

Robert Moses interview with Clayborne Carson at Harvard University, March 29, 1982.

The longterm community organizing efforts in the rural South were usually ignored by reporters who were more interested in the dramatic mass confrontations between blacks and police in urban centers, yet these efforts were crucial in the Mississippi black struggle.

Moses

The key person in setting that up, in terms of setting up the operation, was old man Owens. He was an older man. He carried a cane. I don't know if he has one weak eyelid, so in his glasses--he wore glasses--and one glass had a hook on it, an attachment which kept the eyelid up. So he had kind of a fish-eye that looked out at you. And he was the treasurer for the NAACP, and independent financially; he didn't have to work, and his money was based somewhere up in Illinois. He had lived his productive life in Illinois. And his sister--he was originally from McComb--and his sister still lived in McComb, and he lived with his sister and her husband, there in McComb. And every so often, he went back to Illinois, to check on his business, or whatever he had; I'm not sure what his economic base was, but he had a financial independence, and enjoyed the complete trust of the community about money matters. Well, he called himself, and we called him super-cool-daddy. I mean, he operated completely behind the scenes. He was treasurer, and he at times spoke out when it was needed, when the community needed. He did not, for example, have any misgivings about the demonstrations, and he stayed with us through all that. He was a loyal supporter and shored up the community on the question of what was going to be necessary to do anything about the situation.

So Owens would drive out every morning in the taxi. He'd take a taxi out and pick me up, when I first got down there. And he did the actual leg-work with me, of going around and setting up the project. And what we did was, we went to every single black person of any kind of substance in the community, and talked to them about the project. I described it--voting, and what we were doing, and talked to them about SNCC. And he would hit them for a contribution, five or ten dollars, and he would hold the money. I mean the people trusted him, so that if he said he was going to hold the money, and keep an accounting of it, and make sure it was going to be spent for what we said we were going to spend it for; which was to house, and to feed a couple of SNCC workers--myself, and a couple of people that were going to be sent in. We raised the money in McComb, and Owens was the key person. I mean, he knew everyone; people trusted him with the money. I mean it was absolutely safe; you couldn't have gotten a project

like that off the ground, raising the money, if you didn't have someone in the community that people could trust.

Carson

So that was one of the things that you learned?

Moses

You learned about organizing. The importance, the quality of the local person that you go to work with ... and finding someone that enjoys the community trust, particularly around fundraising, is everything in terms of whether the project can get off the ground.

1. John Fischer, "A Small Band of Practical Heroes," Harpers, October 1963.

Bob Moses quoted, p. 21-22.

"When a representative of Snick comes into a Mississippi town, his first problem is to find someplace to live. Most Negro boardinghouse keepers are afraid to take in somebody who might look like a trouble-[p. 22]maker to the whites. They are afraid the lease might be canceled, or the taxes raises, or the house burned down. So in the beginning we often have to visit around for a long time, staying a few nights with one family and a few more with the next.

"The first job is to get some kind of organization started. We just talk to people in the streets, or call at their homes in the evening, going from door to door. After a while we may be able to call little meetings in a church. When I first came to Greenwood, the church people were all afraid to let us hold meetings. Now eight Negro churches are open to us. That is a real sign of progress; it shows that a lot of people aren't quite so scared anymore.

"We talk mostly about how important it is for Negroes to register to vote. It takes a long time to persuade anybody to try. They tell us: 'I don't want to be bothered with that mess. I don't want those white folks shooting into my house at night.' They tell us what happened to Negroes who have tried to register--how they got beat up, or lost their jobs. Twenty-nine Greenwood people who attended a voter-registration meeting in a church were arrested and sent to the county prison farm for four months; rocks and a smoke bomb were thrown through the windows of the church. No, the whites didn't do that; they got a Negro to do it, by giving him thirty dollars and the promise of a job.

"But after six months in Greenwood, we got fifty people to try to register. Only two of them passed the test. They have to interpret a section of the Constitution to the satisfaction of the registrar, and of course he isn't easy to satisfy.

"By that time we had a little office in a room over a Negro store. In August of 1962 it was raided by two carloads of whites at 1:00 A. M. Three of our people who were there--Sam Block, Lawrence Guyot, and Lavaughn Brown--escape by climbing out the window and running over the roofs, before the raiders broke in the door. But we had to give up the office because of tax pressure against the owner and police charges brought against the

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man who leased the building. Most of the winter we had no office and no place to live. We just kept shifting from house to house. [p. 24?] In December, we managed to get another office, but it was burned in March.

"During this particular time we were trying to collect food and clothing from all over the country for destitute plantation hands and sharecroppers, because the county officials had stopped the distribution of federal surplus food--which meant that about sixteen thousand Negroes had nothing to eat. Whenever we were able to get a little something to give to a hungry family, we also talked about how they ought to register. As a result, about a hundred marched down in a batch; they felt safer if they went together.

"It was soon after that Jimmy Travis got shot, and there were three more shootings in the following month. One time they fired into a Negro theatre where a meeting was going on, and once into Sam Block's car while four people were riding in it, but nobody got hit. The shots were fired from cars without any license plates. The police paid no attention and when some of us protested, they put us in jail--I think the charge was disturbing the peace.

"About that time Dick Gregory, the entertainer, came down to help us with a demonstration and the Justice Department filed an injunction suit to stop intimidation. Soon we were able to rent a new and bigger office, and in the past five months, about 1,300 Negroes have tried to register. We don't know yet how many of them will be permitted to pass the test--but maybe the situation is a little more hopeful, because the Justice Department is examining the records and it has filed a suit to abolish these tests as unconstitutional. It will take a long time, of course, for the case to work its way through the courts.



3/29/82

[Tape 1]

Carson

You were telling me a little bit about how you first came to the Atlanta office and met Ella, and what led up to that, and what was your first reaction....?

Moses

You want me to redo that thing?

Carson

Yes, please.

Moses

I think what I said, what I was talking about yesterday, was a period which was very meaningful in my life, when I was in public school, and we were living in the Harlem River houses, in Harlem. Between projects, was what we called them, between 151st and 153rd street, between 7th Ave and McCoombs Dam. And I was going to P.S. 90, which was on 148th street, and 147th street, between 7th and 8th Ave. And [it] was a public school from, I guess, 1st grade, through the 6th grade. And, somewhere along in there, I'm not sure which grade, they opened up an outlet for a cooperative group which was distributing milk in New York City, or at least in Harlem. And my family--my mother, and my oldest brother Greg, and myself--took over the distribution of milk in the projects, and we opened up a little entryway into one of the little basements there, and we would sell milk in the mornings, before the children went to school. And we averaged about two cases a day on school days, and a few more than that on Saturdays. And selling it, we made a penny on a quart, and there were about twenty quarts in a case, and the milk then was running from eighteen to twenty cents a quart, so we were able to buy our two quarts of milk per day from that sale of the milk, if we got there on time and opened up early enough; otherwise the kids would have gone off to school and we wouldn't sell as much. So we did that for I think a number of years as I remember, and it later made a very deep impression as I learned more about the whole process of setting up businesses and the problems of black people in getting started in the economy in this country.

And then in 1960 when I went down to the SCLC office to work, and Miss Baker was there as the executive director, and we got to talking and she was asking me questions as she does, about your background, and what you've been doing and so forth. And so in the process of talking, it came out about the.... I had asked her some questions, and she mentioned working with the cooperative in Harlem in the 40's and I guess early 50's, but this would've been in the 40's. And I mentioned about our doing the projects delivery outlet of the milk, and so it turned out, she was on the other end of that operation; she was actually part of the organizing force that was putting that operation together. So, that was a big reconnection; it was very helpful and meaningful to find somebody like that, who was involved in the civil rights movement, that I'd been attracted to, who had also touched on my early life in a way that was very meaningful.

Carson

Yesterday, we talked a little bit about what led you to come down



to Atlanta in 1960. Could you go over that?

Moses

Go over that? Well, what really set it off were the sit-ins. I mean, they started in February. I was teaching at Horace Mann, and I was reading the accounts daily in the New York Times. And they began to put pictures of the students as they were sitting in, and the pictures attracted me because I could feel myself in the faces of the people that they had there on the front pages. I could feel how they felt, just by looking at those pictures. And so I decided to go down during my spring break to visit my uncle, Bill Moses, who was teaching at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia. And he had been there since I guess '39-40 like that, teaching in architecture, trying to build an architectural department there. And so I did, and the students were in the process of demonstrating in Newport News. Hampton itself didn't have any targets really worth shooting at. So there was a Woolworth over there in Newport News, and we went over, and sat in and picketed. I think I walked on the picket line, while some of the other students were sitting in.

And after that there was a rally around that same time that Wyatt Tee Walker came down from Petersburg, Virginia, to address people in Newport News. And my uncle and I went over to take a look at that, and my uncle at that time had assumed the leadership of the NAACP chapter there at Hampton. So Wyatt talked at length about King, and about the movement that was developing, and about leadership. One thing that struck me then, he was, as early as that, talking about the need for everyone to coalesce behind a leader, a national leader, the implication being that everyone should unite behind Dr. King's leadership. And I remember I went up to him afterwards, and just mentioned to him, didn't he think that there was a need for a lot of leaders, I mean that we needed leadership all over, as opposed to the need for everyone to follow behind one leader.

Anyway, what was concrete about that meeting was that he mentioned that they were giving a rally in New York, in support of King, and that they were trying to help King to fight some kind of legal action that Birmingham was taking against him. So when I went back to New York, I looked up something about the rally, and the organizing process for it, and I found out that there was a meeting at one of the Harlem churches, and went to that, and Bayard Rustin was chairing the meeting and at the end of the meeting, they passed around slips for volunteers to sign up to work, to help in the process of organizing the rally. So I did, and I went after school then, that would have been sometime in April I guess, and worked down at that office until the rally, which I believe was sometime in May, and just did the regular volunteer work; you know, stuffing envelopes, putting up posters, and handing out flyers.

Carson

Just to back-track a little bit. When you talked with Wyatt Walker, what would have led you to question that notion of coalescing behind a single leader? What about your ideas at that point would have led you to question that notion?

Moses

Well, I guess it just struck me strange, that there should be

such an emphasis on everyone trying or that people should put their energy into coalescing behind a single figure. It seemed to me, I think, just the wrong emphasis. I mean, here was the movement going on, and the students different places across the South were spreading, getting activated, and moving, and why put an emphasis then, on one person, and coalescing behind that person?

Carson

So it was just more of a common sense idea, rather than a philosophical notion.

Moses

I hadn't worked out any notions of leadership, except that I guess I had a feeling for what people later termed grassroots leadership, that is, that there should be leadership all over. You can't--and I don't know that necessarily Wyatt was saying that there shouldn't be, but it seemed to me, that he didn't say that there should be. Because it was the emphasis in what he was saying that struck me as wrong--that is, the emphasis, which I later came to learn was part of a pattern, even in this country, of the ways in which organizations are shaped and formed. And it has a lot to do with the media, and the need for projection, and it's something that led to the downfall of SNCC also, this emphasis that came into SNCC on having a projection which led to...

Carson

What do you think are the causes of that?

Moses

Well, in SNCC's case it was funds, partly. I mean, this is getting off the track, but back around the time they had the Waveland conference, Forman approached me about the problems of fundraising. They had fundraising apparatus which was going on in New York, and they had approached him about their needs, and their primary need was that SNCC didn't have a focus--SCLC had King; CORE had Farmer--a person that they could focus on and could give projection to the organization, and therefore be a symbol around which you could actually raise money. And, given the way the media is set up in this country, it was necessary to do it that way; that is, given the fact that SNCC's fundraising had been hooked into that system. See, you either had to think of a totally different type of economic base, or struggling along like you were doing, or moving in order for the organization to grow and get a large economic base, moving into this national projection. And so we talked about it, and I indicated to him that I was not available for such a projection--because see, at the time, I was considered a good choice. This was following the Mississippi Summer, you see. My name had been in a sense projected some, and so it might have been something that could have been easily done, to build up this figure. We discussed, and I expressed to him my disagreement about this. I wasn't articulate at that time about what the alternatives might be; I mean, I wasn't able to see through... I think now that SNCC could have had just as effective a national projection by build-ing up the idea of the SNCC field secretary, and by building up case studies of particular SNCC field secretaries. Say, maybe you tried to

get into some media publication once a month a story around a given SNCC field secretary, the work that person did, and the community that person worked with, and try over a long range period to build up in the minds of the public that this organization is centered around the concept of a field secretary and that these are the examples of field secretaries. It's more amorphous in that sense as an image; it doesn't focus you on any one particular person, and you get a cross-section of people, but yet you also get some themes running through: the idea of working with people, the idea of community work, or the idea of campus work--SNCC field secretaries working on campus, something like that. But that's what I think now. I didn't think that through enough then, to really articulate it, and get that pushed forward as a policy about fundraising.

And I think that was a weakness on our part, that we left the worries about fundraising to Jim [Forman], so the whole weight of the fundraising fell on his shoulders; and whereas we contributed to doing fundraising, going out and speaking and so forth, and--well, I guess we did even that reluctantly, I mean we didn't really relish going out and doing that. But we didn't contribute to policy of fundraising--that is, to thinking through even when a question like this came up. And part of a weakness of the organization was there wasn't a mechanism in the organization for thrashing through that problem, other than a general meeting, or one to one with Jim. So you didn't get a coherent and really adequate response about the fundraising problem.

And we slipped into the easy way out, which came with Stokely, when we developed a national image, because that's what Stokely did. And it's not his fault, because the need was there. This was after '64, see, that the need was being expressed. Stokely didn't come in 'till '66. See, so there was a whole two year period in which that need was there; it was talked about among different people.

Even my name change was related to that problem, because it was clear to me that they couldn't make me into such a figure, if they couldn't use my name, because that was enough confusion to stop that. I mean, just the fact that you have to stop and say that Robert Parris is in fact Robert Moses, is enough to confuse a lot of people. What you need, of course, is some kind of a clear, sharp image to do this kind of national projection. I mean the national projection requires a simple, sharp, clear image of what you know you're projecting. So...

Carson

I wanted to get back to 1960, but could I just follow up on... I've heard from other people in SNCC that one of the things that was considered early in the '60s was basing the fundraising in the Southern black communities; but the feeling was that then there would be a dilemma of what your motives were, in coming into a community and asking for money, at the same time you're trying to help that community. Did you see that as a...

Moses

I just think we were not imaginative about fundraising. I don't think it would have been a problem if we had figured out how to do it. Jim raised money in Atlanta, and he had some loyal supporters in Atlanta, that he could turn to, who appreciated the



work that SNCC was doing. I remember Paul Brooks started out in Atlanta doing fundraising. That was his project; he was going to do fundraising, and the idea was to get the little person and to somehow get little bits of money in regular amounts, from a large number of people. And that never got off the ground. I mean, he wasn't able to carry through, and I don't know if it was rightly conceived, or if it was possible. In Jackson, I think, he tried to do the same thing, and that also didn't get off the ground.

The thing which we never thought of, or tried to do, was sell literature, like the SNCC newsletter. I mean, no one, as far as I know, ever seriously thought of developing, you know, a newsletter which was geared to the communities we were working in, that could be sold to people. I think people would've bought it, and maybe we could've made a little money that way. But we didn't think in terms--we weren't thinking economically, I mean at that point we just weren't. And a lot of that mainly has to do with our background, and the fact that I don't know if any of us were coming out of a background where people were thinking in terms of economics, and how you put an economic base to an institution. And what models did we have? I mean, we still don't have, in the black community, you know, more than you can count on the fingers of one hand I think, institutions which are servicing the black community, and which are economically based in the black community, something that the black community has put together. We recognized that as the '60s were coming to a head, in the middle of the '60s, late 60s, that our next step especially came to a head around FDP. I mean, a lot of us, talking about it, said: well, there's no sense really, in trying to launch a political party in this country without an economic base, because you'd throw yourself back on the hands of whomever you're going out to for your funds. So you can't actually think to actually have an independent political party. So in that sense, maybe FDP was launched too soon. But then we were stymied as to how to start an economic base, because we didn't have any expertise. And we didn't know really where to begin, but at least we recognized at that point that that was a problem.

Now the same problem we saw for SNCC. I mean, a lot of us talking at that point said, well, we have a problem: How are we going to put SNCC on a good economic base? And we had the potential to do that, in the sense that we had the people. What we lacked was a consciousness; it would have moved us into a different era, really, if we'd been able to bridge that and people to think, now, that they were going to not do the community work now, and so-call push the movement on, but that they were actually going to stop, and take out as many years as was necessary to work to gain money, and put that money in a common cause, which would have been an economic base for that organization. So that you actually had your own economic base. Now there were some of us who were willing to do that, to consider how to do that, but events swept us away.

Carson

Let's go back to the period when you first came into the Atlanta office in 1960, and that came after you worked in New York...

Moses

Yeah, I worked in New York as that rally organizer. As that

office, which was set up there to promote that rally, came to the end of its job, I went and approached Bayard about coming down South, to work for King in Montgomery. And he said, in essence I guess, that there wasn't any real operation in Montgomery, and suggested I go to Atlanta. So, I didn't know anything about SCLC politics, or any other politics, civil rights politics for that matter. And I said OK, so I left sometime in June. I think I was due to arrive there and spend the months of July and August working. And I got there and there was a secretary in the office, her first name was Lilly, and I've forgotten her last name, and Ella was in that same office. She had her own little room. And then Jane Stenbridge had a desk in the main part of the office; it was a small office, there. And I got to basically talking with Jane; Ella was kind of in and out, and there wasn't much of anything to be done in the SCLC operation. They were putting out a fundraising letter.

And it was tedious work, the way they were doing it. See, Jane was just typing up the envelopes by hand, and kind of stuffing them a few at a time, and sending them out. And it looked like they were going to take most of the summer to get this fundraising letter out. And so I got into some other things. The Atlanta student movement was meeting, and had a summer project. They were picketing an A&P which was around the corner from the Y where I was staying, and I would go around there and join the picket line, or man the picket line, because they had trouble getting out people to work. It was a symptom of something, because they were meeting, and there were a number of them meeting, but they couldn't really get people out to man that picket line.

And I got to talking with Jane. Jane had just come down from Union Theological Center, and I had always had an interest in what I loosely call spiritual notions, and at Harvard when I was there, Tillich was up here at that time, when I was at graduate school in the 50s. And I had attended his lectures, and I had read his book, at least the little book, more or less the popular book, The Courage To Be, when I was in undergraduate school, and that, as much as I'd understood it, had had a big influence on me. And then I read a little of his major works, but I didn't- wasn't able to grasp where he was coming from. So we got to talking, and discussing about religion, and different points of view. We had long discussions there in that office.

So that was the way I passed the days between picketing, and talking with Jane, and doing a little of this envelope stuffing. And then a couple of times I got a chance to talk with Ella, and introduce myself, and we talked a little. And she talked a little about what she was doing, a different concept from what King was doing, even then; about her concern for building up grassroots leadership among SCLC, and moving around, and working with local leadership to build up a constituency. And the way she always put it, was that you put all your hopes in a leader, but then that leader often turns out to have feet of clay, and she used that image, over and over again, about the problem of rallying behind a leader. And it was interesting to me, because I had had that experience with Wyatt in Newport News in the spring. So it was interesting, and as it turned out, which I

didn't know then, Wyatt was on his way down to become the executive secretary or the executive director of SCLC.

And Bayard, Bayard had trouble that summer, and they, I think that was the time that [Adam Clayton] Powell got on Bayard. And there was a little public fanfare, which led to his being eased out of a prominent position within SCLC, because I think the way it was, they were considering lining it up, was that Bayard would head up a Northern operation, and Wyatt or Ella would head up a Southern operation for the organization. But the powers that be, when they heard that, did not want that to happen, and so they made some kind of public ruckus, which led to his being eased out.

And the same thing led to Jane's resigning--I don't know if you know that--the secretary for SNCC. When they gave the SNCC conference in the fall of '60--which was the same conference that Amzie Moore went to--to give the conference, they had to have some labor money, or something like that, to sponsor the conference, and part of the condition was that Bayard wouldn't be allowed to speak. So they agreed to that, and then Jane resigned because of that.

Carson

I didn't know that she had resigned.

Moses

Yeah, she resigned. That led to Ed King coming in to take over that job.

Carson

When you first heard Ella talking about this notion of the leader having feet of clay, and putting forward the notion of group leadership, I think that's the word she used, the phrase she used at that time. Did you see her putting this forward as a philosophical idea, or as the result of her own experience, or what? Where did you see...

Moses

To me it came [that] she was talking out of her own experience I mean, talking out of experience as I talked to her, of years of working in the South, and of doing community work, because I mean, you know, she went all the way back to my childhood as I found out. And so she was talking, it seemed to me, out of that, the depths of experience.

Carson

You must have been taken with her, during those first few months after you had met her. What was your impression of this woman you had not seen before 1960. Just on a personal level, how did you feel about her.

Moses

I had a very strong, and a very positive reaction to Ella. I felt that she was someone you could trust. I felt a very deep respect for what she had done with her life up to that point, and for her position, the position she was taking about King. Because she was extremely matter of fact and level-headed about King as a person, and the difference between...You see, because she saw the struggle of our people, which was much bigger than any one person, was not to be encapsulated in some notion of a leader. But really, I think she had a sense of the struggle of a people. A long struggle that went in different ways at



different times but that was always somehow centered in people. And I think she lived that; she felt that, and she... There's a certain type, you don't want to get into types, but you run across certain black women, who have had certain experiences, so that they're always going to just speak from the heart, or what they say, what they mean, and they're going to say it regardless who's there. And the thing about Ella is that she never did bite her tongue. She was always sharp-tongued, and aware that she was sharp-tongued, but always to some purpose. I mean, she wasn't into gossip; she was really into what was meaningful, what was purposeful, and how did that, what did this action here that you were doing, how did that really effect the long range or overall goal of the movement, or of people. So her whole role, 'cause she had of course played a big role in getting SNCC set up within the SCLC. Not just the office. I mean within the sense that there was SCLC and King, at the time that the student movement broke out, and if a different person had been in her position, it would've been extremely difficult to envisage SNCC being set up the way it was, independent of King, because even when I was there in the office, there was still the pressure on the students to join King, and the whole problem of course was funding--whether they could do their own fundraising, and if they had to rely on King for fundraising, then they should be a part of his organization.

Carson

And other than working on that fundraising, what did you do that summer?

Moses

For SCLC? I didn't do anything for SCLC, aside from the fundraising appeal. I mean, I walked the picket line, all that July, and there was one sit-in. There was a group at Emory that was connected with SCEF, I think.

And I think that was another thing that impressed me about Ella, because people were really uptight about Carl Braden and SCEF, and problems with HUAC. And when I went to sit-in, and was picked up, and I identified myself as working with SCLC, then that got into the newspapers, and King called me, and that was the first time I'd met him. And he talked to me about the problems they'd had with this kind of identity, with SCEF, and about red-baiting and so forth, and- of course that was part of the thing with Bayard, about why they were...

So I did that, and that did give me the chance to put forward to King the idea that I thought I could get this fundraising letter out, if I could take the stuff out of the office, and set it up at the Y, and get volunteers to work on it. So he did agree to that, and I did get the fundraising letter on out if I could take this stuff out of the office and set it up at the Y and get volunteers on it. So he did agree to that, and I did get the fundraising letter on out.

Carson

What was your first impression of King?

Moses

Well, I didn't have... I mean, he was very slow speaking, and I guess what struck me was the he wasn't that interested in who I was. I'm not sure why [he thought] I'd bothered to come down in

the first place. I mean, he wasn't as interested in me as a person as Ella was, in trying to say: well here's someone who has come down to work, how can we really use them? Because that, of course, would've been the thing; what real use... And that may have just been him, that he doesn't have that kind of sense, 'cause that is in part I guess, the mark of an organizer--I mean someone who has an instinct for organizing. Then you've always got to be on the lookout for people who present themselves as potential organizers. And I don't think, at least what came across, was that he didn't have that, that kind of instinct. So our talk was just superficial; that's what left me the impression. Not that he was superficial, but the conversation was superficial. It came about because of this newspaper article; if they hadn't put my name in the papers, I probably would have never met him.

[End of side A]

Carson

I was just asking about what Ella Baker's reaction was to the red-baiting that went on, in 1960?

Moses

Well, Ella had a very positive reaction to that kind of red-baiting. Once something happened to me also, in the sense that the students for some reason I guess, apparently because I was a dedicated picket-line-walker, and just partly because of the general--well, my participating in that sit-in, and the general fear and so forth, around HUAC having been down there. Lonnie King and Ruby Doris [Robinson] questioned me, cornered me, and questioned me in that office about whether I was myself a communist or something. And that only got relieved because my uncle at Hampton had written to a friend of his, Karl Holman, who had taught at Hampton, and mentioned in his letter that his nephew, myself, was going to be down in Atlanta for the summer, and he should keep an eye out for me. So Karl, who was that summer heading up, I guess it was, I don't know if they called it the Atlanta Enquirer. But he was putting out a little newspaper, out of his basement, which was essentially a movement newspaper. And he was teaching at one of those schools there in that Atlanta university complex; it wasn't Morehouse. There's another one. Do you know the name? You don't know...remember the names of those schools.

Carson

Not Spelman.

Moses

Not Spelman; there's another one.

Carson

Morris Brown?

Moses

Morris Brown. So he was teaching there and he began to hear news about this strange person who was working over there in the SCLC office, and problems the students were--because he had close contact with the students and Julian [Bond] and them. And Julian would pop by the office, and we'd talk sometimes, and his sister, also. And then the letter came, and he put two and two together,

and called me, and asked me if I was Bill's nephew. So when that happened, then I went out and stayed with him and his family, and that kind of cooled down the problems with the students, 'cause he was able to interpret to them who I was, and that kind of thing.

So there was this fear, and Miss Baker, she kind of explained to me about the students when this happened, 'cause we talked about it, and their lack of background, of exposure, and so their not really being able to judge or place people that don't fit in a certain type that they're used to or have been exposed to. But she was also friends with Carl and Ann Braden, and so she had a completely different reaction to the problem about the sitting-in downtown, and had come to a very different point in her life, about the problem of civil liberties, and who you should work with. So she had no problem at all about working with Carl, or with Ann, or with encouraging the students to work with them. I think she was really a strong force within the organization for opening up that whole discussion, and resolving for the students; helping them to resolve this whole problem about red-baiting, which was clearly there, because you could see it in the treatment I got from Lonnie and Ruby Doris. And Ruby Doris went on to become a very strong person, and very strong on this issue; I mean we had to try, we had to dissuade her, I remember, from going down to Cuba, in--was it 63?--or something, and she was ready to go. So she had done an about-face on this issue, and I think that we owe a lot to Ella for that, and her influence.

Carson

Wasn't there one person at that time, Charles Jones, who had actually testified before HUAC?

Moses

That's right. People talked to Charlie about that. He was defending his doing that. This involved a trip he made to Algeria, I think, to a youth conference or something like that. Was it Vienna?... Or to one of those international youth conferences, and when he came back, he testified. Because I had, my feelings came down along with Ella's, because of the little exposure I had growing up in high school days, and going to "hootenannys" with Pete Seeger, and people like that who were singing. And the fact that Poussaint and my brother were at these camps, where these notorious so-called left-wingers sent their sons and daughters. So I mean they were people. And so they...

Carson

Okay. One of the things that you did that summer, you made a trip to Mississippi. How did that come about?

Moses

That came about, I guess, towards the end of July. I had gotten the mailing out. There was no more work to be done for SCLC. The notice had come through that Wyatt was taking Ella's position. Ella was kind of clearing up her office; she was getting ready to move out. And Jane and I were continuing talking. Jane was involved, there was a coordinating committee meeting which was held that summer, and she was preparing for that. And people came into Atlanta for that



meeting, so I was there, and was able to get a sense of the people involved in the SNCC structure. Out of that coordinating meeting, they decided to send Marion Barry, and a fellow from Alabama whose name I forget now, who later worked with King and SCLC. But they decided to send them..

Carson

Lee?

Moses

Lee, right, to the Democratic and Republican conventions, which were meeting out west in 1960. And something which has struck me, because, I mean, it's a short period of history from 1960 to 1964. But I often think how much organizing was done [in] those short years, so that in 1960 there were just those two people going out to read statements to various--I don't know what you call them, these committees that meet before the convention, you know, and to get on the record a certain position about civil rights, or voting or something, that's what Marion and Lee did, and they were representing the student movement. And then the kind of action that we were able to take in '64, four short years later.

But it often reminds me that the organization from its beginning, was oriented politically towards trying to do something with or about the Democratic or Republican Party, and you know, to have an impact on them. And the students at the coordinating committee, and Marion, they felt this was important; this was something that was worthwhile, trying to do, and was important to do. So even the idea of, I mean the notion of going back to the Democratic party in '64 and trying to get seated would have been right in line, in a sense, with what the organization--how it started out. So that was one thing that came out of that meeting.

The other thing was that they were going to have a conference in the fall, and it was Jane's responsibility to get together the conference, to do the organizing work. So she got to talking about it, and about the fact that she had no names from rural Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. So she asked me if I'd be willing to take a trip to gather names, because they didn't have any names, because there were no sit-ins in any of those Deep South places. So I was anxious to do that, 'cause there was nothing clear, nothing happening in Atlanta, and I was anxious to get out of the Atlanta scene. And so we sat down, the three of us: Jane, and Ella, and myself. And Ella agreed to put together a list of names of people that she knew, and then Jane wrote to them, and explained the nature of my journey, and that I was traveling on behalf of SNCC. And I think in your book, you still have me somewhat connected up with SCLC by the time I go back to Mississippi to register, I mean to work with the voting program. But that's actually wrong.

Carson

I think I just have you coming by yourself and then...

Moses

You check it, because I remember reading, and thinking that this was wrong, because that actually ended my tie with SCLC, that summer when I finished the volunteer work in the office, and went on this trip. I mean the trip was for SNCC; while I wasn't

working officially for SNCC, I was working as a volunteer for SNCC, and I wasn't on a payroll.

[According to In Struggle, "Moses was not yet even a member of SNCC's staff" (p. 26) when he made the trip. The SNCC Office Report for August 1961 states: "The Advisory Committee met and decided to contact Mr. Bob Moses further concerning the Mississippi Voter Registration. It was the thinking of the Committee after communications were received from Mr. Moses that he would sever any previously announced staff position with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, return the check to SCLC, and make it clear to the SCLC Director that he would work only as a SNCC representative. It was the decision of the Advisory Committee to inform Mr. Moses that, under those stated conditions, we would inform Mr. Moses that we would supply him with personnell (sic) and grant the position of Special Field Secretary on Voter Registration in McComb, Mississippi, at a \$35.00 per week basis."]

Actually I funded the trip myself, actually I funded my summer down there, because I had the money from teaching at Horace Mann, so I was actually paying for myself. So I went on that trip, and the first stop was Birmingham, and [Fred] Shuttlesworth. And he was besieged at that time, I remember; they were in a state of siege. They had guards around the churches where they were meeting; they were carrying guns. There was just an enormous amount of pressure on Shuttlesworth himself. And I met a man, I think Oliver, a person who lived on Dynamite Hill there, who was getting out little pamphlets, little leaflets about the bombings that were going on in Birmingham. And he had a sheaf of them that they were getting out. I don't know if you came across those...

Carson

I never did.

Moses

You might try to look them up. I mean, and he may still be around. But he was doing a one-man organizing job, and he was just trying to keep up with the regular bombings that were taking place, and in and around Birmingham, and get out just hard-core information about them, so I sent some of these back. And whatever people I met, or actual material that I came across, I would send it back to Jane. I don't know if in the SNCC stuff there's any of the correspondence between Jane and myself.

Carson

I'll have to check; I haven't run across it.

Moses

Or copies- I don't know if she made of copies of those letters she sent out.

Carson

It's a huge collection, and I haven't been through it all yet.

Moses

Because she sent out letters and I actually wrote back, as I went from place to place, I did write back. Especially I wrote back from Amzie's, 'cause the next stop after Birmingham was Aaron Henry in Clarksdale. And then I had the name of somebody in Holly Springs. I've forgotten his name; older man, but I decided not to try to get up there, 'cause of my money, and it was out of

the way. I would have had to...

Carson

You drove there?

Moses

No, I was riding by bus. I was riding by bus, and occasionally forced to freedom ride. Jane and I had done, I don't know what drove us to do it, but we had a Klan group in Atlanta that summer. I don't know what they were meeting about, but they held their meeting right there in the city. And they were there with their hoods and everything. And so Jane and I decided to go down to the meeting together. So we actually went down, and walked through this meeting with all these Klan people around. I guess they were so shocked that this pair was walking through, that they didn't have time to react.

But, so Jane escorted me down to the bus going over there, so I had to sit up in the front of the bus. I had feelings about doing that, cause I said, now if I get stopped, then I'm not going to get this trip accomplished. But I sat up in the front of the bus for awhile, at least 'til we got--I sat up through the Alabama end of the Georgia border. When I got over into Alabama I moved back, and was just in time, 'cause some troopers got on, and looked; they came through and looked and went back out. But then when I got to Clarksdale, it was funny because there was a couple of young students, who came down to the bus station with Aaron Henry. And see, the thing was I was representing the sit-in movement; SNCC, and this new wave, and so forth, and they were looking; they wanted to see where I was going to sit, obviously. So I sat in the front of the bus, and rode at the front of the bus from Clarksdale down to Cleveland, which was not a long trip, and for whatever reason, nobody bothered me. But, by the time I got down to Cleveland I guess, the rumors were out that the freedom riders were coming to town--some riders were coming in, sit-in movement or something. And Amzie caught that at the post-office.

And I had one other incident: in leaving Jackson I decided to get in the front of the bus; sit up front, and there was another black person sitting up near the front of the bus too, in a different seat. And we were both sitting with white people, and we were both riding from Jackson, going down through, across--I guess we crossed Vicksburg, in going over to Shreveport. And when we hit the town that was over in Louisiana--they didn't bother us while in Mississippi--but they came on, the troopers came on. And this guy who was sitting up front, turned out to be an African, who had his African passport, and had been traveling on the bus from Washington, or someplace; had been on for a long trip... and he was confused, didn't know what they were talking about, and they were confused when they hit this African passport. And then I had my passport; I had a United States passport as identification, 'cause I had taken those trips. So that confused them, and I guess in the midst of all that confusion, they decided to just put us back on the bus, and made us change our seats; they didn't try to arrest us. But anyway, that was my experience...

Carson

So you made that first contact that summer?



Moses

Right. And I left Henry in Clarksdale, and went down to, the next stop was Cleveland, and Amzie. And I stayed there a few days, because Amzie was clearly interested, and in a different way than Henry was. Amzie saw the students as a way out; I mean he really felt that these students were going to do something and that they were going to accomplish something, and he was ready to meet them on their own terms. Even though Aaron Henry played a role as the movement unfolded, with all the organizations, and a key role, in terms of a unifying force in the state, it was Amzie who really saw the students as a wedge, and a force, a new force and a force that he and other people should try to tap. And he broke with the established NAACP leadership on that question, and was clear about that, that early in the 60s. So I sat down, and he had the results of the Justice Department's efforts at voter registration, under the '58 bill. They had that legislation, that piece that passed I think in 1958, about voter registration, which set up that little department within the civil rights; or maybe it set up a civil rights division; I don't know. But that was the division that [John] Doar was working out of, and which was currently involved in the Fayette, Tennessee- Fayette County was one of the places....

Carson

Well, Doar wouldn't have been there in... then.

Moses

Yeah. Yeah, Doar was a hangover from the Eisenhower administration.

Carson

Oh, I didn't realize that...Yeah, he's a republican.

Moses

Yeah, he's a republican, and he was a hangover from the Eisenhower administration. So Doar had been up there and... Amzie met Doar But I'm not sure if it was by then, or in the '60s, 'cause he met him [Aaron Henry] around his problems with the post office. They had laid him off, and cut down his hours, so that he really was working just a few hours a week. So they had as part of their statistics, they had information about all the counties in Mississippi, and the number of registered voters, black and white, and so forth, and the number of people, potential registered voters... and it was an eye-opener to me, 'cause I had never known about the Black Belt as such, or translated that into political terms in terms of what the number of Blacks and their percentage to whites meant in terms of say voting, and electing people. And Amzie was clear about a goal; that is, a goal of not sitting in and opening up lunch counters and so forth, he was clearly not interested in that. He didn't think that would help people in the Mississippi delta, and his thinking was really focused on the delta of Mississippi, as even opposed to the state as a whole, all through his life and involvement. And there was clearly nothing to be gained in the delta from trying to integrate restaurants, and people weren't working, and they weren't eating in those restaurants, and so forth. And he was interested in just voting and trying to gain political leverage and elect people to offices and so forth. So he laid out this

program, and I copied it down, and sent it back to Jane, and said that I would be willing to come back and work on it, and told Amzie that I would come back and work on it the following year. And then I left him some funds to make sure that he got to the conference. And he had an old Packard, I think, but anyway..

Carson

So he came that October?

Moses

He actually went to that conference and the people there actually voted on the project, the SNCC group, voted on accepting that as a project for SNCC. Which is important in the sense that latter the issue came in that voting was a cop out, and that real cutting edge was direct action. And this so called problem between voting and direct action. And the idea that voting was a cop out being that the Kennedy administration was. . .

Carson

Oh, that's interesting, because I have that they accept the voting project the following summer. . .

Moses

Yeah, but see this had been, this was on the books before all of this took place. In that sense, it's important that the initiative really for that project was coming out of the black community, and out of leadership in the black community, particularly Amzie. And it was really his dream about what the movement could accomplish, in the delta; before the Kennedy people began to at least gather people together. I don't know when they started thinking, but before they started actually gathering people together to talk about it. And SNCC had actually voted on it, and approved it before they did that. So that it really wasn't possible for people to later say that this wasn't a bona fide SNCC project, or that it shouldn't have equal stance.

Carson

Okay. Before we leave the summer of 1960, what happened with Miss Baker during that summer? Did she leave her office? And where did she go?

Moses

I think she, Miss Baker, I think she set up with the YWCA. She set up doing human relations work with the Y. She decided not to--because of the students, and the really delicate position the organization was in--not to shift bases out of the South, but remain in Atlanta, and accept a job which would leave her available to be able to work with the students. And I think she found that in doing this human relations work, with white and black young ladies in, I guess, mid-South; I don't know how much they were able to, or tried to do in the Deep South, but I guess places like Kentucky, some parts of Tennessee, Virginia, other places like that, but which didn't demand full-time work. In other words she wasn't looking--this was another thing which impressed me very much--she wasn't looking to make money per se. She was looking to have enough money to be independent, so that she didn't have to rely on someone for money, for her own personal use. But she wasn't looking to have more than what she needed; to just maintain an apartment, and keep herself going. And she was looking in terms of a trade-off; to have a job which

would leave her free so she could spend those long hours, which she did, in those long meetings. And that was a very conscious decision, and she did that for those three years, from '60 to '63. I think by '64, she had decided to shift bases. She had a niece...

Carson

Just to kind of summarize this beginning of the relationship you had with Ella Baker. That first summer, I get the impression that she served as kind of a model of a person who was dedicated; who had certain ideas about how to organize people; the role of leadership, and that she had a great impact on the student movement by being this model.

Moses

I don't think there's any question that she had an impact on the students. I mean, she came across to them as someone that they could trust. And particularly in the fact that, as I observed at that coordinating committee meeting, the students were running it. I mean, she wasn't trying to in any way kind of manipulate the process that they were going through, and which might have been easy to do.

Carson

Okay. And then you went back to New York at the end of that summer?

Moses

Yeah. I finished out that trip, and reported back to Jane, and went on back. I had another year to go on my teaching contract, and I didn't try to make it back down to the fall meeting, and I just basically I stayed pretty close to home, and tried to save some money to go back.

Carson

And when you returned, did you return with the idea of--to New York--with the idea of returning to Mississippi?

Moses

Yeah. I had decided, I had a year to go on the contract to teach, and I decided that I would not renew it, and that I would come down at the end of the contract. And I promised Amzie that I would come down, and also the SNCC office.

Carson

Now I remember seeing a letter I guess that you had written to the Justice Department during the summer of '61? I think even before you came down, I recall.

Moses

When I got back down, I got a letter from--when I came back down to Cleveland, I had to forward to the draft board a change of address, 'cause I was still under this. I mean, my situation had been that I had declared that I wanted to be a C.O. when I was a freshman in college; that was in '52. And all through the '50s, I had been getting the deferment; first when I was in college, and graduate school. Then '58 to '61, when Eisenhower came in, Sputnik happened in '57, I think it was, and they went through this national crisis, and changed the draft laws, so that people who were teaching what they called critical subjects, one of which was math, were eligible for the draft--I mean for draft deferral. So the draft board gave me a deferral while I was teaching at Horace Mann, 'cause I was teaching math for those



three years; '58 to '61. And then when I shifted, I had to notify them. And when I got down to Cleveland, shortly after I arrived, I got a notice to report back to the draft board. So I wrote to them--I don't know if that got to the Justice Department or not--but I wrote to the draft board, and explained my position again, 'cause I was no longer teaching, see, and I was now eligible for the draft. I think they sent me a change in my classification to 1-A, instead of 2-S. And I told them that I didn't accept that, and so forth, and they called me up for a hearing, and I went back. I had to leave Mississippi, and go back to New York, to talk to some people at the draft board, and that talk was very inconclusive, and they said that I would be hearing from them. That's when I first, on my way back from that talk, I first met [Charles] Sherrod, and McDew, Tim Jenkins, and Charlie Jones.

Carson

Back from which trip? Right after New York?

Moses

Yeah. When I left going back to seeing the draft board; on my way back to Mississippi, I arranged to meet with them. They were all up in the Northeast there, and I think it was outside of Philly on that train..

Carson

When they met with Belafonte?

Moses

They had been, they were I think, coming out of those meetings; they didn't tell me about the meetings they were having. But it turned out, I think, that they were then in the process of fastening down this deal with Belafonte, about funding SNCC organizers who would be working full time in the field. See, because they were in the process of thinking through what the student movement might involve, in having organizers working in the field. So that process was going on, but I had already been to Mississippi, and started working. See 'cause when I came back through, Ed King was in the Atlanta office; Jane was no longer there. The office was a shambles; there was just nothing.

Carson

I've heard about it...

Moses

And I went actually and talked to Wyatt again, because Wyatt was in Atlanta now, as executive director of SCLC. I missed Miss Baker; she wasn't in the area at that time. I mean, she was probably traveling or something, so I didn't see her. And I asked Watt whether SCLC would be able to give any money to the voting project. And that caused a little something, 'cause see, I didn't know about all these meetings that were going on, and he said that he thought that they would be able to send some money over. And of course, what they were doing was the process of divvying up funds, that had been gotten from these foundations. So while I was down in Cleveland, we got a frantic call from McDew, who was chairperson then. And this was before I went back to New York. And McDew--Wyatt had gotten up at the meeting in Baltimore and said that I was working for SCLC. And I guess he did that on the strength of my going to ask if they would support the project; if they would help give any money. See, because Ed

King suggested that I...

Carson

That's probably where I got that. Because I think that in one of the transcripts of the SNCC meetings, they had mentioned you as working for SCLC.

Moses

I'd like to see the transcripts if I can. But anyway this. so that's what, See, Ed King had said that he didn't have any money, and SNCC didn't have any money to support the project but that maybe I could get some money from SCLC; maybe they were supposed to have money. See, because it was always this situation were King was supposed to be raising money on behalf of the students. He was always saying that he was raising money for the students, and therefore SCLC should give some money to the student organization. So on that basis, Ed said: well, you should go talk to Wyatt. So I did, and then Wyatt got up and said this, and so then we had to get that straight over the phone, and Amzie was very clear on that. He was clear that he didn't think SCLC would be able to carry through on the voting project, and the project should be a SNCC project.

Carson

So why didn't the project end up with Amzie Moore? Why didn't the project start in Cleveland?

Moses

Well, what happened when I got back, and Amzie wasn't ready. He didn't feel like they had a place to meet, I mean he just wasn't ready to start; I mean the answer is why. He wasn't ready, he wasn't ready to start, and basically I did what Amzie told me to do. I mean...that's another thing; you learn by just watching and observing, and--at least I did, and I just watched Amzie, how he moved. He very seldom told me in advance what we were going to do. I mean, we didn't sit down and plan. There was a steady stream of of people in and out of his home; just people who lived in the county, and the surrounding counties, and some from the town, who looked to him for leadership, and who periodically checked with him about what was happening, or what was going to happen; a network basically for getting out information, and for bringing in information. And I guess Amzie worked with that network, in terms of feeling or deciding what to do, and when to do it. We made some trips, trying to think when we--I guess in that time we went and saw Mrs. Kegler. Did you run across the case of Verty Kegler?

Moses

Yes. You read from that article about that...

Moses

In SCEF's...

Carson

In SCEF's paper...

Moses

Yeah. So you saw that. So I'm not sure what the date was, but I think that was...

Carson

1962 I remember.

Moses

It would have had to have been in the spring of '61.

Carson

It could be; it could be.

Moses

So anyway, in the meantime, Ed King had put a blurb in Jet, that SNCC was going to have this voting project in the delta, in Cleveland. And C.C. Bryant in McComb had seen it, and wrote to Amzie, suggesting that, saying that they wanted to have workers sent down. So I was the worker. So Amzie said, we better send you down to C.C. Bryant. So he did, and I got on the bus, and rode on down to McComb, and so that's how we got started down in McComb; we didn't get started up in Cleveland.

Carson

I did meet with C.C. Bryant.

Moses

Yeah? When you were in McComb? How is he?

Carson

He was fine. He was still working, I guess, for the railroad.

Moses

In good health?

Carson

He's still in good health; very vigorous. He's a good man.

Moses

Yeah. We had, it was unfortunate that he got a little shook when the sit-ins broke out in McComb. And so I had to leave, 'cause I was actually staying with him, and--but the pressure, he began to get too much pressure on the job when the sit-ins broke out, and he wanted us out. He wanted us out of the town actually.

Carson

When you went into McComb, the way I described the McComb project, you initially were going to work on voter registration, but the high schools... What happened with these non-violent workshops?

[End of side B]

[Tape 2]

Carson

What happened with these nonviolent workshops?

Moses

Right. Marion came in and began conducting workshops, and they called them non-violent workshops but the basic thing was just the technique of non-violence. I don't think, I mean there was no deep spiritual in the sense of Gandhian. . .

Carson

Do you have a pencil?

Moses

I think I could get one.

Carson

Found one?

Moses

-In the sense of a Gandhian kind of approach to non-violence, at least not the kind that SNCC was conducting that I saw. So they did those, and then they sat-in. And I've forgotten whether- I guess they were arrested, and sentenced, and then out on bail I think. And then Brenda was. . .

Carson



The three of them: Hayes, and-

Moses

Yeah. And Brenda was booted out of school, and that kicked off the students, so that they demonstrated; they got themselves together, and planned a demonstration to leave, and they planned to march down. And Charlie Jones came down for the march. That march was planned, because Jones came down to get the publicity out. He disguised himself as a butcher. They had that little shop up there, a little butcher shop which was underneath the Masonic Temple there, where we met upstairs? I don't know if you saw that when we were there?

Carson

I don't remember it.

Moses

The meeting place was a Masonic temple and underneath, there was a black butcher shop, and Jones put on an apron, and set himself up as a butcher and was getting the news out over the 'phone. And Zellner had come over to participate, and McDew also, to participate in this demonstration. So this was an actual planned demonstration. And it was, I guess, SNCC's first big direct action project in the Deep South like that.

Carson

Now this was all before the march on the courthouse, that took place later?

Moses

In McComb?

Carson

In McComb, yeah.

Moses

This was the march on the courthouse.

Carson

Okay.

Moses

It was- I mean, I don't know if it was the march on the courthouse. It was to be a march downtown, and we went, marched through the town, and were on our way back, coming back, when they stopped us in front of the police station, and herded everyone in.

Carson

And then, okay, then you spent part of that remaining period in jail, right?

Moses

Yeah. We were in jail for fifty-nine days, or something like that.

Carson

And then at that point why did you leave?

Moses

Leave McComb? Well, the students left. See, when we came out of jail, the students who had marched had all been expelled. And I think before we went into jail, the students had been expelled, and we were setting up these classrooms in, there was a Methodist AME church I think, and in the Masonic temple, although I guess we couldn't use the temple. I think by that time we were on the outs with Bryant, because they hadn't bargained for these demonstrations. So there was a church there that we were using

for a school, and we were having classes with all the students; about one hundred of them had marched and been rounded up, and I don't know how many of had been expelled and were still around. Some of them who were expelled might have left or something; gone someplace else to go to school. But there were a number of them who were there, and finally Campbell College in Jackson agreed to take them on. So when we I mean, essentially we followed them, when we left and got out of jail.

Carson

Oh, that's how you ended up in Jackson... Going to another...

Moses

To another place. I mean, first we followed through a little on our responsibility to the students. So I was around then in Jackson there, and trying to see that they got squared away.

Carson

Now I remember in that interview that you did, that was later published in Liberation, you kind of indicated that that experience in McComb, even though it was a failure, was very useful to the things that you learned from that experience.

Moses

Yeah.

Carson

What did you learn from that experience?

Moses

Well, that was my first experience at organizing, really. The key person in setting that up, in terms of setting up the operation, was old man Owens. Did you get to talk to him?

Carson

No, I haven't even heard that name.

Moses

Owens? You didn't meet him at all? He's. . . He was an older man. He carried a cane. I don't know if he has one weak eyelid, so in his glasses- he wore glasses- and one glass had a hook on it, an attachment which kept the eyelid up. So he had kind of a fish-eye that looked out at you. And he was the treasurer for the NAACP, and independent financially; he didn't have to work, and his money was based somewhere up in Illinois. He had lived his productive life in Illinois. And his sister- he was originally from McComb- and his sister still lived in McComb, and he lived with his sister and her husband, there in McComb. And every so often, he went back to Illinois, to check on his business, or whatever he had; I'm not sure what his economic base was, but he had a financial independence, and enjoyed the complete trust of the community about money matters.

Carson

Do you know what his first name is?

Moses

Well, he called himself, and we called him super-cool-daddy, Mr. Owens.

Carson

I wonder why I haven't run across him?

Moses

I mean, he operated completely behind the scenes. He. . .

Carson

That might be why.

Moses

Yeah, I mean he never, he was treasurer, but- and he at times spoke out when it was needed, when the community needed. He did not, for example, have any misgivings about the demonstrations, and he stayed with us through all that. He was a loyal supporter and shored up the community on the question of what was going to be necessary to do anything about the situation. But what he did, was, when I came in--see C.C. lived out in the--you know where he lived?

Carson

Actually we met him in town.

Moses

You met him in Bergland? Okay, 'cause he didn't live in Bergland Town as it was called. He lived in another section of McComb. They had these different sections-

Carson

I guess I never went to his house-

Moses

-where black people lived, right?

Carson

We did the interview in a cafe'.

Moses

In a cafe'. So Owens would drive out every morning in the taxi. He'd take a taxi out and pick me up, when I first got down there. And he did the actual leg-work with me, of going around and setting up the project. And what we did was, we went to every single black person of any kind of substance in the community, and talked to them about the project. I described it--voting, and what we were doing, and talked to them about SNCC. And he would hit them for a contribution, five or ten dollars, and he would hold them. I mean the people trusted him, so that if he said he was going to hold the money, and keep an accounting of it, and make sure it was going to be spent for what we said we were going to spend it for; which was to house, and to feed a couple of SNCC workers--myself, and a couple of people that were going to be sent in. And I had a little money with me, so I was able to--I was living at the Bryants'--and then I had enough money to feed myself, during the period in which we were getting this program off the ground. And we said we would run it for, I think we said a month; we'd run it through the month of August, if I remember correctly. And we gave ourselves a starting time, when we would set it off, and when we would get some workers to come in and help, and we set up a budget for how much money we would need to house them, and to pay them, and to feed them at one of the local cafe's. And we raised the money before we started the project. We raised the money in McComb, and Owens was the key person. I mean, he knew everyone; people trusted him with the money. I mean it was absolutely safe; you couldn't have gotten a project like that off the ground, raising the money, if you didn't have someone in the community that people could trust.

Carson

So that was one of the things that you learned about?

Moses

You learned about organizing. The importance, the quality of the person, the local person, that you go to work with, is everything



in terms of whether the project can get off the ground. And cutting through all the different ways community people interact with each other, and the different problems they might have with each other, and finding someone that enjoys the community trust, particularly around fundraising.

Carson

Who were the other people in McComb, who were...?

Moses

I mean, basically, let's see, there were a couple of--I mean the people we were working with who he was hitting; there was a big red-head kind of man, his name was Fox, who did carpentry work. Mrs. Quinn, you talked to her, who did...

Carson

She's the one who has the motel.

Moses

Yeah, at that time she had a little small cafe', that was really not really her own, but that she was running. And then she did some cooking and serving at her home at that time. And she was a person that Owens trusted a lot. When we got in jail, she saw that we had food everyday, I mean we were just loaded down with food. And I mean it was interesting, 'cause the community people took a stand in that sense. And she had no problem about coming down to the jail everyday with a car-load full of food, to feed the kids. So-

Carson

So the community was behind you then?

Moses

-demonstrated, yes- that the kids in here and not out there on their own...

Carson

Wouldn't they have felt somewhat betrayed when you left?

Moses

Well, we followed the students. I mean in that sense, I don't think so. And in the other sense, I didn't leave the area, because I followed up the McComb project with the Reverend Smith's campaign, which Bevel and other people had gotten together in Jackson. And he--that fall, starting from November--began his campaign to get on the ballot and so forth. And for...

Carson

I don't know if I have anything about that.

Moses

The third congressional district. So that district included McComb, so it was part of that work. We held meetings in McComb, and he spoke and I got a chance to get back and visit people, and I think they understood that as part of a wider program.

Carson

So after you left McComb, you set up shop in Jackson, as the headquarters, but you were kind of all over the place?

Moses

Well, we- no, I wasn't all over the place. At that time, which was still '61, going into '62, Forman had just assumed the role of the executive director. The freedom rides had petered out, and the kids had gotten out of jail, and a residue of freedom riders had remained behind in Jackson. Bernard Lafayette was there; he married Colia, and Brooks was there for awhile. Bevel

was there, and he and Diane got hooked up sometime during this period. And they set up the Mississippi Free Press. There was a guy down from Oberlin white fellow, helped set that up. Did you run across him?

Carson

I never ran across him, no.

Moses

Did you get all those copies of the papers?

Carson

Yeah. I got a lot of them. I don't know where there are all the copies, but I got hold of a good number.

Moses

Well, they must have his name in there.

Carson

Yeah. The only one I ever met from the Free Press was Lucy Komisar she came later.

Moses

Yeah. She came later. And so that group had put together this idea of running candidates. And they were going to support the candidates; Reverend Smith in the third congressional district. I think it was the third, maybe it was the fourth. And Jamie Whitten, in the second, which was the--was it Whitten? Was a white fellow...I've forgotten the guy's name, minister in the second congressional district, and they asked me to work as Reverend Smith's campaign manager. So I did; I agreed to do that. Higgs was very active in all of that. Do you remember Bill Higgs? Did you meet him? Talk to him?

Carson

I met him at the Mississippi conference; I think he was there.

Moses

Oh, he came back to that? Actually went back to the state?

Carson

I never interviewed him. I remember that was part of the--during that '62-'63 period, I think there was a...

Moses

This was '61 to '62.

Carson

Okay, still '61.

Moses

We had just gotten out of the incident, I mean the McComb thing, and I had gone back to Jackson; the students were at Campbell. and this grouping from the freedom rides was there...

Carson

But it was for the '62 campaign, wasn't it? The congressional campaign?

Moses

Well, the congressional campaign kicked off in November or October, or something, you see, of '61. We did that in '61. I don't know how the primaries went, see, but these were the primaries, the whatever... I've forgotten what they were, but see it was all that- It was that fall and that winter that we did that travelling around.

Carson

Okay. Then so you were basically-

Moses

I basically during that period- I, SNCC had a project in Jackson, which was a direct action project, that I was not involved in. Bevel and Brooks and Lafayette, and the whole grouping, that was the Nashville grouping basically, the grouping out of Nashville. And it was a great test of the theories about non-violence. And I often thought about that, see, because I guess in Nashville, there was Jim Lawson who was really at the core of that philosophy, and he didn't for some reason think that his job was to actually come with the students in the field, and work with them. He felt that he....did you ever interview him, or talk to him?

Carson

No. No, I tried, and I just was not able to get through to him. He's in Los Angeles now.

Moses

Yeah, because those were his people that he trained, and they weren't able to weather the Mississippi response to non-violence, which was the long-term jail sentences, and cool it otherwise. So you didn't get the big media.

Carson

Wasn't it during this time that you began to recruit what became the Mississippi staff?

Moses

Not that early. I was just working for, with Smith, and basically we were moving around. Well, in a sense with Curtis and Hollis and also Mac, McLaurin came down and worked over in Waltham County. But then he went back to Tougaloo he was a student at Tougaloo. But Curtis and Hollis, when they left McComb, they didn't want to work in McComb, 'cause they know the people; the people knew them, and there was this whole thing about working in the area where you grew up. So we had a meeting in Jackson, and Amzie had come down to McComb during the period when we were down there, when people got shaky, to help shore people up. Then and he had later come to Jackson, when they had a meeting there, when the NAACP people met to discuss throwing the SNCC people out of the state, 'cause they were, that also was part of the result of the actions down there in McComb.

Carson

So that was a real threat that could have happened?

Moses

Yeah. if it hadn't have been for people like Steptoe and Amzie, and people like Owens...

Carson

So they kind of spoke up for you?

Moses

Yeah, they spoke up for us. And so, after that, that weathered the whole threat of being ostracized.

Carson

So when did you start developing. . .

Moses

Well, I was just saying, with Curtis and Hollis, because there was another meeting in Jackson, in which people asked for voter registration workers. And Curtis and Hollis decided to go down to Hattiesburg when they got out of jail, and then we went up



in Jackson and had this meeting--basically NAACP people--and then they went down to Hattiesburg. So they were actually the first people in the sense that were recruited into SNCC and worked with local Mississippi people, who worked for SNCC, and voter registration as community workers, and they started a project--the project in Hattiesburg, which kept going straight through, up through '64-'65 at least, although they were not there all the time. I mean other people came in to man it.

Carson

There's another controversial time which has to do with, just skipping over a bit, the first encounter with Al Lowenstein, and the origins of what became the summer project. Where do you see that beginning?

Moses

Al, my first hearing of Al was, I guess, '63, the fall of '63, when they were recruiting people to come down for the referendum, freedom vote, and he brought the students down from Stanford, and Yale. And I'm not sure, I think we met during that period. We did meet. And Miss Ella was over. Ella came for that too. And I remember she was turned off by Al, and his style of working, because she said that she'd met a lot of people who worked like that, and he was on the 'phone calling big name people all the time, getting his whole media, and emphasis on the projection, and the people I guess, in the establishment circles, that can get projection for you, and get pressure I guess, at the right places for you. But Al, and the kind of whirlwind style that Al had, that was very contrary to the way in which-

Carson

So Ella saw that as a threat to what you were trying to develop?

Moses

I don't know if any of us thought of it as a threat, 'cause he was just down doing that project, and back out. But she was just--it was not a style of working that she liked or that she could work with, I mean, in terms of working on the same project.

Carson

So she was still at this time with the YWCA?

Moses

Right. She was still at the YWCA, and still on call. And we called her over to us out with this freedom vote.

Carson

So what about this plan to have this massive project? What role did Al Lowenstein play in putting forward that idea?

Moses

Well, I guess the idea to have white students had surfaced in SNCC as early as '62. Sherrod had students down in Southwest Georgia. By '62, we were up in the Delta. And we had begun; Amzie was ready to move by the spring of '62, following the Reverend Smith campaign, and the campaign they had up there in the Delta. And Bevel and Diane had moved up to his place, and were living in Amzie's house, and they had their first child there. And Diane was planning this operation; she called it operation M.O.M. I don't know if you've talked to her?

Carson

Operation?

Moses

M.O.M. Did you ever talk to Diane?

Carson

No. I never found her. I think she's in Chicago.

Moses

She's in Chicago. Maybe you should talk to her before you do your thing. She was absolutely crucial about getting Forman. I mean, it was Diane that recruited Forman into the organization. So she really had a big influence on how the organization developed. Well, she was at Amzie's house, and she was planning operation M.O.M., which she called Move On Mississippi, and she was planning to go to jail, and stay there, and if necessary have her baby in jail.

Carson

I remember that.

Moses

So, and she was doing all that from Amzie's house--calling all over. So they were there, and Amzie felt it was time; he was ready to move, and it was at that point that we began to recruit people for a project in the Delta. And Amzie came down to Jackson, and we talked to Charles McLaurin together, and to James Jones, Landy McNair, and Doria and Colia Ladner, and Mattie, who later became Dave Dennis' wife, and Emma Bell, who was down from McComb, I guess. Yeah, Emma had walked out in the demonstrations, and had gone on to Campbell with the students, and then... Among those students who walked out, Emma was the only one who came to work with SNCC. So there were those four girls: Dorie, Colia, Mattie, and Emma.

[End side A]

And [Lawrence] Guyot, McLaurin, James Jones, Landy McNair were the fellows, plus myself, so that's five. So there was about nine of us, and then Bevel and Diane were already up there then, at Amzie's house, although they were in the process of moving out, because Bevel- I guess we were- there was some trips I made back and forth, and then Bevel joined SCLC. And Amzie set up places in Ruleville for some workers, and that's where we started. McLaurin went to Ruleville, and I think Colia and Dorie- Dorie is Joyce Ladner's sister, older sister- went to Ruleville. James Jones went to Clarksdale, Emma went to Greenville, Mattie stayed in Cleveland. Guyot went, I don't know where he went first, or if he came up right away. Guyot had problems, 'cause Guyot was for direct action, and originally thought of voter registration as a cop-out. He was a very strong force; he was at Tougaloo and constantly expounding; Guyot was something to watch! 'Cause there was always a ferment going on in Jackson, and we were kind of like taking away the cutting edge, with this voter registration that we were proposing up in the Delta. But the people, a lot of people had just gotten frustrated by the Jackson, trying to do their direct action. These were people who had been involved in that in one way or another. So they came on up, and I don't know the exact date, but that was sometime in the late spring, I think, of '62 that

they came up there, and we fanned out. And then Sam Block at some point came over; I don't know if he was in Itabena; that's where his father was. But anyway, he decided, I mean, he asked to join and he went to Greenwood, and set up there. And after he had set up in Greenwood, Guyot and Levon Brown went over there. And it was during that period that Charlie Cobb came up. I think Charlie came up, if I remember correctly he came up when McLaurin and James Jones came up, and went over to Ruleville with them. He was floating through, a Howard student, on his way to a CORE conference in Texas I think. And he stopped off in Jackson, and people talked to him, and he decided to come on up and work. So that was set up and working in '62, and I think that that summer was when Sherrod had his first project in which he had white students down in Southwest Georgia.

Carson

We were just going through that, the origins of the Mississippi Summer Project, and you were describing the development of the staff and the emergence of the...

Moses

In '62. I'm trying to think whether that was the summer. See I think, I'm trying to think whether Jean Wheeler and Martha Prescott came over in Mississippi to Greenwood that summer, as early as '62, or whether it was '63, when they came over. I mean you may have it in your book; I'm not sure. But they, see, because they had a problem with the white volunteers in Southwest Georgia and finally left, and came over to Mississippi, and worked in Greenwood.

Carson

I guess I didn't really know about...

Moses

Then it was a kind of signal. It signaled what became later a huge problem in the organization. But so as a result of Sherrod's efforts in Southwest Georgia, the whole question was fielded in meetings, in the organization, about the role of whites in coming down to work in the communities. And I remember one meeting in, I think it was in '62 to '63, winter, that we had in Nashville, Tennessee, when direct pressure was put on Mississippi to have whites in the organizing staff. And the Mississippi staff rejected the notion; these were the people that had been recruited and were working that summer in '62, and they were very much against it. But it clearly left other people in the organization in an unhappy frame of mind, so that the question wasn't resolved. So there was pressure coming from within the organization at that time, to integrate the actual field work. 'Cause the organization had been born along the idea of integration, and I guess a lot of the thought was that if the society couldn't be integrated, at least the organization could, could integrate itself, and somehow operate as this isolated, integrated island in the larger society. So we felt those pressures going into '62 to '63, and I've forgotten if we began to get one or two people working in Jackson, when we set up the office in Jackson. I've forgotten when we set that office up in Jackson as a statewide coordinating office. We may have set it up around that freedom vote, in the fall of '63. It was certainly there



by that time. And I think with the freedom vote, we began to get white workers in. I think Mendy had come over by that time, Mendy Samstein?

Carson

Yeah.

Moses

You talked to him? And I'm not sure when Casey came over; I think Casey came over in connection with the summer project, 'cause, but she had wanted to come over for quite awhile. Casey Hayden. You talked to her?

Carson

No.

Moses

Yeah. And so then the question came back again, after the fall of '63, and we had that freedom vote, and the students were down from Yale, and from Stanford. And from that freedom vote on, through that fall and winter, there was--the question was put up about having a large number of such students come down for the summer of '64. And the discussion went back and forth; Lowenstein was pushing it. He was very much in favor of that, and wanted to carry that project through. There was a group of people who had been around the movement, including Tim Jenkins, and Eleanor Holmes, 'cause Eleanor had been down in Mississippi for the '63 summer, and had spent some time working out of Greenwood. And then she was back I think, either finishing up law school, or doing something; clerking or something. And she was one of the supporters who wanted very much to see that project get off the ground. And then-- so the discussion was in the Mississippi staff first, about whether or not you should have... And we had long meeting that went back and forth; different parts of the state, trying to decide whether or not to have it.

Carson

I think I described some-

Moses

-Some of those meetings.

Carson

I recall that at one point you were kind of on the defensive, and had to-- that came down in favor of having...

Moses

Well, I remember when I decided. I was holding off, and not participating in the actual discussion, in terms of trying, because to hear what people were saying on both sides. And it was clear, the division; there were a few people on the staff who were in favor of it; Dorie wanted it. Guyot wanted it. The majority of the staff did not want it. The local people on the other hand, the people we were working with, wanted it. So you were deadlocked in terms of where to put the weight, with the staff, with the people. The problem as I looked at it then with the staff, was they were already burnt out. They had been now out there for a couple of years and that's a long time in that situation: where you're in a given area, and you're struggling against the same thing everyday, and you don't see any progress. And it isn't like we could service that. I mean we didn't have a way of servicing staff at that point; of bringing them out,

taking them to institutes, setting up educational programs for them. We didn't have resources; we didn't have any money; we hadn't set up any kind of support system for staff.

Carson

As I recall, people were thinking about doing something like that, maybe a little bit later in the...

Moses

The best thing we had was the work-study program, and that's the thing I asked Carol Merritt to set up. And that provided something for some of the staff; that is, at least they could, I mean they could work, and then they could go back to Tougaloo and spend a year recuperating, and do a little academics, and then come back out and work again. But that, even that wasn't tailored to meet, I mean that was tailored to get us over some kind of hump, in terms of at least how are the students going to see their way clear to finishing school. But it didn't provide a program at the school which really was tailored to a person that had this intensive experience in the field. So you didn't take advantage of what they had learned; I mean there was no attempt to do--there was no program for tape recording or teaching them how to write; to term what they were doing.

Carson

So in any case, you were kind of- you were caught the middle; where did you move?

Moses

Well, I decided, I remember, at the Hattiesburg meeting. Louis Allen was killed. Louis Allen was out of Amite [County] and he was the person that had been a witness to Herbert Lee's killing. And he lived close in to Liberty, the county seat there. And they shot him right at his doorstep there in front of his house. And I went over to talk to his wife, and to help them move. She- after that she got herself together and moved to Baton Rouge, outside of Baton Rouge. And we were witnessing, during that period, Mississippi's reaction to the civil rights legislation that had passed in '63, 'cause there was this series of church burnings, and other kind of events which were happening. And I remember when that happened, I decided that I would speak out for the project, and that- which I knew would turn, and tip the scales, in terms of having the project. And so I did at the next meeting, and then from then on, we went ahead to begin at first... Then we had to sell SNCC on the project; there was--after we had decided, the staff had to. The Mississippi grouping had decided, and then there was the question of going and setting SNCC's approval, and that took awhile... there was opposition; Ruby Doris was having a lot of questions about it. And Forman began to pull in behind the project as it got rolling, 'cause we. . . It was originally a COFO project, so it was COFO's decision to have the project, and SNCC, as the project got rolling, it began to resolve some of Forman's problems about fundraising, because as it got rolling, it began to get projection and momentum; a lot of people began to want to get in touch with SNCC, to offer help and so forth. And so because, SNCC, I mean, came out of the summer solvent, and actually for the first time with a good cash. . .

Carson

Capital?

Moses

Capital; not capital, but...

Carson

So despite all those expenses over the summer, it raised more money than was spent?

Moses

Oh yeah, yeah. We came out, they came out of the summer with a good sum of money.

Carson

Now I remember you wrote a memorandum in which you seemed to be suggesting that your notion of the summer project was to bring about federal occupation of the state. What was the goal?

Moses

I don't remember that. Do you know where that is, or what it was?

Carson

"The goal of the project would be to force even Mississippi officials to change their policies, or the federal government would intervene..."

Moses

Do you have a reference to that?

Carson

It's not really clear that you wrote it; that's the problem. It was in Holt's book.

Moses

Oh then forget it, forget it.

Carson

You didn't write that?

Moses

Oh God, no. Holt- I mean, 'cause Holt was way out; he was just insane.

Carson

Wow. Okay, it wasn't clear what was the source; I don't attribute it to you, I just said a prospectus for the summer. He has an appendix in the back of the book, and he had the prospectus... and it's not clear that you wrote it. Oh, in any case, what was your-

Moses

I don't think we had that big, I think as I saw it, and what my program was at that time, was like Mississippi as I saw it was in danger of being left out of the phase that the rest of the South was going through, with regard to the movement. That is, the civil rights legislation that they passed didn't affect Mississippi, didn't touch it at all. Voting was nowhere within striking distance. The freedom rides had failed to dent the problem of people riding in interstate traffic and so forth on the buses. So, and what I felt, I think was that there was nowhere within the civil rights movement any real concern for, or any program to reach Mississippi, and to ensure that whatever gains were made, were also made in Mississippi. The NAACP had, in effect, written the state off; they were not about to put any real resources or money. They didn't see how they could. CORE, after the freedom rides, agreed to hold, put a holding operation in Mississippi, and they put Dave in as one field representative, and as long as we had that COFO umbrella thing, they said that



they would work with that, and feed some people. But they had no plans for putting any real operation into the state; they didn't see how they could do it; the state had broken them over the freedom rides. SCLC, King had likewise withdrawn, I mean Bevel when he worked for SCLC, they pulled him out of Mississippi, in terms of doing any voter registration there. What they agreed to let him do was to recruit people for the voter education program that they were carrying out in South Carolina, where they would get people, and so they found our voting program to be a convenient umbrella to work through to recruit people. So as long as we were carrying through this voting program, where we were in touch with people, then they could have a person; they had an Annell Ponder there who could use our apparatus, our contacts, our office, and all of that to make contact and get over a couple of busloads of people, whatever it was, whenever they had their things. So, but other than that they had no plans, and King himself had no plans to try and get into the state to do any major projects. So it was basically just SNCC, and the task force we had developed there--fifteen or so, twenty people maybe, by that time-- as field secretaries, who were committed to trying to really push through some changes, in line with what the rest of the civil rights movement was doing in the state, and we were committed to trying to do that statewide. And what I saw facing us, was a situation where there might be some gains made elsewhere in the South, but you would have this residue, this lump here in Mississippi, which would be entirely ineffective, aside from the fact that there would have been some scratching away by this little band of workers, see. Now that may have been a wrong analysis; I mean, looking back, I don't know. But that's what I felt at that time; that's what I felt was accomplished. I mean, I think what really the project accomplished, was, it brought Mississippi, for better or worse, up to the level of the rest of the country. That's about what it did; it brought it up to where it now moves in the way that the rest of the country moves. It is no longer this defiant voice which is both the symbol, and the organizing force of an opposition, which is saying no to just basic human rights with regard to black people.

Carson

I remember in Forman's book, he says that at one point he became very concerned about the way Al Lowenstein seemed to be working autonomously from you. Did you sense that there was, that his-

Moses

Well, Forman-- you know that Al and Forman have a long history--

Carson

Yes right.

Moses

--that goes back. And I didn't know about that until we were well into organizing for the project, and then Forman talked about that. So from the get-go, Forman was suspicious of Al. Mendy was the person that the job fell on to talk to Al. Did you talk with Mendy about Al?

Carson

Yeah.

Moses

See, because Mendy was working in the Jackson office, and when

it became clear that Al was very critical of the way the project was developing, I just really stopped trying to talk with him about it. And Mendy did that; he put in long hours, almost daily, talking with Al on the 'phone.

Carson

Why do you think Al didn't like the project?

Moses

Well, Al had two problems; one was the locus of the decision making. See, because....

Carson

What, the question of whether it was local or- ?

Moses

Well, the project was just a delicate balance from the beginning, to get it off the ground at all. First, you had the fact that the staff, the Mississippi staff, didn't want it; second, you had the fact that SNCC was suspicious of it. And third, you had the fact that Ella didn't go along at all with Al's way of working which she had experienced in the freedom vote that fall. And fourth, you had Forman's long history of antipathy with Al.

Carson

I can see why you would want to have someone else deal with Lowenstein.

Moses

And then you had the problem of inter-organizational things. I mean, you had the problem of putting together SCLC, NAACP, and CORE, at the national level, and the COFO at the Mississippi level, and keeping that straight, see, because COFO was really the outlet of these organizations in Mississippi. It wasn't anything happening at a national level. It was really an agreement between Medgar Evers, Dave Dennis, and myself, and Aaron Henry, representing the four national organizations in the state. I represented SNCC; Dave, CORE; Medgar, national NAACP, and Aaron, holding many hats but in that situation representing SCLC, as a spokesperson for SCLC, but also pulling the state branches of the NAACP. So COFO was really an umbrella which was put together to make it possible to have a coordinated voting effort, and use the SNCC manpower, see, because SNCC was the only manpower in the state. And from my point of view, it was desirable, because you heard over and over again the feeling, on behalf of people like Owens in McComb and other people like that, that they wanted to see all the organizations work....

[End side B]

*End of Moses I file*

[Tape 3]

Moses

So people wanted to see, I think--I mean this was not just Mississippi, I think there is a deep desire for unity among black people to see black organizations working on a unified basis. I was responding to that, early, on when I made the initiatives with Dave and with Medgar [Evers] to get together a coordinated effort in the state. And Medgar was the kind of person you could work with in terms of the NAACP. If Charles had been there, then it would have been hopeless. But we were able to work with Medgar--Dave, and myself, and Aaron Henry--to really put together an umbrella such that anywhere you went to work in the state there was no questioning you as to whether you were working for this organization or that, and therefore this group was not working with that organization, and so therefore: "we can't work with you about this program..." So that gave you carte blanche to operate any place and to organize around the voting any place in the state without that kind of organizational conflict, because when anyone called back to whomever to check, then the word would come down: "yes, we are working with them." Which is very important if you are trying to get something off the ground because you avoid all that confusion at the bottom level. But none of the organizations--with maybe the exception of CORE, which saw that as the only way for them to operate in the state--were happy with COFO. SNNC was not happy with it, Wilkins and NAACP, they were not happy with it; SCLC--I don't know how King and them felt about it. They may not have had too much problem with it. So there were that kind of problems which became greater as you attracted national attention for the project, then you began to get problems with national organizations like NAACP, as to "What is this COFO? Who has responsibility?" So the only way to keep SNCC and the staff in line for the project was to have the decision-making in the COFO staff. And the feeling I had, certainly, going into the project was that these were the people who were doing the work and therefore they should bear the brunt of the decision-making. Well, Lowenstein never could buy that. He thought, I think, that it was just an anachronism to have a staff making the decisions. I think he came out of a mind-set where the decisions should be made by a board or something.

Carson

And the staff should just carry it out--

Moses

Right, and the staff carries out the decisions which some executive group makes. And that to me was an anachronism in the context of the movement. I didn't see the movement ever as fitting into that kind of structure where there was some kind of overall group of people who were not involved in the daily working but set themselves up as a power seat, with a staff that carried out the policy. And the reasons were that you weren't paying people. People were just getting ten dollars a week, (if they got it), and they were risking their lives. So how could you set up such a policy where there's some people who have good jobs and are working somewhere safe in society, and they come together and meet and decide policy which some other people, who are now



going to set up, go out and work for nothing at the risk of their lives? What basis do you have for justifying that kind of an organization? I couldn't find it.

Carson

That was kind of an irreconcilable difference.

Moses

We could never agree on that. I would never agree to that kind of procedure for the work that we were doing.

Carson

Didn't that come up in another respect at Atlantic City? I think that you and the other SNCC workers were insisting that the delegation-

Moses

-Make its own decision, and they were pushing for an executive group within the delegation--a representative democracy as opposed to I guess what people call now participatory democracy. But we had more a town meeting--and we felt there was no reason why the delegation couldn't sit in session. They were there, they had nothing else to do, and they could all sit, while we all talked and hashed out all the matters. Of course what we were after was education, I mean we looked upon the whole process there as a process of education for the delegates, and so, what better education than for them to sit through those meetings and find out, and try to hash through themselves? And the more people who were educated by that then the wider the fallout when you got back to Mississippi, as opposed to just having two or three.. .

Carson

Thinking back to when you went to Atlantic City, did you expect to have succeeded?

Moses

No. I didn't. But I think there was a surprising--which I hadn't picked up, which was a weakness-  
[interruption]

Carson

Let's see, we were talking about Atlantic City, and what was happening-

Moses

Yeah, and the problem of funding of this organization and the way of looking at things. See, the same problem cropped up in SNCC, later, because when you had the move towards tightening up on discipline, people also went along in that move with setting up an executive committee and thinking of the staff as a group of people who carry out the orders of a policy-setting body which is going to be your executive committee. And even though they felt that the executive committee was asking people from the field and electing SNCC staff people to be on it and also asking people like Mrs. Hamer, and so forth, people who were known and that we had worked with, it still set in this funny position where you were now asking your staff--who still you're not paying any of your money--to carry out the orders of some group that sets up policy, orders which again in many cases, might be very dangerous to carry out. And again, I was against that as an organizational form for SNCC, and for the work we were doing. I just think that that was the wrong form. We didn't ever really get a chance to

try a different form of organizing ourselves, to figure out what would be a different form that might work, 'cause it was too hard to really carry through real thought about that issue, and try to carry it out, you know, on an experimental basis. That problem runs very deep and it was there from the beginning, around the Summer Project. Although for the Summer Project it was resolved in the sense that everyone--except Lowenstein, I guess, and maybe some other people that we don't know about--agreed with the decision that COFO staff would have the basic decision-making powers. Miss Baker was happy with that; Forman had no problem with that, because when you look at the COFO staff, SNCC was heavy-weighted in the COFO staff. And the CORE people had no problem with that. And then with the NAACP, it was the people in the state who counted, see, it was the NAACP branches in Mississippi that actually counted, and they had no problem with that because COFO was them, and they were part of it. They didn't see themselves as somehow separate from COFO.

Carson

And it seems like even that fell apart after Atlantic City.

Moses

It fell apart before. But the reason again was a mistake on our part, and I'm really not understanding of organizational structures, and how to work with them. See I didn't have myself, even, an understanding about government. I mean, of course, what we were actually trying to do was set up a government for black people in Mississippi. But we didn't understand how to set up a government or what different functions different organizations would play in setting up such a government. So we got COFO, and we organized FDP on the back of COFO and let COFO drop. And people didn't miss it at first, because it was the same people in both organizations. And, you know, I remember talking to Spike about this, about problems of people and organizations, and remember telling him: "Well, you know, it's the same people in any case around the country and they just turn up in different hats, you know, you wear different hats, and we could do the same thing here." But we were too rushed, and we didn't have time, we didn't think through, and we didn't have, I guess, the prior experience, or training, or whatever. See, because thinking back now, we could have easily moved when we set up--if we had thought of FDP as a political party and responsible for a political wing of the government, where they were going to do training, say, for thousands of people, black people, to take elected offices. So that they could actually carry through a political education and actual training, set up a school, to actually get people ready to take office, and set up your party from the grass roots, from local offices on up, as opposed to the big thing of challenging Congress and trying to get at that level, but actually work from the bottom and get people elected--which still needs to be done. We don't have any mechanism in the country for doing that. I mean, if you think about it, in this country there's no mechanism for educating people who go into office. I mean the Kennedy school here is the first step in that direction, and it's a drop in the bucket, and geared to...

Carson

It's very elitist-

Moses

Yeah, the elite concept.

Carson

Getting to what actually happened in Atlantic City; I remember talking to Joe Rauh and his view was that it was basically a misunderstanding of some kind about what was the intention at Atlantic City. His intention was to gain whatever it was possible to gain, and he'd made a decision that what was possible to gain were the two seats. And he felt that from the beginning it was clear there was going to be a compromise. And he felt that you and the other SNCC workers-

Moses

Well, there was a compromise though, that we agreed to, that was the problem; there was Edith Green's compromise. See that is where I basically differ and disagree with the interpretation that came out of Atlantic City. See Bayard wrote that article in Commentary I think it was, right after Atlantic City, and it conveniently painted us as people who didn't understand the political process, and therefore brought tactics from the sit-in movement into a place where they didn't apply. And basically we didn't understand the compromise. But nowhere in the article does he mention Edith Green's compromise.

Carson

So you saw that as-

Moses

-that was our bottom line as far as compromise goes. And that was a compromise that we could accept. Namely fifty-fifty, so that black people would feel like they had some real input into the political process. I mean, there's no sense in going into, see, my feeling was that they looked at the political process like it was school integration. You get a couple of well-dressed Negroes, shine their shoes, and bring them in and you've started your process. You know, you've started desegregating your schools. And these people will get the benefit of a better education. But there's no benefit from two symbolic seats. I mean there's no benefit for anybody. I mean, that's just the wrong way of thinking. So there was no way that we could accept what they were prepared at that time to offer. Now, that they were wrong was clear four years later. Of course, four years later they came our way and offered what they weren't prepared to offer in 1964. And of course the reason was control. By four years later they had maneuvered so that they had the type of delegation that they felt they could support. People like Hodding Carter and other people like that that they had roped in and that they felt they could work with in Mississippi. See there's the whole question, I think, just about the Democratic party and what they felt that it should be and what direction it should move, and I think they lost out. I think they lost the cutting edge of the Democratic party and I don't think the Democratic party really has recuperated from that, which had also an impact on what happened in '68 around Viet Nam and the whole direction that the party went in, because I think they lost the group that might have turned the Democratic party in a different direction about Viet Nam. They lost their cutting edge. And I think they lost the whole generation that dropped out. They looked at that as



just a group of black people coming up from Mississippi--poor, and powerless for the most part. But then there were also all the onlookers--a thousand students--who really represented the cream of the next generation of political activists at the level of the Democratic party 'cause they weren't radicals--I mean, these were the people who, ordinarily, would go in and be active, and that kind of political aid. And I think they lost a lot, and I think they haven't yet recovered--I mean, that--plus Viet Nam.

Carson

It seems like things kind of unravelled after that summer.

Moses

In Mississippi?

Carson

In Mississippi and elsewhere. There just seemed to be a very gradual--no, not gradual at all, very rapid process of-

Moses

Well, Viet Nam came in--that also, around the rest of the country--Atlantic City was a watershed in the movement because up until then the idea had been that you were working more or less with the support of the Democratic party, or certain forces within the Democratic party. We were working with them on voting, other things like that. With Atlantic City, a lot of movement people then became disillusioned. And here the lack of political education caught up with us. Because I was caught offguard by the extent of the disillusionment within SNCC people. I might have expected--I knew there was something coming up for the local people who were the delegates because they had--I mean, part of what we wanted to do was to educate people about the Democratic party because they had an image really that the Democratic party was something that was to be their savior, in effect. And I knew a little about it, just from New York, Harlem politics, so I knew that that wasn't true, that this process of voting and going into politics wasn't going to pull us out of the problems we were in. But what was important was that people thought that it would, and they were willing to organize around that, so we did that. But then the problem was, as I viewed it, how are we going to educate ourselves as a people in this process? And what we didn't count on so much was the need to educate the SNCC staff about what happened, because they were also deeply disillusioned. So that kind of unsettling took place. The other thing which was educating was that people as far left as the National Guardian crowd kind of backed away from us at Atlantic City under threat of Goldwater. They were so afraid that anything that really turned people off, like the demonstrations, sitting-in, being too obtuse there, would set in a reaction which would make it difficult for Johnson to get elected, and therefore Goldwater would get elected. That was an eye-opener for me, just as to the extent of the support. You turned around and your support was puddle-deep. It didn't have any real support.

Carson

And after that came that meeting in New York which I talk about in the book where the national organizations got together and wanted to regain control over Mississippi-

Moses

I wasn't at that meeting--Mendy and Courtland Cox were at that meeting. That of course got us back into the problems of decision-making. Because no one had anticipated that a decision of such important national consequences would come out of the Mississippi movement and that national organizations would be dragged into it without having had a real say in the development of the process which led to that confrontation or to this kind of decision. So they wanted to move to make sure that that did not happen again, in this process of control. But see this is what Lowenstein wanted to do in the beginning, he wanted to set up a national committee. In fact. . .

Carson

"Allard Lowenstein advocated structured democracy rather than SNCC's amorphous democracy." And also there was red-baiting-

Moses

That was the final issue on which Al refused to come and join the Summer Project, the question of the Lawyers Guild. And I had to travel around and talk to--who was it--Greenberg, and the Legal Defense, and the SCLC lawyer, and other people about the Lawyers Guild participating in the project, and our decision that we would keep them in the project. The people at Stanford, for example, called me out. I had to make a special trip out to the West Coast to talk to the Stanford group. To Dennis Sweeney, and there was a guy there who was publicity director for the school, who came down to help with publicity, and Sue Thrasher-- Was it Sue Thrasher? I've forgotten her name now. Sue Thrasher may have been with the Southern Students and not with Stanford... but there was a girl out there...

Carson

Mary King?

Moses

No, not Mary King, Mary King was working with SNCC.... But anyway we had a long meeting out there, in which I explained our viewpoint about being open and working and not having that whole atmosphere from the fifties injected into the movement. Of course Al had pulled out, and they were considering whether they, the Stanford group, should pull out, and not go down. So they called me out to meet with them.

Carson

Right after the summer you took part in the tour of Africa?

Moses

We just went to Guinea. I didn't tour. John and Don Harris went. No, we just went to Guinea, and I guess that was a mistake, I guess it was the wrong time to leave. I've thought often, afterwards, that we did not handle and think through the transition out of the summer, the transition for the volunteers. I mean, for example, there was no central meeting place set up, with money set aside for a conference, for the volunteers who had come down for the summer, as a way of getting out of the summer, so that they could leave, talk to each other, evaluate their experiences, maybe decide among themselves what they would like to do in terms of when they got back to campuses, and things like that. No transition point for the staff, a way of getting them out of that summer and cooled down, you know, and a place to just

cool out or relax. We hadn't planned that. Instead there was this project to go to Guinea, which took the wrong people, because it took away the leadership at a time when they should have been back working with the staff.

Carson

But at that time it would have been very difficult to have rejected the invitation to come. Maybe at least you could have postponed it.

Moses

Or sent other people. You could have had a different kind of delegation going. I think probably a different kind of delegation would have been more fruitful; if you had people like a photographer, or two photographers, whose mission was to take pictures. Someone who knew how to run and had the patience to do tape recording, someone who...

[End of side A]

or a group of cultural--and I'm not thinking so much of the Freedom Singers as they were organized at that time, But of people that we had like Betty Mae Fykes, and Bernice, and Mrs. Hamer. Mrs. Hamer was there but she didn't have anybody to sing with her. People who could have made a real cultural impact. That's just thinking back.

Carson

That was your first trip to Africa?

Moses

Mine? I guess that was my first trip to Africa.

Carson

What was the impact of it? What impressed you there?

Moses

I guess the--we spent our time in the meetings. There was the party; they were having their annual meetings, and then after the meetings they were having entertainment, basically. People from around the country had come in and were doing plays and dances and things. What really came across was just the lushness of Africa. First, physically the country, it was tropical--that was my first visit to a real tropical country--and just the density of the growth, the lushness of it, the beauty of it. And then the people--we were guests of the government, so we were really a little isolated from the people--we went to market once, and we did go to one place where there was a kind of family living. But you got the sense of the struggle of the Guinean people under Toure. Just looking at the one hotel, that was kind of abandoned. You'd see one or two Europeans there...

Carson

had a meeting there with the president.

Moses

I was sick, I missed it, I got sick and couldn't go. That was unfortunate.

Carson

What do you think, did the trip have long term impact, or was it just something that was an episode... ?

Moses

It's hard to say. It certainly turned people's attention to Africa, and it turned people's attention to--I remember I was very happy to see the North Vietnamese at an outpost there, they



had some representation there. That was the first time I could actually get in touch with, and see them as people without the whole propaganda in this country. But we didn't understand Africa very well, I don't think. Forman, among all of us had had some training, done some work about Africa. But the movement never did really grasp Africa. I began to understand Africa after I'd lived there.

Carson

You returned the following winter...

Moses

Yeah, I went back when they had the meeting of the OAU in Ghana, which was the last big one which Nkrumah hosted just before--that was in '65, end of August or early September--it was a momentous period in Africa, because before we got there, [Ahmed] Ben Bella had been overthrown in Algeria, and then while we were there, Smith declared UDI in Zimbabwe, and before we came back about five or six countries fell over like dominoes across the continent. It was that wave of reaction--it was a consolidation of Russia, and a moving out of China on the world scene, because Ben Bella represented a move towards China and [Colonel Hourari] Boumedienne a move back towards Russia. It was the same thing in Ghana, because by the time we got back or shortly after we got back, Nkrumah himself was thrown out of Ghana, and China was moved out of the country. They had a large representation there, I remember, during that period, that went all the way over to Indonesia, when they got rid of Sukarno and they had that bloodbath in Indonesia. But it was during that period that Russia reasserted its hegemony in what they were calling the third world, and China kind of regrouped and then went into its cultural revolution. See, I think there's a mistaken analysis about the movement in this country and nationalism, because I think the nationalism in this country that emerged with Stokely, and in the mid-sixties has to be analyzed in terms of the worldwide situation about nationalism and I don't know--you'd have to do a lot of research--but I don't think what happened in this country is understandable as an isolated phenomenon. I think in the whole world, right across the world there was just a fantastic upsurge in nationalism through the mid-sixties. And part of it, I don't know what triggered it off, but certainly I think all these coups had something to do with it. I mean, there was just coup after coup after coup, and it was certainly related to the effort that was going on then in Viet Nam. And partly what it did was to batten down the hatches in all those other areas because you were in the throes then of revolutionary activity in Africa. Lumumba was killed right around in that period. Was he killed before that OAU conference? The Congo was still in an uproar--

Carson

The Congo was '65 when the U.S. sent troops in there--

Moses

In the spring? Still--there was all this movement, and there was a force that was moving and developing on the continent which was cut short, short-circuited. And after that it regrouped in Tanzania, and slowly pushed its way down into Mozambique. But it was a different kind of regrouping and forcing. And Nyerere was

the last outpost for the Chinese on the continent. So that really there's a whole thing to be done about understanding this nationalism, that swept around the world which was really epitomized by the cultural revolution, which broke out around this same time.

Carson

When you returned from the first Africa trip in '64, according to the accounts I have, SNCC was facing a crisis over what was going to happen with the volunteers who wanted to stay on the staff, and Courtland Cox called a meeting, and Jim Forman was trying to get his Black Belt project as a plan for the future-

Moses

I think that was wrong what you said in your book, that we met--I don't know if there's a source on that-

Carson

Well I have the transcript of the meeting that took place early in October.

Moses

And what does it say, I say I was agreed to a Black Belt project?

Carson

No, actually what it says, Forman says that you didn't agree to it, that you didn't support the Black Belt--you didn't oppose it but you didn't support it either, and Forman sees this on your part as a withdrawal of leadership that left SNCC without really-

Moses

A program. It was clear--I felt at that time that it was useless to try and go into another student project like we had, because of the problems with the staff. I felt that we just couldn't handle that.

Carson

But Forman was proposing recruiting volunteers from black colleges at that point.

Moses

Yes and no. Solely at black? No, he was never, I don't think--I mean, they wanted to increase the number of volunteers, but I don't think he was ever proposing an exclusively black project. But people were just turned off with the idea. Now of course both Guyot and FDP, they did recruit people for that summer. They brought some people down.

Carson

So you didn't really have a plan of your own about what was going to happen to carry on after the summer?

Moses

Well, I thought what should be done was to straighten out the problems in SNCC. I felt always that SNCC was the organizing energy of the movement that we had, certainly in Mississippi, and I never tried to move without SNCC or to move around SNCC or set up something which bypassed SNCC. From the beginning, whenever we got people, I always tried to bring them into SNCC, because I felt that was where they were energized, that's where people who were working in the field and got burned out, if there was anywhere they could find energy, it would be in SNCC, going to SNCC meetings, hooking up with some other SNCC people, doing something different. I always looked at SNCC as the energizing

force, so my feeling coming out of '64 was that everything depended on SNCC, and it depended on SNCC recuperating. That's how I felt. I didn't think at that time of setting up some kind of force outside of SNCC. So basically I was waiting on SNCC; that's what I was doing for almost two years.

Carson

That's interesting because I guess in most of the accounts I've seen, it emphasizes your withdrawal, rather than SNCC's failure to supply you with a program to move on. I guess that's the impression I got from reading Sellers' account and Forman's account-

Moses

Well I wasn't looking for SNCC to provide us with a program, but I was waiting for SNCC to resolve the basic problems that had surfaced as a result of '64. And I felt that it was worth whatever amount of time it took to resolve them. I mean, I didn't have the feeling that-

Carson

You didn't see yourself as dropping out of the movement?

Moses

Oh no, no, I didn't drop out, I was just there in Mississippi.

Carson

It was within that period that you changed your name, wasn't it?

Moses

That was in '65 I guess, at Waveland, but see the name change had to do with--in fact, I had moved to Birmingham. When the Selma march was going on I had packed up, Donna and myself, loaded up a SNCC car. I had made a previous trip into Birmingham and had rented a SNCC apartment, and we set up in Birmingham. We were going to do organizing.

Carson

Did you resign as director in Mississippi?

Moses

Well, what had happened in Mississippi? COFO was no more, which again, that was a mistake, that's what I was talking about before. The FDP, and partly it had to do with Guyot, Guyot had a feeling of competition, I think, so that he wanted FDP to be the organization for the state. But the whole problem of--we talked about it at some of the meetings. I remember definitely I sketched some Ven circles, Ven diagrams on the board at one meeting down there at Waveland, and labeled one SNCC and the other COFO and the other FDP and then talked about all the eight subsets. And tried to place people, just different people; some people were SNCC members and COFO members but not FDP, and then there were some who were COFO and FDP but not SNCC and so on, just to try to get people to see that we were in a much more complex situation than we had been in when the summer started. And that we needed to try and think how were these organizations going to--but see, part of the problem was that no one was happy with COFO. And after '64, even Dave Dennis and some of the CORE people weren't happy with COFO because their feeling was they got pressure from CORE about what happened at Atlantic City. And there were tensions about which way SNCC was going, it was pulling out on its own, it really wasn't working within COFO, it wanted to take its own way. Plus we lost Aaron Henry in '64



because he decided to go in with the Democrats and to work and build with them. So the texture, as thin as it was, that was holding COFO together, fell apart.

Carson

So it wasn't a matter of you leaving COFO--

Moses

COFO just fell apart. But then the other problem was that we didn't understand organizations, because if we had thought through and far enough ahead, we could have salvaged COFO, I think, on a common ground. We could have fell back, and said: Now look, there's say a whole problem of adult education--because in the meantime in Mississippi we had that literacy project, and they were beginning to turn out materials and stuff like that--suppose we had said: let's have COFO be an educational arm. Let's set up adult education; all of us agree on that, whatever our other disagreements, we can all agree that everyone should learn to read and write, so let's all use COFO as a vehicle for this, so that community people--see because community people were confused, people were asking what happened to COFO? Or say, even the question--and of course here we were shortchanged--on the question of Headstart. In my mind, COFO would have been the ideal vehicle to move Headstart into the state, as opposed to setting up the NDGF or whatever it was called [MCDG]. But then, see, the people who did that didn't talk to us about it, that was done bypassing the movement, for whatever reasons.

Carson

But even at that stage you weren't able to stay in existence because of--

Moses

Yeah, so they missed out both ways, because they missed out on the movement energy and also missed out on support. The movement might have been able to mobilize to fight it, because without the movement underneath them then you lose, that's the lesson that people--I don't know if they've learned it yet. All these organizations that kind of move in behind the movement and seize the openings that the movement has created and given them to do some kind of more traditional work, then finally find that in order to even sustain the funding for that work, they have a political struggle. And it's a struggle which they might be able to accomplish with the movement underneath them, but in the haste and some kind of mad desire for control they move in and smother the movement that created the way. There's no real understanding in this country of the dialectics between some kind of grassroots movement and some further kind of organizational service-oriented movement such as Headstart or literacy projects, which are community-oriented but are not in themselves a movement because they of necessity are going to be tied into foundations or governments, other things like that, but which are always fighting another bureaucracy or some other political entrenchment for support, just for funding. Like the situation you have now with the whole educational system. It's because you don't have a movement in the country that people are back to fighting for just the basic right to educate their kids. The lack of understanding I find on the Democratic side, the liberals who are working within the government, and tend to think the movement

gets in their hair.

Carson

Instead of seeing it as an opportunity-

Moses

Instead of seeing the dialectic: how does this country really work? What do you have to have going at all times in the country to make it work? If it is going to really work for people, instead of some theory or other of what politics should be or something like that. Just actually how do you get things done in this country?

Carson

Another thing that I want to make sure I've got clear that's in the literature is your break-off of relationships with white people. Did that happen, and what was the story behind that?

Moses

I guess the break-off with white people came around the time that we organized the conference in New Orleans. I was under pressure to act as sort of an adviser to the white movement that was in operation and was already beginning to be formed around Viet Nam and my response was that I couldn't do that. My feeling at that time was that whatever energy I had, I needed to put it into the black movement and the black community, and nationalism and the problems we were having, and to stay with that and ride it through. The thing that I felt about the white movement was that at that time they couldn't see and had a very hard time dealing with the need for black people to meet by themselves. There's a real need for black people to close the door and meet in their own group, and people were threatened by this. It was a need in the SNCC meetings. The SNCC meetings dragged on interminably partly partly because they could never do this. So people never could say what they felt. A lot of people, particularly the staff, the black people from Mississippi, who had really deep feelings that they were ready to voice--I don't think they could say them. They might say them in an all black setting but they weren't ready to say them out in the whole meeting. So I talked to Mendy [Samstein], to Staughton [Lynd] and to other people I felt I had a very particular responsibility to, and explained to them how I felt and what I was going to do, that I was going to cut myself off from contact with white people that we had really been working with and trying to develop common strategy with and that it was really time for them to develop their own strategies and thoughts.

Carson

That came in '66.

Moses

It came after the second trip to Africa; it was when we came back that second time that we began to plan for that New Orleans conference.

Carson

So that was probably late '65.

Moses

No, it was early '66 because we didn't get back until early February, or January of '66.

Carson

So by the time Stokely's elected you're no longer involved with

SNCC.

Moses

Yeah, I didn't go to that meeting. I'd been to the New Orleans meeting, but I guess I had pretty effectively--See the disagreement I had was over the fund-raising. We mentioned that before in terms of the image and projection and so forth. I really felt that the organization couldn't do what it said it wanted to do unless it was willing to tackle the question of the economic base. See that's what Jim was not ready to open up for a general discussion in the organization.

[End of side B]

Moses

Well, the thing is the economic base. Because, you see, coming out of '64, there were a couple of big questions. There's one, the question which we raised about funding and the need for national projection. And the search for an image, to have this kind of projection around. There was another question about SNCC's relationship to the Democratic party and in general to the establishment. Because coming out of Atlantic City, a lot of us felt that what we should do is organize independent of the Democratic Party in terms of politics. That's what Guyot felt, and that's what FDP attempted to do. And they made an approach to Malcolm, who was also moving in that direction towards some kind of political activity. He was supposed to come down and speak down at FDP. But that hookup never got made. And the problem I felt that FDP, just looking at it, couldn't survive as an isolated entity. It had to hook up to something. But to what? If you look at the country at that time, what was grassroots and non-student and politically active, that they could actually, that you could call a conference and get people? There was nothing. So, how to hook up. Well, we had people going out. Because the question before the whites broke, before this whole thing went down, we had people going out to white communities to organize. Did Mindy talk to you about that.

Carson

I'm not sure I did a taped interview with him.

Moses

Because he went out. He spent some time with the Teamsters Union. We had some people who went to try and actually live in white communities to do some organizing. Because I felt that one way around the issue that developed within SNCC was to get the white workers into the white community. If we could somehow get white workers establishing some beachheads in the white communities, one, they would obtain some legitimacy two you'd get rid of the problem that everybody is trying to pile up in the black community so you have all these tensions going on. And, three, you could get people to meetings. If you could turn up a meeting where you had real grass roots white people like you can turn up today at some meetings and get the MFDP people to meet with them, they wouldn't have any problem meeting and resolving, talking to each other so I felt that was the only way out. In fact it was the only way I saw out of the impasse we came to politically in this race question and doing this political organizing. Basically the program was to try to strengthen the FDP give it some kind

END OF MOSES B



of base to operate in in the sense of some kind of support and to see if you can make a beachhead in the white community. Well the workers came back burnt out from the white community. They couldn't survive there. It was a wasteland. There were no supports there- they just couldn't survive two months-and that kind of. See, you didn't have the movement you have today in the white community. Because the movement that came about in the white community came out of the civil rights movement, but it came out of a phase, and by the time it had phased in, the FDP had phased out. It didn't have anything to support it. It got beaten down. If we had had that kind of thing, then I think we could have managed the race question as it cropped up-with white workers working in the white community I think that would have taken some of the pressure off of the black community. And once you begin to get the community people--white and black--meeting together in political meetings and addressing their problems politically and their problems with the national parties I think you would have been over a big hump on that. So, but we couldn't do that and so the issue of the whites in the organization and their role just continued to fester because there was no clear way out at this point. Certainly there was no way to absorb any large numbers of whites, and part of my involvement in the peace movement was also just a way of helping the white students to get out of the civil rights movement. I mean, because people came out and were attracted to working with the peace movement and getting into that, and seeing that as a legitimate movement, something they could get their teeth into.

Carson

So this break had to do with this need that you felt for black people to work on their own, to develop a strategy for the future.

Moses

Yes partly, yes. Black people at that time had a need to get together by themselves and I think that has to be analyzed in terms of a worldwide perspective. I mean what was going on in the whole world. I mean why think that the United States should somehow be isolated from that and not really affected by that. Why would you expect that what is sweeping around the rest of the world should not also sweep through this country?

Carson

So after early '66 you were no longer involved with SNCC?

Moses

With SNCC. And we were on this point about the funding. And you see the organization, where the organization was coming to in these meetings. There was the black white question which never really could get surfaced at these integrated meetings so that didn't really surface until Black Power in the summer of 66 and get out in the open. Part of what we were trying to do in the New Orleans conference was just to get that question out into the open and say that black people had the right to meet together, by themselves and close the door. And of course people interpret that in this country, it's inevitable that you interpret that as antiwhite, as racist. I mean it's impossible to do that in this country and just have an interpretation that people are searching for an identity, which is not necessarily to be geared at cutting

down somebody else's identity, cultural identity. And its certainly true that there were alot of people who had very deep feelings against white people, but everybody didn't. I mean a lot of people were just looking for positive feelings about organizing or more cultural ways of black people getting together. Now that has come to be more accepted, but at that time it wasn't so. So that caused a lot of confusion but anyway we were trying to do that, get that question out in the open. The question that we couldn't get out in the open and upon which we couldn't agree and on which I wouldn't continue to work with SNCC was this question of the economic base. Because as long as the org was getting funded from the sources that it was, and we saw what happened, how those sources came down at Atlantic City. So we knew what the limits of that was in a practical sense. There was no chance, no sense of trying to embark on this radical program. That is of radicalizing the organization, which was what the talk was at the meetings. I mean, we raised this question, but it wasn't possible to get people to see it. People thought that that their fund raising things would buy radical nationalism and that's what it turned out they were asking. And they got caught with their first radical statement with the fundraising getting completely swept out from under them with no preparation, no anticipation of no alternative source of support. But that was clear in 65 and 66.

Carson

Just recently while I was in Philedelphia as you knowI was at that conference on Black Jewish relations, just as a tangent, I don't want to spend alot of time on this, but how many up in NY you had to have been aware of the Jewish left in NY. Do you think that it played any part role in the civil rights movement as you knew it? how would you analyze that role?

Moses

We had a great role 1st there was if you think of them as playing certainly Rabinowitz. NOW he had a crucial role early on in the funding of SNCC that must be in there somewhr in the records.

Carson

You know I wondered where that 10 thousand came from.

Moses

It doesn't say. is that early..

Carson

I guess around 61.

Moses

Right, well that's Rabinowitz.

Carson

Was that on his own or money he had raised?

Moses

No, I think that was on his own. I think, I remember because he came down to Atlanta and Jim made a point of introducing him to me and explaining what they were doing and that he was going to help. And there wasn't a question about what was the reason for doing this or anything and I just at this point accepted that it would be too complicatd to try to get into people's motives. And all we could do was we would take money.

Carson

So you thought of fundraising as pretty heavily tied to the

Jewish community?

Moses

From the beginning it certainly was. The Jewish left. I mean there was Rabinowitz and certainly he was helpful in org others. You get into the lawyers then. I don't know what extent Boudine and that group helped, but I'm sure they did because they were all very close then. But who was, who were the lawyers there for FDP? [William] Kunstler and [Arthur] Kinoy. I mean they had a very strong influence in shaping the legislation, I mean the court procedures for FDP. In the congressional challenge and all of that. Guyot relied very heavily upon them. And I guess, I'm not sure when [was] the earliest point. They were in there, I remember going to Washington and Kunstler was there in a meeting, and Higgs was there. So that would have been about 62. I've forgotten what the situation was, what the case was, what it was about.

Carson

Well the one case was..

Moses

I've forgotten, I'd have to look up all this stuff. The other case was the National Guardian group, Joanne Grant. She herself of course is black but the grouping around the National Guardian was heavily represented Jewish people there. And that certainly was a large source of support, of financial support in terms of Joanne writing articles and getting mailinglists and the other thing Jim did early on was set up a fund raisng group. It was a grp of Jewish fundraisers who raised money professional for Israel. And they set up a fund raising netwrk in New York to raise money for SNCC. That was 62 or 63. That all should be part of the records, the financial records. They have to have that stuff in there because...

Carson

Well, I haven't found it yet. Im going to keep looking.

Moses

Or look through Jew things to see. It was the major fund raising group.

Carson

So these wre professional fundraisers?

Moses

Professional fundraisers. They raised money for Israel, professionally.

Carson

What about personnel? Other than, I guess, Dottie Miller, Jews were not

a major part of the persnnl during the early period, right?

Moses

Well who were the white people in the office

Carson

A lot of them were southerners.

Moses

Well Casey [Hayden]. There was a girl there; I've forgtn her name.

Carson

In other words you don't recall any strong Jewish presence within SNCC at all?

Moses



No, Mindy came in and came over the Mississippi in 63 I guess.

Carson

Because one of the points I make in my paper is my feeling from looking at the records, even if there were Jews there, the fact that they were Jewish didn't count really as a factor because it wasn't really brought out as a particularly Jewish contribution. In other words, they were other white people who were. . .

Moses

I think the factor people were worried about was the left connection. I mean I don't think people were thinking there was a Jewish connection so much as a left connection. I remember Mike Miller. There was a lady up in San Francisco who was very influential in raising funds for the West Coast office, who at one point invited some people to go to Israel. And so they the question came up about that she was also very active and highly placed in the Jewish community and support for Israel and so forth. That was after '64 that that happened. So that, of course, people were not into this thing of the Jewish attempt to control.

Carson

That. . .

Moses

That came in the late '60s with the nationalism. It was with the nationalism that whole thing about the Jew community versus the black community surfaced. I guess it surfaced some around Malcolm and his connections with the Arab community. Then that began to come back into the country.

Carson

What happened after 66 as far as what did you do?

Moses

Well, after the New Orleans project, I went up to Cleveland and I was at Amzie's for a few weeks. And then we held a conference in Alabama for about ten of us, for the SNCC people from Mississippi, basically that was about it, some SNCC people from Mississippi and Jim Campbell. Did you ever run across him? He worked with Malcolm, and then he did some work John Clarke in the HARYOU act in sitting at these tv series and things. He had come down to New Orleans with John for the conference. So we had a kind of retreat and talked through some things. While I was there, I got the notice to report September 1 to the draft board; that was 66. Then I went back to N.Y. and got myself together. It was at this point that my relationship with Donna broke, and I had some big decisions to make. So I finally decided to, I had a little job that some of us got together a nursery school on the east side, we were just kind of incommunicado over there, working until I got ready to leave. There were two young fellows from the movement, one from Mississippi who had gotten his draft notice and wanted to leave the country, and another fellow who was a CORE person from out of New Orleans who had also gotten his draft notice and wanted to leave. And then we were all together in Alabama. And so I went on up to Montreal and set up a place, rented a place for us, and then sent them up because they were actually being trailed, especially the Mississippi fellow; they were a few steps behind him. He would check in some place they would come around. So they went on up and then when September 1 rolled around I went on up. I decided I wasn't going to try to

face. . . I didn't feel like going through court system and facing a lot of hoopla whatever.

Carson

So you went up to Canada,

Moses

I was in Canana until about June of '68 [when] Janet and I left Canada. Basically I was in Canada with these two fellows and it was tough because we all had to assume different identities and to try and get jobs. You know its a problem of getting papers. When youre thrown out like that you're really thrown out on your own resources because we didn't have any ties with anyone back here. I was able find a series of jobs. One at a night watchman's job and I got fired from that. Then I had a job at the airways and airline servicing their flight, packing their food. You know they hire people to come in to a central kitchen near Montreal and you just go in a t night and the stuff is already prepared and you just put it on the trays and that kind of job, those kind of jobs there are a regular turnover. They are always advertising in the paper for people. So that lasted a few months. Then during the Christmas vacation I was able to get a job selling in one of the Department stores when thay take on some people and then I finally got a job in the springtime selling the local newspaper over the phone, which was a strict paid by... You get a certain percentage of every paper you sell. and that they operated using the phonebooks and in Montreal there was alot of big turnover so the new sheets that. The new phonebook that was coming out, they would buy those. They had some kind of setup where they could get those. And then you would call these people as soon as they moved and even if they had had it at their old place if you could sell at this new phone number, then you got credited with the new sale and that kind of thing. So it was a question of the guy who would know what the good sheets were and then, if you were a regular worker coming in, then he would hand you good sheets and you showed that you could work them and get a certain return, you weren't losing potential customers. So I did that the rest of the time I was there I think I strd that the spring of '67 and through that summer. That summer they had Expo in Canada. Then I lucked out there. Basically I found a family that I could kind of fit into. They were a family, the wife was Canadian born, the husband was West Indian. She had had a number of children; she had an older child she had had by an Indian, who was half Indian, and then she had a child she had had by a white sailor who was half grown and then she had two more children by her husband.

Carson

A United Nations.

Moses

They were coming out different colors and different looks, and I was able to fit in and be an uncle. And then I could move around the city. I would take the kids. I spent most of the summer out with the kids at expo. I would earn my little few dollars, about 65, working at this telephone. So I did that for that summer, and then I guess during that summer I made one trip back.

Carson

Did this family know who you were?

Moses

No, I just used, they might have guessed that I wasn't using my real name, but they never questioned me about it. The other fellows kind of found it hard; they had a harder time of it then I did. One got into the music scene, the jazz scene, but then you get into the dope, so that made it tough then because then we couldn't really associate because then once you get into that there's always something.

Carson

How did you meet Janet?

Moses

Well I didn't meet Janet; I knew Janet. Janet wasn't with me, see because she was in Mississippi. Janet and Donna were close friends. When we came back from Africa, I don't know if you can get her to talk, but she really pulled the group together that did the New Orleans conference. See, she pulled Tina and Doug and Janet. Donna did that so that was the

Carson

I missed that in the book.

Moses

Well you couldn't know about that. and so then Rudy, so she, Rudy and Jerome really set up the organizing place in New Orleans. You've run across Jerome [Smith] right? Jerome was the one who got into the confrontation with Robert Kennedy

Carson

Yeah I know his name..

Moses

And you know Rudy. He was the one of the national vice presidents of CORE, Rudy Lombard. You should try to talk to him. He got his Ph.D. from Syracuse. I think he is doing work related to drug addicts in Washington, and I think now he is back in Louisiana in New Orleans. So coming out of the conference, Rudy and Donna had been trying to work out some type of relationship thing and so coming out of the conference went on to tried to do that. And then coming up to New York, we were all together. We were all still friends working at the same place in New York, Donna, myself and Janet. Working at this children's thing. And Janet agreed to keep the . . . she was the only liaison person who knew where the of us had gone in Canada. We were all together in Alabama and so after a year I came back. Janet [Jemott] put me in touch with Donna. This was in '67. That was the last time I saw donna. So I was clear then about our marriage relationship and then after '67 that's when Janet and I began to relate. She came up to Canada once and then in '68 is when we got together.

Carson

Did you want to go to Tanzania then?

Moses

Well we tried to go to Tanzania, definitely, and we didn't quite make it the first time because we didn't have enough money. And we got P.I.'ed in Uganda. Once you get P.I.'ed (prohibited Immigrant) because the thing is, to go into east Africa you have to have your return ticket out of east Africa or else they won't let you in because they don't want to be responsible for you because you don't have enough money. And we didn't have either the return ticket or enough money to buy one. So the guy in



Uganda P.I.'ed us and then that's an automatic flag so when we got to Tanzania the guy P.I.'ed us there so then we became property of the airlines and the only place we could touch down where they would accept us was Cairo. So the airplane had to fly us back on its return trip to Cairo. So we were there for about 9 months before we could get back to Tanzania.

Carson

So you just earned enough money to live on.

Moses

Janet's mother sent us some money. We earned money there. We got a job doing radio announcing. Did you ever run across David Du Bois?

Carson

No, I've heard about him though.

Moses

Well, he was based in Cairo and I had met him in the second trip to Africa. ... Well, he had come to Ghana to the OAU meeting because he was actually working for Nkrumah. And his mother at that time was in Ghana and was running the tv programs for Ghana and he was based in Cairo and doing some kind of information agency for Ghana in Cairo and really running that I guess out of the President's office. So I met him there and so when we got to Cairo he helped us get a job where he was working which was the radio station in Cairo which was doing their foreign language broadcast back to the states. So we took that until we got clearance to come back.

Carson

So when you were in Tanzania it was by no means at the invitation of the government?

Moses

No, we hadn't been able to make any contacts, so we just went. when we came back the second time we had an official okay to come in because Bill Southerland had done some work after we got P.I.'ed. That was the only way we could get back in was to get someone who was in the country to explain who we were.

Carson

Who is Bill Sutherland(?)

Moses

Bill is an old ... his sister runs freedom house here in Boston. Bill is in his early sixties and he goes back to the War Resisters League and he was a conscientious objector in WWII, coming out of New England kind of the black middle class. What I associate with the Jack and Jill, do you know about that group? Anyway both he and his sister had a very strong social consciousness. So he was a pacifist and with the War Resisters League and got over into Africa in the fifties and was very active in some of the campaigns against the nuclear bomb in the Sahara and then active around the whole liberation movement for Zambia. Particularly he became close friends with [Kenneth] Kaunda and [Julius K.] Nyerere and then settled in Tanzania and worked there from, I guess, the time of independence.

Carson

So you had met before.

Moses

We had met before I went over at one point when I was giving a draft resistance speech ... that were burning draft cards way

down town and I gave a speech down there and he was in the country and came and I met him. In fact it was just before we were going to Ghana. So he gave me the name of his wife who was in Ghana who was a Ghanain. Did you ever run across the book laytime in Africa? by Effor Southerland? That's his wife; she wrote a book. It was one of her early books on some children's games.

Carson

So you got in the second time through his help.

Moses

Yes, so I had called him when we got to the airport when we got stranded and he came, but it was too late. We got in early Saturday morning and then the plane left around midday Saturday and it seems that all the people who might be able to handle that kind of a case were out for the weekend on a safari and that kind of stuff, so we couldn't do anything but after we left he got working and Monroe Sharp was in Tanzania at that time, so he was able to fill Bill in about the background and civil rights stuff and so they did something, put something on paper, and got it through to Nyerere.

Carson

So when you arrived what did you do? How did you support yourself?

Moses

When we got into Tanzania? Well, when we first came we stayed at Bill's house and then he got us a meeting with Nyerere and then Nyerere got us a job with the Ministry of Education. We had applied, in fact, and they had rejected our applications. When Nyerere put in a feeler about us and everything. . .

Carson

So you were administrators? teachers?

Moses

Teachers. We went to work up country in a little school, about 300 students. It was outside of the town of--I guess there weren't a thousand people in the town. And the school was about 2 miles outside Same, and it was called Same Secondary School. It was sixty miles south of Moshi and Mount Kilimanjaro but in a different tribal network. The Wachugas are the people around Moshi. And these were the Wapari people who lived in Same, but the school itself was a tribal mixture of students.

Carson

And you were the only teachers in the school?

Moses

Only you mean, what kind of teachers?

Carson

I meant how, many teachers were there in the school?

Moses

Well the school of 300 the staff if fully staffed was, I think, 13.

Carson

And you just taught regular subjects?

Moses

I taught math, and Janet taught English.

Carson

And you did that for most of the time you were there?

Moses

Well, we taught there for five years, at that school. Then the last year before we came [back] we taught at Kibaha, which was outside of Dar es Salaam. It was a larger school and they are on the English system. So Same was a secondary old level school which is four years of secondary school after 7 years of primary school. Kibaha was O level and A level. So they had a four year o level course and then they had students doing A level, which leads to pre university. Where in the O level students are taking basically 9 subjects every year, very intensive science course. So everyone is taking math physics, biology, chemistry for four years, and then on top of that they're taking English, Swahili, geography, and history.

Carson

That's pretty tough.

Moses

And then at the A level they begin to specialize, and they whittle it down. They might take a combination like biology and chemistry for 2 years or they might take physics and math, or they might take physics and chemistry, or they might take economics and history. In other words the people . . .

Carson

It might seem like an obvious question, but why did you go to Tanzania?

Moses

Well, in Africa, where else could we go? I mean, I was running from the draft, so we had to go to a country that could stand up to the United States. First of all, I wasn't travelling on my own passport, and this was another complication in terms of getting into the country. So, we had to go to a country where people would be simpathetic and would be able to withstand pressure on the part of the United States government. So, what countries were left by that time? Because you had all those coups. The only countries really left were Egypt, possibly, and that was out of the question because they were embroiled in that struggle with Israel by that time. And Guinea, maybe, but then Guinea had French, a language barrier, plus a climate which we were not really used to. I mean you have to make adjustments for that. So really it was just down to Tanzania; it wasn't much choice at that time on the continent for us. If you remember at that time Nigeria was in an uproar. The Sudan was in an uproar; they were fighting in the southern Sudan. In fact there was no way into Tanzania by land. You couldn't cross over from the west because of Nigeria, and you couldn't come down from the north because of the Sudan.

Carson

So you worked in the schools. Could you give when your children were born?

Moses

Yes, Maisha was born in, we left Cairo in '69, cause we left Montreal first in '68. We got to Tanzania and turned around. And we got to Tanzania the next summer, August or so we were back on our way again. And I think it was the first of October, around there, that we got back to Tanzania in '69. And we had gotten straightened away by December. And we were up actually in Same before that Christmas of '69. And Maisha was born in July



of '70. And Omowale followed in April of '72. And then Tabasuri followed in February of '74. And then Malaika followed in June of '76, by which time we were back in Cambridge.

Carson

Why did you leave?

Moses

Well, we tried to take out citizenship, actually. We had applied to become citizens. And we never heard, and there was I guess Nyerere was able, as far as I can judge, wasn't able to pull anyone in his cabinet to his point of view about Afro-Americans. None of the people, there were quite a number of people that got over to Tanzania during that period because this was the heyday of the nationalism, and a lot of people left and tried to establish roots in different places and Tanzania. And a number of people tried and no one got accepted during the period we were there. I'm not sure why, except that Nyerere--it was his policy, the open door to Americas, but he was able to pull any of his really political people, who habitually fill the cabinet posts and rotate in these posts, with him. Now there are a number of speculations as to why not, but the fact is that he didn't. So, we didn't. I think if we had been welcomed, and other people had been welcomed in that sense, that there was going to be a real chance to participate in the life of the country--not as a perpetual foreigner or stranger, but in the sense that people are allowed to participate here--then we would have stayed.

You know about the story about people being arrested and all of that around the sixth PAC?

Carson

No, not really.

Moses

You know that when they had the sixth PAC conference, in 1974, there was some story in the paper that some blacks from the states were trying to smuggle guns into the country. And this broke, or supposedly happened, just before the conference was to take place. And they were headed towards a place, a work camp, that they had established, or supposed to establish, up in the Nyerere's home. So this made the front pages around the country, and as a result they began a roundup, and they rounded up a number of blacks in Dar es Salaam and kept them in jail throughout the conference, while the conference was going on. And they searched our homes. They came in our place and searched place. All over the country. And wherever they found the least thing that scared them or threatened them, they put people in jail. But the net result of that was that it soured relations between Afro-Americans and communities and people that you had been working with, who didn't know what to think. Whereas local people tended to shrug it because they had their own problems with government, one way or another, people who were working for the government in capacity or another--which is your whole working force because there are no jobs outside of the government--couldn't do that. And so you would feel this pressure in a lot of different ways.

Carson

And so you returned when?

Moses

May 1976. And around that time Janet's mother began sending us some clippings which indicated that there was a change in the attitude here about the draft and the people who had left because of the draft. So, it seemed like there was a chance to come back. And I made some inquiries and came across the thing about the National Fellowship Fund and applied to school and got accepted and got a fellowship, a notice of acceptance of getting a fellowship. So I figured that we would come back and try it.

Carson

I wondered if you could go on the record and explain your thesis, tell us the title-

Moses

I don't think it has a title yet but the topic basically could be put around the question of the nature of the evidence for mathematics and logic and whether the evidence for those subjects is different in kind from the evidence, say, for physics and chemistry. Basically I'm looking at a disagreement between Kant and [Felix] Klein on that question. Kant's saying that there's a radical difference and Klein saying that there isn't, that whatever evidence there is that counts for physics, it's the same type of evidence that counts for logic and for math. And they had a private correspondence as well as a public discussion about it, and I'm looking at the correspondence and doing the history of it, which goes back to Kant in terms of its modern conception of it. Also I'm trying to trace that history through the writings of mathematicians and some philosophers through the nineteenth century. And you have mathematicians like Gauss, [Bernhard] Reimann, Ploinquerer, Klein, [Johann Friedrich] Herbart, all famous mathematicians who took a stand one way or another relevant to this subject and the question as it had developed in their time, and so I'm trying to trace the thread of that and compare that with some of the other philosophers who also commented on that.

Carson

Could you give me some basic background information on your family?

Moses

Father is Gregory Hayes Moses. My mother Louise Parris Moses. I was born January 23, 1935. I had two brothers. The older brother was Gregory Hayes Moses, Jr, and Roger K. Moses. Roger was about six years younger.

[End of interview]