

[1963]

FIELD REPORT: SAM SKIRAH

I went to B'ham Sept. 15, for the purpose of getting together a group of students at B'ham Southern College to do something about the situation in B'ham, mainly in connection with the bombings. Before I left I got some materials from the office about SWCC (such as reprints of articles, background material on SWCC, press). I was given \$15 to make the trip.

Because I had so little money I hitch-hiked, leaving Atlanta about 6:00 and arriving in B'ham about 11:00 that night. When I got into the city it was under martial law. The National Guard had the city heavily guarded. I did not see a single civilian on the streets. Three troopers stared toward me but I was able to escape on a city bus that was passing nearby. I made it out to B'ham Southern College where I spent the night in a cove in the radio station where I once worked. I was however able to talk to some students that night.

The next morning I went to the cafeteria for breakfast. I saw several students who were interested in forming an organization of students between Miles and B'ham Southern Colleges. One of the best is Bill Seward who is the treas. of the student government there. Many of the students showed interest in doing something about the bombings the day before but they were afraid of what the administration would do to them. He set up a meeting for the next night. Some of the students said they would work on getting a group to attend the funerals. While we were talking a secretary from dean Jolly's office came and got me. She said that Jolly wanted to see me immediately. When I got into the Dean's office he ordered me to leave the campus immediately and never to come back. I ask him for what reason and he said that I was interfering with the program of his students. He was speaking for the administration he said. I left the campus and went to Miles College. Here I talked to Mr. Pitts about getting a group of students together between Miles and B'ham Southern. He was very interested and told me to contact Dr. Oglethorpe at B'ham Southern. I went from Miles down to the A.C. Carbon Hotel where I met Deany Lyon and Julius Spud. Here I called Dr. Oglethorpe who said he is very much interested in such a group but that he cannot take an active part in organizing such a thing. He did say that he could be glad to work with such a group once it got started. He also said that it would be better if I were not connected with the group. Oglethorpe is the most militant professor at B'ham Southern.

I found out that there was already some students meeting between the colleges but from all I could find out it is a folk music club. Some of the people in this group are interested in music is more than that. One such person is Sam Talley a professor at Miles College. He will work with the kind of group I have in mind. I also talked to some of the students at Miles College who are very interested in getting something started. One of these people is U.S. Clemens the ed. of the paper there.



On Tuesday Sept. 17 we held a meeting with some of the students from B'ham Southern College. There were not but five students present but the ones present were some of the best because they had to break the curfew the college had placed on the students in order to attend the meeting. John Lewis, Julian Bond, Darry Lyon and myself were there from SNCC. We met for about an hour and a half and discussed setting up the program. There was not anyone there from Miles College because school had not started there and I did not know how to contact the students. Alexander Brown was present and will work in setting up the program. The B'ham Southern students showed an interest in not being connected with me or with SNCC at this point. They felt that it would be much better if they set up the program and that I not be involved. This is the way I wanted it anyway.

At the funeral Wednesday there were many white students. I saw several from B'ham Southern. I gave the Southern students the information that Jack Minna got up on who owns B'ham and they said they would write some letters on it.

I am writing an article for the Southern Patriot about the students at B'ham Southern. Am ask me to do this.

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