

W 504 S. Madison  
Albany, Georgia  
March 4, 1963

There's a throbbing all over me, a never ending ache back and forth across me. It is cold pain frozen within my soul by the suffering of the years and add to this my plight - I stand within the center of a razor blade, high walls of stainless steel around me - boxed. The ugly face of Segregation hovers over me.....but this is the beginning.

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Howdy,

It's good to be back home. Joyce and I arrived last Saturday night and joined the entire staff early Sunday Morning for an all day staff meeting at the Koinonia Farm. The sun spread its refreshing light and warmth on my first day back in S. W. Georgia. I returned to find that despite our feelings of despair over the D. E. Short trial the people in the counties looked on it as a measure of hope. This was the first time a white in this area had even been questioned and brought to trial for an injustice to a Negro. The delight of my heart was the Sumter County Movement where in the last three weeks the attendance at Mass meetings has exceeded 125 and people have applied for registration at the court house in Americus at the rate of 15 to 30 per week. At the Sumter meeting I met some of the most freedom hungry people I have ever seen. People sit in the meeting with their heads high as they sing and talk about freedom. Even a teacher was present and offered his services in our new night school project (to be explained). Can you imagine a real live teacher? We are on our way. Mr. Weston - firm, articulate and militant - told the people "don't you go down to that court house with your head down, scratching when you don't itch. Stand up! and speak up!" Already they are talking about economic security and establishing a savings and loan association. Yes, Sumter may prove to be the salt of our movement.

We had a tent full at the Terrell meeting Wednesday and a new spirit of progressiveness was evident especially in our old friend Deacon Edwards. Warm arms of friendship and shared suffering welcomed me back into the family. On Monday Faith and I will start to work in Terrell with Chico Neblett.

Albany had a good meeting Monday at Third Kiokee - run in real SNCC fashion. We had representatives from each of the counties witness to the struggle in their county. The audience was almost transfixed in admiration and awe as Agnew James, Mana Dolly, Dec. Evans, and Dec. Brown gave testimony of their trials and their determination. This kind of witness increases inter-county unity and at the same time gives form and backbone to the emerging leadership in the counties.

Early Friday morning we were awakened to the news of the shooting of our Mississippi worker, Jimmy Travis. There followed the long hours of agony and waiting, when threads of prayer and rededication were irretrievably woven into the fabric of our existence. We got a message Saturday from Dotty that he would be all right. The boys are aiming a bit more accurately these days.



Some of you might remember Agnew James' father-in-law, Hawkins Simmons in Lee County. He dies last Saturday night. Faith, Charles and I went to the funeral Thursday.

There is lots more to tell, but I think I'll save some for next time. We are trying to keep better hours this week. We are all being persued by the flu bug. So, early to bed.

Affectionately yours,  
Prathia

P.S. The insurance company has cancelled the insurance on Carolyn's house.

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Hi Everybody:

Well I've made it to Albany at last! I'm already getting to feel very much at home. This past week has been spent meeting people, dodging the flux learning to light the kerosene stove and trying to figure out finances. Went to a Delta meeting and was warmly (!) received. Warned them that I would bother them to death until they became more involved in the boycott (one of my good sorors was seen downtown shopping that morning) and in voter registration. They didn't exactly stampede to me to volunteer, but I did get several personal invitations to dinner which I plan to follow up.

Marion King has been working on a plan to start a night school to teach subjects from first through twelfth grads, for which credit would be given. We need 75 to 100 people signed up before it can be started - but interest seems so great, we shouldn't have any trouble.

Everybody's in good health again. The fellows are out in the counties, Faith, Prathia, Eddie and Chico go to Terrell tonight. As I write this, I'm locking out the back door at nothing in particular - just enjoying the sudden warm weather - 80°! Faith and Prathia are getting dinner ready - wish you were here to share it with us.

Affectionately  
In freedom,  
Joyce

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The following poem was written by Marion Gaines, 11 year old young lady from Albany. She's been actively involved in the movement - canvassing, and leading singing at the mass meetings.

WHAT THE BLACK MAN NEEDS

As a race we all should learn  
We should learn to take heed  
If we desire to reach the goal  
Co-operation is what we need.

To be a successful race  
Some must follow, some must lead  
But regardless of what you do  
Co-operation is what we need.

Since we all can't be leaders  
Here's the thing for us to do  
Co-operate with the one whose leading  
And we are bound to pull through

There's nothing impossible for a black man  
Upon the face of the earth  
One of the wisest men that ever lived  
A black mother gave him birth.

Black is really honorable  
To be black is nothing bad  
The Bible says Solomon was black  
He was the wisest man we've ever had.

I thought to mention these things  
Praying that you will take heed  
Come!  
Cooperation is what the black man needs.

Marion Gaines