

Here is an almost illegible copy of a letter sent out to the kids who were here this summer.

October 14, 1964

Dear Gang, working in "interville", what is going on here, what is going on here, what is going on here. Please for give us for being so lax, but since you have all now had some experience at trying to fit 48 hours of work into a 24-hour day, we won't even try to explain why we haven't written. First of all, the editorial we includes: Muriel (project director and working the southern part of Washington County), Valerie (federal programs and working the northern part of Washington County and the southwest part of Bolivar County), Pat (part-time freedom school and full-time Herbert Lee Memorial Fund executive committee), Russ (south end in Greenville, northern Washington County and federal programs), Dave (Greenville "public relations", northern Washington County and federal programs), Morton (full-time now in Cleveland-Bolivar County), Larry Brenton (full-time Issaquena County), Willie Rolling (full-time Sharkey County), Fred (full-time Sharkey County), Myrna Thomas (Hollandale), Mrs. Moreton (literary program and community center), Mrs. Blackwell (full-time Issaquena County), Ervin Little (sometime singer with Little Johnnie and the Sensational Sounds of WF&W fame and part-time local COFO worker), Buzz (freedom school coordinator and librarian).

Before launching into an opus magnus (?) of what has been doing around here, could we issue a plea to you all? Our files are minus all sorts of info, especially concerning your own local contacts. We can find no list of who attended the freedom schools or for what courses, nor any report, comprehensive or otherwise, on what was carried on in the schools and community center this summer. So would you all be dears and, amidst the million other things you are doing, try to write up for us your own individual reports (no matter how hazy) on what you did, what you thought were good aspects of the program, what pitfalls we might avoid before we trip into them on our own, etc. We are also missing a good deal of the research material which was gathered this summer, including a quantity of news clippings, etc. Has anyone seen them? Also, since only one of the freedom school people remained on, the rest of us could use any and all ideas which you might have for programs, with P. Veil making an urgent call to Vicki and Barbara on artsy-craftsy ideas for the elementary school crowd.

We hardly know where to start to tell all that has been going on here (and not going on here) since you all left. So we'll start in the middle and move madly in all directions at once. Officially our main emphasis at present is on the FDP freedom vote which will be held on Oct 31, Nov 1-2. Due to the usual Miss. red-tape hang-up and last-minute skulduggery of the county registrars in refusing to certify petitions as they should have, only Doc Henry and Mrs. Devine will appear on the official ballot for the Nov 3 election. The result has been two-fold: classes are being held in how to spell ~~Dr. Am. E. R.~~ as a write-in candidate; we are trying all over the state, but especially in the 2nd, to make a really big showing in the freedom vote so that when Congress reconvenes, Mrs. Hamer will be able to contest the seating of Jamie Whitten by showing that he does not in fact represent the majority of his so-called constituency under the 1 man-1 vote rule. Although no one is quite sure what Congress will do, this, like the confrontation at Atlantic City, will force the federal government to do something. Here in Greenville we are working hard at setting up some sort of viable block organizations (primarily on the south end) as core groups not only for the FDP but for movement activities within the city in general.

Although the general reaction of many Greenvillians to the winter project is "what are you doing here? We thought you'd all left," or a "we did our part this summer", the reception outside of Greenville and primarily in the north of the county has been overwhelming. Valerie, along with various others of us depending upon who is around, started working in "interville, which is a plantation town about 8 miles north of here. The adult group and MSU have been so enthusiastically organized by the people, including many from the plantations, that they are now holding their own mass meetings every Wednesday evening, with Valerie just dropping by to pass on our latest info Pto them. This past week Val held the first mass meeting ever in Lemont (Bolivar County), which is just over the county line, a couple miles north of "interville. Not only did 50 people attend this gathering (most of them again plantations tenants) but someone even offered one of the local cafes as a polling place for the freedom election. Down in Hollandale where Muriel has been working, the MSU has become very active. There are 68 members alone from the Panther Burn plantation. (No real need to emphasize to you all the importance of this interest on the part of the plantation dwellers, who are in the most precarious economic position as far as possible re-
prisals are concerned, but also the most militant in the movement). We are trying to organize the farmers so that they will have some say in the crop allotment program. Farmers leagues are also being started through which to introduce existing federal rural programs.

The freedom school has been slow in reopening, mainly due to the fact that it all had to be removed from 725 Nelson. We were fortunate enough (????) to be able to rent the downstairs room in Carter's building (for \$45 a month which is exploitation as far as this editorial we can tell) for a combination freedom school and community center. We spent a couple of wild weeks building book shelves (after a fashion) and putting the library together (the shelves sag a bit in the middle, but none has broken yet). The only two scheduled activities at the moment are a Negro history class two evenings a week and a study class for the elementary school kids which is about to drive the P. out of their minds. Through the black organizations on the south end we plan to start classes in background for politics (especially FDP for the moment) in people's homes using the "freedom primers" put out by COFO. Although the primers are quite simply written they use a fairly wide political vocabulary, present many facts in a readable manner and serve as a good jump-off point for exciting discussion of the situation (especially in Mississippi) in the region using the primers in the high school kids' area. All of us who are around have been doing some sporadic tutoring of high schoolers as they come and ask for it. (I've reviewed the Handbook of the National Council of Churches has been limping since the end of the summer. Fortunately the National Council of Churches representatives have arrived. Two of NCC's six staff folks, Dale DeLoach and Warren McGonagle and Terry Walker, will be working more or less directly with COFO in Greenville (which is NCC's headquarters for the Southern Ministry Department) that they will really serve as a spur for the Herberm. An executive committee will be set up next week as the policy-making body for the Center. It will include 3 NCC, 2 COFO, 4 local people, one local student and perhaps a couple other locally interested folks from Washington County at large. In addition an advisory committee will be organized to make the work as broad-based as possible. This latter committee will include any and all of the local organized groups, from the PTA and VFW to the Sunflower and Floral Club and members of the white community. To date the Fund Committee under the direction of Dr. Page and Mr. Moore has raised about \$750. As you can see, this is going to be a slow moving thing unless something extraordinary happens. One big donation was raised in the north by Barbara, Lisa and Ken, but other than that we've only gotten dribbles of contributions. Since we did promise this summer to raise most of the money for this center in the north (\$1200), we sure would appreciate it if you would let us know how you are all doing in this respect and what we could do from this end to help. We will be sending out a big mailing this week to the northern contacts which you left us (some of these seem to be missing, too - so we'll just send out what we've got.)

A word about Christmas -- we are all planning to remain in Greenville over the holiday, so if any of you want to come down to celebrate with us, you'll be welcome. Chief Burnley will be leading out the Christmas parade (the theme is "The Spirit of Christmas" -- got any ideas for a freedom float-in?). We'd like to be able to give a little something extra to the poor kids such as sacks of candy and fruit -- are there some schools in the north who would like to sponsor this with us? (Speaking generally of winter, it's freezing here: at night it gets down to the low 30's and only into the 80's during the day. Three cheers for the sunny south!)

And now a word from our sponsors. We're broke. There is a big \$10 in the Greenville COFO bank account, and that's it. Most of the projects have been getting budget money from Jackson, but somehow someone there got the idea that Greenville was a self-sustaining crowd (which we ain't), so... As a run-down of what we spend: \$90/month rent to Carter; \$100 (at least)/month phone bill (there is no longer a WATS line in Greenwood, and Jackson just took out one of its 2 WATS lines for lack of funds); \$40/month electric bill for the office and school; \$200/month gasoline and car repair bills for our 2 staff cars (one of which works strictly out of Sharkey and Issaquena -- the other being used for Greenville, all of Washington County and western Bolivar); and one meal a day for the staff. This doesn't begin to include office supplies like mimeo paper, envelopes and the tons of stamps we will need if we hope to keep mailing out materials to the north. Our new COFO bank account name is the "Greenville Project" (HINT). No kidding, guys, we hate to come begging, but we don't have much choice. Any help will be a start (even just stamps so that we can write to you). Hoping that you are all well and kicking and that we will hear from you all in the near future, remain

STRUGGLING

THE GREENVILLE PROJECT