Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

6 Raymond Street, N.W.
Atlanta 14, Georgia

688-0331

Dear Betsyx and Paul,

Thank you for the heavenly package which arrived last week. Boy! What ideal things you chose. What we need are snacky things that are nourishing. Since we almost never get fruit, ~~the raisins were devoured~~ almost immediately. Dried soups are good either when we don't have time to really cook, or to flavor ~~the perpetual~~ rice we seem to be eating. Actually we've been lucky for the last month. Someone gave us a bushel of sweet potatoes, and a man who xxx raises hogs gave us some HUGE pork chops, a dozen or so slices of country bacon, some shoulder meat and spare ribs. Fortunately our reluctant refrigerator was repaired last week, so we've even been able to keep the meat fresh.

As for the GORGEOUS Christmas present, I've just looked at it. Waiting for 12/25.

On Christmas day, we're going to have dinner with one of the families in Lee County. Two of the boys on our staff are living in Lee County, where they spend their days canvassing from house to house, trying to get people to register. Yesterday they got kids from the Negro school to canvass with them. They took the kids over to Smithville, a city where about 25 "disturbed citizens" threatened to throw SNCC workers into the swamp last summer, and got to 51 houses. They got seven people to go down to the Lee County Court House to register, but they were turned down, which is the first act of resistance on the part of officials in a long time. Originally they might have refused a registrant or harmed him physically, but since the Justice Department stepped into adjoining Terrell and filed an injunction, the officals have tended to rely on behind-the-scenes intimidation. By now we're all used to taking affidavits, so an old man of about seventy swore one out yesterday in the farm house where the SNCC boys are living.

Adjoining Terrible Terrell County has not seen one person go down to register since the burning of the churches. The Sheriff in Terrell and several private citizens are all named in the injunction mentioned above, restraining them from interfering with voter registration. This is because fifteen people appeared at one of our mass meeting in July, (15 whites), among them two Sheriffs and several deputy sheriffs. Anyway, they were pretty vocal about their disapproval of the proceedings; they smoked and cursed inside the church; and they voiced several threats. Unknown to them, several reporters who were in the area to cover proceedings in Albany, had been invited out to this Terrell meeting. The next day Claude Sitton splashed the story all over the NY Times in a story that was something like three full columns, on July 27. The Justice Department, xxx probably quite upset by the publicity, came rushing down and filed the injunction. This of course was only one of amany meetings that "interested citizens" had attended, however the Justice Department responds to stories published in the Times more quickly than they do to out affidavits. Sheriffs stopped coming to meetingd. About a month later, three churches burned in Terrell, a house was riddled with bullets (two of the bullets in this instance riddling the left arm of Jack Chatfield, SNCC worker), and an economic squeeze was started against those active in the drive. In Lee County only one xxxxxxxxx church was burned to the grond, but four houses were razed with machine gun fire.

One of these houses is the home of nine teen people, most of them children.

Here in Albany, I've been working on a local voter registration drive. There is no danger in registering here in the city, but it's hard to convince the thousands who need to register that it's really worth it. Registering to vote doesn't seem like a very heroic act in a city where 1,100 arrests were made during protests. Veterans of six or seven arrests sometimes don't see driving down to the court house as part of their fight. We did run a Negro for City Commissioner and brought out a fair numbetr of whites and Negroes for him. We also got the local politicos sufficiently scared to bring them all out in the open. They ran racist editorials on the local radio station, ran leaflets on how the "Nigras" were marching to the polls as they had marched to jail. In a city which is really a one party city, the primary is all that counts. As I guess you know, Paul, and as a Justice Dept. man pointed out to me, the Federal Govt. has no jurisdiction over City Elections. Further, primaries are run by committes of the party involved, rather than by the city. Well, the local party made up all kinds of crazy rules this year. They announced that the polls would close at 7:00 Pm and then closed them at 6:00. Since they afe forced to integrate the polls (by court order, I believe), they integrated them racially, but separated the men and women. They allowed no poll watchers for the Negro, and barred all press from the polls for the first time in Albany's history. The possibility of miscounting is suggested by the fact that the Negro was given 3,000 votes on the local radio station the night of the election. The next morning the number had mysteriously changed, and the newspapers and radio were all saying that he had received only 2,000 votes. 1,000 Negroes who had voted in previous city elections, or who were registered in the city, were told on the day of the election that they could not vote because they lived outside the city limits. Some of those excluded in this fashion lived in city housing projects, which is an interesting paradox.

I must get back to ework. I spend most of my time canvassing here in Albany, or doing office work. The Albany office does the work for all of the staff, inclusding the county staff. So we're busy.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Love,

Jauth