

Biloxi

I. Nature of activities

The Biloxi project dealt most of the summer just with the Biloxi community. Within the last several weeks, it has also moved into smaller surrounding communities such as Ocean Springs and Vancleave. Within the last week we have been working in Wiggins also. There is a Freedom School in Biloxi and Ocean Springs, the former had for most of the summer between 40 and 80 students, depending on the day. Ocean Springs has about 15 to 30 students. The main concentration of studies is Negro history, and they also delve into citizenship, art, music, or whatever the students may want to discuss. The second main part of the program is voter registration and Freedom Democratic Party. During the first part of the summer, most effort here was upon voter registration. COFO workers would canvass the neighborhoods getting people to go down to the courthouse in Gulfport to attempt to register. For the latter half of the summer the concentration has been on Freedom Democratic Party, to the total exclusion of voter registration. Both COFO people and local kids canvass the neighborhood getting people to sign the Freedom registration forms, and in general talk to them about COFO activities. The third part of the program, community center activities, has been mainly developing in the last several weeks. Programs of adult education, nursery schools, and informing high school students of opportunities for college are examples of programs that are being discussed and developed in the Biloxi community center. ~~There is a youth organization in Biloxi called the Mississippi Student Union, and they elect their own officers. The activities in Wiggins are more limited; they involve only Negro COFO and local people, and they are limited only at the Freedom Democratic Party canvassing and Mississippi Student Union.~~ The youth in these areas are being organized into an organization of their own, called the Mississippi Student Union, and they elect their own officers. The activities in Wiggins are more limited; they involve only Negro COFO and local people, and they are limited only at the Freedom Democratic Party canvassing and Mississippi Student Union.

II. Harassment, etc. from private persons.

- 1.- Robert Williams statement- get shot at by local youth while riding on motorcycle in Biloxi.
- 2.- Lodie Robinson statement- smoke bomb thrown at car full of people in Biloxi.
- 3.- Report labeled Ocean Springs- several people shot at; woman walking on road was almost run into by pickup truck.
- 4.- Phone calls- general run of bothersome phone calls.

III. Harassment, etc. from public officials.

- 1.- Robert Williams statement- Mayor of Biloxi threatened and intimidated him in Mayor's office.
- 2.- Biloxi bars report- Mayor and Chief of Police warned Negro bar owners not to serve white COFO workers.