

24 August 1965
[Columbia, Mississippi]

Dear Mom and Dad,

Things have slowed down here drastically -- partly because of general discouragement arising last week (see inclusion), partly because much of what we're doing is just trying to keep running (cleaning up, fighting off hoards of ants occasionally).

One important event was the return of a guy around the corner from Jackson State College for two weeks. He came at a low ebb, when Curt had left, and we four had tried on Monday to get some kind of organization started before time ran out. We drew a blank against a brick wall and just about said let's forget it. Wednesday, Ike (the guy from J. S.) came to the meeting and livened that up. As we figured, either through innocence of the dead situation or through natural enthusiasm. At any rate, he gave us hope. Friday, with a girl from Prentiss, the meeting went excellently, and finally organized a boycott picket, which had flopped Monday.

Now all we have to do is figure out how to keep it going, and that looks hopeless still. But on the picket we ran into the CORE head from Duritta, La., who we think will be coming to help us for several weeks as far as organizing goes (man, he really told the people in church off on Sunday for sitting around on their...)

Anyway, except for canvassing for the Washington trip (which is difficult psychologically because of the constant shoving back of the date), and keeping on trying to get people down to register, we are stuck -- direct action is still hopeless unless people do it on their own (though I must admit, some of the originally hesitant girls have been doing okay -- they requested permission to sit in the bottom of the theater and were refused, and went into Autry's, although they lost their nerve and went out before asking to be served. Oh, well.

I think one of the major tasks is getting the door hung this week -- I'm not sure the girls will be able to do it (for that matter, I'm not at all sure I can do it). Also, we are going to try to wire this place ourselves since the guy who was supposed to wire it has not come for three weeks.

Sam left last Sunday. He missed the first bus; he called a cab, the guy mumbled something and hung up. 15 minutes later, Sam called up again and asked if they were sending a cab and the guy said No!! and hung up.

Mail about to leave. I called Laurel and got the bank to return the money to Chicago (Gwen hadn't got back even yet). Please send fifty dollars by wire for bus tickets and cheap suitcase -- I will pay you back from the Chicago money. I will be leaving as early Sunday as possible, or maybe late Saturday (there is a chance we will have pickets from Bogalooosa Sat. and I don't want to miss it). Damn, I've got to get this off -- will write soon.

[For the complete set of my Mississippi 1964-65 letters, see
<http://dickatlee.com/issues/mississippi>]