sound truck. He was told that the announcements must be submitted for approval and a permit must be obtained; only certain hours can be used. But we can't get a permit. The submission is illegal constitutionally.

.....5 people canvassing concentrating on freedom registration. 212 forms signed.....13 people went to court house;;; 5 out of 7 known passed..... 21 people committed to go to the court house from canvassing work.....

MSU meeting held trying to organize. They are giving a party to get more participants, COFO and all adults invited. 20 attended.

Many more people are becoming involved; initiative is being taken on the part of more and more...It looks like this project will be an going affair.

Mass Meeting---250 attendance. Very good meeting. Different COFO volunteers gave specific explanations of the work done and needed to be done. Sandy Leigh talked about the Freedom Democratic Party challenge and its importance. It was very specific and meeting; everyone could identify. The grand jury proceedings were explained. \$13.00 was collected and several people were signed up to take people to the court house.....Reporters were there from the Miss. Press Register and Chronicle...they are favorable and liberal men. We had a long talk with them and they are printing a statement by the pres. of Moss Point NAACP about the grand jury which indicates the lies of Byrd and the truth of community and NAACP support..... Something about our work and the mass meeting will be in all local newspapers.....
...the mystique of the church and apathy is being torn down...Ayot is getting across...church and "democracy" are one in the same.....

July 21, 1964 - Moss Point ----

9 people went to court houses; 4 passed, 3 failed 2 told to come back.
95 Freedom Registration forms signed.

NAACP had a meeting and the membership put the leadership on the spot. They passed resolutions aimed at establishing for all that they support the summer program. One was to picket the court house (but they won't until they talk with us).Hanes was here today and explained to CORE people the importance and absolute priority of the Freedom Democratic Party. Our precinct meetings are the 26th and we couldn't afford to be in jail for these and future meetings. The FDP has a good chance of getting seated depending on: 1) how much work we do in the state, 2) how solid are the delegates and the general committee, and 3) what the national scene is in terms of the power of civil rights movement, liberal forces etc. If the Democratic Party, under the direction of Johnson, figures they can lose some of the south and still win etc...The chances of Miss. getting seated is 90% negative at this point and the chances of sending delegates are slim, our chances are good.....

Charles Glen was arrested tonight on subpoena from Forrest County grand jury on charges of perjury. He will transferred to Hattiesburg tomorrow.

The MSU had another meeting. Georgia is still leading the group.

We had a good staff meeting.....