

November 4, 1964

Dear Folks,

I have despaired of writing this letter, not because I haven't wanted to keep in touch, but because so much has happened that anything I write does not say what I want it to. Nothing can convey how much hope and how many disappointments I have felt this last month, and yet how much hope and joy I feel for the work I am doing, and especially for the work that will be done. This work goes so slowly that I tend to magnify the importance of a single contact or a single incident, only to be bitterly disappointed when what I hope for doesn't come about. The greatest consolation at those times is that maybe our presence alone is doing some good in the community in terms of making the people less fearful of stepping out, but this is too intangible to be very satisfying. Nevertheless, we are persevering and I believe that we are making progress, if only by talking to people so that they can articulate their hidden bitterness. There isn't anyone (Negro) that doesn't say to me (privately) "I'm with you 100%" or how much they appreciate what I'm doing and I always want to yell at them why, then, they won't help us, just a little, and then I'm ashamed for thinking that because all this is so new and they are so afraid and so ignorant and each multiplies the other. But these are good people because they have suffered so much and can so much more appreciate friendliness and sympathy and (I hope) understanding.

On the day that I arrived several of us went to visit the remains of the first and only Negro church burned in Clay County, in a small rural community called Waverly. It had no connection with civil rights work. All that was left was ashes, stone foundation posts, and some charred lumber that had been cleared from the scene. The ashes were carpeted with nails and irregular opaque puddles, symmetrically fallen, marked where windows had been. Sometimes the glass had covered the fallen nails, and looked like a symbolic representation of the burned church. Along one side was a pile of metal strings, lying in the ashes -- all that remained of a piano. We had heard rumors of a car arriving just before the church caught fire and so we spoke to a few people who lived nearby. One, a farmboy, was bewildered and afraid and it hurt me when he said "yassuh" and "yassum", so readily that I felt ashamed to say something friendly and reassuring because he still wouldn't have understood the purpose of our questions. There was another person, a younger girl, who said nothing but that her parents weren't there, and showed much more in her nervous eyes.

There are four full time workers in West Point: Jan, a girl from Syracuse who worked in West Point at the end of the summer; Bob, who goes to the U. of Chicago and who worked in Canton this summer; and Eddie, a Chicago Negro who used to live in the Delta. Jan and I live with Mrs. Dora Adams, a Negro woman of 53, and her son Joe, age 13. Eddie and Bob live with Reverend M.W. Lindsey, a Methodist minister who is supervisor of about 20 churches in several counties and who has been responsible for getting opened to the movement numerous churches in the 1st Congressional District. He has been actively in the movement all his life, is a member of the Freedom Democratic Party, and a man of incredible personal courage, wisdom, and sympathy. I can't respect a minister more than when he not only preaches but also lives the Christian Creed -- and believe me I've seen more hypocritical Christianity down here than any ten people should be exposed to, much less the vast

majority of the Negroes of Mississippi. So many times we find ministers so scared of earthly comforts (of not keeping them, I mean) that I wonder why they take upon themselves the "leadership" of the Negro community. They solemnly intone pious platitudes with not the slightest feeling for the hardships of their people. Religion down here simply has no relevance to daily life, except insofar as it makes so many older people believe that God will fix everything. That's why Rev. Lindsey's sympathy and strength and honesty are so needed.

Mrs. Adams used to work for Bryan Brothers Meat Packing Plant, about the largest single employer in West Point. She had worked there 16 years when she was declared disabled by the company doctor last April -- due to her high blood pressure. She had to wait 4 months before she could claim Social Security disability payments, but has been declared able to work by the local administrator because, apparently, her blood pressure has returned to normal in the interim. She went to the unemployment office and was told that she should get disability payments on the strength of what her doctors say. Therefore she is in limbo between both programs, and uncertain of getting the benefits of either. But the rotten thing is how the whole burden of responsibility for determining what she can get falls on her. There's no one to inform her about her rights and to help her understand how to cope with various appeals, much less to tide her through the period necessary for a reconsideration of the SS Board's decision. So I went to her doctor and suggested he get a copy of her final and most complete check up and then go in with her and talk to the SS man. But both her ignorance and her race weigh against her in obtaining the slightest sympathy or help.

She is quite a religious woman, and in every one of the 4 rooms in her house are icons or slogans or pictures of Christ. Her house is small and white, in a row of several similar ones, in an area called Smithbottom (a "bottom" is a section). The house has no plumbing, but there is a water faucet on the front lawn. She is quite lonely, it seems to me, and stays home most of the day watching television. She talks a lot, and sometimes it shames me when I become brusque and try to show her that I want to continue what I am doing at the moment, rather than listen to her. Sometimes I feel uncomfortable because her problems tend so much to become involved with our work, making me feel responsible for helping her solve her problems when I can't solve our own. But she is a good and sympathetic woman, and very appreciative of our being here. One day I said, jokingly, that if things weren't better here in the winter we'd move to Biloxi, where it's warm. She sounded worried that we would, and said that we should give the people here one more chance, since they'd been ignorant so long. And she's so hesitant about telling us to do anything; her diffidence is embarrassing. But she's very concerned about us and our work, and is an invaluable source of information about the community.

The most important thing we've been working on is the Freedom Vote, which is the follow through on the Freedom Democratic Party's challenge at the Democratic Convention. The ballot was identical, or nearly identical, with the regular ballot except that Aaron Henry, Negro president of the state NAACP, was running for Senator on the FDP ticket. The idea was that anyone could vote during the four days of the election, no registration being required, and we hoped to show people up North the fund of Negro votes that would support a liberal candidate. If the

election had been closer here the Johnson total plus the FV total for Johnson might have meant victory and we thought that the Justice Department would vigorously push new voting suits. As you know by now Goldwater is extremely popular here, about every third car having a Goldwater sticker on it. Clay County, despite its being the beneficiary of TVA projects and considerable Federal revenue, went for Goldwater 14-1 (read that fourteen) on the strength of the racial issue, which is not at its most critical here.

About 10 Negroes voted, with no trouble, because of pressure exerted by the JD last year (or so I understand). The Negro population was solidly (I mean unanimously) for Johnson. The local editor remarked how few Johnson stickers were on cars (before the election) but of course neglected to say that this resulted from the disenfranchisement of half the population. We got a few Johnson stickers and buttons in, and were deluged with requests, but the supply soon ran out. Feeling was very strong, and most people, especially white people, were afraid to put them on because of social or economic reprisal. Anyway...we hoped to show that it wasn't just apathy that kept Negroes from voting. So we did a lot of canvassing in the rural areas of Clay County and organized lots of meetings to explain the Freedom Vote.

To me it's pretty scary working the rural. First of all, the white people are meaner and second, we travel almost entirely blind; that is, we have to tell which houses belong to Negroes and which belong to whites before we go in. Let me give an example from the beginning of the summer. Five of us were looking for a Negro Baptist revival in the rural. We stopped at a store and I got out to ask directions. Since that time I have learned that most rural stores are white owned. I asked the white lady who owned the store where the Baptist revival was. She kept saying "We're not having any revival." She wouldn't give me directions to the church and when I left she conspicuously took the license plate number of our car. We cleared out fast. Actually it's a bit easier than it sounds, since the poverty of the rural Negro is conspicuous. Almost all of them live in unpainted shacks, with small cotton patches in back, or near large fields owned by whites.

The trips into the county took us to a cafe in the westernmost part of Clay, called Redonia Bennett's. We hoped to be able to hold a meeting there but his wife seemed afraid that the Sheriff would bother them if they allowed us to use it. Mr. Bennett is a cattle rancher, and isn't home too often so we arranged to see him at a cattle selling barn outside West Point. We walked in to a small hall with a dirt arena and benches surrounding it. Everyone there was white, all looked rawboned and redfaced, dressed in levis and boots. The auctioneer had an amazing cant that sounded like he was gargling with a marble in his mouth, sort of understandable only to the buyers and sellers. Every one of the men there looked as if he combined the worst traits of Mississippi racism and American Western sense of doing-something-about-what-you-don't-like-yourself. So we met Mr. Bennett, outside by the car, and he said he'd try and get us a church (which never came through).

The Tupelo Freedom House was almost arsoned, so they were evicted because the owner couldn't get insurance.

Joe Stone, who works with us very closely and who has a job at Mary Holmes Jr. College outside West Point, is attempting to organize the youth of West Point. Right now their project is getting the local movie theater integrated. Negroes at present have to go in by the side and sit upstairs. It used to be whites upstairs, but they threw things downstairs and spit on the Negroes so the manager changed seating. We had quite an elaborate plan worked out -- two girls and two boys were to approach and ask to be seated, we stood by in a car in case anything developed. They were refused entry both times, because counterpressure was applied to the manager and whites threatened to boycott him if he allowed them in. But the Negro kids are very active in propagandizing, and most wear SNCC or Johnson pins to school. The principal is scared stiff. If any of us speak to him he is full of "You-understand-my-position..." He, like most teachers, is too afraid of his job to get involved.

About four days after I arrived 6 crosses were burned in West Point. One was set afire in front of Mrs. Adams house. Actually it was quite a fearful experience. A green pickup truck stopped, door slammed, then a fwush as the cross caught fire. It stood in a field, burning starkly in the night and I stood by the window with my knees going clackity-clack. Crosses were also burned in front of the church we use, and near cafes and stores in the Negro sections of town. The next day we were informed by the members of the church that we could no longer meet there. We therefore redoubled our efforts to get places to meet for the freedom vote (to publicise it).

During this period we did most of our work in the rural areas and worked out meetings in Tibbee, Strong Hill, White's, and Section. Most of these are rural communities near West Point, and in the western part of Clay it was very difficult to get churches. Most churches have deacon boards which decide whether to let a civil rights meeting be held. As you may imagine, most deacons are afraid that the church will be burned down, or that something will happen to them (especially if they are teachers). The minister also has a great deal to do with influencing the decision. We learned proper procedure the hard way.

Through a mixup we thought that the board had o.k.ed a meeting at the church at Strong Hill. Actually, the meeting our contact (the church secretary) spoke of was the meeting of the board to consider our request. Anyway, we went all around Union Star and Gibb's publicizing the meeting, and word reached some of the deacons of the meeting that they should have approved. So we were informed that we could not have the meeting, and were faced with the possibility of people from the rural showing up for one that didn't exist. So we asked the deacons if we could speak to them at a meeting and reverse their decision.

Five of the seven deacons met with us at the church. They were: Mr. Wash Davis, Mr. Freddy Davis, Mr. Conoway, Mr. Westbrook, and someone else. Our "advocate" was the brother of Freddy Davis, and the son of Wash, who was senior deacon. He was the Secretary of the church, and his name was Ivy Davis. Freddy Davis is the richest Negro in Clay County. He owns a chicken farm and sells poultry to most of the large stores in town. His customers, therefore, are predominantly white. We knew that as the most influential member of the community it was

essential to swing him to our way of thinking, and this meant providing him with the assurance that we would help protect him if he was boycotted by his customers (which has happened once before). Wash Davis, incidentally, is a well preserved 80, and has the bony stature and perpetual muse of Raymond Massey playing Abraham Lincoln. He was quiet, but, making that association, I was sure he would be sympathetic.

We began by apologizing profusely for our mistake, and it became apparent that we had two for us (not including Ivy), one against us, and two uncertain (Freddy and Wash). We and Ivy talked and talked about our hopes and about how it was time for Negroes to stick together and I could see that Freddy was doing some hard thinking along new lines -- namely, that he might be protected by a counter boycott, initiated by us. Ivy, passionately I may say, urged that we be allowed to hold our meeting, that the solidity (future if not present) of the Negro community could stand against the power structure.

For about three hours we argued and convinced and what a satisfaction it was to hear other people saying what I had for such a long time -- and people who actually felt what I had only seen and heard about. So finally they said that since we had already publicized the meeting we could hold it.

The next evening we sat amid the shambles of what had been a meeting at Strong Hill. For early that morning Wash had called another meeting of the deacon board, at which, by design or chance, our most fervent supporters were not in attendance. Enter another character, Rev. M.L. Perry, Uncle Tom extraordinaire, who did come to that meeting. He is not only the pastor of that church, but also principal of the Negro elementary school. He was evidently called by the county superintendent of schools (white) and asked (to use the word in a loose sense) what exactly was going on at his church. Mind you, not intimidated, just told that a policeman had given the superintendent a copy of the circular that we passed out about the meeting and asked to explain what was going on. The implication was clear to everyone but Perry when we later spoke to him.

So he just told the deacons about the call and they, with understandable solicitude, called off the meeting. And Perry isn't about to sign an affidavit about the circumstances of the call. We spoke to him and with sugary sweetness he explained that he had had nothing to do with it, and we got little else except an avoidance of the real reasons for the refusal. On our way out he gave us each a dollar donation and I felt like a beggar asking for a million dollars of cooperation and getting one cold, hard sou in return. The next day we went to services at the church and listened to him deliver a sermon that could only be entitled "These are times of decision -- sit tight." At one point he was speaking of how many of the people of the world were in chains and he said "And I'm not speaking of my own race either." He actually apologized! I felt so outraged that I got special pleasure out of treating him especially courteously after the services. Anyway, we certainly learned how not to go about getting a church.

Until I got there, there was no car that we were able to use. We had had to return our station wagon because we could not pay \$225 for the new motor. I went to Mr. Cox and explained how much we needed it,

and explained that I had written for some money so he let us use it in the following weeks. The motor wasn't very well put in, so we decided that it wasn't worth the money. Later he repossessed the car and we promised to send him the title.

Our greatest problem, I mean one of them, is finding a place to have an office. Living in two separate houses means that there is too much time lost getting together in the morning, and absolutely no place to hold meetings and discussions or do paper work except in somebody's house. The housing problem all over West Point is acute, and our being civil rights workers makes it even more so for us.

Two places we thought of were above cafes, convenient because they were both on the main street in the Negro section. Both were just large dance hall type rooms, with no stoves or heaters. On both we suffered similar letdowns. First one man said his wife didn't want us to; then the other, after raising my hopes, also said that his boarders would have moved out if we moved in.

So one wonders how successful the project can be if the people here do not make a greater commitment to the movement. Many times I feel that they anticipate so many problems that they reduce the courses of action they can follow and too often they do not attempt to make ways to circumvent problems that might arise. Too often they think that the way to freedom is, or should be for them, free of sacrifice, or, in reality, the probability of sacrifice, however small. Things here are bad, but as long as people think in terms of bombed churches (if we speak there) or burned houses (if we live nearby) progress will be very slow!

What is needed is a mobilization of the community, which brings me to what has happened to Freddy Davis. He has been boycotted by about six stores because his brother drove us home one day and because the word is out that he is supporting us (which is not exactly true). Anyway, this is the most important chance we have had to mobilize the community -- in a counter boycott (excuse me, selective buying campaign) against the stores boycotting him. The Negroes around here, we hope, will be raising less cotton and more hell as the boycott progresses. The problem lies in getting people mad enough to see that they can do something about the grip of white merchants.

God knows, Freddy Davis is no great symbol to organize around, but he does represent on a larger scale what the white community does to Negroes who speak out -- they can't get loans or credit or supplies. As Mrs. Adams pointed out bitterly, it's the Freddy Davises around whom the community is likely to mobilize, while the Mrs. Adamses are usually abandoned and forgotten.

But we have not put too much into the boycott, and time is fast going. This and a boycott of the theater could well get West Point moving. Unfortunately, many people feel that Davis should do more to help his own business by personally appealing to Negroes. We have started to implement the boycott by speaking at churches in town, but its effectiveness will have to wait until we are able to enforce it. This means an organization with people willing to "police" the various stores and talk and cajole support for the boycott.

I am so involved in the atmosphere of West Point and Mississippi and Negro life that there are only a few contacts that I make (places I go, I mean) that remind me of life in the North and civilization as I know it. I don't mean that the South is uncivilized (on second thought, it is though), but I never feel in everyday life a familiarity with things Northern or things associated with home or intellectuality. In some places, though, I can't help but feel a link with my life before I came down. Strange places, too, like the library, the supermarket, and the movie theater. Somehow the tension and watchfulness that I naturally feel working in the South is dissolved when I go in, almost like a retreat, a place where my work stops and everyone around me is normal and friendly and...white.

Believe me, Southerners are the most hospitable and friendly people in the world before they know why I'm here. I withdraw to the library every Tuesday, when the Sunday Times comes in. The librarian, an elderly courteous lady, came over to me one day, she's very chatty, and asked me if I'd been stationed in Columbus. I gave her a doubletake and replied (thinking she thought I was at the airbase) yes. But I've gone in with Eddie, who is Negro, and she is very friendly and talkative, recommends books to me, and orders books from Jackson. I asked her for some books by C. Vann Woodward and she spent ten minutes, to satisfy her own interest, looking him up in Who's Who and finding out what he had written and where he taught. Then she ordered me two of his books. She's sort of funny-aristocratic. She knew he had written Tom Watson-Agrarian Radical and said to me with an I'm-sure-you-agree tone, as if speaking to one of her old lady cronies about a racy best-seller, "But I'm sure you wouldn't want to read that", which is an interesting theory about historical reading, although I didn't know whether it was because he was a Populist or anti-Negro. And she recommended the autobiography of former Congressman Frank Smith who, I said, was head of the TVA. Well, actually he's on the board of directors, says she, but (a friendly concession) it's about the same. So I asked if she knew where he lived. So she said, Lived in Greenwood all his life, around Carroll County. Like he was her cousin or something!

The library is the only public facility in town that has been integrated. The supermarket has been integrated for a long time, since Negro money is virtually indistinguishable from white money, except that it is not as easily come by. But it is just as rich making. Here, too, I can lose myself in name brands, and it's almost the same as being in Grand Union. I was in the Ritz Theatre when the first integration attempt fizzled and stayed around to watch a long and dull spectacular called Cleopatra, which didn't have even a bloody battle to justify its length, much less stirring performances by its stars. But the joy here is obviously escape and for several hours Mississippi recedes and Egypt (or Hollywood) comes on strong.

As I said, most of our meetings were strictly one shot affairs, to inform the people about the freedom vote or something else, but no lasting organization independent of us was formed, that could itself take over the task of local organization and itself call meetings. One Sunday, Eddie and I went out to White's, a rural Negro community, to arrange a meeting at the church. Actually we wanted to get the permission of the members, who were meeting at what was called the society hall.

From the outside the society hall looks like a large version of a tarpaper shack. Set off from a dirt road, it is surrounded by scrubby fields. White's itself is little more than a flat dusty series of adjoining cotton fields, with a dusty road running through and poor shacks lining the road. It has about four stores, which are converted from shacks. The inside of the society hall was covered with thick wallboard, on which had been scratched various initials and assorted scrawlings. The floor and ceiling were of worn wood with about half the ceiling blackened by the wood stove that stuck out from one wall. There were about 30 people there, of whom five were men.

We sat on smoothworn benches, and in front of the room was a crudely built table, also smoothworn. Sitting on a bench along one wall was a boy of about five, a cap next to him. He stared a wide baby's stare at the room, a little while later was asleep. In front of him, around the table were the several officers of the club, mostly women. An old man sat by, with the expression of one who has heard this before and who knows when his part comes...distant.

Most of the meeting was taken up with the rollcall; most of those called were not there, but everyone who was paid his dues, a dime per person per month. A strange monotonous ceremony -- the only noise the too loud call of name after name, an occasional response, a pause and a shuffling toward the front, then a transaction and another name. Almost all the men were elderly, dressed in old illfitting good clothes (or actually, often a jacket over work overalls). The women dressed in new clean sweaters, and plain patterned, plain looking dresses.

Most of the ceremony I sat awkwardly in my seat, rubbing my morning donation of half a dollar between my palms, making squishing sounds as I clasped and unclasped my clammy hands. Most of the nervousness comes from speaking to a group of people I don't really understand, because it's hard to convey to them what we feel and what we want and to get from them the response we want. Actually we tend to want their ideas and participation to approximate our ideas and the degree of our participation, which never happens. Anyway, I got up and spoke and received encouragement from the people who nodded in agreement although I wasn't particularly articulate (which is different in Mississippi than in New York) and was sort of relieved when the chairman said All those in favor of civil rights raise their hands. And the people who didn't I knew from the beginning wouldn't from the way they didn't look at me when we came in.

But it was nearly unanimous for giving us the church. We had a not too good meeting at their church, or at least I didn't think the meeting was too successful in evoking a response from the people. They were enthusiastic, but I didn't feel we gave them anything to go home and count upon participating in. The thing that's so hard to convey is the need for their own initiative.

One of the things we planned to do before the freedom vote was to make forays into two other counties, Webster and Calhoun, from Clay (the historical significance just struck me for the first time). We understand that both are tougher than Clay, from the point of view of white resistance. In both the percentage of Negroes in the population is 25, as compared with Clay's 52%. There are few, if any, known sympathizers

with the movement there. Both are much poorer economically than Clay. Eddie and I were the ones to go in first, and what we found was disheartening.

Actually we only went into Calhoun. One of the people we know here has folks in Calhoun City, and he agreed to take us around and make contacts and see if we could work out a meeting. We arranged to meet him there and we drove out with Jan. Unfortunately he wasn't where he said he would be, so we got directions to his father's house. No one was at the house so we sat on the porch a few hours until the family returned. But Rufus was with his wife in Bruce, a town of about the same size, in the same county. So the two of us got a ride to Bruce with a neighbor, only to find that Rufus and his wife were at the movies in Calhoun City. So back we went, met Rufus, and were told that he hadn't planned on us showing up and had arranged no place for us to stay. He knew of no one to put us up. It was about 10 at night and we decided to go back to Bruce, where his in-laws lived. As you came in at night the most noticeable thing was a large conical funnel belching sparks into the night air. This was burning scrap lumber from the town lumber mill. We slept in the car that night.

I can't forget the sight that greeted my eyes when I awoke. A light drizzle was falling over this...shanty town. Surrounding this mill the most squalid collection of shacks, with mired paths cutting through them. Every shack was painted green, or had been painted green, lying sullenly around this mill. This was nothing more than a company town, southern style -- owned and run by Mr. Bruce. I wish I could do this Dickens justice. In some places not a single shack, but an army barracks of shacks, just a long building with ten or so one story interconnected shacks, strewn with garbage, green painted, with wooden boards fording the mire of the sidewalk to the mire of the street. Open sewage ditches by the side and in front, and the drizzle of the rain. Every cafe was in a converted shack and wherever we went we were the subject of frequent stares.

So we saw a few people, all of whom were visibly uneasy, and left after the first day. No contacts, no place to stay, no place to meet, no probability of success. Somehow I felt that leaving was not in good SNCC tradition, but my depression was so complete and so unprepared for that I left with relief. But we will have to go back, if not this year, next, and it will not be pleasant work when we do...pleasant work in the sense of having a good chance of success.

Anyway, most of our efforts for the past weeks had been centered around the Freedom Vote, which took place for four days. You can imagine how we scrambled during that time, and often the only solace we received was knowing what to tell the next people not to do. We had a few polling places, but few poll watchers showed up. We had four volunteers from the North, all graduate students at Princeton. Two were from England, and in general I have been surprised by the number of English students who have worked in Mississippi. They seem much more stable, much less likely to be down here for fuzzy reasons, much easier to get along with.

Too often I think, with white volunteers and some Negro volunteers (from the Summer Project) SNCC becomes a cult, you know, something to lord over those who aren't in, to take pride in non-conforming, to voice

radicalism for the sake of being radical, and to completely gloss over what should be a sensitive reaction to people's problems (Sometimes I think, "Oh, it's only that..." about someone's problem, as if death is the only thing worthy of concern). Have you heard of SuperSNCC? He's a Negro janitor (named Tom) who turns into a super being and saves his people from Mississippi sheriffs. Maybe that's how we think of ourselves...white college students breezing around Mississippi....

The other week we were in Monroe County and saw how our friends in Aberdeen work the FDP precinct organization. Enough to turn one green with envy. At a small rural community they had about 50 people conducting their own meeting, with the COFO workers acting as guests, informants. But we got many useful ideas, and have embarked upon a new program of our own, starting with precincts and leading up to a county organization. The selective buying campaign is the foundation of our organization.

But, to get back to the Freedom Vote, on the second day several of us were arrested, beginning with John Bell, a local student, who was arrested while showing a man how to Freedom Vote on the main street. So Bob and Eddie got out and were also arrested. Later the same day Gavin Lewis, an Englishman, and I were arrested for distributing posters of Lyndon Johnson on main street. We were well treated and later released on \$300 dollars bail apiece.

What do we need? A mimeograph machine, a car, furniture, a freedom house, food and clothing. Most of these can be translated into donations of money, since it mails easily. I cannot stress too strongly how much the eventual success of the project in West Point will depend upon the support we get from the North. The Council of Federated Organizations central office in Jackson is an inefficient bureaucracy, unable to do much more than send us our project check every two weeks -- 80 dollars. This means that we scramble for what we need, beg, borrow, and other things. We have a possibility for a freedom house -- excuse me, freedom shack. That isn't a complaint, either, but we will need to get an awful lot of work done before it can be made into an office. We need literature run off, and that means a mimeograph machine. Can you get us one???

West Point is a small, small project as projects go; that means we are last on the list for a lot of things, and we don't have a car to go here and there and complain and cajole, which is the only way to get things. Therefore I am complaining and cajoling to you by letter (and few of those, I know).

Can't you send us something? It will be winter soon and the Negro population is poor. We hope to distribute food and clothing. Please don't send us small quantities -- it isn't worth it to ship it. But how about arranging massive donations? Get friends to get friends and amass a stockpile, then contact SNCC at 100 Fifth Avenue, NYC and find a way to get it to West Point (perhaps via Columbus).

I would appreciate it if you could send all checks made out to me. The reason is that we cannot cash SNCC checks here and if we send them to Jackson we never see them again. Actually, if you don't want to

make them out to me, SNCC can use the money as well as West Point. Perhaps you could make a monthly pledge of, say, ten dollars, and get your friends to make a similar pledge. We're battling everyone: white power structure, conservative Negro leadership, inefficient Jackson office.....

We shall overcome,

Joel

P.S. Since this letter has taken two weeks to write, I will send at a later date a short, one page appeal for money. Perhaps you could request mimeoed copies from Mrs. Jacqueline Bernard, 395 Riverside Drive, NYC, NY after you receive one from me. Then you could send them to various friends with a short personal endorsement of my character and trustworthiness so that people will be willing to send me money.

P.P.S. My address is General Delivery, West Point, Mississippi.

P.P.P.S. We got 960 votes in the Freedom Vote, about 1/5 of the would be eligible Negro voters in Clay County.