

REPORT OF WEEK'S ACTIVITIES, NOVEMBER 12 -- 15, John O'Neal

These few days have been rather crowded with activity but nothing noteworthy have I done because the immediate objective is to become familiar with the people, the problems peculiar to these people and the terrain.

In summary, these few things have been accomplished: have met a few of the many "Mamas", Mama Goldie, Mama Dollie, and Mama King. Met a few others also. Attended meetings in Terrell and Sumter Counties. Got Driver's License from the "Great state 'a Georgie".

Several things, however, seem particularly important for I have been strongly impressed. The richness of the landscape, the lusty greens, the strong reds and yellows, the blue bowl skies. The takkn oriya Georgia pines. I can't help being impressed by the beauty of the beauty of the place.

The militant attitudes of the people who attend the meetings is impressive. It causes me to wonder at my tole. What can I say to people already on the march? When called on to introduce myself at these meetings I have attempted merely to encourage them in their sturdiness and to introduce myself to them, trying to reveal my weaknesses to them, hoping that they will discover any strengths I might have.

I have been impressed most, I think, by the discipline of the individuals who are here on the SNCC staff. The most significant element of the Freedom movement, it seems to me, is the fact that here, for the first time in modern history, a moral force is being brought to bear on a real problem with real support from the people and is really effective in terms of the people's needs and aspirations. I have been disappointed to find that all too often the perception that guides us on social matters has not seemed to carry over to the personal realm. The patterns of discipline that have been established here in Southwest Georgia project are some encouraging and giant step toward this end.

A few germinal ideas have occurred to me concerning the plight of the sharecroppers in this area, the necessity of communication with our "good white brothers" and the kind of relationship or identification that our fellow campus bound students, particularly those at SIU. Happy to say, I have been encouraged to develop these ideas, but they do not warrent further comment at this time.

Regarding my personal hopes for my involvement here; at this time I hope to become a writer, eventually to concentrate on the theatre. The decision to come work in the South with SNCC, as well as all other decisions (I hope) was made imperative by my moral or rather religious committment. This does not, however, serve to minimize the former assertion; I would like to think of myself as an apprentice artist. I would hope therefore that my experience here provides the opportunity for the development of my art, both in form and substance. The substance, it seems to is almost inevitable. One cannot live among great people suffering a great crisis without developing some great insights. The ability to communicate these, however does not occur in such an accidental fashion. In short, I hope to take advantage of some of the incidents, some of the ideas that follow from these incidents for some kind of writing. Have already begun work on one short essay "A Boll Weevil's Eyeview of the Cottonbowl" (working title). A statement of neophyte's view of the Freedom Movement, hopes, fears, expected dangers, expected returns, and stuff like that. Is still in the thinking stage.

Can't think of anything else for the time being.