

c. July 1965

Dear Ellen,

Thank you for sending my address book and for your note. I'm glad to know you're working at Liberation, although holding down two jobs must be a little rough. I gave Lee the book and he seemed very pleased. He has written you a letter, although I don't know if he has mailed it. He hangs around the Short St. office, where the Jackson project (or so it calls itself) is now located, seems very depressed, lonely and somewhat alienated from the other kids. I think that Bo, Larry Williams and the older (should I call them "local boys") may have had a bad influence on him... I am not, however, working on the Jackson project, and thus don't know the whole Short St. story.... I arrived to find the Lynch St. office shut down.. permanently.. the remainders of a freedom poster, and the broken door were the only indications that we had ever been... Half of the staff had moved to Holly Springs, saying Jackson was impossible to work in, the others, mainly the communications people had begun to set up a new office on Parish St. So, after recovering from the initial trauma of seeing Lynch St. vacated, I set about painting away, building shelves and laying rugs (yes, rugs) in the new office. Things were just beginning to go smoothly.. no gang fights, robberies, or knifings... when, lo and behold, there appeared a City Building Inspector, telling us we would have to vacate, because the building did not meet required building standards... we were given a few hours to move... so again we are without an office. Communications is attempting to work out of the FDP office... although the COFO phones are located in the condemned office... half of COFO's materials are piled on the Jewitt's living room floor (material recovered from Holly Springs). Typical COFO mess. Anyway, I'm supposed to be out working on one of the projects but keep getting hung up here... am presently, for example, running around trying to raise xxx rent money for the Freedom House (COFO no longer pays for it), caring for a girl from McComb who is ten months pregnant and has come here for medical attention (God bless Dr. Smith). looking for a new office, etc. etc. etc.

Things are pretty much at an all time low in that there is absolutely no leadership in the state; hence a hundred different directions, conflicts, etc... there seems to be very little consensus on where we are going, and how we get there. Aside from organizational problems, however, and the fact that we are all hung-up, incompetent, or battle weary, there is a lot of soul-searching going on, and there is an increased amount of dialogue on every level. Red-baiting is way up, and the NAACP is screwing us all over the state. An example of the kind of thing happening is the formation of biracial committees (grand, on the surface) with all of the wrong people... people who stand nothing to gain by any more than token change.....

There has been quite a turn over of people... mainly people gone away and not replaced.... so I can't even offer you good gossip. Wendy and Cliff are in Calif.... Most of the FDP people are in Washington... Jessie Morris lives in semi-isolation at Tougaloo... Hunter is busy organizing young democrats..... Hunter, although a dear friend, still erupts. Thornton is running the printing shop which has become a little party house.... God, I can't even think beyond the fact that people still spend their days sitting in

steps of their shacks, spend their lifes having babies, drinking beer.

This letter is so inadequate...but I'm really drained at this point, and figure something is better than nothing at all. I've also written a letter to Dave, Bev etc. which I am including. Will write more to you soon. Please keep me posted on NY happenings...its frigtening how rapidly one becomes ~~ixk~~ isolated down here....

Hope you are well. HOLD ON!