

Interview with Marilyn Lowen, NYC 3 October 94

**What was your background before the movement?**

If we can just edit this out I'll just tell you straight out, I don't believe there was an ever before the movement for me. I believe very clearly in reincarnation and I believe I've been doing this forever! I started right in as soon as I was born, in Detroit. This is becoming clearer and clearer to me the longer I live when I look back now some of the stuff I did as a child, it was different than stuff other children were doing in my neighborhood or on my block. I always had this purpose to be involved in fighting injustices, fighting for freedom, especially racial oppression. I have this sense that this is what I was doing over in Europe because I was born in '44 and when I read biographies of Jewish Women resistant fighter in Poland and Russia. I feel like I knew them and I was there. By the time I was 11 or 12, I had joined these groups called "Haboneem" and "Hashomere Hatzair" which I'd forgotten all about until recently. I came across this book called The Underground Army by Heike Grossman who is a person I'm really fascinated by now. She reminds me very much of SNCC people, the way they organize and everything. This woman actually survived many years of resistance work in areas where everyone else was liquidated practically. And she lived to go to Israel and become a member of Parliament. And Heike was in this one of these groups I just mentioned and it was because these two groups believed there could be another way, a better world, and that they were organized. They were the ones who were able to survive and fight back, whereas the rest of the people in the Jewish community were middle class and worried about their jobs. Or they were religious and believed that God would take care of the situation. But this small group was able to communicate with people who were non-Jews, who were also interested in freedom, with Poles, with Russians. So they were able to smuggle arms or people out. When I was reading her book, I realized I was in that group in Detroit, Michigan. So that was all very interesting to me.

So some of the civil rights stuff I did as a kid was...Okay, early experiences. When I was about six or seven I lived in a neighborhood in which we were the only Jewish family that I know of. I had a best friend named Cookie who was Catholic. And on the way home from school one day, she and her friends surrounded me, and she held my arms why they beat me

up. I was so outraged and betrayed because she was my best friend, so I ended up breaking her lip, and I fought back. I've always been glad I did. But it was an experience I wasn't prepared for. I didn't really know at the age of 6 or 7 that I was a member of a hated, persecuted race. They were Catholics and I was a Jew, and somebody must have told them whatever the usual thing is...that we kill Christ...I don't know. They had to get me and teach me a lesson. I remember asking my mother what was a Jew. And that was at that age, something that made me very aware of how a person, Jewish or Black, as a child, has to part putting these things together as you are growing up. What's going on and what is this all about? We moved out of that neighborhood fairly soon after that, by the time we were seven. We moved into a neighborhood that was predominately Jewish, which I guess my parents thought would be safer, and it was. It was a pretty happy experience. While the rest of my friends were going to Hebrew school, I was going to a secular Yiddish culture school where I was learning about the resistance in the Warsaw ghetto. There were only four of us in the whole city who went to this school. It was my mother's idea much more so than my dad's. My mother grew up learning to read and write Yiddish because my grandmother's mother had actually left Lithuania and made it to Palestine and she was...I don't even know the word for it. As the years went by I found myself more and more concerned with peace in the middle east and friends of Palestinians, so I don't know enough of my grandmother's story. I really don't. But I'm sure there was some fighting spirit there, I mean she couldn't have made it there and survived there...I'm sure it wasn't an easy life. So of course my grandmother never saw her mother again. She came here as a teenager and made a life here, married and had four kids. But my mom learned to speak and read and write Yiddish because she would do the letters back and forth. So my mother had grown up with this Yiddish secular culture and apparently my mother's father was not particularly religious, kind of political. He was very aware of class society and things like that. But also they didn't stay in the city. They left the East coast very soon after they came here and settled in a small town in western Pennsylvania. My grandfather was a tailor and a furrier and my mother was just telling me this week just how fortunate her family was. They always had food, their family always worked hard and even during the Depression the family didn't starve. So even though there was a definite working class consciousness in the family, they also managed to be somewhat independent.



So anyways that's how I was going to that Yiddish secular school. I've been remembering a lot of the songs I learned at that age -- the type of songs that would make you join a civil rights movement. They were songs like "We're going to build a world, a free new world" and there was a song "All people are brothers. From one father and from one mother" and there was another one "Mix together altogether" --exactly those horrendous things that those southern white racists were dreading that we would mix the colors all together. And of course my children are of mixed race. I guess I just grew up really feeling that racism was insane, that it was something to be gotten rid of. That we were one family. So part of this is what shaped my life as a SNCC person. I never felt like I was a white person. I didn't grow up that way. The sense of who I was as a Jew was really brought home to me from very early years growing up in Detroit. And Detroit was an extremely segregated city with either white or black. The Jews were kind of the middle race in Detroit. As I got to be 9, 10, or 11, my neighborhood started to become integrated and my family was happy about this and some of their friends were. But the real estate agents exploited racial fears and they worked very hard to create this "white flight" thing to the suburbs. As black families began to move into this particular Jewish neighborhood, the racism wasn't as hard-line. The real estate agents would literally call our house every day asking us to sell. I would see For Sale signs go up overnight and I always perceive them as these evil mushrooms that just sprung up in the rain overnight. So as a kid I would around tearing these signs out of the ground. I think of that as sort of my first civil rights activity. Our neighborhood was called Russell Woods and I formed a Russell Woods Youth Group when I was 10 or 11, to stop this destruction of our community and keep it a place where everyone could live together. We had meetings at my house and then there were families in that neighborhood who came from a somewhat leftist background. Detroit in the fifties was in the throw of McCarthyism and there was a lot of fear among the adults that my parents knew. You would notice that people were afraid. There were certain newspapers that they would hide if people came to the house. People would stop talking to other people. A friend of ours who was a school teacher was fired from her job for refusing to testify or being suspected of being a communist. She lived with us for a while after she lost her job before she moved out of the state and went somewhere else. You know these were the kinds of stories that were going on. My parents were absolutely terrified of me

being involved in anything because they saw people losing their jobs, losing their reputations.

My first husband Bob, the SNCC photographer, he happened to be best friends with this guy Dave Wellman. I met Dave Wellman's parents later through Bob. The parents had been sent out of the country to Canada. They were separated from their children because they were actual card carrying communists. A lot of other people were just progressive or what ever that meant. Sal Wellman and his wife never said they weren't. They were exiled and it was very hard on their two children, David and Vicki, growing up. I remember being at a concert where I saw David and Vicki and went to speak to them and my mother snatched me back because there were FBI agents all around with cameras at all times. You never knew what going on. So I grew up in that kind of an atmosphere where it wasn't always explained to me and a lot of times nothing was told to me because I don't think my parents wanted me to get too involved. I already wasn't having a normal life like other kids.

My family was social friends with black families. We visited back and forth. Apparently at that time in Detroit that really wasn't common. There were a lot of Jewish families in that neighborhood who did identify with being white. For me, I made a decision by the time I was 9 that Jews were not white. It was insane for Jews to think they were because just a few years back we were just being wiped out. It was kind of obvious that a lot of Jews, out of fear, were preferring to think of themselves as white or wanted to be upwardly mobile in America. By the time I was in the early years of high school, the neighborhood had pretty much emptied out of white people. My parents blamed each other bitterly for what happened to me because they didn't move out of the neighborhood soon enough. They got over it eventually. They are great people but just socially they really were ostracized by the other people. [Pause]

The next civil rights type childhood activity I can remember is something called the Detroit Brotherhood Youth Council. This was a group sponsored by the trade union leadership conference that was run by Hory Shetfield in Detroit. It must have corresponded with the sit-in movements in the South. I started high school in '59 or '58...that's pretty early. When I was in Junior high I put up a bulletin board about the Supreme Court decision and it wasn't all that popular with my teachers. But I was a good student and they let me and I chose to do it about school desegregation. It was controversial but they didn't stop me from doing

it. That same social studies teacher got me expelled from Junior high. I was reading a book by a writer named Lillian Smith called Strange Fruit. It took place in the South and there was a mixed race love affair, a black woman and a white man. So I was sitting there in class reading it behind my textbook and when my teacher discovered it he sent me to the office. The principal of my Junior high, his name was Terry Bannon, we called him terrible Terry, as it turned out his brother was one of the wardens of the state penitentiary. So they were a pretty hard lined racist family and the guy looked at the book and kicked me out of school. I will always remember that day walking home from school in the middle of the day. Life was pretty organized back in the fifties and in the daytime you were in school, and it was a very strange feeling to be walking home, alone, without my friends. I was really trying to figure out what I had done wrong. Or had I done anything wrong? I was pretty sure that it wasn't me, that I had a right to read whatever I wanted to read.

So I was part of this group called the Brotherhood Youth Council. What we trying to do was integrate a swimming pool called Crystal pool. Crystal pool was for whites only. I think they might have had one day a week where black kids could swim. So a lot of use who knew about it were "swimming in". I just had the most incredible experience with this Crystal pool sit-in. I was at the memorial service for Peter Countryman, who was one of the founders of the Northern Student Movement this last year. And I stayed with Martha Norman Prescott and so did Frank Joyce, who was the founder of the Northern Student Movement Project in Detroit. We asked Frank how he had gotten into the movement, and Frank said that he had driven by Crystal pool that day and saw what was happening, got out of his car and joined the demonstration. His father just about killed him, threw him out of the house, and there was a group Frank later was in called People Against Racism in Detroit. He was the original person against racism. When he saw that demonstration at Crystal pool, he just crossed the line. Frank has gone on to be a wonderful, anti-racist in Detroit. A lot of the future leaders of the struggle in Detroit were in that Crystal pool thing. I remember a guy named John Watson who was one of the leaders of the sit-in and went on to become one of the leaders of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit. The purpose of the league, even though Detroit was a union town, supposedly a progressive town, there was racism in the unions. The black workers got the worst jobs, the least promotions, they had the most dangerous jobs, they had the

most injuries. Last hired, first fired. So as the Detroit response to this growing civil rights movement was really to organize in the factories because that was the main form of survival in Detroit. And many, many people in Detroit were there out of Mississippi and Alabama. They had come up during World War II because there were opportunities in industry, and there was an opportunity to get away from the lynchings, the oppression, the bad education, the sharecropping. Even within that industrial factory system, things were still not equal. That group overlapped with SNCC at various times and they spread throughout the northeast. So a lot of the folks who were part of that original Brotherhood Youth Council became leaders. So my friendships and relationships with other people who were fighting for equal rights and justice were all the way along, through junior high and high school.

By that time the Woolworth's sit-ins were going on. So in '60 I was part of the demonstrations in Detroit. By this time I'm in high school. In high school around '60 in solidarity with the southern student movement we were picketing Woolworth in Detroit. The high school I went to was called Casstack. It was the most integrated, if not the only integrated, high school in Detroit then. The reason it was, was because it wasn't a neighborhood school. Most of the schools, I guess just about all of the schools, were neighborhood schools. And since it was a city that was spread out with residential houses, not like New York, what ever neighborhood you lived in, it was an ethnic neighborhood. There were Polish neighborhoods, and whatever. So whatever high school you went to, it was with that ethnic group. So Casstack wasn't like that. It was downtown Detroit, and people came from all over the city. So they were kind of a little bit braver to go there. It was a more challenging school in a way. It had very developed curriculums. There was an automobile curriculum where kids were preparing for the automotive industry in Detroit. We had a commercial art curriculum, and a fine arts curriculum. And the kids that graduated went right into being professional graphic or commercial artists. We had a performing arts curriculum where kids went on and were professional Broadway stars. I was in this one called science and arts, which was pretty much a college prep curriculum. After high school I would go on down the extra half mile from the school to Woolworth and I'd join with other people. In 1960 I would have been in my second year of high school. I remember that it was something I did almost every day. We would be singing songs like "If they can't in the South, then we

won't in the North". And we sang a lot of union songs that were turned into civil rights songs, like "Which side are you on?". I had grown up learning a lot of union songs because it was a union town, and I was in this group called the Jewish Folk Chorus, which was not a religious Jewish group, but a secular group. We sang all kinds of songs of culture and struggle, and we sang songs from the black movement and everything. Music was always a big part of my life growing up in Detroit and I guess that's why I loved SNCC so much. Why I loved Bernice so much. When she talks about how music shaped the movement, it was true for us very much so in Detroit. We had banjo pickers and guitar players. One of my best boyfriends in high school, Steve, was a guitar player and his family were socialists. He would sing all these Irish revolutionary songs. My friend, Stina, who is Mexican American, her father was a union leader, and we sang those songs. We just grew up filled with this union and civil rights movement. It would be great if your generation could start singing these songs again. They are songs that need to be sung, and don't need to be just microfiched. We'd be downtown and be singing "Like a tree that's planted by the water...we shall not be moved". These were union songs, and a lot of them came out of black gospel, white Appalachian gospel. It was great. It seemed as if it was always raining. When I look back at that moment now, I just picture us going around and around in the pouring rain in these circles outside of Woolworth.

#### **Who organized the Woolworth protests?**

That's what I'm trying to remember. I know it wasn't the leftist people because I remember that this was the beginning of my awareness that this was going to be a necessity for black leadership in the civil rights movement that was not steered or guided by white leftists. As we picketed, they would be going around handing out all these left wing pamphlets. We would be really furious. We would throw them away and want to fight with these guys. Because even though some of their issues and rhetoric might have been correct, they were really exploiting us. As the movement developed on through the sixties, it was just real clear (when I worked in Harlem and went to the south) that the civil rights movement had to set its own goals and lead itself. It couldn't be run by these other folks.

#### **When you heard the rhetoric of SNCC...**



It was all like we came of age together. It was like we were already part of each other because we were all the same generation. We were all seeing and living the same thing. It was really hell living in Detroit with desegregation, for me it was because my friends and neighbors were black. I'd walk home with friends who were black, and friends who were white would no longer walk home with me or talk with me. There was all this craziness going on in my community where people didn't want to live there anymore. It didn't make sense. I knew there was some kind of insanity in this country. I already said I think I came here knowing it. Even if there is no such thing as reincarnation, my family was Jewish and they weren't that shy about letting me know about what had happened in Europe. My own family had been killed. So it was the air I breathed. That was life in Detroit. You knew when you were in what neighborhood, you knew from your teachers. I had this teacher in junior high, who actually said he'd been in the Klan. I was the only one who stood up and questioned him about it. And I watched the faces of my fellow students, a lot of whom were black. I knew they had a lot to say, but they couldn't. They actually couldn't challenge this guy because things were different then, then they are now. It did make that difference that people are no longer silent about these issues. Everything hasn't changed, but the awareness is out front. We don't just have to keep it in our families or our churches. [break]

**So how did you meet Bob?**

We were both dancers together in a college dance group. I was in the all-city dance group that was representative of all the high schools, and I also joined the University dance group. He was in that. [break]

**Did you go to college in Detroit?**

After I graduated high school I left Detroit and I was anxious to get out. I was having some difficult times with my family and my boyfriend. He and I had been going together for a year and a half, and at the time I thought that part of my parents objection to seeing each other was because he was African American. I think at the time he was a Negro. They didn't have African Americans yet. It turned out that it wasn't really that. Bob was

22 and I was 16 and I was their first daughter that they had to raise. So they were sort of upset about it because we didn't come straight out and tell them about us seeing each other until the week I graduated from high school. We stayed out the whole night because I was going to go away to college that fall. And we were just having a hard time saying good-bye. We decided to front up to our relationship. We came in, in the morning after having been out all night. My parents were really hysterical. They didn't know if I was dead or alive. So now that I'm a old person and a parent, I see it a little differently. My parents' objection to our relationship was not strictly a racial issue. There was an older man taking advantage of this younger, innocent girl. But there's no such thing as innocent young women. Anyway, they are all good friends now. Things were pretty tense my last year in high school. Bob and I were seeing each other, my parents were tracking us down and having people follow us. It was kind of rough. I was ready to fly the coop. I decided to go to Bennington because of all the schools I looked at in the United States it seemed the one that would allow me to continue to dance and also have a rigorous intellectual program. They respected women and it seemed to be a progressive school in the sense that they didn't have a lot of restrictions of paternal rules. There were no curfews, and I was definitely ready for no curfews. But it doesn't really mean much up in the middle of Vermont. Although it means you can stay up all night studying. Anyway, I left Detroit and that's why I went to Bennington.

The summer between graduating and going away to school, Bob and I were out in Colorado dancing. On the way back we visited some new friends down in Austin, Texas and people took us for Mexicans the whole time. I'm a fairly dark skinned white person...but I don't consider myself a white person, and he a fairly light skinned black person. So we were just taken as Mexicans when we were there. So that was interesting. You know when you travel around the world, this whole racial thing can kind of shift a little bit. Then, we came back and then I went away to Bennington. That fall at Bennington, there was a notice on the bulletin board about a conference in New Haven, Connecticut that was sponsored by the Northern Student Movement. They were going to have guests from SNCC from southwest Georgia. So I was very excited about seeing this it was a connection to what I left behind in Detroit, what I'd been doing for years. The Student Voice that SNCC was putting out, that Julian Bond was doing from the Atlanta SNCC office, I'm sure was the source of a lot of our information

in Detroit. So I was familiar with the names of different SNCC projects and SNCC people, and I knew who was going to jail, because you know that's what the Student Voice reported on. That's how we did our support work in the north.

**So you saw this pamphlet about the conference...**

So I saw this pamphlet about the conference and it struck my heart and I decided that I was going. I had never been absolutely able to explain how I got there because I only have memories of walking there in this beautiful autumn New England countryside. I was in southern Vermont and I had to get to Connecticut. The memories that I have of this are walking along small two lane highways with very old forests that were changing to fall colors, and parallel to the road where I was walking I remember seeing Indian people walking along with me. Since then I've begun to realize that those were spirit guides who were there to accompany me on this journey that I was on. Even though they had physical form they weren't really solid, but they were there. Then later on I remember as it was getting dark and I was wondering what I was going to do for shelter, this little stone house appeared. The door was unlocked and I went up the path and it was only like a movement fairy tale to me, and I went in and it had a little plaque on the wall that it was a Quaker meetinghouse. I'm pretty sure the name George Fox was on it somewhere. He was one of the founders of the Quaker movement in New England. The place was empty and there was a fireplace and there was a bushel basket of apples. I was very hungry and I ate a few apples and I drank some water and I rested for a little while. Then somehow I arrived in New Haven. I can never remember how I got from that shelter. It's come back to me over and over again as a very blessed experience because the Quakers were the activist abolitionists throughout New England who campaigned for the end of slavery and who sheltered people who were fugitives from slavery. And there I was going down the road, and they gave me shelter. There was no one there. The building was just there, empty.

When I got to New Haven, I met some people who had a profound effect on my life. A couple, named Peter and Joan Countrymen, who were founders of the Northern Student Movement. At this time Yale was an all male school. Bennington was still all women. And Joan and Peter had their first son Matthew and Joan was nursing him in the cafeteria and this was

such a profound experience for me. She was a brown skinned woman and he was a white guy, it was an all male area, and pretty much an all white supremacy area. There they were. I just recently met Matthew at his father's memorial service this last year, and I think I told him about it. His sister Rachel was nursing her baby, so I took pictures so I could match those pictures in my mind of her mother nursing Matthew thirty years ago. I knew they were special and that they were trying to do something different. Carl Anthony who was from Philadelphia was speaking about the program he was running in Harlem, and I decided that was what I was going to do because school wasn't particularly contributing to the education that I felt I needed which was to improve conditions in society, get rid of racism, and all the other garbage. There were a group of SNCC workers from southwest Georgia. People whose names I had read about in the Student Voice. There was Charles Sherrod, and Ralph Allen, and Peggy Damon and her sister. There may have been some other people whose names I don't recall. They led us in singing freedom songs and this group of people had just come out of the jails of southwest Georgia. The songs that they sang spoke about the experiences they had gone through. These songs were used in the jails as Bernice Reagon explains over and over again. The songs were what kept people from being afraid from succumbing to fear and kept people connected even though they may have been in different rooms. You may have heard people screaming down the hall and you just kept singing and staying connected. So, that was my first time I can recall actually singing and joining hands with southern SNCC folks. We'd been singing a lot in Detroit in the picket lines and union activities, but I felt real connected with the SNCC folks then.

I got back to Bennington somehow. I called Bob, and told him that's it, we were going to have to do. He connected with Frank Joyce somehow in Detroit. Joyce is the fellow I mentioned earlier who drove past the Crystal pool and joined us. His father later saw him on the news and kicked him out of the house. So Bob and Frank somehow connected and started this Detroit Education Project that was the Detroit branch of the Northern Student Movement. Then in the summer when I finished college that year I went to Harlem to work with the Harlem Education Project and Bob joined me there. Frank was real mad because he wanted to stay in Detroit. I think Bob was interested in being in New York. We worked there for a year or so. Bob began to learn some photography there. In the summer of '64, the following summer he decided to go south for the

Freedom Summer Project. Dorothy Zellner was recruiting for that project. I remember there was a meeting at Riverside church and I remember Bob and I went to that in the spring of that year. I remember being very moved by her speech. In fact I told her about this, this summer when we were down in Mississippi and I thanked her for getting us aware of the summer project. She said that she was really glad that we came. Bob went on down. He went to Oxford for the orientation that the people from the SNCC project who had been working for a long time on voter registration had been up against very deadly situations. Herbert Lee had been killed, Lewis Allen had been killed. There had been a lot of beatings and brutality and the decision had been made by the SNCC workers in Mississippi to invite this group of northern students in. The orientation for these students were taking place in Oxford. Bob's original intention was to go down there to work in the Freedom schools as a teacher because he had finished college and done a year of post degree work in education. He had been student teaching. But when he got down there it turned out they needed photographers more than they needed teachers. He became a SNCC staff photographer and he continued doing related work for another twenty years or so.

### **Where was he working?**

He was based in Atlanta for awhile and then Toogaloo, Mississippi. There was another SNCC photographer named Cliff Waas who already had a little house there. Bob went and shared the house with him and I joined them there in '65. I didn't go down for the summer project because of two things. One was that Bob and I were having a rough time and we needed some space as they say in the nineties. The other thing was that during the year I'd been working in the Harlem education project we had a similar situation where white college students had been coming into Harlem to help and that was kind of what was going on in Mississippi. There were a lot of problems that go along with that. I felt that the main contribution that I wanted to make wasn't the color of my skin. I wanted to have some concrete skills to offer. So I worked in a summer camp program and learned more about taking care of young people. When I did eventually go south, that's what I did. I worked in education. I didn't want to be there just as a white body. I knew there were going to be all kinds of



tensions and problems. It was a great project. I'm 100% glad that it happened. But I didn't go down until the next year.

**When exactly did you go down?**

I went down right after Selma. In the fall I decided I wasn't going back to Bennington. I had already left for the spring term and I just could not bridge the gap between those two worlds. The majority of the girls at Bennington were from fairly privileged families. I had been working in Harlem. We were having rent strikes and trying to eradicate rats and doing something about the illiteracy. In the fall when I had gone back after my first summer...the summer of '63 I had worked in Harlem and then when I went back that fall of '63, I did actually organize a civil rights group on campus. Another person over at Williams was starting a civil rights group too, and the person who was starting that, Don Jackson later became a very close neighbor and friend of ours in Mississippi. Our families have remained close. He became a Hummed Kinyata later on. Do you know his daughter Luwana who just graduated from Williams? He has a son Malcolm too. One of the things we did at Bennington in the civil rights group was collect clothing and food to be sent down to support the strikers in the Delta and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party activities. People were being thrown off land and losing their jobs. That was one thing I was able to do at Bennington to at least make people conscious and aware and connected to the fact that something was going on. I think I tried once to write a little short story called "Bernard Malamute's Pants" because we did send a pair of his pants to Mississippi. He was on the faculty at Bennington. But there was only so much you could do with civil rights at Bennington. I did get a couple of close friends of mine to join the movement. One woman, Sue Slovak went on to become a civil rights lawyer. Another friend of mine, Lisa Marshall she later joined us in Mississippi a couple years later and worked as a student staff member for CDGM.

That fall I went back to Detroit and I worked with Friends of SNCC. I know we did a lot of work, but it's hard to remember. When SNCC folks came to town what we'd do was find them a place to sleep, to eat. We would set up events where the Freedom Singers would come to town and give concerts for fundraising. The kind of support work that Friends of SNCC would do, trying to get publicity for what was going on. Detroit being

the kind of community it was, I think we were probably doing outreach into the union community and to the church community, the synagogues. Trying to let people know what was going on and finding ways people could give their support. I was back in Detroit that fall and that winter.

On New Year's Bob came up from the south to see his family, and we were going to visit the family of one of his best friends named Tommy Owakiana who was one of the other SNCC photographers. They lived up north of the border from Detroit, on the Canadian side. We had a very serious car accident on the way there. I got kind of badly injured and stayed in Detroit trying to recover, and worked that winter. Bob did return south. In the spring of '65 was the Selma march, and Bob was one of the photographers on that. I remember being real worried about him, and sleeping by the phone every night waiting for the news. And then that spring somehow I heard someone was driving to Atlanta and I just left. I just left Detroit and went to Atlanta. I stayed there that spring and worked in the Atlanta SNCC office as part of the SNCC photography department which was what Bob was in. What Jim Forman who was the chairman wanted me to do was to setup an archival system so in times like this, thirty years later there would be some records. No one really thought it was all that important then because they wanted to use the money to get people out of jail. The staff pay was \$10 a week, and it was very, very rare that you even got that. I don't know what we lived on. Community people would feed us, and we just kind of made it. The SNCC photo department wasn't a real high priority for most of the central committee, but Jim was pushing it. They did have a darkroom and a little office down in the basement of the building and that's where I lived. I would attempt to keep in touch with the SNCC photographers in the field. Made sure they sent their film in to be developed. Rufas Hinton who later married Muriel was only 17 at the time was learning how to do the darkroom work there. We developed the film, we contacted media and got pictures out to them when stuff was going on. If media people needed pictures we would look through our files to see what matched articles.

Sometime during that spring I remember coming to New York city and actually meeting with the archivist of that big library across the street. She trained me in how to set up a photo archive. What was so incredible about those times was that all people's good wills was electrified by this movement. Everybody who had any heart of imagination was really glad that something was changing in this country. From what ever position they were

in they would help. We had dentists in New York who would fix the teeth of Freedom Fighters. I remember I got a winter coat one year from some people who were in the clothing trade. Everybody wanted to do what they could. So we couldn't really finish what we were doing in the library because New York had its first city blackout. So I took the information and I went back down there, and tried to have this organized photo archive.

Then around June of '65 Bob was going back to Toogaloo where he had pretty much decided to stay to be the photographer for Mississippi. We were driving over and outside of Selma we had another bad car accident. I Shattered this knee and this arm. I ended up in a good Samaritan hospital in Selma for a month. He was driving and the tire blew out. I've never known if it was bad tires or sabotage or a combination of the two. I thought I was in a coma from the time I was in the accident to when I recovered in the hospital. But Rufas, who was a passenger in the back seat, told me that I was wide awake screaming at this trooper not to touch Bob. I was in the hospital and I found out the nurses were getting paid about a dollar an hour so I started organizing! Most of the hospital workers were black and they knew I was one of the Freedom Riders. A lot the civil rights workers were all called Freedom Riders by local people because that's just the phrase that caught on. So people knew there was a Freedom Rider in the hospital, so nurses would come in and check on me. The doctors that came in to talk to me boasted about being a friend of Sheriff Jim Clark, the sheriff of that town, and he made a few sarcastic grinning threats to me. I also remember Bob Moses appearing by my bedside and I just remember him standing there and looking very stricken by this. It later fit together with other stories that I heard told about how Bob felt when other civil rights workers were in some way or another hurt. He did have a lot with people coming down. But not just that, Bob wasn't the reason I was there, it's just that Bob is a person that so deeply feels everything otherwise he wouldn't have done what he did himself in Mississippi. I was very grateful that he stopped by. I recently found some letters from John Conyers who was the Congressman from Detroit, so I guess the word got back to Detroit that one of their folks had been injured down in Alabama. Somehow my mother heard where I was and she got me on a plane and got me sent back to Detroit. It was a good thing because I hadn't been properly treated and they needed to re-operate on my arm to set it. I spent another month in the hospital there. As soon as I

got the cast off I took a plane to Mississippi. It was a rough summer for my folks. I took off and went to the little house in Toogaloo that I had been trying to arrive to earlier that summer with Bob. [break]

I came down to Mississippi and my leg wasn't totally healed but I decided that I wanted to get started with this summer project. The Child Development Group of Mississippi was just being formed in that summer of 1965. This was a group that was the recipient of poverty money that came out of the Lyndon Johnson War and Poverty Office of Economic Opportunity. It was a very significant program in the state of Mississippi because the moneys were coming directly from the federal government into the black community. This was the first time this had occurred in 100 years. A lot of what happened to Mississippi in the 1960s paralleled what happened 100 years ago in the 1860s because after slavery was ended by Civil War there was that period of Reconstruction where the federal government was in supervising elections. There were a tremendous amount of black elected officials in Mississippi at that time. There were freedman's schools, agrarian development, economic development. After the federal government withdrew, the Klan and so forth took over and people were losing their lands and businesses. Well, it was very similar to what happened here. Because of this fight against this new form of slavery, segregation and apartheid, that it became almost like a national battle like the Civil War where people from the north were down there helping. This was one of things we won from the federal government, this money. So they sent this little piddling million bucks down there to repair a century of disenfranchisement.

The good thing about it was that the money was coming directly into this new infrastructure that had been created in the black community by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. The MFDP was set up as an alternative to the Democratic Party because the Mississippi would not allow black Americans to participate to caucuses, and precincts, and they wouldn't allow them to vote, let alone become part of the electorate officials. So CDGM came right after that. The Atlanta City Convention was in '64 and it raised quite a ruckus in Atlantic City. Ms. Hamer and the other delegates were not finally achieving their goal as being seated rather than the traditional democrats. There was a recognition in the high levels of the government that something powerful was going on in Mississippi and that there was national support for black enfranchisement in Mississippi.

So the Civil Rights Act was passed in '64, '65 whatever and then here comes all this government money in the summer of '65. A lot of people who were in SNCC had already begun leaving the state. The summer project was over. A lot of the volunteers had left and some of the people who were there in SNCC working in COFO began to leave. But there were some people who were still around. It was extremely controversial within the state of Mississippi within the movement community as to how to deal with this war on poverty and this poverty money. There were some people, I'm fairly sure Jim Forman's position was that this money was really not worth it - that it would be used to co-op movement leadership and tell people what to do, to buy them. It was a very real concern. There were other people that felt this money was desperately needed. That the black community had been economically exploited for 400 years and it was an opportunity to have some cash flow in the community and people believed that if they had this money they could build up businesses and give people independence so that if they decided they wanted to vote or run for elected officials. People could have their own jobs. At least some people wouldn't have to go work in Miss Ann's kitchen or be a sharecropper or be totally dependent on loans for their farms from local banks which closed people out continuously. Anyone who was a movement activist they'd get foreclosed. So the idea of having this money, it was more than tempting. It seemed like something that had been earned by the struggles of the last four or five years. Now that we've established the right to vote legally there had to be some money to go along with it. So we took the money for that summer and they had schools all over the state.

Each school had its own elected community board. So when I got back down to Mississippi in August it was the second month of this first summer pilot project with CDGM. So I went to work with them right away. Because I had this background in dance and performance from growing up in Detroit and Bennington, I joined a group called the Living Arts group. It was a wild and wacky group. You have to be really young and crazy to do what we did. This was a group of two white guys, Tom Griffin and Alan ...something, two northern white college types, myself, and four or five young black students from Mississippi who were interesting in performing. They were pretty young, like in their eighteen, nineteen, or twenties. We had this old station wagon and we drove around the state of Mississippi to the CDGM sites doing entertainment. We were doing puppet shows, or little skits and they were pretty much audience interactive. The idea was to get



the staff at these community centers some ideas of things they could do as far as performing arts and to give the kids some entertainment and something new. We got chased out of many a town, run up many a road. We were really had a nerve driving around in these integrated cars because even though it seems like a fairly innocuous project, this was only months after the Mississippi summer project, so we were obviously outsiders. We dressed fairly respectably but we were probably just a little bit different in the way we looked. We had a good time. I was hobbling around on my one leg dancing around.

I'm sort of drawing a blank on that fall. What I think we were doing was preparing for the farm allotment elections. In each county there was a board of supervisors elected who made decisions about people's land, who got what subsidies from the government. And of course these things had always totally been controlled by the white citizens council segregationist group. So what we wanted to do was prepare black farmers to run on these committees and to vote for these committees. So Bob was working on developing this thing called the Southern Visual Education Service. It was kind of through a lot of Maria Varela's work. She was putting together educational literacy material. They had a little photography house. It was a little wood house that some local folks were letting us having for little or no rent, and it was equipped very well as a darkroom. We were going to be making these educational filmstrips. So we went around and gathered the material for this. Then there was some liberal supporters up here in Westchester New York and Bob and I came up that winter and learned how to do the layouts and the storyboards and how to shoot this stuff. These filmstrips were eventually produced and eventually used as educational tools for people in these elections.

Then in the spring CDGM had been lobbying all this time to get our grant back. We were so darn successful that summer that they wouldn't give us any more money. People were really starting to feel self confident, the teachers were not middle class schools teachers. The middle class school teachers in Mississippi had been walking a very narrow line. They had to sign on the dotted line that they were not members of the NAACP or they could be fired from their jobs. So teaching was the only sort of job with any independence of dignity that you could get outside of domestic work or farm labor, so people who were teachers were reluctant to give that up. Yet they themselves were very pushed around. So the teachers we had in CDGM were not that bunch. They were not the

middle class crowd. They were people who had raised other people's children and had to leave their kids home while they had to work in somebody else's kitchen. It was like a great liberation for the women and mothers who came to work in CDGM. They were actually getting the opportunity to educate their own children and the community's children. It was exhilarating. People were absolutely thrilled. It really was like the first fruits of this civil rights movement, this kind of social revolution. That's why I say it was so successful. People couldn't be intimidated. People couldn't be told they couldn't vote. They couldn't be starved out because they had their own money. Now a weekly paycheck would be about \$25. But people in those days were making about \$8-10 a week for full time work as a domestic household worker. So \$25 was better. Two or three people would split that one paycheck. So this program was very empowering to the communities and the local power structures were well aware of that. So they did everything they could to keep this money from coming back.

The success rate with the kids was also too good. The kids who went through that first summer program, when they started public school in the fall, they weren't all ashamed and frightened and tongue tied like a lot of kids had been. There had been no pre-school programs at all for poor black kids in Mississippi. The kids created quite an effect when they showed up in school that fall. They had been using small manipulative materials like crayons, paintbrushes, and puzzles. So they didn't have any problems with coming in and starting in on their work. We'd been doing all the reading readiness and singing. These were children who were articulate, who had been encouraged to ask questions. And the tradition in Mississippi, both black and white, on childrearing was that you should be seen but not heard. They weren't really encouraged to express themselves. So our kids had spent a summer going for hikes and finger painting and they were a pretty happy bunch. When they hit those public schools, the teachers were shocked and some of them liked it but a lot of them didn't. They really thought our kids were uppity and rude and didn't know their place. I wouldn't say that's why they didn't fund us. I would say it was more the political and economic aspect of our success that was intimidating.

**Wasn't it said that this money was being inappropriately used for marches by SNCC and that it was a front for black power?**

I think that came a little bit later. I don't know if that happened after that first summer. But I know as the struggle heated up for CDGM money to keep coming in directly to the movement infrastructure the attacks heated up because the local power people said you are using this government money for political purposes. Of course that's all they ever did. Stennis and Eastland were the ranking senators on the house appropriations committee, all they did was appropriate American tax money for generations for slavery. They had these huge plantations. They were being subsidized by the government not to grow cotton and they were being given these little nasty commodity foods and any of the peasants who were trapped on their land and would get out of line they wouldn't even give them this little nasty flour and lard and junk from the government surplus. During the season that they were unemployed...it was just disgusting. Yeah, we used that money politically in the sense that some of the people who were in the FDP who were also on the staff of CDGM might go around and announce when there was going to be another meeting or something. So that was like the war was definitely on. Whether we were going to be able to get the government to help us develop some economic and educational progress in the black community, however the black community chose to do it, or not. Or whether people were still going to have to run by the people they were being run by. We didn't get refunded that fall, and people worked six months. So that's how I was working with Bob those six months.

Oh, I just remembered... I was in New England. That winter I was on those Greyhound buses. Anyway, that winter we had this film "Chance for a Change" that Allen and Ellen Gifford made. I would take it around to colleges like Smith and Holyoke and try to fundraise. I don't know if I was the best fund-raiser. I might get fifty bucks here and fifty bucks there. That was call the unfunded period. There was probably more than one unfunded period. I know after that first burst of empowerment and franchisement that summer of '65, people decided to hang on until the money came back. Out of these very poor communities people kept schools running for six months out of their own pockets. They went into their freezers, into their gardens, they cooked for those kids. I mean these are families who had survived out of nothing for a long time and they knew how to pull together. People were really strong. Somehow they found the rubber for the tires and the gasoline money because people were spread way out in rural areas and it was expensive to transport kids to these

schools. Families were afraid to send these kids because they could lose their jobs if their kids were caught going to the Headstart. We had a number of our schools bombed. They would put tacks on the roads leading up to our schools. It was intense. But the good part was that it gave us a very real way to continue the movement. Voting was certainly really important, but when you start talking about feeding children that's real to people. Having moms come home with a little paycheck where they can hold their head up. This was very programmatic stuff that people could want to fight for.

**So did you ever get the funding back?**

Yeah, in the spring we got the money back. I remember that's when I went back on staff as what's called a roving resource teacher. SNCC was not CDGM. I've been a SNCC person since I was eight, nine, or ten years old. The OEO was certainly not about to give SNCC any money. SNCC was one of main objects of the counterintelligence program of J. Edgar Hoover. SNCC was considered radical, even SCLC was considered radical.

**I was under the impression that the CDGM had some ties with SNCC.**

Well it did, but it wasn't official. It was certain individuals who had some kind of a SNCC background worked for CDGM. This was enough to scare the local power structure. They knew who were Freedom Riders and who were not. Certainly SNCC has never been funded in any shape or form by the United States government. They held my check for six months. I remember a little funny FBI agent going over and over my time sheets and my files, and I didn't get paid for a really long time. I was still young and didn't have my own children to support. You don't need a whole lot of clothing down there.

So that spring I was stationed up in the Mississippi Delta in the town of Batesville, in Penola county. The area that we were establishing preschools in was Penola and Tallahatche counties. These were some pretty tough counties. They were traditionally plantation counties. It was a feudal lifestyle. There were a few white wealthy land owners, and then the majority of people were pretty much subjugated to working on the land and depending on those people for everything. I would travel around to different little towns. It's funny, I think some of these white settlers

were very stuck on Greek classics, because you know I worked in town like Sartus, Masadonia. The upper classes their were really big on classical western culture. So anyway, I'm in these little towns and what we would do id whatever piece of building we could find in the black community, we would set up a center there and this was to prove that they could really run these centers and that the money should really come into these communities. I don't even know if we had money for those right away. I think we might have still been doing it in hopes of. I would go into a community where there might be a church and we would try to set up a playhouse corner and we would make stuff out of nothing. I was in touch with what we called the central office in Jackson. We were starting from scratch all together. I was young and the teachers were inexperienced, but what we all agreed was that things needed to be improved, and up until then the children didn't have picture books. they didn't have A B Cs to practice. they didn't have crayons. The majority of teachers were women. What the men did more was do the transformation jobs, and when the money started coming in they would do the administrative jobs. There were some funny things that went on. There were a few parts of the state where power had traditionally been consolidated in the hands of preachers and teachers. So there were some preachers in some communities who really ruled their communities with an iron hand and they really decided who got the jobs and who didn't. Sometimes that was fine and sometimes it wasn't.

Then the fall of '66...where I got a call from Blackside this morning from Liz Carver and they were looking for this original paper which I found. This the Jackson Daily News and these are the headlines for October 3rd which is today's date. Exactly twenty-eight years ago 1966, "CDGM Refused Federal Money". It says CDGM has been expected by the OEO and they decided it can't be refinanced. So we had all kinds of mass meetings. Fannie Lou Hamer led the meetings in Jackson. People took buses and cars from all over the state. It really did pull people together in a very powerful kind of way because the poverty program directly involved a much larger number of families in the state than the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party had. There was a smaller group of people probably in each area where the MFDP was that couldn't even get involved because most people would be put of their land right away. So sometimes it was people who had some independent source of income like they were real estate agents. Mrs. Victoria Gray Adams who was one of three delegates along with Ms. Hamer, she was a real estate agent. So



people had some way that they could possibly survive. With the CDGM more and more and more people had become involved so the numbers were massive. A lot of people had gained a lot and had a lot to lose. So when we had these statewide meetings to protest the government taking the money away, we thousands of people coming. For the ones who made it to Jackson for these statewide meetings there would be more in the community. So it really brought a lot of people together. It was a really unifying force. But then within the next year or so we did start to lose the program to local power structures. I think the federal government just as they had during the Reconstruction period decided it was too much trouble to try to support the black community from up north. They just assumed let the local politicians run it. So that's what happened. The local power structures eventually took over the money and the funding. There was a group called Friends of the Children of Mississippi which was a spin-off from CDGM that I worked with for quite a while. We were continuing on with the same people and programs.

#### **So what about the Mississippi Action Project?**

MAP? They were the badguys. I can't quite...I was young. All I knew was that they were the badguys. It was a tricky thing. There were a lot of so called white liberals who were people who could see that obviously that times were changing and that black power was being established and there were going to be black voters and that more and more black people would be holding office. They were in their way trying to accommodate themselves to that and take advantage of it to make sure they could control it, or at least have a lot to say about it. So I guess being a SNCC type of person and being more connected with the grassroots black people than with the smaller percentage of black people who were maybe willing to go along with MAP, who had the PhDs or whatever. What I saw happening in CDGM was something so good that I didn't want it to be ending. People who had made wonderful teachers but just hadn't had the opportunity to have a formal education were going to be pushed out of the program and pushed back into the fields. That was a horrible, horrible thing. There was no reason that so called uneducated black women couldn't run pre-school programs for their children. We had teacher training all the time. people were getting educated as they went along, and they were doing a wonderful job.

There was no reason why this had to be taken away from them and they had to stay poor and let other people educate their kids.

That brings us up along to '67 or '68 and then in the fall of '68 I left Mississippi. Bob and I moved to New York city. I was pregnant with my first child. I worked throughout that summer doing educational workshops, driving around pregnant. That was fun. People down in Mississippi are a lot more respectful of pregnancy than they are in New York. It was kind of ironic that I came up to New York in about my third month of pregnancy, and the women's movement was just starting. Some people who I knew had been in the south, in the civil rights movement, contacted me. They were all really concerned that I not have this kid. People wanted me to have an abortion. I won't name all the names, but there were a lot of people who thought that was the thing to do. I had quite a hellish months up here. The air was polluted. Everything was bad. When I got back down there it was just wonderful because people were patting me on my belly. The average family size back in those days was like eight to ten kids. The fact that I was pregnant was a real positive and happy thing when I was down there because one of the traditions that came from Africa is a tremendous love of children. Call it the goddess, call it whatever you want to call it. From what I understand in most African cultures, women are highly regarded for their ability to bring new life. It was almost the opposite for what I experienced in my brief trip to New York. So when I got back down there, I felt every protected and supported and I just went right on with my big belly driving around doing these workshops, and we had a great time. I left the state two weeks I was due to deliver because I had some worries about whether it would be safe for me to deliver my child there. I was a Freedom Rider and the baby's father wasn't a white person and there are so many things they could do to a baby in the delivery room, put something in their eyes, or something. So I just didn't feel that it would be a good idea to risk that. Plus I wanted to have natural childbirth and it didn't seem likely that we could do that down there unless we did it at home I guess. So I arrived in New York in the beginning of September and my son Kabinga was born September 16, and I've been here pretty much ever since. I noticed one of your questions, when did you leave SNCC, and I thought that was funny because I'll never leave SNCC. I never left. SNCC may not exactly still not exist with an address and a board of directors but I think all

of the people who ever were part of it, we acknowledge each other as each other. We all feel connected as part of that group.

One of the things that was so good about this meeting down in Mississippi June 23, 1994 called the Mississippi Homecoming was that there is a really wonderful tradition throughout the black south of homecoming in August. People who migrated north for so many reasons but kept ties with their homes and families in the south just come back in the summer. Since the gains of the civil rights movement, this homecoming thing has just mushroomed. For instance in the Harmony community where I visit quite often to visit my friend Winston Hudson, she started this homecoming thing sometime in the sixties and they had maybe a dozen families. They would cook for everybody. Now its up to three thousand! They have to hire outside food, carnival equipment, the local sheriff is up and down the roads making sure no one is misbehaving. It's pretty remarkable. I was there for homecoming a couple of summers ago. I think in '92, and a whole bunch of her relatives who had actually not come down during the movement years because they were afraid of being hurt, were down there now. People were bringing children who maybe were born in California, Oklahoma, Indiana, they were coming back to these ancestral homelands. It's quite a wonderful thing. In one human lifetime is pretty short, and its been wonderful to see so much happen just in my little short lifetime. When I was down there, I was in my early twenties and now I'm almost fifty, and when I go down there now there are families who left in the forties and fifties and went to places like Chicago and Gary, Indiana. Some of them who worked steadily that whole time we able to retire from civil service jobs or factory jobs with a steady income or pension or retirement check, and those people are down there now building homes and reestablishing and strengthening those communities. What's so good about is that conditions have deteriorated tremendously and a lot of families are really glad that somebody thought to hold on to that land down their and make it possible. There was a political move on the part of the white power structure in Mississippi to get people out because black people were in the majority. Keeping people disenfranchised was one way of controlling the power but there was still a lot of black people. With mechanization and industrialization they just didn't need the farm labor there and they didn't try to find ways to keep people there. In fact, my friend Mrs. Hudson, she and her husband who were very active leaders in the school desegregation struggle...Her sister was one of co-signers to

one of the school integration lawsuit which was the first rural integration activity in the state of Mississippi. The banks and the FHA and the those folks when they needed loans they told them they just need to move on to Chicago. That was the idea, to get all the vocal black people who would be considered trouble makers by the white power structure, they were just going to freeze them out and make everybody leave the south and take their land. So its very gratifying to go down there and see all kinds of homes being built, people who have kept their land. There next generations have mobile homes all around on the land.  
[break]

**What did people in the movement think of interracial relationships like the one you and Bob had?**

You can't really generalize about people. Every person is a person. I would say as far as local people they thought it kind of cute. They didn't care. If we were crazy enough to do that, they weren't going to tell us we should or we shouldn't. The thing about Mississippi is that people have been having interracial relationships all along but they were not under the best of circumstances. We all know that rape has been one of the main forms of interracial relationships. Besides that though cross race marriage was illegal in about twenty-three states when Bob and I were living down there. It was on the books. It wasn't just Mississippi. The South African government came here and studied our Jim Crow laws before they put in apartheid. Apartheid was established later as a legal system in South Africa than Jim Crow was here.

**Did any black women ever show resentment ?**

I would say of the people who were born and raised Mississippians it wasn't such a big issue. As far as if we were all in the same age group, SNCC workers who were black or white...there were some stuff going on. There were some things that went on. As time went on I think the tensions increased as the sixties went on. By the end of the sixties biracial relationships were pretty much on the way out. There wasn't much support for them. There was a lot of pressure on them not to continue. It became politically incorrect. It was no longer acceptable.

**What is your perspective as a woman in the movement?**

During the earlier days of the sixties, what we women did, both black and white women, local or foreign, we struggled to survive as women the way women always have, by being supportive to each other and trying to handle the problems as they came up. SNCC women had more freedom in the movement, its not even SNCC...SNCC is just a name and a concept. When you are working in these communities SNCC isn't the main thing. You are part of the nature and struggle of each place. So when you are living that life in that movement...you are pretty much on your own. You are being pushed to your max. Everything you got, your physical and intellectual abilities are being challenged. A lot of movement people, men and women, are people who just wanted to be challenged. We were not going to be content to be spectators and sit on the sidelines. I think that there were some rough situations for us as women in term of what women go through. Women can get pregnant and men can't. But those things would have been going on anyway if hadn't been in the movement. I think we would much rather have been taking our lumps in the movement than not. I think that there was a tremendous amount of respect amongst Freedom Fighters, male and female. There may have been stuff that now we would now call by different names, but that wasn't the biggest thing. I guess in the earliest days when Jane Stembridge was down there and Casey, and Bob Moses, there was a band of brother, a circle of trust and I guess there was a really intense love among SNCC workers. By the time I got there in '65, '66, that was already not so universally true that everybody loved everybody because so much had happened over the summer project and strains within the movement, pressure on the movement. There was a sense of connectedness.

What was great about this Mississippi Freedom Summer Homecoming was that we fitted right into that context of the black community's homecoming that go on all over the south. I felt that the folks that were black Mississippians who organized this homecoming for the freedom volunteers, what they were doing was building on a very living and powerful tradition in the African American southern community. They were saying you all are my family and we're welcoming you home. And in a family everybody doesn't love everybody the same. Everybody doesn't get along with everybody the same but you do feel that you are connected. That's what happened this summer. I saw my family. We were happy to be together. The next



generation, our children were there. It was wonderful to see a lot of black students from Mississippi who are involved in defending the traditionally black colleges and universities that are being threatened by being closed down. Everybody that I saw there, we all have different histories among ourselves. People were lovers. People were spouses. People had disagreements. But it was just so good to see everybody that it was completely a family experience. I guess its in that sense that I can say we are all still SNCC members.