

Henry County

It looked like Henry County wouldn't get a SCOPE project after Rev. Harrell diverted the Carlisle group to Barbour County. But after orientation ended some people still weren't assigned and others arrived in Atlanta looking for a place to go. One night Hosea was talking to a group on the porch of the Freedom House and said he needed a team to go to Henry County, Alabama. He said there had been some violence there recently and he couldn't let the crackers get away with it. Who wants to go, he asked. The first to volunteer was Mary Pottle, a 39-year-old white woman from Weymouth, MA. With a degree in mechanical engineering, she was teaching jr. high math in Braintree, MA. Among her motivations to go South was her own experiences with discrimination, both as a woman and as a bright woman from a rural family in a world that didn't know what to do with her mathematical ability. She had been inspired by the Selma demonstrations and by her sympathy for Viola Liuzzo, who had been killed while driving a Negro teenager after the march ended. They were the same age. (Pottle, 1975, 1, 4)

Six whites and one Negro also volunteered to go to Henry County. Mike Bibler, 21, came from Elkhart, Indiana and attended North Central College in Illinois. Andy Leeds, 19, from Scarsdale New York was a student at Bard College. Sylvia Buback, 24 and Phyllis Gladych, 26, were both nurses in Detroit. They had driven to Atlanta with Mike Brown, 23, and Jim Herman, 21, whom they knew from the Newman Club at Wayne State University in Detroit. They were on their way to Allendale SC to join others from the Newman Club, but agreed to spend some time in Henry County first. Jim only stayed one week; the other three stayed for six.

The one Negro was Al Hampton, 39, who was taking his two-week vacation from his job as a meter reader in Los Angeles to work with SCOPE. Hosea sent them to Abbeville, where J.B. Newman, 66, had asked him for workers. Hosea assigned Jimmy Wilson from Chicago to be the project director. Wilson's father had left Mississippi for Chicago many years earlier to find a better life. It took some time to bring his family north. Growing up in Chicago's west side ghetto, Jimmy got involved with gangs but found his calling with the civil rights movement. He was working with the West Side Christian Parish organizing youth when the Selma demonstrations made the news. He and two female friends took the train South, where they joined the marchers. Jimmy was beaten on March 7 on the Edmund Pettus bridge. Like many of the young people who stayed after Selma, SCLC put him on staff and sent him to a rural county to organize. Not yet 20, he was now a county project director. (<http://digital.archives.alabama.gov/cdm/ref/collection/photo/id/1761>; SC 3-5/6-66, 4; Finley, 2015, 2, 329)

When Mr. Newman saw who Hosea had sent, he couldn't quite figure out what to do with all those white women. Late that night he took the SCOPE team way out into the country to a one-room schoolhouse. They found men from the Negro community discussing whether or not they should be allowed to stay. Reassured by Jimmy Wilson, they didn't ask anyone to leave. The boys stayed at two adjacent farms near Haleburg, in the southern part of Henry County. The farms were owned by the Saunders brothers, sons of a sharecropper and grandsons of slaves. Mary and one of the nurses were taken to a farmhouse on the outskirts of Abbeville where the woman of the house gave them the double bed in the front room to sleep in. They relocated every week or so because their hosts were threatened in various ways. Once, as they sat on the front porch after church just conversing, white men drove by yelling insults and shaking their fists.

Another host was warned to keep his children away because one might be hit by a bullet aimed at the niggerlovers. A third got a visit from the sheriff. (Pottle, 1975, 6-7; Herman-Brown interview 10-3-15)

Most SCOPE projects tried to meet in a church, but none were available in Abbeville. Mr. Newman had arranged for SCOPE to use the Negro Masonic Lodge on Girard St. as a meeting place. Newman thought a small room on the second floor could be used as an office, but it was little more than a space with a table and a few chairs. There was no phone.

Sheriff R. Y. Ball was The Law in Henry County. To make his authority clear to the newcomers, Sheriff Ball paid them a visit on their first day, stomping into the Masonic Hall where they were meeting. First he questioned the men about their arrest records. The white boys said they had never been arrested, which the Sheriff refused to believe. Jimmy admitted to having a record, but when asked how many times he had been arrested, he responded "Too many to count." The Sheriff almost smacked him, but instead turned abruptly to Mary and demanded her "card." When she showed him her driver's license he threw it back at her. "Don't get smart with me," he snarled. "I want your Communist card." He refused to believe that she wasn't a Communist and didn't have an arrest record. (Pottle, 1975, 9)

That night the street lights went off on Girard Street. When locals called town officials to find out what happened they were told that the street lights would stay off until the "troublemakers" left. Ten days later SCOPE moved to a different building further away and the lights went back on. On another occasion the SCOPERS went to a baseball game between two Negro teams out in the county. The game had barely started when the Sheriff showed up and stopped it. He told the white workers that the game wouldn't resume until they left. He also ruined the atmosphere of a marshmallow roast that SCOPE had invited young people and children to attend. Held behind the Masonic Hall, not visible from the street, the only disturbance was the sound of their singing. As they were closing up an older Negro teenager walked up to Andy Leeds and knocked him to the ground without word or warning. Jimmy Wilson, who was over 6' tall, "pushed" the assailant out of the crowd without touching him. They later found out that Sheriff Ball had ordered him to start a fight with the SCOPERS, which explained why the sheriff drove up immediately, jumped out of his car and used his bullhorn to break up the gathering. He hit Jimmy with a truncheon, knocking him down. He told Mary to get out. The white SCOPERS filled her car, which she carefully eased past the sheriff's car that was blocking the exit. (Pottle, 1975, 9, 15-16)

The Negro community dealt with the assailant, who said he had been plied with liquor, by "freezing" him with silence until he left town. Local whites used a similar tactic with the white SCOPERS. Mary soon found that she could not buy gas for her car anywhere in the county. The sheriff had visited all of the gas stations and given them a description of her white Rambler. She had to go out of the county when she needed a refill. Store keepers sometimes called the cops to have SCOPERS removed rather than make a sale. The local library did the same when two white SCOPERS entered its door. Once Mary tried to buy a cold drink at the local Taste Freezer counter. Negroes were normally served from an outside window; only whites could sit at the counter. Mary was white, by herself and not trying to make a point; just thirsty. Neither the manager nor the two women behind the counter would take her order. They treated her like just another "uppity nigger." Mary wrote the US Attorney General about this incident. Her letter worked its way down the DoJ hierarchy until it was added to the complaints the resident FBI

agent was sent to investigate in November, long after SCOPE had left the county. (Pottle, 1975, 13, 16, 18; FBI file #173-2678)

Low-level harassment was common. Mary was called a whore by local whites when they spoke to her at all; others refused to touch her, even in passing. A merchant who let her purchase an item threw the change on the floor rather than hand it to her. Local law enforcement made money off of the SCOPE projects, largely through tickets and citations. Mary's white Rambler with its Massachusetts license plates and Mike's VW bug with Michigan plates were easy to spot. Neither the sheriff nor those working for him were paid salaries. They were paid fees for each action taken; \$5 for each arrest, \$2 for putting someone in jail; varying amounts for serving papers. Out of this, the sheriff had to pay his expenses. This gave them all a major incentive to make arrests and write tickets. (Pottle, 1975, 13; SC 1-15/16-66, 4)

The sheriff's office saw the SCOPE cars as a potential source of income. Jim Herman observed that "Wherever we went there was a cop on your tail." Mike was stopped for making the wrong hand signal for a right hand turn. Instead of giving him a ticket, the cops arrested him and put him into a jail cell with two local white guys. Recognizing that this could be perilous, Jimmy Wilson phoned Atlanta. Mike's \$300 fine was paid within three hours. Mary was frequently followed and ticketed twice. Once was for not having Alabama license plates. The sheriff said every car had to get them within 30 days. He put her in jail until she was bailed out. She had tried to get Alabama plates on arrival but had been refused; after she was arrested she was permitted to buy them. The second stop was for going 55 mph in a 35 mph zone – uphill in an old car. That cost her \$150. Once Mary had Alabama plates on her car she could be ticketed for driving a car with plates from a different state than her driver's license, as could any of the other SCOPERS. Since none of the SCOPERS had Alabama drivers licenses, they could all be ticketed for driving without a license if caught driving her car. SCLC usually paid these fines or reimbursed SCOPERS for paying them. For Henry County SCLC paid \$500 in June and \$542 for July. (WSL 400) (Brown-Herman interview, 10-3-15; Pottle e-mail, 8-31-14)

Canvassing was slow-going. People wouldn't answer their knock on the door. Those who did often listened to their pitch, but otherwise did nothing. Enthusiastic when they arrived, none of the SCOPERS were prepared for the wall of apathy they encountered. They also made rounds of the churches, making announcements about when and where to register. After finally arranging for a mass meeting in Headland, only five people showed. (Brown-Herman interview, 10-3-15)

The extent of Negro poverty in the South was a shock to pretty much all of the northern civil rights workers, even those who knew something about poverty in the North. Negro women worked in white women's houses for \$2-\$3 a day. Their husbands didn't make much more working on the farms, which mostly grew peanuts plus corn to feed livestock. There were only two manufacturing plants in Henry County, plus one egg-packing plant. Pepperell Manufacturing Company made sheets and pillowcases and the Dixie Veneer Company processed lumber products. Neither had labor unions. Pepperell's workforce was 40 percent Negro, which was a lot more than the other companies. Negroes were hired only for lower end jobs where they had to meet production quotas. Pay hovered barely above minimum wage; some men who had worked in the plant for two decades only received \$1.60 an hour. They were often covered with lint; they breathed it and even ate it with lunch. No Negroes were employed in low end public jobs as they were in the North. All 22 of the US post office personnel were white, as were those in various

state agencies. Only the teachers and the preachers lived above the poverty line. Preachers were paid by their congregations, though they often had other jobs to make ends meet. Teachers were paid by the county, and could be quickly fired for advocating civil rights or working to register voters. They had to pay for their own teaching materials, which the teachers in the white schools did not have to do. (Pottle, 1975, 14; USCCR-ASAC, 1966)

One consequence of this poverty was that an inordinate number of children went to school hungry, which made it hard to learn. A lot of them got free lunches, paid for with federal money, but still didn't get to eat before lunchtime. Health problems and dental problems went largely untreated both due to the cost and the unwillingness of local white doctors and dentists to treat Negroes. A larger consequence was an unwillingness to challenge the white power structure out of fear of losing what little they had. Henry County Negroes went as far as they could when they invited SCOPE to help them register to vote. They were afraid to do more.

That became evident when Jimmy Wilson got Hosea's telegram to stage a voting rights march on August 3 to pressure Congress to pass the voting rights bill. He convinced a local Negro to sign an application for a parade permit in hopes that a couple hundred people would march a mile to the courthouse to protest how difficult it was to register to vote. This prompted the Mayor to invite seven local Negroes to meet with him and the city council that night. After the police chief said that any marching would be met with arrests, they all agreed that the permit should not be given. Unlike some counties, which marched with or without a permit, in Henry County everyone just stayed home. Local leader J. B. Newman told the *Southern Courier* that "Everything's all right here. We don't have no need to march. We had a satisfactory agreement with the officials." (FBI report of 8/3/65 in File #157-2925; SC 8-6-65, 6)

By then most of the SCOPERS had decided that Rev. Harrell was right: Henry County wasn't ready for a movement. Andy Leeds and Mary Pottle went home. The three from Detroit had already left for Allendale Co., SC where they originally intended to work. SCLC sent Jimmy Wilson to work with its Chicago project. That left Mike Bibler alone in Henry Co. without even a car.

The SCLC Convention

Only a day after I arrived in Abbeville we were told to come to Birmingham for SCLC's 9th annual convention. Held the week of August 9-13 in the Thomas Jefferson Hotel (once a pricey whites-only inn), it brought roughly one thousand people from all over to hear some of the most prominent names in the civil rights movement. All across the country the movement's impact was evident. The day the convention opened the U.S. Attorney General announced the first counties to get federal examiners. As it ended, the Watts riot was raging in Los Angeles.

SCLC arranged housing for all of the staff it brought to the convention. I had my own room in a very nice home at 1517 12th St. N. This lovely neighborhood was called "Dynamite Hill." It got the name during the 1950s when dozens of houses were bombed to deter better off Negroes from buying homes and lots on the edges of a shrinking white neighborhood. Intended to intimidate Negroes, the bombings scared whites, hastening their departure. Dynamite Hill became the nicest Negro neighborhood in Birmingham. (Connerly, 2005, 84-85; http://bhamwiki.com/w/Dynamite_Hill)

The homes in Dynamite Hill were larger and fancier than those in the suburban tracts where I grew up in California, or the homes of my relatives in Alabama. The bathroom in the house I stayed had unlimited hot water for bathing, which at that time seemed like a real extravagance. "Courtesy cars" picked us up in the morning to take us wherever we had to go. We were fed in a church basement five blocks from the convention hotel. I'd never lived this well before, certainly not at conventions. When I went to conventions of the Young Democrats while in college half a dozen of us split the price of a hotel room, alternating between sharing the bed and sleeping on the floor. Free room and board and transportation made me feel like a queen.

The first day (Aug. 9) Dr. King told the press that the days of big demonstrations were over, at least in the South. Congress had passed two major pieces of civil rights legislation in two years – the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. What was needed now was implementation. (*WP* 8-10-65, A5) We all knew that this would be easier said than done. White Southerners were determined to resist. They had prevented implementation of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the US Constitution for almost a century; why expect them to change now just because Congress had spoken? The Supreme Court had declared school segregation unconstitutional in 1954, yet eleven years later very few Negroes attended white schools. Title II of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibited race discrimination in places of public accommodation (that engaged in interstate commerce) yet "White" and "Colored" signs could still be seen all over the Southland. Traditional practices continued even when the signs were taken down.

Constance Baker Motley was the featured speaker at a banquet Monday night honoring Rosa Parks. As an attorney for the NAACP LDEF (known as Inc. Fund), Motley had argued ten cases before the Supreme Court before she was elected to the New York State Senate in 1964. Motley was Manhattan Borough President when she addressed the SCLC convention. The next year President Johnson would appoint her to be a federal judge in the Southern District of New York, a job she would keep for the rest of her life. She was the first woman or the first Negro

woman in all of these jobs.

Tuesday morning a couple hundred of us paraded six blocks from the St. Paul Methodist Church to City Hall, held a short prayer service on the steps and returned to the church. In 1963, an attempt to march like that would have brought out the police dogs. Now, it only brought police protection – though the police were probably there to protect city property from us and the city from bad publicity. Organized and led by firebrand Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, the main theme of the march was the lack of Negroes in the police and fire departments. (*NYT* 8-11-65, A20; *BN* 8-10-65, 2)

Positions on the police force had been a goal of Birmingham Negroes for many years. Asking that Negroes police Negro neighborhoods was not a radical demand; many towns in the South already did this. Many whites in Birmingham also thought it was a good idea. It didn't conflict with the rules on segregation or white supremacy as long as Negroes only arrested Negroes. A 1952 *Report of the Citizens' Committee on the Birmingham Police Department* had recommended hiring Negro policemen but Public Safety Commissioner Eugene Connor wouldn't do it. In 1956, two Negroes who wanted to join the police force were told that there were no application forms for "colored." All the application forms said "white." In the fall of 1963 the *Birmingham News* and some of Jefferson County's "Big Mules" endorsed colored cops in response to the demonstrations the previous spring. City officials talked about hiring Negro police with local Negro leaders but the Birmingham city government did not act. This left it the sole hold-out among Alabama's larger urban areas, and many of its smaller ones. (Manis, 1999, 82-86; Eskew, 1997, 101, 104-5; McWhorter, 2001, 556; *ADW* 8-22-56, 1; *BN* 7-9-65, 4; 7-30-65, 10; 8-4-65, 57; 3-12-66, 1, 2)

Shuttlesworth was a flamboyant figure who had already made his mark on Birmingham history. Born in 1922 in Montgomery County and raised in a small town in Jefferson County, he found work and education elsewhere in Alabama, returning in 1953 to pastor the Bethal Baptist Church in north Birmingham. Active in the NAACP, he had first petitioned the city government to hire Negro police in 1955 and since then had made it a personal campaign. By 1957 Shuttlesworth was well enough known to be invited to SCLC's founding convention but never became part of the inner circle. It was at his urging that SCLC held its 1962 convention in Birmingham and organized the 1963 campaign. (Manis, 1999, 281-82)

This campaign built upon the years of work by the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR) which Shuttlesworth had organized in June of 1956 when the State of Alabama banned the NAACP. Unlike the NAACP, the style and membership of the ACMHR paralleled that of the black church, with Shuttlesworth as chief pastor and an executive committee acting somewhat like a Board of Deacons. "Services" were held on Monday, combining religious and political elements. A survey done in 1959 found that over 60 percent of its roughly one thousand members were women. Shuttlesworth was still head of the ACMHR and still active in Birmingham in 1965 even though he had moved to Cincinnati in 1961 when called to pastor a larger church. (Clarke, 1962, 26-27, 37)

Among the press covering the convention was at least one mole. Ralph Roton used a

press card issued by the right-wing *Birmingham Independent*, but was really there to gather information for Robert Shelton, Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America. Headquartered in Tuscaloosa, it was by far the largest KKK organization at the time. Roton, a Montgomery high-school drop-out who held an IBEW union card, had been reporting on SCLC activities to Shelton since 1961. According to Alabama A. G. Richmond Flowers, Shelton had appointed him to head the Klan Bureau of Investigation. (BN 10-17-65, A-12; 2-8-66, 1) Investigating Communists and “subversives” in the civil rights movement was more than an avocation. He attended civil rights events to take photos and make recordings for the Alabama legislature and for Governor Wallace as well as the Klan. It seems that everyone was interested in just who went to movement events, especially those open to the public where anyone could go. (HUAC, 1966, IV: 3196-3297) No doubt the Birmingham Police had their own observers at the SCLC convention. Two detectives usually attended the ACMHR’s Monday night meetings and took notes. (Clarke, 1962, 58; White, 1998, 27)

The Tuesday night meeting was in the Sixteenth St. Baptist Church, where four little girls had been killed by a dynamite blast only two years before. Telegrams were read from President Johnson, Vice President Humphrey and numerous national political and religious leaders. After praising both the civil rights movement and his administration’s response to its demands, Johnson promised more “new laws where needed.” SCLC would soon ask him to do just that. (BN 8-22-65, 24)

Dr. King made two convention speeches. The first was his annual report to the SCLC convention on Wednesday and the second was a public address to a wider audience in the Civic Auditorium Thursday night. In the first he praised SCOPE as a success in the six Southern states where it had projects. He said that the summer workers had talked to over one million Negroes and registered 26,000 new voters. The next step was to send at least a million new voters to the polls for the next election. “Before we meet again next year,” he said, “it can safely be predicted that this program will have affected the political life of at least 120 of the South’s most predominantly Negro counties.” He anticipated that this would lead to the election of Negroes to all local offices, and “will inevitably result in liberating the political climate of the South.” Making the Negro community “fully conscious of its potential political power... was an ongoing, and sometimes tedious, job, requiring additional dedicated civil rights workers,” he said. Dr. King reported that the SCLC professional staff had increased from 75 to 200 and SCLC’s budget had tripled. Although he didn’t say so specifically, I reasoned that to achieve his goals more professional staff would have to be hired. I hoped be one of those. I hadn’t come South just for the summer and I didn’t want to leave. I agreed with Dr. King that this “tedious” work was “ultimately... [a] most exciting undertaking, for it means the dawn of a new day.”¹

¹ “Annual Report - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Delivered at SCLC’s Ninth Annual National Convention, Birmingham Alabama, August 11, 1965.” Although some of this was in the newspaper reports on the convention (*NYT* 8-12-65, 12; *CD* 8-12-65, 6; *WP* 8-12-65, A12), I used the numbers and the quotes on pp. 3 and 8 of a 12 page printed copy of Dr. King’s report, dated October, 1965, in Box 30 of the Fauntroy papers, in the Special Collections Department of George Washington University library. Budget information on pp. 1 and 13.

King also told us that the movement was going North, where it would focus more on economic issues. This had been debated within SCLC for some time before Dr. King announced on July 7 that SCLC's first major northern campaign would be in Chicago. Dr. King had toured Northern cities looking for a place to start a major project which had skilled local leadership that was willing to work with him – a characteristic which had proved crucial in Southern campaigns. At one point he had leaned toward Harlem, but Cong. Adam Clayton Powell (D - NY) had publicly told Dr. King to stay out. (*CD* 6-19-65, 9; *NYT* 8-15-65, 73) The Chicago campaign had started with rallies and a march in Chicago only a couple weeks earlier. Al Raby, the leader of the Chicago Co-ordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCCO), was in Birmingham to meet with Dr. King. SCLC's first major northern campaign would be on Chicago's West Side. (*NYT* 7-8-65, 36; 7-25-65, 39; 7-27-65, 18; *CD* 8-14-65, 1) I had no interest in joining the Chicago project; I wanted to stay in the South.

Thursday night we convened in the much larger Civic Auditorium for Dr. King to make his plenary address. He told several thousand people that "Few events in my lifetime have stirred my conscience and pained my heart as the present conflict which is ranging in Vietnam." He announced that he might write each country's leaders to appeal that they stop shooting and negotiate. (*BN* 8-13-65, 11) Dr. King had never been neutral about Viet Nam, but he was cross pressured. On the one hand he had been counseled that speaking out would alienate President Johnson, who was pushing Congress to pass civil rights acts. On the other hand, many in the civil rights movement were angry when the President sent 3,500 combat troops to Viet Nam on March 7, 1965, while ignoring attacks by Alabama state troopers on people trying to walk from Selma to Montgomery demanding the right to vote. Coretta Scott King and Bayard Rustin were among the many prominent individuals to address an anti-war rally in New York City on June 8. Peace movement leaders had provided money and personnel for Selma and earlier campaigns. (*NYT* 6-9-65, 4; 8-15-65, 73)

SNCC and CORE were in DC in August participating in an "Assembly of Unrepresented People" with four major peace organizations. It began with a picket of one thousand at the White House on August 6 while President Johnson was signing the Voting Rights Act at the Capitol and ended with a march of 800 to the Capitol on August 9 to protest US troops in Viet Nam. In between were two all-night sit-ins in front of the White House by those trying to present a "declaration of conscience" against the war in Viet Nam. Almost a fifth of the participants were Negro. About a third were arrested in one of the demonstrations. (*NYT* 8-7-65, 3; 8-9-65, 4; 8-10-65, 3; 8-11-65, 3)

Dr. King tread into this thorny thicket very carefully. On July 2, 1965, he told a public audience at the SCLC Virginia state meeting that "the war in Viet Nam must be stopped." But when he tried to persuade the SCLC board to pass a resolution, it balked. The board finally agreed to a resolution which clearly stated that "securing rights.... for Negro citizens" came first. Only if the conflict escalated could Dr. King "turn the full resources of our organization to the cessation of bloodshed and war." This soft resolution was presented to and passed by the convention. (*NYT* 7-3-65, 6; first quote in 7-5-65, 4; 8-13-65, 1; other quotes in 8-14-65, 3; 8-15-65, 73).

King's appeal for a non-violent resolution of the war in Viet Nam was drowned out in the media by the very violent conflict raging in Los Angeles. Only the day before, on August 11, a riot had broken out in L.A.'s Watts neighborhood. This was the first riot of 1965; there had been seven in the summer of 1964. (*NYT* 6-13-65, E3) Birmingham had experienced one day of rioting after two Klansmen threw bombs late in the evening of May 12, 1963, and another on September 4 after the home of attorney Arthur Shores was bombed. (*NYT* 5-13-63, 24; 9-5-63, 33) Whites had rioted in Oxford, MS in October 1962 after James Meredith was admitted to the University of Mississippi. The Watts riot surpassed them all. By the time it subsided six days later, 34 people had been killed, 1,032 injured, and 3,952 arrested. Almost a thousand buildings were damaged or destroyed. No one at the SCLC convention knew what to make of this. Uncontrolled violence was contrary to everything the organization stood for. After the convention ended Dr. King told the press that he deplored the violence. It was self-defeating, he said. But he used its occurrence to remind Americans once again that Negroes needed to be brought into the economic mainstream and not left to rot in jobless ghettos. On August 17 he flew to Los Angeles to meet with community leaders and get a better understanding of what had happened and why. (*WP* 8-15-65, A18; *NYT* 8-18-65, 1; 8-19-65, 1)

Quite a few others also flew to L.A. to learn from the riots, but not with the same motivation. Among them were the Police Chief of Birmingham and the Sheriff of Jefferson County. Along with the Chief of Security for Southern Bell Telephone and the Birmingham Captain of Detectives, they spent a few days with the L.A. Police Department obtaining "information regarding this disturbance (i.e. the Watts riots) which might be used beneficially in the future in their respective departments." (Report of trip to Los Angeles by J. M. McDowell, Sept. 3, 1965, Birmingham Police Files 31.6, BPL) Sheriff Jim Clark of Dallas County, made famous by the Selma marches, used the riots to foment fear in Alabama. He claimed that he had a "copy of riots (sic) plans used in the California disturbances," and that "negros (sic) are supposed to promote riots similar to those occurring recently in California in Birmingham, Montgomery and Selma." This caused a flurry of communications among the police chiefs of those cities and the FBI, none of whom could find any evidence to support this rumor. (Memo of 8-17-65 from Cap. J. M. McDowell, record of phone messages by Chief Jamie Moore, 8-18-65, BPSF 8.4, 31.6 at BPL)

The committed racists among white Southerners were pleased at the riots. Even though rioters primarily destroyed Negro neighborhoods, these whites felt that the wanton devastation justified their allegations that Negroes were an irresponsible and destructive force unless kept under tight control. Their worst expectations were being realized. (Permaloff and Grafton, 1995, 223)

My Roots in Marion County

Early Saturday morning I took the bus to Hamilton to pay a call on Aunt Loy. Hamilton is the county seat of Marion County, my mother's home town and that of her mother, and her mother before her. In 1818 Marion County was carved out of lands long occupied by the Chickasaws as one of the 22 counties in the new Territory of Alabama. Named for Revolutionary War hero General Frances Marion of South Carolina, otherwise known as the Swamp Fox, the initial boundaries encompassed nine of the current counties along the eastern border of Mississippi and part of what is now Mississippi. The first large influx of whites came from Kentucky and Tennessee with Andrew Jackson on his way to put down the Creek insurrection. They began to settle there in the 1820s, but only sparsely until the War ended.

Hamilton was founded in 1882. It was named for Confederate Captain A. J. Hamilton who donated 40 acres for a county seat in the middle of a much smaller Marion Co. A new wooden courthouse was built in the town square. It burned down five years later, along with all the county records and newspapers. After a second one also burned down, it was replaced with a large sandstone structure in 1901. As Register of the Circuit Court in Equity, Mama Mitchell had her office on the ground floor of that courthouse; I wandered around its halls freely during the summer of 1955. Until his death in 1941, Papa Mitchell had his law office nearby, but it was long gone by the time I arrived. An earlier office was destroyed by fire in 1913, along with twelve other buildings. Fire was a frequent cause of tragedy in the days when town water came from wells and was carried in buckets. Mama Mitchell's father, Jason Parks Ford, burned to death in his own home on April 20, 1926. He was an invalid and couldn't get out in time.

My grandfather opened his first law office in Hamilton after graduating from the University of Alabama Law School in 1893. Apparently, he only attended classes for one year before receiving his law degree. At that time, only a couple hundred people resided in and around Hamilton, which didn't incorporate until 1896. His clients were mostly farmers, who couldn't afford a trip into town for ordinary legal business, so he made house calls. When he was finished for the day, he'd wrap the reins around the whip pole, say "home, James" and snooze while James, his horse, brought him home. Not until 1927, the year my mother graduated from high school, did Hamilton get electricity, and not until the 1940s were the town roads paved. As a child visiting in the 1950s I had no idea how new this all was, since all the main roads were paved and well maintained. By then about 2,000 people lived in Hamilton. In the surrounding area light manufacturing supplemented farm income. One of my uncles worked in a mill while his wife ran the small farm they lived on, which was owned by my grandmother.

The economy and demography of northern Alabama has always been quite different from that of the blackbelt where most of the civil rights movement took place. The long finger of the Appalachian mountains reaches down from the North through Virginia, Kentucky, western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, and north Georgia before petering out in the rolling hills of north Alabama. Slavery never flourished in the mountains and hill country; there were few slaves outside of the Tennessee River valley and little sentiment on slavery, pro or con. The population was overwhelmingly white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, poor farmers.

Early in 1861, as the slave states debated whether or not to secede, the hill and mountain sections of each state resisted secession, seeing the coming conflict as "a rich man's war and a

poor man's fight." Some resisted more successfully than others. The northwestern counties of Virginia formed the new state of West Virginia, which was officially admitted to the Union in June of 1863. In Alabama the northern counties were too small and weak to form their own state, but their reluctance to become involved created the legend of the "Free State of Winston."

After Alabama voted to secede, a mass meeting was held at Looney's Tavern in Winston County on July 4, 1861 to decide how to respond. Those present passed a resolution "that no state can legally get out of the Union," but if it could, then a county "could cease to be a part of the state." Winston County didn't set up its own independent government; it just asked to be left alone because its citizens didn't want "to shoot at the flag of our fathers" and didn't want to fight their neighbors. (Key, 1949, 282) This was wishful thinking. The Confederacy required three years of service of all able-bodied white males between the ages of 18 and 35. Those counties that didn't meet their quota of volunteers were invaded by the Confederate Army, whose agents conscripted all of the able-bodied young, white men that they could round up. Those who didn't report as ordered were hung, shot and sometimes mutilated when caught. Between 8,000 and 10,000 white Alabamians hid out, earning them the sobriquet "Tories of the Hills." (Rogers, 1994, 210) Many joined the Union Army to avoid conscription into the Confederate Army. The First Alabama Cavalry of United States Volunteers was made up of these Alabama hill farmers who preferred to fight for the Union than against it, as well as some men from other states.

I heard about the "Free State of Winston" while growing up. I didn't know that the story was only a legend and I didn't know that it was part of my own family history. The story was not told with approval. By the 1950s the history of Southern resistance to secession had all but disappeared from common knowledge. The statement "...must be from Winston Co." was applied to those who didn't know their place or didn't follow the rules. I was on the receiving end of that accusation, said teasingly by Aunt Loy or Mama Mitchell, many times.

Officially, 2,576 white Alabamians enlisted in the Union armies, 80 percent into the First Alabama Cavalry. My great-grandfather, Andrew D. Mitchell, was one of these. Actually, he was two of these numbers, because he enlisted twice and the official records count each enlistment. (Current, 1992, 213, 217) The first time was on Sept. 25, 1863 when he mustered in along with his two older brothers – Samuel and Eldon – to escape Confederate conscription. Andrew was two months shy of his seventeenth birthday but he lied about his age to stay with his brothers. Both older brothers took sick and Eldon died. Andrew and Samuel soldiered in Mississippi, Arkansas and Tennessee before their Company L joined Sherman's march through Georgia. They got as far as Atlanta but were not part of the General's infamous March to the Sea in which his troops pillaged and burned everything in their path. In its own way the Army was good to Andrew. Having had no formal schooling, Andrew was illiterate when he joined; his officers taught him to read and write so he could be promoted to sergeant in May of 1864. He was discharged after his one year service obligation ended. Andrew must have liked Army life, because he rejoined the following February 18th as a corporal and stayed until the regiment was dissolved on October 20, 1865.

I wish I could say that I grew up on this story of my great-grandfather's willingness to go against the grain, but I didn't. Not until 1995, forty years after the summer I spent in Marion County, did I find out his name. Mama Mitchell never so much as mentioned her father-in-law. Nor did she tell me that her uncle, Joseph M. Ford, also served in the First Alabama USV, as a

private. Neither did any of my aunts, or even my mother, tell me about the Union skeletons in the family closet. Only my mother's silence surprises me. She knew her grandfather – she was 22 years old when he died on November 3, 1931 – but she never uttered his name. I once asked her where Papa Mitchell's people came from; she shrugged her shoulders as though she didn't really know and said she thought they came from Mississippi.

They didn't. Andrew and his brothers were born in Georgia. Susanna Mitchell, his mother, brought her seven children from Cherokee County, Georgia to Winston County, Alabama in 1861. There's no record of why they moved, nor any record of the children's father. Andrew's war records state that his father is unknown. In the 1860 Georgia census Susanna appears as a "head of household" living in the Wild Cat District of Cherokee County; her occupation is given as "Prostitute." Something prompted her to move her family to one of the poorest counties in Alabama just as the War was starting. After it ended, Andrew returned to northern Alabama, where he farmed for the rest of his life while raising nine children with the woman he married two months before being mustered out of the Union army.

He did not fade into the background of rural life. Known locally as "Uncle Andrew" he served four years each as a justice of the peace and a county commissioner. In 1890 his service was rewarded with a postmastership at Thorn Hill, a wide spot in the road where Marion County meets Winston County. In the Nineteenth Century northern Alabama voted Republican out of loyalty to the Union. Between 1861 and 1933 the Republican Party held the White House for all but 16 years. Alabama Republicans had their pick of the federal patronage jobs in their state, of which Andrew's was only one small plum. However, by the time he ran for Congress on the Republican ticket in 1910 the Democrats dominated the entire state; 1898 was the last year Alabama sent a Republican to Congress until 1964. In his race against a progressive incumbent Democrat from Hale County, Andrew got only 18 percent of the vote.

Acutely aware of how his opportunities had been limited due to lack of education, my great grandfather provided his children with as much as they could get, even though their labor on the farm was probably missed. My grandfather attended two years of normal school (college) in Florence, Alabama and then graduated from law school at the University of Alabama in 1893. The only one of his siblings to emigrate from northwest Alabama became an M.D. Yet, for the sin of soldiering for the Union Army, the Mitchells erased Andrew from the family tree. In the not too distant future, they would do the same to me.

The Birmingham Bus Station

My bus left Birmingham at 5:15 a.m. There was an earlier one at 1:45 a.m., but it would have arrived in Hamilton at 4:00 a.m. I didn't want to wake my aunt at that early hour, and preferred sitting in the Greyhound bus station to waiting in the deserted streets of Hamilton until daybreak. I was glad to see that the bus station had finally desegregated. There was one waiting room, one set of restrooms and one diner. The Supreme Court had ruled late in 1960 that it was a violation of the Interstate Commerce Act for facilities associated with interstate carriers to be segregated. The Freedom Rides publicized their continued segregation in May of 1961. Birmingham was one of the three Alabama cities where the integrated teams of riders were beaten up by screaming mobs while the police looked the other way (the other two were Anniston and Montgomery). (*Boynton v. Virginia*, 1960; Peck, 1962, 114-32; Howard, 2004, 188-99; testimony of Gary Rowe at Church Committee *Hearings*, Vol. 6, 1975, 117-8) At the explicit request of the Attorney General, the Interstate Commerce Commission issued rules on September 22, 1961 stating clearly that racial segregation on interstate carriers, and in facilities used by both intra- and interstate passengers was illegal. (Barnes, 1983, 176)

Despite this, I had noted that the Birmingham bus station was still segregated in 1962 and 1963 when I passed through on my way to someplace else.¹ The signs were gone but everyone knew in which room they were supposed to wait for their bus. They also knew what would happen if they didn't stay in their place. Fannie Lou Hamer and five colleagues were badly beaten when they entered the white restaurant at the Winona, Mississippi bus station on June 9, 1963. Sometime in the last two years those invisible walls had finally come down, at least in Birmingham. (Watters and Cleghorn, 1967, 363-75; Branch 1988, 819)

I had dressed properly for my visit in one of the two nice suits my mother insisted I take with me, correctly guessing that there would be no place to change clothes where the bus dropped me off. I put my hair up and even wore pantyhose, which I hated. Maintaining a neat appearance meant sitting carefully in the bus station in order not to muss my hair or clothes. Since sleep was not an option, I settled down with a science fiction novel and some postcards I needed to write.

Southerners are very friendly people and do not share the northern belief that total strangers just want to be left alone. Around 10:00 p.m. a Negro couple sat down next to me, wearing SCLC delegate badges. I wasn't wearing any civil rights insignia, but they recognized

¹ The Greyhound and Trailways bus stations in Birmingham were separated by four blocks. The 1961 Freedom Riders went to the Birmingham Trailways Station, which is where I waited in 1963. In 1965 I was waiting in Greyhound. I don't remember which one I was at in 1962. (Freeman, 2004, 48, 77) Barnes wrote that "By mid-1963, legacies of a Jim Crow transit structure lingered on, but overt, systematic discrimination in interstate transportation had ended." (1983, 184). I must have been waiting in one of those legacies. I deliberately sat in the "colored" waiting room, though I don't remember whether I found it easily or not. During the hour or so that I sat there, a Negro woman came over to me and said in surprise "What are *you* doing in here?" "The question is," I replied, "What are *you* doing in here." She shook her head in amazement and left.

me from the convention and started a conversation. The man said he was a Baptist minister, age 32, from Marion, Alabama (the county seat of Perry Co.), The girl with him was only 17, but they were, she said, “sort of engaged.”

A little before 11:00 we went to the cafeteria to get a lemonade, where he ran into a friend, who suggested that we go for a drive. I was game, but not sure what to do with my two heavy suitcases. I hadn't checked them because I didn't want them to go out on the 1:45 a.m. bus without me. I asked the two young white boys behind the baggage counter if I could just leave them for a couple hours – I'd retrieve them before they could be put on the earlier bus. All of the baggage handlers I had seen inside the bus station were white; all the ones I saw outside who loaded the bags onto the buses were Negro. Unfortunately, they had seen me talking and joking with the Negro couple, so my proper appearance and polite request did not gain their co-operation. One almost said OK, but the other cut in to say “You'll have to wait for the baggage clerk to come back,” indicating the back of the room with his chin. “He'll be 'long after 'while.” Turning to the first clerk, he observed that there “sure is a lot of white trash in the station tonight.” “Yeah, there sure is,” I casually drawled out in my best Southern accent, trying to suppress a smile. “Just goes to show what kind of people ride on and work for Greyhound.” I smiled and batted my eyelashes. When the baggage clerk arrived, I repeated my request, but the answer was no. I started to ask again, very sweetly and politely, but the first clerk interrupted to say “They're sure learning a lot with those riots in California, I'll bet.” By this time I couldn't contain myself, and grinning broadly, highly amused, I walked away.

Since I couldn't safely check my bags and they were too heavy to carry with us, I splurged a quarter for a locker and all four of us took a taxi to some Negro nite-club in a poorer section of town. Admission was 75 cents each. It closed at midnight, so we didn't go in; that was too much money to spend for such a short stay. Instead we stood on the corner and talked while some kids only ten feet away tussled, jeered, made out, and danced. Everyone stared at me. The Rev's friend, whose name I never quite got, kept asking me if I thought we should integrate some of the hotels in the city. My hitchhiking experiences had taught me to say no early and often, but it didn't stop him from asking just as often. When he wasn't talking about hotels, he told me that he too was a Baptist minister and had been ordained only a year ago.

After we returned to the bus station, the Rev and his girlfriend left, not for Marion but for a little town twenty miles out of Birmingham, to visit his mother, whom he said he hadn't seen in three years. I settled down with my novel and postcards, but not for long.

Around 4:00 a.m. two young men sat down, one on either side of me, and started to chat me up. They had the classic “white trash” look. Thin to the point of emaciation, pallid skin, teeth so poor that they looked like a dirty white cloth splotted with grease spots where some were missing and others rotten with decay; slack muscles and watery blue eyes. While visiting Alabama as a child my mother had pointed out such folk hanging around the courthouse. She attributed their uninviting appearance to poor nutrition. I had seen these two off in a corner earlier, talking and pointing to me; they had probably seen me talking with the Rev. and figured I was good for a gag or two.

My initial impulse was to coldly tell them to go away but after a little hesitation, I thought I'd see what I could find out about them instead. Of course, trading stories required telling them about myself and I had no intention of doing that, at least not truthfully. Again using what I had learned from hitchhiking, I concocted a story of half-truths. I manufactured a name

and address, a little bit of naivete, and a personal history that left out all of the essentials. I told them that I was on my way to visit an aunt (true), after having seen my cousin in Birmingham (not exactly true). I was from Abbeville (recently), where I had grown up (false) and currently worked as a typist (a little bit true) and a teaching aide in one of the local schools (not true). But they couldn't come visit me (heaven forbid!) because I was going to Atlanta in two weeks (maybe) to get a new job (maybe).

They told me that they were ages 27 and 28 respectively and had just gotten off work from the local steel mills. One pulled out his drivers license to show me and wanted me to show him mine. I certainly wasn't going to show him my California drivers license with my real name on it, so I insisted that I didn't have one. He didn't believe that claim; everyone in the South gets their license as soon as they can – usually long after they've learned to drive. These boys were more on the make than the Rev's friend. They wanted me to take a later bus so I could “go have some fun” with them. Of course I wasn't going to do that.

I was relieved that the 5:15 bus was on time as I couldn't keep up the fake stories and the Southern accent much longer. What I enjoyed most was the expression of utter incredulity on the faces of the white baggage clerks as they watched the two white steel workers carry my heavy bags to the bus for me. I didn't check my bags with the clerks out of concern that they would “lose” them between their office and my bus. Nothing like a gentleman when you need one.

Visiting Aunt Loy

The bus took a little over two hours to travel the 101 miles from Birmingham to Hamilton, about midway up Highway 78 to Memphis. Most of the twelve Mitchell children were out of the house and living on their own before that road was paved in the mid-1930s. Trips to the big city were rare when they were young, by train from Guin, which was sixteen miles from Hamilton. Ten of them left Marion County when grown, never to return, not enamored with life in a small town in a rural county. Uncle Grey stayed, largely because he was mildly retarded and didn't have much education; he married a good woman who ran the farm they lived on while he worked in a mill. Aunt Loy left for a while, but didn't go far. She returned home to take care of her mother while working as a legal secretary to Rankin Fite, the main lawyer in Marion County. Large families generally choose a daughter to care for elderly parents; Loy was the designated daughter. Papa Mitchell died rather suddenly early in 1941, so did not require long term care, but Mama Mitchell lived until late in 1962, passing at age 83 after several heart attacks.

I had lived with the two of them on two occasions. The first was for nine months when I was three. I have few memories of that time, but my mother told me that Loy was so taken with me that she wouldn't give me back. Helen had to drive to Alabama and "steal" me away. The second was the summer of 1955, when I was nine. We had driven to Alabama the summer before to visit the relatives and I had begged and badgered my mother to let me return the following summer. I liked Hamilton. My childhood dream was to live on a farm with lots of animals; Hamilton was as close as I could get to a rural life. I have fairly extensive memories of that summer, all pleasant, except when I had to listen to my aunt and my grandmother complain about each other. I hung out around the courthouse talking with all the people who knew the Mitchells; I played in Rankin Fite's office while Loy typed his legal papers; I learned how to set type at *The Marion County News*; I hunted for arrowheads in the 16 acres of woods in back of the house; I swam in the pond on Uncle Grey's farm; I taught my new puppy, Lexi, to bring in the morning newspaper; I helped tend the family graves, heard family stories and met distant cousins.

I was already interested in politics, even though I didn't know all that much beyond the fact that Democrats were good and Republicans were bad. I much preferred playing with Rankin Fite's campaign paraphernalia than the toys most nine-year-old girls enjoyed. The Fites were the premier political family in Marion County. In 1955 Rankin Fite was Speaker of the Alabama House. He kept that job while Big Jim Folsom was Governor for the second time. He would be Speaker again from 1967 to 1971, during Lurleen Wallace's and Albert Brewer's term in office. Both his father and his grandfather had practiced law in Marion County and one of four Fites had represented Marion County in the House or Senate for most of the 20th Century. Effective politicians, they "brought home the bacon," in so far as there was any in a state with low taxes and little public investment. (*Tuscaloosa News* 11-7-80, obit on 5)

I was still my mother's daughter and not always the good little girl the Mitchells hoped I'd be. My first test came early in the summer when Mama Mitchell asked me whether I favored the North or the South in the War. I hesitated for a moment and then blurted out "the North." I knew that wasn't the right answer, and I really didn't have an informed opinion on the topic. I was just being contrary, but contrary in a way that I knew my mother would approve. I

don't think my grandmother expected me to have an informed assessment of the War at age nine; she was trying to see if my mother was raising me right. On finding that she wasn't, Mama Mitchell and Loy spent the summer teaching me Alabama history from a Southern perspective. I still know the words to the Alabama State Hymn by heart.

I phoned Aunt Loy when I got off of the bus, knowing that she was an early riser. Her house was about a mile away, just outside of town, an easy walk if I hadn't had those bags. When her car pulled up she scrutinized me from head to toe, justifying my decision to dress up despite the discomfort of waiting and traveling all night in a good suit and pantyhose. I knew that she would report this visit to my mother and my appearance would be of prime importance. I had hoped to change clothes when we got to her house, but she had plans. Her favorite niece was visiting from California, dressed like a proper young lady, and she was going to show her off. After breakfast we would pay visits on several of her friends and attend some celebration at a local store. She didn't ask me what I was doing in Alabama and I didn't say. Of course she knew that I was there as a civil rights worker – one of those dreaded outside agitators invading from the North to upset the social order. I knew she knew and she knew that I knew that she knew. That was the elephant in the parlor that was better left unmentioned. Southern families are good at pretending that what they don't like doesn't exist. My challenge would be to play along with whatever fiction she chose to create.

I thought I pulled it off very well, and indeed Loy appeared to reward me that night when we sat and talked about the past (we certainly couldn't talk about the present). Just before we went to bed she went into her drawer and pulled out her opal ring -- a white opal set in a circle of chip diamonds with a gold band. I had often played with her jewelry in 1955 and that was one of my favorites. Loy said she knew that I had always admired it; since my twentieth birthday was coming up, she was giving it to me. It was way too big for my fingers. I knew I wouldn't wear it, but I was genuinely touched and thanked her profusely.

Late the next morning Aunt Ruth pulled into the driveway. She was the second Mitchell child and the oldest daughter. Ruth Mitchell Brown lived about 35 miles from Birmingham, where she had taught in the public schools and raised two children. Although I didn't feel close to Ruth like I did to Loy, she had played a big role in my life. I was born in a military hospital near Atlanta right after World War II ended. My mother said I was born sick, as were many other babies born that week in that hospital; several died. She took me to Ruth's home where they nursed me back to health. After six months, when I was well enough to travel, my mother took me to Los Angeles and moved in with her next younger sister, Jack Ann Oliver (named for Andrew Jackson Mitchell – one of Papa Mitchell's brothers). She lived in L.A. for the rest of her life, mostly in the San Fernando Valley.

Loy hadn't mentioned that Ruth was coming, and never told me why she was there at that particular time. The day passed pleasantly enough; we had lunch and visited the cemetery. I wasn't sure how long to stay. I had told Loy that I'd be there for the weekend but I was prepared to stay longer if she asked. Thus I was completely unprepared for what happened next.

Aunt Loy exploded. With no obvious provocation, she started to yell at me about what was I doing working with all those niggers. She said many other things in the torrent of words that poured from her mouth, but they are too vile to repeat. Within her words was an underlying fear, as she told me what my male Negro colleagues would do to me if they got the chance. I

stood there in shock wondering what had triggered her outburst. Before I could say anything, she told me to get out of her house.

Perhaps I would have been less shocked if I had known how Southerners viewed sex and race. A lot of what Loy said had to do with rape, and how my black male colleagues were just waiting to rip me apart. If I had known more Southern history I might have been aware that in the 19th Century white Southerners created the cult of white womanhood, with its myth of the sex-crazed brutal black male just waiting for a chance to rape this icon of the Southern Way of Life. (Feimster, 2009) Loy was born in 1906. Ruth was born in 1898. Both grew up while this myth was running strong. My mother, born in 1909, probably absorbed it herself, but she had clearly rejected it by the time she was raising me.

Ruth, who had said nothing, told me to pack my bags and she'd drive me to Birmingham. Once we were on the road I asked her what had happened, what had I done? She said nothing. We passed the two hour drive in stony silence. When we reached the city limits she asked me where I wanted to be dropped off and I said the Greyhound Bus station would be just fine. She didn't ask me where I was going, and I didn't say.

The next bus to Abbeville left about 3:00 a.m. so I had a long wait ahead of me. I didn't want to talk to anyone, and I knew that if I stayed in the waiting room that would be difficult to avoid. I retreated to the Ladies Room, which conveniently contained a brown naugahyde couch in case some of the Ladies were indisposed. I bought some postcards and a magazine to have something to do. Then I changed into more comfortable clothes and hogged that couch until my bus left, thinking about what had happened, wondering how Loy's favorite niece had morphed into the parlor elephant in her mind. I realized that I had completely misjudged the depth of white Southern racial prejudices. I had assumed that education was the way to get white Southerners to change their views. It worked for my mother; why not her siblings? Aunt Loy made me realize how deeply racism was buried in the Southern psyche. Although she never asked why I was in Alabama, Aunt Loy knew that I had come to turn her world upside down. Not her immediate world – in the 1960 Census there were 733 Negroes in all of Marion County – but the larger conceptual world of ordered relationships. In her world white supremacy was the natural order of things; in my world, it was evil. I knew that education alone rarely changes people's attitudes about good and evil. I could no longer expect the older generation to change; it would just have to die out.

I saw Aunt Loy one other time. In April of 1971 I was invited to give an academic lecture at the Birmingham campus of the University of Alabama. My mother had told me that Loy had had a stroke and was being cared for in a Birmingham nursing home. I phoned Aunt Ruth and asked her to go with me to visit Aunt Loy. She declined to accompany me, but did tell me where Loy was. When Loy was wheeled into the visiting room, her head hung down to the side and her eyes were half open. She couldn't talk. After holding her hand for fifteen minutes while I talked to her without much response, I left. When she was better, Helen and Jack brought her to the Valley and put her into a nursing home nearby where they could keep an eye on her and take care of her affairs. The three middle sisters had always been a subfamily among the Mitchells; they helped each other out and sometimes wore each other down. After my mother died in November of 1973, I heard nothing more about Aunt Loy. None of my remaining aunts and uncles would have anything to do with me. I don't know when Aunt Loy died or where she is buried.

Abbeville

The sign said “Welcome to Abbeville, A Friendly Town.” Founded in 1823 but not incorporated until 1853, Abbeville was called Yatta Abba by the original Creek population. Its central location led it to be named as the county seat in 1833, the place where records were kept, taxes were collected and justice was dispensed. Populated by 2,524 people when the 1960 Census was taken, it resembled many other desperately poor, small Southern towns. The courthouse in the center of the town square looked like it had been built before the War and hadn’t been painted or washed since then.¹ From down the street you couldn’t see it at all because it was surrounded by trees. On one corner of the square, clearly visible, was the police station. I would become very familiar with that little building before I left Abbeville.

In all the weeks I worked there, no one told me that Abbeville had been the site of a cause célèbre in 1944 when a young Negro mother was kidnaped by six white men on the prowl for sex. They took her at gunpoint from a group leaving a church in Abbeville, drove into the woods and gang-raped her. The Sheriff quickly identified the perpetrators, but when the men said that they had paid for the sex, he was unwilling to do anything more. A phone call to the NAACP in Montgomery brought the branch secretary, Rosa Parks, to investigate. Her father, James McCauley, had grown up in Henry County, so she had kin there who could tell her about the people involved. A long-standing race woman, she and her husband had worked on the Scottsboro boys’ defense in the 1930s. Parks had registered to vote in Montgomery on her third try. After she returned to Montgomery with information about the gang-rape, the NAACP organized a massive publicity campaign, comparing the nonchalant attitude of the authorities toward the brutal rape of a black woman with the quick trial and execution of black men accused of raping white women. When two grand juries wouldn’t indict any of the accused, the authorities dropped the matter. While the victim never received justice, the massive publicity helped educate the rest of the country about Southern racial attitudes. (McGuire, 2010, pp. 3-39; *CD* 9-14-45, 1; 10-6-45, 1)

Inside the same courthouse where the grand juries heard about this case, the paint was peeling from the walls and splinters protruded from the stairs. Grabbing the rickety railings to ascend to the next floor was not a good idea. Ceiling fans in each room turned languidly, slightly circulating the hot, humid air of summer. One could still see where the signs had once hung over the “colored” and “white” drinking fountains. Even without the signs, everyone knew which one to use – when they worked, which they usually didn’t. There were only two restrooms, instead of the four I was used to seeing in Southern public buildings, or even the three common to Southern gas stations. Both had signs. One said “Colored” and the other “White Men.”

The streets facing the courthouse contained virtually all of the places of business. A few more lined the side streets as they twisted and curved from the square into the residential sections and to the main highways. There was one prosperous looking section with tall, stately homes built many decades ago, but most homes looked poor. I soon learned that paved streets were the most visible difference between the white sections and the Negro sections of town. In the latter, the iron-red roads were gutted by a complex of ruts, bumps and ditches, which changed with

¹ In fact this courthouse had been built in 1889 at a cost of \$2,040. It was replaced in 1966. (Scott, 1961, 34) <http://hchg.org/gallery/historical-photos/106-historical-photos>

every hard rain. Few streets were wide enough for two cars to pass. When two vehicles going in opposite directions met, one had to back up into a driveway in order to give way to the other. There were no street signs or house numbers. Everyone knew where everyone else lived; anyone who didn't know didn't belong there.

The standard pattern for Negro homes was four rooms and a path. Few could afford the luxury of indoor toilets. Water was piped to the Negro homes, but not sewers. Cesspools were expensive, so residents relied on outdoor toilets. "Chic Sales" my mother called them; named for a 1920s comic who had told jokes about outhouses. These, or at least the ones I saw, had regular toilet paper instead of pages from the Sears Roebuck catalog that my mother had used in her youth. The houses generally had two front doors from the front porch; one to the living room and one to a bedroom. The kitchen was in back of the living room and another bedroom in back of the first one. Every room had a door to the room next to it, making hallways unnecessary. Homes with large families had a big double bed in the living room as well as in the bedrooms. This was shared by two to four kids. Insects were close companions. Roaches over three inches were always darting across the floor, out of the cupboards and in the sink. One just had to get used to them.

There is nothing drab about the South. The grass is bright green all summer, in sharp contrast with the dull orange earth. The insects are large and brilliantly marked. The mosquitos keep up an incessant whine from which there is no escape. I soon had so many bites on my legs that I no longer bothered to aim; I just scratched. Even though I liked hiking, I avoided going into the woods where I might pick up chiggers – little red mites that burrowed into your skin. We didn't have chiggers in California but I had endured them during my childhood summer in Alabama. They itched worse than mosquito bites.

Compared to California, where there was a daily sameness to the weather, I found the unpredictability of Southern weather to be somewhat unnerving. A bright sky could be quickly rent with a vehement cloudburst, as though the wrath of heaven was descending on that one spot of earth. Winds of almost hurricane force and rain that poured like a waterfall might last only half an hour before the sun returned. Such a rain might cool the air a bit, but only added to the humidity. My skin glistened perpetually with sweat. Throughout the summer, I woke up in a sweat, went through the day in a sweat and went to bed in a sweat.

The outside of the Negro homes always looked shabby, unkempt and unpainted, though there were often flowers blooming in the front and a well-tended garden in the back. Inside was another matter. The walls were painted brightly and the rooms had furniture just as good as that in middle-class California homes. On the walls there were usually three pictures, in addition to family photos and racks of knickknacks. These were of Christ, Kennedy and King, in that order of frequency. I didn't quite understand the JFK pictures. I could understand putting a picture of the President on the wall, but Lyndon Johnson was President. If I had seen Abraham Lincoln on the walls, that would have made sense. But Kennedy? I didn't think he had done that much for civil rights – at least not publicly – and what he did do was because he was pressured to do it. LBJ on the other hand, had spoken loudly and eloquently in favor of civil rights and, more importantly, he had acted. He had gotten the Civil Rights bill through Congress in 1964 and just signed a Voting Rights bill. I never figured out why JFK was revered and LBJ was ignored, unless it was because Southern whites had cheered his assassination.

Although I saw electric stoves, refrigerators and even freezers in Negro homes in

Abbeville, I never saw a washing machine. Unlike Newberry, which had both Negro and white laundromats, the one in Abbeville was for whites only, so access to a public laundromat wasn't the reason. Monday was wash day. As it is everywhere, washing was women's work and pretty strenuous women's work at that. First the clothes were soaked and soaped in tin tubs behind the house. After rubbing them on a scrub board they were boiled in big black kettles sitting on open wood fires. The women stirred and pounded the clothes with broom handles or other long sticks until they were clean. The wet, hot and heavy clothes were lifted out with the sticks, dunked in cold water to make them cool enough to handle and hung on bushes to dry.

My mother never told me how her family washed when she was growing up, but we used a wringer washing machine. Once a week all the washable clothes would be agitated in hot soapy water one load at a time, then run through the wringer to a rinse tub and from there to another rinse tub. The last stop was the clothes hanger. My mother pushed the wet clothes through the rollers while I caught them on the other side. I was always a little afraid I'd catch my fingers in the rollers even though it was my mother who took that risk. I took the wet clothes outside and hung them on the clothesline while my mother prepared the water and started the next load. I wanted to ask the Abbeville women why they didn't have a washing machine or a permanent clothes line, but I could never quite muster the courage to do so. While I saw poor homes with little in them, I also saw many that were well equipped with electrical appliances, so lack of funds was not the reason. Beyond tradition – doing what your mothers did – I never figured that one out.

Trash disposal was no mystery. It was burned in the back yard. Aunt Loy and I had done that together in the morning during the summer I spent in Marion County and the women of Abbeville did the same in 1965. In fact, trash was still being burnt in the back yard when my mother and I moved to the San Fernando Valley in 1953, though the tract developers provided cement incinerators to contain the flames. I mostly remembered the smoke. Aunt Loy told me in 1955 that smoke was a tattle-tale. When she and my mother were children, their house had no plumbing, indoor or outdoor. Everyone went in the woods. That was OK during the day, but going at night presented a conflict between going far enough away not to leave a smell and fear of the woods at night. The next morning, when the older children burned the trash, everyone watched how the smoke blew. "Smoke follows she who goes too close to the house," they yelled gleefully. Although the house had a modern bathroom in 1955, Loy loved to tease me when the wind shifted in my direction. I remembered all of that as I watched trash being burned in Abbeville ten years later. I smiled to myself, but said nothing.

During the six weeks that I worked in Abbeville, I stayed with Mr & Mrs. (Henry and Melinda) Trawick at 110 Rock Hill Circle. An older couple in their 70s, their six children were gone and they were living off of Social Security. Their house had the usual four rooms, but with an indoor bathroom, situated in between the front and back bedrooms. I had the front bedroom all to myself. Since it had its own door onto the front porch, I could come and go without disturbing anyone. Mrs. Trawick always kept a pot of beans simmering on the kitchen stove with a pan of newly baked mealbread next to it. Regardless of when I came in at night, there was always something to eat waiting for me. Mealbread was made with white cornmeal; it wasn't sweet like the yellow cornbread my mother made. It went well with beans; I enjoyed every bite.

Mrs. Trawick didn't tell me their family history, but census records report that both were born in Henry County of parents who were born in Alabama. Melinda Davis was born in 1895. She married Henry in 1912 when she was 17. Henry Trawick was born in 1887 as the oldest of

seven children. His father, Augustus, was born in 1862. At that time George N. Trawick owned a plantation in Henry County with 50 slaves, which he continued to own after the War. After immigrating to Henry County in 1829, he married twice and had 12 children, four of whom were killed in the War. One street in Abbeville was named Trawick, as a testament to that family's importance in that town. The 1940 Census counted over a hundred Trawicks living in Henry County, evenly divided between Negro and white. Since freed slaves commonly took the surname of their master, all the people – black and white – in Henry County who bore the name Trawick probably had a common origin and a few had some common genes.

[<http://files.usgwarchives.org/al/henry/bios/gbs670trawick.txt>]

[<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/2:2:3QGV-WC8>]

My two colleagues were Eddie Sanders, Jr. and Mike Bibler. Eddie was black; Mike was white. Eddie had grown up in Birmingham, where he had marched with the “children’s crusade” during SCLC’s 1963 Birmingham campaign. His arrest on May 6, 1963 – along with about a thousand other young people – was his first, but not his last. After graduating from Hayes high school in 1964 he had spent a semester at Miles College, located just outside of Birmingham, then drifted into the movement. At the SCLC convention he met Hosea, who sent him to Henry County to be the new project director. Raised in Indiana, Mike had joined SCOPE after graduating from a small college in Illinois. He was the only one left of the group Hosea had sent to Henry County in June. He told us nothing about the prior group, including why it left early.

I was fortunate that I could stay in one place the entire time. Mike and Eddie had to move around. Whites put pressure on whichever family was hosting a civil rights worker until he was asked to leave. During his working life Mr. Trawick had driven trucks for a lumber mill, which made him eligible for Social Security. The Trawicks owned their home. Since they were not dependent on whites for their income they could not be financially threatened into kicking me out. Being Negro, Eddie blended in a bit better; Mike was easy to spot. Pressure was put on anyone who helped the project, creating a constant undercurrent of apprehension. We were always looking for people to drive us around, places to stay and other forms of support. Assistance came and went. Local people wanted to help us, but they were afraid of white retaliation. They weren’t afraid to feed us. Indeed they almost competed for the privilege of hosting one of us for a meal. Either they figured the brief visit for a meal wouldn’t be noticed or it could be excused.

We were told to have our personal mail sent to General Delivery at the Post Office of whichever small town we were in. The ostensible reason was so the mail carriers wouldn’t be added to the local whites who knew where we lived. I think they knew anyway. I think any white who wanted to know where we lived, whether postal clerks or KKK members, could easily find out. But having our letters wait for pick-up at the Post Office made it easier on those of us who frequently changed sleeping spots to get our mail. The fewer hands it passed through the less likely it was to get lost.

Working in Abbeville

The bus dropped me off outside Central Drug Store, which had the Greyhound franchise. I carried my bag to the Trawick home where I had spent the night only a week before and waited on the porch until I heard stirring within. I hadn't had much sleep but this was not the time to catch up. Today was registration day.

The registrars met the first and third Mondays of the month. August 16 was the first registration day since the Voting Rights Act became law on August 6. All those long, complicated forms and tests SCOPE projects had to cope with in July could no longer be used by the Registrars to keep people from voting.

Before their doors closed we registered 208 people. Fantastic! Only one man with a criminal conviction was rejected. This turnout was largely the result of the work of those who had worked in Henry County in June and July. The Board did its best to limit the number of people who could complete the process. Normally it was open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. but today it closed at 3:00 p.m. The normal working day for rural people started at 6:30 a.m. and ended at 3:30 p.m. Closing at 3:00 kept them from registering. We asked those who came to register between 3:00 and 5:00 to sign complaints which we sent to the Department of Justice.

We tried to hold mass meetings twice a week but we never found a church in which to hold them. SCLC wasn't connected with a local church. Hosting a civil rights project was dangerous. The ministers in Abbeville were not willing to risk their churches being bombed or set on fire. Fortunately there was a Negro community center where we could meet. It was just a large hall made of cement blocks, but it had lights and chairs and that was all we needed. During the summer someone had pasted a page from *Life* magazine on the inside of the door. It showed the upper torso and face of a Klansman, clothed in blue robes. In back was a burning cross. Someone had written underneath "We Love *Everybody*." I often wondered how many really agreed with that sentiment.

There was one incident, but not at the courthouse. It was at Central Drug, just across the street from the courthouse. Our new project director, Eddie Sanders, dropped in to buy a Coke. Instead of exiting with it, as Negroes were expected to do, he sat down at the counter to drink it. The proprietor told him to leave. When Eddie didn't move, the owner told his Negro helper to get rid of him. The helper grabbed Eddie to drag him to the door, but Eddie didn't budge. The owner called the cops. They came and arrested Eddie for disorderly conduct. He was tried at 4:00 that afternoon, found guilty, and sentenced to pay \$104 or serve 54 days in jail. We paid the fine out of our limited funds. It was a very expensive Coke.

The helper who tried to push Eddie out the door had signed the complaint against him so Eddie decided to take out a complaint against the helper. The Sheriff refused to accept it and walked out of the office. As Eddie left the Sheriff's station he was approached by a group of white men who told him to get out of town by 5:00. He didn't. The Negro community told us that the Sheriff had himself been arrested in July for hog stealing and his gun and badge taken

away. Nonetheless, he still acted as Sheriff until he was defeated for re-election in 1966. One of his five deputies was Negro. His job was to patrol the Negro Nite Club section on Friday and Saturday nights. He didn't wear a uniform or carry a gun. He only had authority to arrest Negroes and only a billy club to help him do so.

On Friday, while I was eating breakfast in Mrs. Trawick's kitchen, the police chief drove up to the house. Without even turning off his motor, Chief Hubert Money yelled to Mr. Trawick, sitting on the front porch, that he wanted to see the white girl who was staying with them. I didn't think anyone knew where I was sleeping at night. Mr. Trawick dutifully came inside and told me the police chief was out front and wanted to see me. Trying to hide my apprehension, I went up to his car and said "good morning" to the chief. He scowled as he told me that "There's a telegram for you at the post office," turned his wheels and drove off.

A telegram, I thought to myself, from whom? Who knew I was here? It was from my mother, addressed to "Miss Jo Freeman, address unknown, (civil rights worker)." She wanted me to phone home. When I did, collect, she said that she had phoned SCLC in Atlanta looking for me but all they could tell her was that I was in Abbeville. No one at that office knew where I was staying. She phoned the Sheriff's office to see if they could locate me but was told that they had nothing to do with "them damn agitators." So she sent the telegram on August 19th.

Initially I was furious that she had revealed my presence in the town. After I cooled down I realized that she had done me a favor. Small towns weren't like big cities. Everyone knew everyone else's business. Even though I hadn't left the Negro neighborhood the white police chief probably knew who I was and where I was staying from day one. What my mother's telegram had done was not tell the cops that I was in town, but show me that they knew that I was in town and where I was staying.

We wanted to file a complaint against Central Drug, but didn't know where to do it. We debated the relative merits of writing to the Department of Justice, the Civil Rights Commission, and, since Central Drug had the Greyhound franchise, the Interstate Commerce Commission. While we were pondering, a representative from the Civil Rights Commission showed up. Morgan Kousser had just graduated from Princeton and was on his way to graduate studies at Yale.¹ His work in the Democratic Party in his home town of Memphis got him a summer job with the USCCR out of its new regional office. He traveled around the South visiting civil rights projects and local leaders and writing reports. He said we should file an omnibus complaint with the USCCR's Memphis office and request that it be forwarded to the appropriate agency in the Justice Department. We compiled a list of the many businesses that were violating the civil rights laws and quickly came up with twenty. Most were in Abbeville; a couple were in Headland.

On August 20 we sent our two page letter to the Commission with a copy to the SCOPE

¹ I found our complaint letter in the SCOPE files on Henry County that I requested from the FBI. It was addressed to Morgan Kousser. Recognizing his name as that of a notable historian, I contacted him in November of 2008 and exchanged several e-mails on what he was doing in Alabama.

office in Atlanta. Our complaints included such things as separate entrances for “White” and “Colored” (Colored was always at the back), separate restrooms for white and colored, a refusal to seat Negroes, and white only establishments. The local clothing store permitted whites but not Negroes to try on clothes. Our complaints eventually reached the Mobile office of the FBI which assigned agents to investigate. They first looked for a SCOPE office in Henry County, but found none. Then they contacted the Atlanta SCLC office which told them where to find me and Mike Bibler; we were still working for SCLC that fall. By the time the FBI caught up with me I had changed counties twice.

When the FBI interviewed me on December 6, I told the agent what I knew about 19 out of the 20 businesses on our list (he didn’t ask about the liquor store). Reading the dry FBI translation of my words prior to signing a statement, I realized that the only claims given any credence were the ones where I had personally observed a civil rights violation. Those based on what I had been told by local Negroes (e.g. that an establishment only served whites) were discounted. I added a complaint about the Henry County Hospital, which was not on the original list of 20, because I did have some personal knowledge of its discriminatory practices.

At some point we had discovered that the newspapers published lists of those admitted to and released from the hospital each week, separately by race. We also learned that the hospital had 30 beds distributed among three wards; one was reserved for Negroes; two for whites. The hospital had two separate entrances, two separate waiting rooms, and no Negro doctors or nurses. One day I went to the hospital with Raphael Zahler, who had joined us for a few weeks, to talk to its Chief Administrator, where we personally observed what we had heard from local Negroes. We took with us copies of the *Abbeville Herald* and the *Dothan Eagle*, which printed the names provided by the hospital. The Administrator said he was working on a plan to completely desegregate the hospital in order to bring it into conformity with the Hill-Burton Act. By the time I left Abbeville at the end of September nothing had changed.

Officially called the Hospital and Health Center Construction Act of 1946, Hill-Burton provided money to build hospitals in underserved areas. Southern states were its greatest beneficiaries. Its major sponsor was Alabama Senator Lister Hill, who had replaced Hugo Black after he was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1937. Both were New Deal liberals on everything except race. In the Senate they voted the way their white Alabama constituency wanted them to vote. Consequently when Truman insisted that federally funded health facilities be open to all races, a clause was added permitting segregation by race within each facility. In 1963 the Fourth Circuit federal court struck down Hill-Burton's “separate but equal” clause. (*Simkins v. Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital*) Responsibility for seeing that desegregation actually occurred fell to the Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) but it had no clout until passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Title VI prohibited federal funds going to institutions which discriminated on the basis of race. The NAACP mobilized a campaign of complaints. By June of 1965, several dozen HEW inspectors were visiting hospitals to check out the complaints. (BN 6-2-65, 66)

The day we wrote that letter to the USCCR a white civil rights worker was killed in Lowndes County, in what Alabama Attorney General Richard Flowers called “another Ku Klux

Klan murder.” Jonathan Daniels was an Episcopal seminary student from Keene, New Hampshire who had been working in the South since Selma. He was jailed in Hayneville along with several others for disturbing the peace by picketing in the town of Ft. Deposit. After they were released six days later, Daniels was shot by Tom Coleman. A state employee, he then shot and seriously injured another white civil rights worker in the group – a Catholic priest – as he was fleeing. Coleman was acquitted six weeks later by a jury of twelve white men – all his friends and neighbors – while Fr. Richard Morrisoe was still in a hospital and unable to testify. When A.G. Flowers tried to postpone the trial until Morrisoe was well enough to travel, the judge threatened to hold him in contempt. (CD 8-23-65, 3; 10-2-65, 1) Lowndes had the well deserved reputation of being the most dangerous county in Alabama. Its most famous victim was Viola Liuzzo, the 39 year-old Detroit housewife who was killed on her return from driving marchers back to Selma after the March 25 rally in Montgomery. A Lowndes County jury also acquitted her killers.

In Henry County no one harmed us physically, but we all experienced continual harassment. Jim O’Brien and David Stasa drove down from Detroit to help out for a couple weeks, bringing their own car. Jim attended a Catholic seminary and David taught at a Catholic high school. It was nice to have a car and not have to always hunt for rides from local people, but those Michigan plates signaled who we were to everyone who saw them. It was easy for anyone to see who was from out of town even on a car with Alabama plates. The one or two numbers on the license plate before the dash identified the county where the car was registered. Numbers 1 through 3 were assigned to the three most populous counties – Jefferson, Mobile and Montgomery. After that the numbers were assigned alphabetically. Henry County was #37. Everyone who lived there knew the numbers of the surrounding counties. Any other number meant that a car wasn’t local. We also memorized the numbers for the surrounding counties so we could identify any car driven by whites with out-of-county plates, especially if it was following us. Often a cop or even a private car would follow us down the road. We could drive all over, turning into streets or driveways, turning around, stopping to motion them by, and even parking and getting out, and our shadow would stay with us. Often the cops would stop our car for no reason and go through the whole procedure of checking car registration and driver’s licenses, taking forever to do so. On one trip to Headland, 15 miles away, we were stopped four times for this kind of check. Of course they used *any* excuse to write tickets; sometimes they wrote tickets without an excuse.

Since the Detroit boys were the only ones with Michigan drivers licenses, only they could drive the car they brought. They became super cautious drivers. Even at 2 a.m. they would stop for every traffic light, signal every turn and stay at least 10 mph under the speed limit. Being constantly watched also made us cautious pedestrians. We never jaywalked. We’d go to the corner to cross a street which had no traffic. The local high school boys who drove us around were ticketed for minor offenses and threatened with worse. Two were arrested at their homes for speeding even though no law enforcement official had observed the offense. The ticket was based on a report phoned in by a private party – unnamed of course. One lost his job. It was hard enough to get rides during the summer; once school started it was virtually impossible.

In retrospect, I think Henry County was one of the safer places for SCOPE to work in the

summer of 1965. We heard a lot about what might happen to us but no one was beaten up and Eddie wasn't run out of town. We also heard that Abbeville had a Ku Klux Klan klavern and Dothan had a white Citizens' Council but we didn't see any signs of activity. We got plenty of threats and lots of harassment, but it was the local people who helped us in some fashion who paid the price.

Dorchester

I was just settling in and getting to work when Eddie announced at a mass meeting that I was going to SCLC's Citizenship Education Program (CEP) in Liberty County, Georgia a few miles from Savannah. He said that two local people could go with me and asked for volunteers. The school held five day workshops to train people to teach literacy to adults, plus some political education.

I was delighted to go though it would have been nice if Eddie had told me before announcing it to everyone else. On Saturday he told me to go to Selma where I would find a bus chartered by SCLC to take people to Dorchester from all over Alabama. None of the local people had said they wanted to go. They had jobs and couldn't take a week off without notice. He didn't know *where* in Selma I would find the bus, or *how* I was going to get there. He just told me to go.

Sunday morning I caught the 6:30 am Greyhound to Dothan, the big town 36 miles to the south. I sat in that bus station for three hours waiting for a bus going north to Montgomery. There I had to switch bus stations, not just buses. Greyhound didn't go to Selma; Trailways did. I carried my bag two blocks to the Trailways station and waited some more. I finally arrived in Selma at 5:00 on Sunday afternoon. It took me ten and a half hours to travel 180 miles. With a car, I could have driven only 142 miles in three hours. Of course, with a car I could have driven directly to Dorchester in only five hours.

I'd never been to Selma before – now famous because of the marches the previous Spring. Eddie hadn't given me any names, addresses or phone numbers, or told me where to go when I got there. He just said someone would meet me. No one did. I searched for a phone booth with an intact phone book in it. The books in the first three booths I found had most of their pages ripped out. Finally I found one still mostly intact. SCLC was listed in it with an actual street address.

I found my way to 21 Franklin St, only to find an employment agency with "Register Now" signs in the window. It was closed. Nothing said SCLC on it, but I saw a sign saying SNCC a few doors away. That office was open. I knew that SNCC and SCLC didn't work together. Having heard that SNCC workers had a very low opinion of SCLC and an even lower opinion of SCOPE I walked through the door somewhat apprehensively. I was relieved to find that the occupants were friendly. Someone had a phone number for the CEP and let me use their phone.

Sometime later I was picked up and deposited at a Negro housing project. Only then did I find out that a bus would leave at midnight for Dorchester.

The predecessor to the CEP at Dorchester was started in South Carolina by Septima Clark in 1957 to help Negroes pass the complicated literacy and other tests necessary to register to vote in the Southern states. Originally from Charleston, she operated as the Director of Workshops for the Highlander Folk School in southeast Tennessee. From there she went all over the South recruiting people for its literacy program. When it looked like the State of Tennessee was going to close Highlander, SCLC was persuaded to take over the CEP. In 1961 the Marshall Field

Foundation shifted its \$40,000 annual funding for the program from Highlander to the United Church of Christ (UCC), which hired Andy Young, a UCC minister, to be the Director of Education and Septima Clark to be the Supervisor of Teacher Training. The primary purpose of the new CEP shifted from teaching people how to read to training people to teach people how to read. The real purpose continued to be “discovering and developing local community leaders.” (Adams, 1975, 118, 133; Clark, 1986, 41-54; Morris, 1984, 149-155; Preskill, 2008, 229-31; quote in Clark, 1964)

The American Missionary Association,¹ a division of the UCC, owned an old school building near Midway, Georgia. Built as a school for freedman, it was known as the Dorchester Community Center. The CEP moved from Highlander to Dorchester. Groups of 50 to 60 students came every week to take classes for five days. Dorothy Cotton, as the CEP’s Educational Consultant, went all over the South recruiting students for the program. Between 1961 and 1970, the CEP trained more than 10,000 teachers who set up 897 Citizenship Education Schools throughout the South.² (Cotton, 2012, 115; <http://www.hmdb.org/marker.asp?marker=9066>)

The CEP sent its graduates back to their own communities to organize adult literacy programs. They held classes in their homes, in beauty parlors and even under trees. A \$250,000 Marshall Field grant paid the teachers \$75 a month, and paid the “students” \$30 a month to come to class two hours a night, two nights a week, for three months. While learning how to register to vote students often became interested in the civil rights movement. This did not endear them to their local white communities. Despite the training, white registrars still made Negro registration difficult. Indeed, whites were often hostile to Negroes even learning to read. But once the Voting Rights Act passed, CEP alumni were ready; those that weren’t already registered to vote were the first to do so. (*SP* 21:3, 1; Clark, 1986, 61-70)

Our classes started first thing in the morning on August 23. We were each given the “Citizenship Workbook” that we would use to teach others how to read and taught how to use it effectively. It included drills for penmanship, “New Words to Study,” and even an arithmetic lesson. Tasks included writing a letter to a friend and filling out a money order. Short sections on history, religion and politics were used to practice reading. At the end was one on “Planning a Voter Registration Campaign” along with a canvassing sheet. It wasn’t hard to see how these schools prepared their adult students not just to read, but to become movement activists when the time was ripe. (Clark and Cotton interviews in Morris, 1984, 238-39)

After dinner I retreated to one of the offices where the staff let me use a typewriter. I had a lot of letters to write. I wrote them on the backs of voter registration test forms for several states that I found stacked in a corner. Only a month ago, students had been trained to fill out these complicated forms. Now, thanks to the Voting Rights Act, they were scratch paper.

¹ The AMA was founded in 1846 as an abolitionist society. After the War, it sent missionaries to the South to teach the freed slaves. It founded over 500 schools and eleven colleges. Most of its member churches were Congregational, which evolved into the United Church of Christ.

² The program ended in 1970 due to a loss of funding. It had been floundering since passage of the VRA removed literacy tests as a requirement to voter registration.

I wanted my friends, especially the ones back in Berkeley, to see what kind of questions had to be answered to register to vote in the South. I didn't think my political science professors could pass those tests without looking up the answers and I knew that I and my college friends could not do so. For example, the Georgia form contained 30 questions of which 20 had to be answered correctly. Among those 30 questions were: "Who is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia and who is the presiding judge of that court?" (Not the same person). "What are the names of the Federal District Judges of Georgia" and "What is treason against the State of Georgia." While most of the answers could be memorized, there were a lot of local questions; e.g. "What Militia District do you live in?" These weren't the kinds of questions people could answer without taking a class specifically for their own county.

At 2:00 a.m. on my 20th birthday I was trying to stretch a letter to three pages so I could send the entire test from one state to one of my Berkeley friends. The insects raining from the ceiling were a definite distraction. My fingers kept busy flicking bugs off of the typewriter and off of me. I scratched my mosquito bites while staring at the white paper in the platen, stumped for words. In between scratching I typed a little. It was the first time in weeks that it was quiet enough to think, yet my mind struggled to put my experiences and observations of the past few weeks into words. In the two counties I had worked in I seldom had solitude even when I was able to borrow a typewriter. People were always coming into whatever office we had in order to ask for something. Children screamed and threw stuff around. The phone rang, demanding to be answered. It was always hot. Hot and sticky. Not good writing weather. At 2:00 a.m. in Dorchester it was almost cool even though it was still summer. Yet I found it hard to write.

This letter was to my former Political Science T.A. (Teaching Assistant) for Professor Norman Jacobson, from whom I had taken a course in American Political Theory. At Berkeley, T.A.s taught most of our discussion classes, which were called "sections," while professors lectured to large audiences of note-taking students. Wanting to sound intellectual, I wrote Morrie about "dialogue" – one of Prof. Jacobson's favorite themes. Our professor had emphasized that "dialogue" was the essential element in the political. A truly political act involved the establishment or maintenance of some sort of genuine two-way communication. There was a lot that Dr. King had said which fit this definition very well; specifically, that civil disobedience was not an act of force but an attempt at engagement. I hadn't seen much dialogue while working to register voters in South Carolina and Alabama. I saw fear, determination and struggle in the faces of both blacks and whites but no inter-racial communication. Indeed, the entire system of segregation was structured to minimize inter-racial communication; whites wanted to keep it that way. Now that I had a little time to think, I was trying to explain this to the T.A.

I went to bed before I finished the three pages. The next day was graduation day. We all went through a little ceremony where we were awarded a "Certificate of Attendance" before taking the bus back to which ever state we came from. I took the unfinished letter back to Abbeville with me. It would be another three weeks before I finished that letter, not because I couldn't find more to write about, but because I couldn't find a typewriter. The Henry County project never organized any literacy classes, so I never got to put my five days of training to any use. Morrie never replied to my letter.

Confrontation at the Courthouse

My bus arrived back in Abbeville at 6:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 28. After five days of learning how to teach adults to read and write, I was tired. Mrs. Trawick was already up, cooking breakfast for her husband when I got to her house. After one look at the circles under my eyes she put me to bed and said that I could tell her all about it later. I woke four hours later and set out to find Mike and Eddie, the other two SCOPE workers in Abbeville. I went from place to place but no one knew where they were. After five hours I found them. They were in jail.

While I was sleeping, they had gone into Ezzell's, a local department store, to pick up a suitcase that Eddie had bought on layaway a week earlier. Ezzell's will take anyone's money, but when the clerk saw them come in together he yelled at them to "Get out of this store." Instead of leaving, Eddie argued he wouldn't leave without his purchase. The clerk called the Sheriff, who arrested them for trespassing. It was Mike's first arrest and Eddie's fourth or fifth.

It took another five hours to bail them out. The usual practice was for a homeowner to sign a property bond but the Sheriff wouldn't accept one. I had to scrape up \$200 in cash. No mean feat even though technically it was just a loan. It's not that people didn't have any money. They were scared that the Sheriff would find out who donated the money.

I got some help from two high school girls who had worked with us on voter registration. They knew who might have a little cash hidden at home and might let me have it. A local man drove us around. However, he didn't want to be seen driving us into the courthouse square where the police station was, so after we accumulated the cash he let us out a few blocks away.

On our way to the police station we walked past the jail. It was a very homey jail. In fact it was the second floor of a house, with bars on the windows. On the first floor were offices, a kitchen and bedrooms. Those rooms were occupied by a woman with two children who cooked for the prisoners and whomever was on guard duty. In the front yard was a big oak tree and a swing set. The first floor was dark, though I knew someone had to be there. The yellow glow of the lights through the windows on the jail floor sharply outlined the black bars, giving the appearance of a vertically hung flag of conquest.

Feeling elated to the point of foolishness, we stopped at the curb across the street and sung out the lines of a freedom song to Eddie, Mike, the other prisoners and whomever was listening:

Go tell it on the Mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.
Go tell it on the Mountain,
that freedom's on its way.

A cheer came from the house; Mike and Eddie must have gotten our message. At the

same time, the lights on the first floor came on and the front door burst open. We ran around a tall hedge and almost ran into a cop walking up the sidewalk. For a brief moment I thought he was going to arrest us for disturbing the peace or something, but he didn't. We went on our way.

The police station was a little two room building at the edge of the courthouse square. It had a desk built into the front, topped with phones and police paraphernalia. A large double window rose above the desk, from which the cops inside had a good view of the streets.

The three of us went inside. I told the cop that I wanted to bail out Eddie and Mike. He made the high school girls get out before he would do the paperwork. It took him about 20 minutes to fill out the forms and take my money but it seemed like 20 hours.

The bright light inside illuminated the two of us as though we were on a movie screen. Like wolves drawn to the scent of blood, men emerged from nowhere to congregate outside and watch the show within. They did more than watch. They taunted and heckled. I saw the two high school girls huddle together, looking scared.

While the cop filled out the forms, I went outside to deflect attention from the girls. I was certainly better bait; one of those hated white civil rights workers, and a female to boot. Those men said a lot of nasty things, but nothing that I hadn't heard before. They peppered me with questions. I tried to answer, partially just to be polite, and partially because all the political theory classes I had taken in college emphasized the importance of dialogue in resolving political conflicts. Our exchange taught me much about the limits of political theory in the real world.

The men asked me what I was doing there. I had no right to invade their home, they said. I should go back to my own. I replied that Alabama was my mother's home state. My grandfather had served in the Alabama state legislature. In my own mind, my deep family roots was one of my justifications for being there. To them, my family connections to Alabama just made things worse. If I'd read more Southern history I'd have known that scalawags were hated more than carpetbaggers.

I then fell back on the rhetoric of patriotism. I didn't like it, but I had learned it growing up in the fifties, where accusations of being "unAmerican" were lavished on those with whom one disagreed. Weren't we all Americans, I asked. Whether from the North or the South, whether white or Negro, weren't we all part of the same country? Shouldn't any of us be able to go any place in our own country?

Not in their eyes. They hadn't forgiven the North for the War and would much prefer secession to giving up segregation. They said I was a traitor to my race.

What impressed me most wasn't their words but their hatred, their impregnable hatred. It radiated from their voices and distorted their faces. I had argued about segregation with Southerners before, but I didn't remember ever seeing such hatred. The more I traded words with those men, the more frightened the high school girls became.

I wasn't scared. I was a bit nervous, but I wasn't scared. Perhaps I was just naive; I had only been working in the South for a couple months. And my stay in that small town was temporary. Whatever retaliation there might be would fall upon the high school girls and their families; it would not touch me. But what really kept the fear away was my strong sense that what I was doing was right; that I belonged in that town that very night arguing with those Southerners about why they needed to change their ways about race. My beliefs covered me like a coat of armor. Indeed, we did appear to be at war with one another. In this little confrontation our weapons were only words, but our attitudes were so diametrically opposed that no compromise was possible. So much for dialogue.

I could tell that the cop was ready to take us to the jail to fetch Mike and Eddie. I didn't want those dozen or so men following us, but the cop didn't appear inclined to shoo them away.

What to do?

Spontaneously, without really thinking about it, I changed the subject. Let me ask you something, I said to the assembled men. When I was in your courthouse, I saw only two bathrooms. I didn't have to tell them that the sign on one said "Colored" and the other "White Men." Exactly what do you expect your women to do, when they got to go, I asked.

They fidgeted. They fussed. I'd clearly caught them off guard. Indeed, I had embarrassed them. One of them finally stammered out that *their* women, respectable white women, wouldn't use a public convenience. Oh, I said, and which one do you expect out-of-town visitors to use? More mumbling; the men began to drift away.

After a couple minutes they had all faded back into the night. The cop, the girls and I went to the jail where Eddie and Mike were jubilant to get out. The five of us walked back to the Negro neighborhood which sheltered us, then parted to go to the homes in which we slept.

City court was held on Mondays. Mike's and Eddie's trial, or what passed for one, started at 4:00 p.m. It was more of a hearing than a trial, and was not public. But it was efficient. Instead of pleading a case, each accused went into a small room to hear his fate. Mayor Vickrey, who doubled as the judge, denied a jury trial on the grounds that there weren't enough potential jurors present, said that he was awfully sorry that they hadn't had time to secure a lawyer, refused to allow them to bring in any witnesses but did allow each of them to make a statement, and heard the testimony of the store clerk and the arresting officer. Then he found both guilty, fined Mike \$100 and sentenced Eddie to six months in jail.

In the past, civil rights workers had only been fined and SCLC paid the fine as the most expedient thing to do. Rather than spend six months in jail, Eddie chose to appeal. Bail was set at \$300 each. The \$200 I had paid to get them out on Saturday could be applied to this bail, but we still needed \$400 more. When I could only raise another \$100 I bailed Eddie out. In fact, that additional \$100 would have paid Mike's fine but if we were going to appeal one case we would appeal both. After I got Eddie out the cops said we could use a property bond for

Mike's bail. There were a few little catches. No property owner could sign for Mike who had an outstanding property bond for anyone else; we had to find two property owners to sign; each had to have property worth at least \$300; and the property had to be free and clear of all notes and mortgages.

It had rained all day. I spent several hours sliding around on muddy streets and threading my way through puddles to find the necessary two property owners willing to sign Mike's bond. I finally succeeded. I never found out what happened to our appeal, or to the local people who signed the property bonds. By the time those things happened, I was long gone.

SCOPE Evaluation and Effects

The next day we went to Atlanta for the end-of-project evaluation. We were told that over 1200 people had worked in SCOPE during the summer. This included 650 summer volunteers from 120 colleges and universities, 150 paid SCLC staffers and 400 local volunteers. We heard that since June 22 we had contacted over one million Negroes in 125 blackbelt counties in six Southern states covering 14 Congressional Districts. I'm not sure where these numbers came from. No one that I knew had been asked to submit a report of how many people had been contacted but the numbers were impressive. Supposedly we had involved 600,000 Negroes in political education, 280,000 in community organization, and had taken 124,000 eligible voters to be registered. Of the latter, 34,000 had been processed and 26,000 had been registered to vote – before the passage of the Voting Rights Bill. This brought to 225,000 the total number of Negroes registered to vote in those counties. Since there were 900,500 Negroes of voting age in the SCOPE counties, there were still 700,000 voting age Negroes waiting to be registered to vote.¹

Of course there was a lot more going on behind the scenes of which we knew nothing. In fact, SCOPE was not universally perceived as a success. On August 25, Blackwell sent a confidential memo to Dr. King and Rev. Abernathy stating that “the SCOPE project as it presently exists should be brought to an end just as soon as it possibly can without inviting public inquiry.... [I]t has cost freedom contributors ten times what it should have ... [and] has gone wanted (sic) for sound management every day that it has existed.” (WSL 92-93) At an Executive Staff meeting in Atlanta on Aug. 26-28, Hosea Williams praised the project and Blackwell panned it. Since the two had been rivals for a long time, their conflicting appraisals were not surprising. In the minutes of the Executive Staff meeting, Dorothy Cotton wrote that

¹ Although some of these numbers were in newspaper reports, I took them from the printed version of the “Annual Report” that Dr. King delivered at SCLC’s Ninth Annual National Convention in Birmingham Alabama, August 11, 1965. These numbers cover a six to seven week period (June 22 to sometime before August 6). They are the same numbers as those in a Quarterly Report dated November 6, 1965 that was prepared by Hosea Williams (SCLC IV 145:29) Hosea probably gave the figures to Dr. King for his convention speech. At SCLC IV139.2p975-78 I found a table with numbers from the six SCOPE states. The list of counties worked included many that I knew did not have SCOPE projects in them. The number of SCOPE workers for each county was far in excess of those I have been able to identify as working in those counties. For example the table says there were 526 SCOPE workers. The totals for each state add up for 546. My research showed that at most 350 outsiders worked in SCOPE. There were a few locals who were put on staff as director of SCOPE projects, but there were just a few – not the 200 difference between my research and the official figures. I don’t have a database to compare with the other numbers (e.g. Attempted to register, Involved in Political Education, Involved in Community Action) but everything looks grossly exaggerated. This table is relevant only because it represents an attempt at keeping score, and is inconsistent with the numbers in Hosea’s and Dr. King’s reports. Someday we may be able to find out the number who actually registered to vote but we will never know how hyperinflated the other numbers were.

Williams said “the project effected the results he envisioned” which were to arouse and motivate Negroes. He said that SCOPE had spent \$165,000 to date, that the best projects had 5 to 10 workers, and that “we should continue working in many places where it was begun this summer.” Hosea envisioned SCOPE continuing in some fashion, perhaps the following summer. (SCLC II 46:8p971-2, 977)

Hosea’s quarterly report to the SCLC Board on November 6 defended SCOPE’s success. “Statistically speaking,” he wrote, “the cost per voter was far cheaper than that of any recorded normal voter registration campaign when other primary accomplishments were simultaneously validated,” but didn’t explain what these were. He repeated the same statistics Dr. King had reported on August 11, except that he claimed that “approximately 70,000 Negroes attempted to register,” and 49,302 succeeded.² Since he didn’t qualify this with dates, there is no way to compare the Nov. 6 figures with the Aug. 11 ones, or to know who registered because of SCOPE in the summer and who due to the presence of federal registrars in the fall. (SCLC IV 145:29) In reality, Hosea, like everyone else in the movement, engaged in hyperbole.

Everyone I’ve showed these numbers to who worked in a SCOPE project agrees that the participation figures are grossly exaggerated. The registration figures are 20 to 50 percent higher than numbers from other sources. Even the number of SCOPE workers in a county is exaggerated, though not as grossly as the figures on local participation. Since county registration figures were supposed to be collected weekly by FBI agents for a few states, it might be possible to eventually calculate how many counties benefitted from a SCOPE project. If these records still exist, that will require more archival research than I am able to do.

These figures don’t tell us much about the experience of SCOPERS, even incidents that could be counted such as how many were beaten. From reading the incident reports made at the time and e-mails about what SCOPERS remembered years later, beatings happened to well over a dozen; some were injured badly enough to go to the hospital. The young white men in SCOPE were particular targets for physical assault. Those arrested were put into cells with local whites who were free to do as they wished. Sometimes they were attacked during pickets or protests; other times for trying to eat in an integrated group. (Gitin, 2014, 113-4, 207; Labedis, 2011, 100-2; <https://www.crmvet.org/docs/scopeinc.htm>; FBI file #44-30006) For local whites, there was nothing exceptional about beating up a “nigger” but beating up a “commie outside agitator” brought status among their peers. Fortunately, none of us were killed. There are no counts of how many local youth working with SCOPE were knocked around but there are a lot of stories.

As for the young white women, reports of physical assault were rare, though occasionally hands were put on bodies in places they should not go. But examples of verbal assaults abound in statements, books and e-mails. The verbal assaults were sexual in nature. In the eyes of local whites, we were all whores. This was consistent with the “cult of white womanhood” that permeated Southern culture, though northerners didn’t know that at the time. To Southern whites, white women who consorted with Negroes were by definition degenerates. Nothing at

² In their book on SCOPE, Demerath et. al. cite an SCLC newsletter for their report that 68,796 Negroes attempted to register, and 49,302 succeeded during the summer; 1971, 102.

orientation prepared SCOPERS for these psychological assaults. In 1965 a woman's "virtue" was still a prized possession and sex before marriage was still a sin. Driven by "the pill" the sexual revolution was just around the corner, but it hadn't arrived yet. Accusations of sexual impropriety were serious insults. (Labedis, 2011, 100-2; Gitin, 2014, 113, 157)

SCOPE got very little national press coverage. The few stories on summer civil rights workers incorporated SCOPE into a more general story on civil rights activity or a specific story on demonstrations when they occurred. (A rare exception was Good, *WP* 7-12-65, A3) The local white press ignored civil rights activity as much as it could. The black press didn't have reporters in the rural counties, though it occasionally published reports from AP or UPI. The word SCOPE rarely appeared in these stories. The *Southern Courier* had a few stories on Alabama projects. Some SCOPERS sent stories home to their local or campus newspapers. Although SCLC sent news releases to these publications during orientation, they didn't send stories back. As more and more small newspapers are scanned and put online, we may eventually be able to fill in a lot of gaps in the SCOPE story.

We do know something about SCOPE finances, because SCLC paid a CPA to look at the numbers and write a report. Issued on June 30, 1966, it largely covered the period April 1, 1965, when SCOPE was announced, to February 28, 1966. The CPA accounted for disbursements of \$216,681.53 in that time period. Of course this didn't include all the money brought in by SCOPE projects or individuals and spent locally. SCOPE chapters were asked to send their money to Atlanta, where it would be deposited into a SCOPE account. They would then request payment for expenses when they had them. Some did this; some didn't. I didn't give Atlanta any of the money I brought with me, and I didn't receive any until after I went on staff in the fall. I know many others who did not turn over their funds but spent them as needed. In short, while the estimates of participation and registration in the official reports are far in excess of reality, the summation of expenditures is far less. (Slayton report of 6/30/66 at http://www.crmvet.org/docs/660630_sclc_scope-fin.pdf)

The Executive Committee agreed that a more intensive evaluation was necessary. A letter went out over Dr. King's signature dated October 1, which asked SCOPE volunteers to provide "your very frank and candid evaluation of your work this summer" by responding to a brief questionnaire. I have not found any of the completed questionnaires, or even a list of to whom they were sent, in the SCLC papers, though I have seen some elsewhere. Sherie Labedis reprinted her form with answers in the back of her book on her SCOPE summer in Berkeley Co. SC. (Labedis, 2011, 163) Hugh Hawkins, who had worked in Martin Co., NC, replied by letter. He pointed out that they couldn't do voter registration because the registration books were closed in the summer. He said that they were caught between conflicting demands of the leaders. "Mrs. Small and Mrs. Mobley did not want any more demonstrations.... Mr. Frinks looked on demonstrations as the only proper way to proceed.... [We were] ... caught in the cross-fire between local and state leaders on the question of tactics." Nonetheless, Hawkins thought SCOPE should continue in 1966. (SCOPE questionnaire in Hawkins papers 5:23p7; MLK ltr of 10-1-65 in 5:22p3; Hawkins reply of 10-26-65 in 5:22p68-9)

Hosea wanted evaluation meetings in three northern cities: New York, Chicago and San

Francisco, though it's unclear if any of these actually happened. The only document I could find was a flyer announcing the NYC conference at Columbia University on February 26, 1966. The student newspaper has no report of such a meeting. Hosea spoke at a rally at U.C. Santa Barbara on Nov. 19, 1965. He was in Southern California to attend a meeting in a church near UCLA on Nov. 20. Again grossly exaggerating the participation figures, Hosea praised SCOPE and encouraged his audience to work with SCOPE over Christmas or the following summer. (Flyer in Hawkins papers, 5:22p13; *Daily Bruin*, 11-19-65, 11-23-65, 1; *El Gaucho*, 11-18-65, 1) There's no document of a SCOPE evaluation meeting in San Francisco or elsewhere in the Bay Area. By the fall of 1966, the Friends of SNCC chapters in California that had been helpful to those people recruiting for SCOPE in 1965 were starving from lack of funds; many had died. (Gitin, 2014, 158; Miller e-mail of 3-20-20)

Not all SCOPERS went home to worried parents or even back to school. Michael B. Everage, 18, doesn't appear on any SCOPE list, but the *Southern Courier* reported that the Montgomery high school student worked with SCOPE and the Hale County Improvement Association during the summer. When he returned home his parents disowned him. The story doesn't say where he lived; only that his parents wouldn't sign the forms necessary for him to register for school. Michael became interested in civil rights when he lived in New York but his parents didn't. (*SC* 9-25/26-65, 5)

All SCOPERS left the South with an FBI file, if they didn't have one before they arrived. Some left with an arrest record. This would follow them most of their lives if they checked yes in the box that asked about arrests in applications for school or jobs. (Gitin, 2014, 160) These days getting arrested is a common protest tactic. It's a way of calling attention to a cause and demonstrating commitment. Civil disobedience has become institutionalized. In the 1960s and 1970s CD was a radical form of defiance which incurred major personal costs. Just having an arrest record was one of those. It was more common to acquire a variety of psychological problems. The term PTSD wasn't part of our vocabulary, but at the 2015 reunion a lot of SCOPERS reported symptoms that fit that description in our discussion on the effects of working in the movement. In her book, written decades later, Joyce Brians said she experienced an inability to concentrate and nightmares. (Gitin, 2014, 158)

My version of PTSD was a strong aversion to being in the middle of crowds and to loud noises. It was decades before I could get on a packed bus or subway during rush hour. In classes, I would only sit in an edge seat, never in the middle. If no edge seat was available, I'd sit in the aisle or stand in the back of the room. I couldn't tolerate fireworks; I'd flinch every time one burst, even when I knew it was coming. New Year's eve 1970 I was sound asleep when someone set off a firecracker below my window. I was out of bed and crouched behind a dresser *before* I woke up and realized what was happening. I couldn't stand discos or any loud music. I was also very sensitive to any noise behind my back. All these wore down over time but never entirely went away.

SCOPE was a great idea in theory. Each college would form a SCOPE chapter which would establish a relationship with a blackbelt county that might last well past the summer of 1965. The chapters would raise their own money and bring workers and other resources into

some of the most poverty stricken areas of the South. They would also bring the knowledge that someone out there cared. Like most things in the civil rights movement, it didn't work out quite the way it was planned.

For the most part, schools did not form an ongoing relationship with the counties they worked in, but there were some exceptions. The University of Illinois created the Alabama Illini project which stayed in touch with Greene Co. AL and Gilmore. The following summer, three new students came to Eutaw to do civil rights work. No one came in 1967. (Tyler, 2012)

Columbia U. SCOPE prepared to return to Orangeberg and Calhoun counties in SC. It put up a table on campus in March to recruit summer workers. Micky Shur hoped that the focus in 1966 would be on educating local people on how to bring federal money to the county, especially for farmers. (*Columbia Spectator*, 3-24-66, 6) But he doesn't remember actually going to those counties in the summer of 1966.

Dick Reavis remained committed to Marengo County AL, but not to SCOPE. As a student at the University of Texas in the fall of 1965, he put together a Demopolis Project Committee which stayed in touch with the Civic Club that had been created the previous May when SCLC arrived. The Texas students collected a thousand books which they brought to Demopolis over Spring break. They arranged to give them to the county library in exchange for integrating the facilities so that the Negro children could use the library and all those books. A Civic Club leader was running for Tax Assessor in the May 3 primary so they stayed to knock on doors. With their help, Anne Braxton came in first in that primary, but lost the run-off to the white man who came in second. (Reavis, 2001, 85-6)

When the semester ended, Reavis brought half a dozen students to Demopolis to work for the summer. Three of them joined the Meredith March for a few days. They had raised enough money to rent a large van but it proved to be a liability. With Texas plates, the van both identified them to law enforcement and put them in conflict with the Alabama law about driver's licenses. They intended to canvas the rurals but quickly discovered that voter registration wasn't the best use of their time. There was no one worth voting for in November, at least not locally; the next primary wouldn't be for another two years. Becky Brenner opened a free day care center, which eventually became the Headstart program. Bill Moore and Bob White worked on creating a food stamp program. Another student worked on setting up ASCS committees. Dick spent most of the summer in jail. (Reavis, 2001, 86-7)

In other places individual SCOPERS returned at different times. Bond Perry and Margot Thomas returned to Choctaw Co. AL in October of 1965 to register voters. Margot went onto the SCLC staff and stayed there a year. (SC 11-20/21-65, 6; Thomas bio) Two Amherst students planned to return to Martin Co. NC when the registration books opened up in October. (Hawkins papers 5:24p42) Bill Monnie returned to Lunenburg Co. VA in the winter of 1966. In the summer of 1966 Bill Brault returned to Hale Co. AL to "set up a catalogue of registered voters as well as a small library." (Brault bio) Lanny Kaufer and Phil McKenna returned to Sussex Co. VA in the summer of 1966. Lanny stayed in touch with members of the Sussex County Improvement Association that came out of the SCOPE summer and visited them in 1988. He was one of several SCOPERS who maintained relationships with some of the people they worked

with. (Kaufer e-mail of 12-9-18)

Some of these relationships lasted for years. As soon as Mary Pottle returned home she started collecting and shipping clothing, household goods, toys and books to different families around Henry County AL where they were distributed as needed. By 1966 there were four libraries in the county – the two public libraries which were officially desegregated but seldom used by Negroes and two other libraries set up in black churches with hundreds of books on black history and literature shipped from Massachusetts. Mary kept this up for years, occasionally driving South to see what was needed. Many students had never seen dictionaries. She befriended Martha Parker, the young woman who was the first Negro to go to Abbeville High School, and helped get her into Morris Brown College after the high school neglected to tell her about the SAT, or to send her transcript to the College. (Pottle, 1975; *SC* 7-16/17-66, 8)

There were some counties which met Blackwell's description of failures. *Why* they failed is a harder question to answer since SCOPE only went where requested. Savannah was the most notable. Georgia's oldest city, with the more cosmopolitan culture typical of ports, had a 1960 population of 168,887 of whom 35.2 percent were non-white. It was in Chatham County, whose 1960 population was 188,299 of whom 34.1 percent were nonwhite. In 1962 26.8 percent of NVAP was registered to vote compared to 46.2 percent of WVAP. (House Judiciary Com., *Hearings* 1965, 162 citing *AJC* 4-29-63)

Civil rights activism had a long history in Savannah. During and after WWII the NAACP achieved much within the confines of segregation. With a large membership and significant numbers of young people, the NAACP responded quickly to the Greensboro sit-ins, organizing rallies, marches and an economic boycott that lasted well into 1961. Hosea Williams rose to prominence during these eighteen months of protests by inspiring and mobilizing the students who were the bulk of the troops. Hosea was an officer of the NAACP, but organized a separate Chatham County Crusade for Voters to give him more leeway to challenge segregation. At some point he clashed with the NAACP leadership, largely over whether there should be any night marches. He also caught the attention of Dr. King, who invited him to work for SCLC. Hosea took several of his best men with him, resolving the leadership struggle in Savannah, but leaving a less than welcoming environment for the twelve SCOPERS who were sent to Savannah in 1965. (Tuck, 2001, 44-54, 127-37)

No one came from Savannah to pick up Boyd Faust and Irma Geller, or the four seminarians from Maryknoll College in Glen Ellyn, IL and they didn't have a car. After several days languishing at the Freedom House, Dana Swan drove them to the homes of their hosts in Savannah. The project director was supposed to be J.T. Thompson, but he had been diverted to Crawfordville to help run the protests there. Consequently, the SCOPE team had no direction, and none of them had sufficient experience to know what to do. The NAACP took a hands-off attitude since they were sent by Hosea. Six more SCOPERS arrived in late June and the seminarians left in mid July.

They got some work done. Big Lester, who had come from Savannah with Hosea in 1963, went back for a few weeks. He borrowed a 1949 Packard from Henry Brownlee and used

it to pick SCOPers up in the morning from their various hosts. In a previous life it had been a funeral car but was now known as the “Ballot Bus.” Its faded black body was painted with white slogans. On the hood was written “Free rides. No excuses.” Mike Ungersma and Bill Washburn drove it through the streets while Big Lester literally pulled people off the sidewalk and pushed them into the vehicle. When full, they would go to the registrar, where Barbara Ann Levy, one of two students from the Davis campus of the University of California, observed the registration process daily to make sure it was done fairly. (Faust, 2015)

On July 20, Faust and Geller went to Atlanta, from which they were sent to Americus. In August the SCOPers still in Savannah were told to go to Americus, and take a bus of locals with them to participate in the demonstrations. When the SCOPers returned to Savannah later that month, they found themselves dealing with a new staffer from SCLC whom they did not like. The summer was almost over, so they packed up and left, after holding a couple small marches. No one knew how many Negroes were registered by SCOPE that summer, but they all agreed that their time could have been better spent elsewhere. (FBI report #157-199; Faust, 2015, 5)

In the fall of 1965, the three University of Wisconsin sociologists who had administered a questionnaire at SCOPE orientation sent two follow-up questionnaires by mail. There were 166 white volunteers who sent back the second questionnaire, giving an overall response rate of 60 percent. Of these, 79 percent of the volunteers spent most of their time working on voter registration; only one percent said they integrated public accommodations. The latter is inconsistent with the information that came out of discussions at the reunion, and letters and e-mails that I reviewed. Since we weren't *supposed* to demonstrate that summer, perhaps those returning questionnaires in the fall of 1965 under reported what did happen. In fact, most of the kids in the counties we worked in wanted to integrate, especially eateries. They thought that was exciting. While the teenagers were crucial to canvassing, most thought it was boring. So did the SCOPE volunteers. It was easy for the kids to pull SCOPE volunteers into “integrating” despite instructions at orientation that there be no demonstrations.

The sociologists analyzed the responses for 49 projects in all six SCOPE states, with an average of six participants each. In general the respondents felt that their projects had been successful, but not as much as they expected. “Protest” led to greater feelings of success, even though respondents acknowledged that it wasn't as important as voter registration. One could “prove oneself” with protest. Bringing more people to the registrars didn't give the same psychological lift. Political education classes also contributed to feelings of success, as did a sense of achieving some community organization. (Demerath, et. al. 1971a)

Culture Clash

Those of us who grew up in the North brought attitudes, practices and experiences which were often quite different from those of Southern society, black and white. SCOPE orientation did not prepare the summer volunteers for these differences. While I was not at orientation, I have read the program and some of what others thought about it. It was great on politics and history. Some speakers were inspiring. But what the volunteers really needed, especially the Northern white students, was some cultural anthropology and training in organizing. For the most part, SCOPE volunteers didn't know what they needed to know until they were in the field and stumbled into the unknown. They did and said things that would be perfectly normal for young people where they came from, but would evoke disapproval from Southerners.

Culture clashes fell into three categories though they sometimes mixed. One was the reaction of northern whites to the Southern black world. Another was the reaction of Southern blacks to the northern whites in their midst. And the third was Southern white reactions to the northern whites' relationship with Negroes. None of these clashes were as sharp as they would have been before WWII, as increased travel and TV made people more aware of differences. But the fact that clashes were still common in 1965 illustrates how hard it is to adjust to the unfamiliar, and how embedded attitudes and values were.

Differences of region and race were accentuated by class. Some Northern whites had no exposure to Negroes before coming South, but for those of us who did, it was more likely to be Negroes of the middle class. Mine came largely through my mother, who taught in black schools on the east side of Los Angeles until 1953. There she befriended Negro colleagues with a common Southern heritage; one became her best friend. I spent second grade in a black elementary school, largely because it was next door to the jr. high where my mother taught, making it easy for me to have a place to go at the end of my school day. After we moved to the San Fernando Valley I saw few Negroes in the schools I attended and few at Berkeley. Some SCOPERS had tutored kids in Northern cities, but they didn't meet their families or visit their homes. The fact that the few Negroes we knew were middle-class teachers and students made it easy to see that segregation and discrimination were wrong, but harder to relate to Southern blacks who were not middle-class.

Most white volunteers came from traditional homes, shared by two parents plus their children. Some mothers worked outside the home, but not all. In those days, married women weren't expected to earn money if their husbands could support them, especially if they had children. Such income was dismissed as "pin money." They certainly weren't supposed to have careers. Among Southern Negroes, this was more likely to be the case higher in the class structure, but the middle and upper middle classes were much smaller so the percentage of traditional families in the black community was smaller. Indeed, two incomes were generally necessary for a middle-class standard of living. Consequently women earning money outside the home was not disparaged and men didn't feel inferior because their wives worked for money. It was normal for married women to work, even if they had children.

Lower class Negroes had more varied and fluid family forms as well as multiple incomes. For the northern whites, this took some getting used to. One SCOPER described the family she lived with as composed of a middle-aged woman, her brother and his two children, plus three more nieces and nephews. Two other cousins sometimes stayed in their house. “In the poor areas there seems to be very few normal family situations,” one white SCOPER wrote home in the middle of the summer. (Addison letter of July 25, 2) What was “normal” to her was not normal in the Southern black community.

Many patterns of Negro life conflicted with those of Northern whites. C.P. time was one of them. Working in Martin Co., N.C., Peter Buck wrote that they had scheduled their first mass meeting at 7:00, but by 7:15 only five people had arrived. It was 7:45 before enough had come to make a meeting possible. By 9:00 they had slightly over 50. Ingrained deference to whites was another roadblock. SCOPERs were surprised by the number of times Negroes said “yes” without meaning it. This happened most frequently when they agreed to be ready to go register on the right day but would not be waiting when the car came to pick them. The same thing happened with meetings and classes, though one was never sure if the people weren’t coming, or just coming on C.P. time. (Buck Journal, 1965; Guy Nussberg interview in Hawkins papers, 5:24p44)

The biggest culture shock was seeing poverty much worse than anything they imagined. The extent of poverty and indifference to it evoked comments in letters home and what SCOPERs wrote or talked about subsequently. The general view was that a rich country should not have malnourished children. Janet Wolfe wrote about how expensive it was to be poor, where everything had to be bought on credit. Bruce Miroff observed that “it was not only the physical features of poverty that were so discouraging to the volunteers; it was equally their impact on peoples’ spirits.” (Brault talk, 2017, 3; Venable, 2017, 43-4; Wolfe, 2014, 1; Tyler, 2012, 2; Miroff, 2016, 2; Zvonkin diary, 1965, 32; Pottle, 1975, 1)

Along with this was the impact of segregation itself. Of course a lot of the North had *de facto* segregation, but the gulf wasn’t as wide as in the South. Those volunteers who had occasion to compare the black and white schools in their counties could see not only a big difference in the buildings, but in the fact that the black schools inherited the worn-out textbooks and equipment from the white schools, when they got any at all. Mary Pottle was shocked that students had to pay “book fees” to get books, or even pencils to use in class. Pretty much every SCOPER observed that the roads in the black community were not paved, there were seldom sewers, sidewalks or streetlights. This was an obvious consequence of not electing the public officials who decided where to spend public funds. It reinforced our belief in the importance of registering to vote. (Pottle, 1975, 1; Hetlinger, 2015, 2)

Once they saw the Negro schools, SCOPERs weren’t that surprised at the low literacy rate, or the degree of partial literacy. Before the VRA was passed some SCOPE projects organized classes to teach people to read the forms they would have to fill out. Kathleen Courts, who worked in Kershaw County, SC, wrote that they had a list of the legal language used to disqualify voters. – I have never been convicted of any of the following crimes: burglary, robbery, bigamy, miscegenation, etc. (Courts e-mail of 6-15-15) Several SCOPERs remembered the pride their “students” expressed when they learned to write their own name in place of an X.

(Labedis, 2011, 110-11; Poole, 2018)

A lot of the culture shock white Northerners experienced when entering the world of Negro Southerners came at the table. Food defines communities throughout the world. Eating was one of the activities where segregation was very rigid; whites and Negroes could not be seated in the same room if they were eating. Since we ate in Negro homes, that meant eating a lot of dishes we found strange. I thought I had grown up on Southern cooking, but in the Negro community I had many encounters with the unknown. These usually involved some part of the pig. My mother hadn't served a lot of hog, apart from ham hock in her green beans, occasional pork chops, and a baked ham on New Year's and Easter. In South Carolina I began to learn what I had missed, and was often glad that I had missed it. I also learned that the Southern expression to "eat high on the hog" should be taken literally. I'd often heard my mother use it to mean "doing better" but until I encountered the numerous parts of the pig, I didn't know how literally I should interpret that expression. The many Jewish civil rights workers were at a special disadvantage. Not all Jews avoid pork, but they were aware of their cultural tradition that pork is unclean.

My first gustatory adventure was with pig's ear. It was served boiled, or so I was told when I asked what it was. I stared at the strange shape on my plate for a long time, eating everything else while trying to hide the fact that I really didn't want to sample the main dish. Instead I dissected it. There was a layer of fibrogenous cartilage about 1/16 of an inch thick blanketed between 1/8 inch layers of something else. It was the "something else" that I couldn't quite figure out. It seemed to be muscle, skin and fat all mixed into one. I had trouble eating it, and I only tried once. Pickled pig's feet on the other hand I could eat; they tasted a little like a vinegary ham but with more gristle. Chitlins I knew to avoid. Chitlins is tripe – hog intestine boiled for at least 24 hours. I had tasted tripe soup in Mexico in 1963 and didn't want to do so again. The trick was to avoid it gracefully – especially when staffers (not local people) were teasing you. A lot of SCOPERs ate things they didn't like because they were teased into doing so. I ate the pig's ear, but I managed to avoid eating chitlins, though I did have three close calls.

Chicken, on the other hand, was where I joined the teasers. Everyone loved Southern fried chicken. It was eating it that separated the Northerners from the Southerners. Southerners thought chicken was finger food. Licking your fingers was half the fun. Northerners ate chicken with a knife and fork, which was very inefficient. You couldn't get all the meaty morsels away from the bone with utensils. I thought it was funny to watch people try to eat chicken with utensils and I'm sure a lot of black Southerners did as well.

Vegetable preparation was a different world. Most SCOPERs had never eaten collard greens or okra. (There are several types of greens, but collards were the most common). My mother had cooked both. I liked greens, but I didn't like the slime in okra. Proper frying would get rid of the slime, but prepared any other way, it oozed from the pods. Overcooking vegetables was another Southern tradition. My mother's college courses had taught her that the vitamins are lost with overcooking so she changed her culinary ways. But when she tried to tell her mother the proper way to prepare vegetables.... Let's just say that I was still hearing about it in the 1950s, and Southerners, black and white, were still overcooking their vegetables in the 1960s.

There were a few other experiences with food that caught some people by surprise. Boyd Faust, who was a Southerner, remembers being served milk with whiskey in it. Peggy Poole, from California, remembers a loaf of bread on the table that was totally covered by cockroaches, which scattered when the light was turned on. A young son of the house brushed off the loaf and handed her a slice as though the roaches were nothing. That was one of her introductions to poverty. (Poole, 2018)

One of the first problems white Northerners faced was understanding the Southern Negro dialect. My initial reaction was that it was not only difficult to understand, but also sounded dumb. My mother had always told me that smart people were educated people, and educated people spoke proper English. Hearing all that “dumb” English was inconsistent with my beliefs about race, which gave me pause. My partial understanding of what I heard reminded me of my 1963 trip through Mexico and Central America where I found it hard to understand what people said despite my four years of classroom Spanish. I decided to do in the South what I had learned to do on that trip, which was to listen for the meaning and not for the words. Spoken language is redundant and augmented by gestures and facial expressions. Listening for the meaning made it a lot easier to understand what was being said even if I didn’t understand all the words or the accent. I mentally stepped back and tried to grasp the meaning. That worked, though not quickly. Eventually Negro dialect became comprehensible and I could listen “normally.” Of course some dialects were harder than others. I can only imagine the struggle of those who went to coastal counties where Gullah was spoken.

Shelby Jacobs, the Negro engineer from Los Angeles, had his own language problem. He loved to tell how “the kids were fascinated by our dialog. Not because of the context of the conversation, but the fact that my speech characteristics were identical to my white team members. The kids had never heard a black man who did not sound southern or urban. The look on their faces was as though I was being spoken through by a group of ventriloquists! One of them said, in her best southern dialect ‘he shoooo do tauwk propah!’” (Jacobs e-mail of 8-19-15)

Another major cultural adjustment was shifting from a big city mentality to that of a small town. Not all white SCOPERs were from big cities, but those who were initially maintained an air of distance on a public street. Small town folk mostly know each other and greet each other even when they don’t put on a friendly demeanor. Once our faces were known to the local Negroes, they smiled and greeted us warmly on the street even if we’d never been introduced. In the big city, when someone you don’t know smiles at you on the street it usually means you are about to be hit up for something; the best response is walk right past as though you haven’t seen a thing. In a small town that’s down right rude. I’m sure a lot of local Negroes thought the summer SCOPERs were rude.

Of course, white folk didn’t smile at us once they knew who we were and what we were doing, even when we were in their stores buying something. Strained politeness was the best we could get. Many, probably most of them, hated us and didn’t mind showing it. They believed that we were out to destroy their world. When any of us walked down the street in the white business section of a small town, we got a lot of glares, if they looked at us at all. I don’t think any of us

got used to hate stares. We were also treated like scum in stores and sometimes faced jeering white boys, threatening to beat us up. One result of absorbing all this hatred was that we only felt safe in the Negro sections of town. For many, this continued long after they returned to school or home. A lot of young, white civil rights workers left the South with a lingering distaste for white folk. It took a while to get over that. (Pottle, n.d.,13; Hetlinger, 2015, 4; unsigned letter in Hawkins papers, 5:22p9; Miroff, 2016, 11; Ackley e-mail of 12-12-18)

We all knew that religion was more important in the South than in the North. As the Wisconsin survey showed, SCOPers clustered at both ends of a religiosity scale. Those who were committed Christians never quite understood how white Southerners could believe in Christ and racism at the same time. Jews found less anti-Semitism than they expected; Catholics found more anti-Catholicism. Protestants occasionally put their religious knowledge to good use. Joe Keesecker, who was on his way to theology school, was pleasantly surprised when he was invited to preach at a revival in Florida and even more pleasantly surprised at the positive response to his sermon. (Keesecker, 2015, 4) Bruce Smith described an incident in Amelia County VA when he and Tim Kellogg talked to the black farm tenants. The white owner saw them, walked up and asked if they had been saved. Yes, Tim said. Tim came from central California where he had been raised in a fundamentalist Baptist church; he had memorized the Bible. After an exchange of verses over what the Bible had to say about race, the white farmer shook his head and just walked away. The hostile confrontation that Bruce had expected just did not happen. (Smith, 2015, 32-3)

Hosea thought white women were something of a liability. This came out occasionally in things he said and the types of jobs he gave us (or wouldn't give us). Few, if any, of us knew that Negro men associating with white women could be lethal so didn't understand his concern. Reading and listening to the stories of other SCOPers told me that his hesitancy reflected the fears of local folk out in the counties. A lot of Negro homes didn't want to house white women. Local hosts often discussed what to do with us and some turned down SCOPE projects with white women in them. Looking back over time I realize that this had to do with the cult of white womanhood that white men had created late in the 19th Century to justify lynching black men. Our presence in those homes added to the fear they already had of white retaliation. Nor did we understand that conduct that was perfectly normal for young people in the places we came from could be interpreted as a precursor to or even a type of interracial sex. To a white Southerner, that was the worst thing that could happen. That's why the waitress in Macon GA had such a fit when she saw the Negro engineer from Los Angeles and the white female UCLA student lick the same ice cream cone. Or why the two white women working in Camden SC were asked to leave after *one* of them was seen talking to a Negro teenager inside a car outside the place the two women were staying. Or why black high school boys were often discouraged from hanging out with the white college girls.

When young people get together it's normal for boys and girls to check each other out. They usually want to talk, sit and dance together if music is playing. In the South, black and white youngsters might be allowed to play together until they reached puberty, when they were separated. The white volunteers had been warned not to date local youth (we weren't supposed to date at all), but what could and could not be done at a social event held out of sight of the

white community was a little unclear. When the students from the University of Minnesota arrived at Fort Valley, GA, FVSC students organized a reception and dance. The white students were told by teachers not to dance with the black students, but as soon as the music started, they completely forgot. The reception was abruptly ended. (Grefenberg, 2009, 13)

The Southern belief that white men had to protect white women from contact with black men was unknown to the young whites who grew up in the North. While there was a general cultural belief that men should protect women, it wasn't racially specific in the North. Nor was "protection" interpreted as preventing association. Furthermore, the type of young women who came South to work in the civil rights movement weren't those who believed that they needed to be protected. We knew it was dangerous, but we thought the danger came from whites, not young black men. My mother had clearly rejected whatever she learned about protection growing up in Alabama. She always told me to "take care of yourself. No one else will." She taught me to do just that. While I never talked about this with other young female civil rights workers, I suspect that attitude was common. The women who went South for civil rights were a select group. Self selected to be sure, but select. We weren't wimps.

The Negro community's reaction to the SCOPers living and working with them is best seen through their children. More than one white volunteer was shocked to discover that Negro children were afraid of them. Just the sight of a white person brought out tears. (Pottle, 1975, 4) "When Darlene (Keeler) and I first moved in the kids were afraid of us and said "yes ma'am" all the time. Now they treat us a little bit more like members of the family but they are still quite shy and quiet." (Nancy Addison letter to Mom, Dad and Bobbie, July 25, 1965, p. 2) Others found that Negroes were afraid of any white person coming to their door, even when accompanied by a Negro. (Sheila Long ltr to parents, 6-26-65, 7-4-65; Brault talk, 2017, 3; Venable, 2017, ?)

Children also wanted to feel our hair and skin. In Florida, John Hetlinger was surprised at the number of little kids who wanted to touch him. (Hetlinger, 2015, 5) Some just stared. When Lanny Kaufer had his first dinner at the home of his local host in Virginia "their young son was staring at Phil and me. Finally, Mrs. Parham told him that it wasn't polite to stare. He replied, 'But, mama, they eat just like we do.'" (Kaufer report, 2013, 1) On the other hand, when Shelly Thompson went to Mobile he found that "It took the Negro kids a long time to shake our hands because they had never thought that any white man would ever shake their hand before." (Quote in *MK* 10-29-65, 11)

The white community's reaction was stronger. When sheriffs or mayors first met SCOPE project leaders, they objected to whites living in Negro homes. At orientation volunteers were told that a white woman should never be seen in public alone with a Negro man, for any reason. *Why* was brought home to me in the fall when I was working in Selma. Harold Middlebrooks, SCLC's district director, told me to walk to the bank with him to sign some papers. Soon after we crossed the street into the white neighborhood we passed a house with three men sitting on the porch. I could see them staring at us with a mixture of hate and incredulity that we should be so bold. Our visit was uneventful. The Rev. signed a paper authorizing me to use the SCLC bank account, I provided my signature, and the clerks learned what I looked like. On the way back we passed that house again. This time the men stood up as we went by and one went inside. Soon

they were following us down the street. One carried a rifle. We walked faster and faster, hoping to cross into the Negro neighborhood before they caught up with us. By the time we reached the border, we were walking so fast we were practically trotting. But we made it. They didn't cross that street. I often wondered if they really intended to catch up with us, and what they would have done if they had. If all they wanted to do was display bravado for their neighbors and scare us, they succeeded.

White on White Reprisals

“There are only two sides in the Southern fight – those who want to maintain the Southern way of life and those who want to mix the races,” a red-and-black full-page ad in the *Montgomery Advertiser* proclaimed over the signature of state senator Sam Englehardt, executive secretary of the Citizens’ Councils of Alabama. “There is no middle ground for moderation... that middle ground has been washed away by the actions of the NAACP in seeking to destroy the freedoms of the Southern white man.” Senator Englehardt ended his broadside with assurance that “there is no hate or animosity in this organization.” Harry Ashmore, 1982, p. 226.

As a result of the Citizens’ Councils’ activities, most white moderates in the South no longer feel free to discuss in public the issues involved in desegregation for fear of social ostracism and economic reprisals. What channels of communication had once existed between whites and Negroes have thus been largely closed.

Martin Luther King, Jr., in *Stride Toward Freedom*, 1957

Repression keeps white students silent.

Bob Zellner, *Southern Patriot*, January, 1964, p 1.

My relatives’ reaction to my becoming a civil rights worker was one small brick in the wall that white Southerners built to keep out any dissent from racial orthodoxy. At least through the 1960s, white supremacy was the state religion of the South. Anyone who voiced disagreement was an apostate and treated as such. Just as the South closed ranks against any talk of abolishing slavery before the War, there was no open discussion of alternative models of race relations after it. The only model was white supremacy. The only question was how to make white supremacy unassailable. Between the War and the Great War there was an occasional voice from the “silent South” – usually an intellectual who published an article in a northern journal. Holders of such traitorous views were denounced and often run out of town.

The early dissenters didn’t question the desirability of white supremacy and only some of them criticized disfranchisement and segregation. What they asked was that freed slaves be treated like human beings and not beasts of burden. In an 1881 book, Atticus Greene Haygood, the president of Emory College in Oxford, Georgia (later Emory University in Atlanta) argued that all of Southern society would benefit if Negroes were educated and not exploited. New Orleans novelist George Washington Cable published a series of essays on “The Silent South” and “The Negro Question” in *Scribner’s Magazine* which were reprinted as books in 1888 and 1889. These men and the few others like them were relentlessly attacked in the Southern press. (Sosna, 1977, 1-20; Chappell, 1994, 4-18)

After the 1896 *Plessy* decision “southern white dissent became even narrower and more defensive.” The slightest and most circumstantial critique of white racial practices occasioned a

major brouhaha. After publishing an objection to lynching in a major magazine in 1902 an Emory College professor was forced to resign. A Trinity College (Duke University) professor who wrote about the evils of racial demagoguery in 1903 kept his job but wrote no more. (Chappell, 1994, 22-32)

In response to the race riots that swept the country in 1919, a small group of Southern white moderates formed the Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC) with its main office in Atlanta. It hired Will Alexander, a Methodist minister who was active in the YMCA, to set up committees throughout the South to work on improving conditions for Negroes. During the Great War, he had supervised “racial harmony programs” in the South for the War Department. Funded initially by the YMCA and subsequently by Northern philanthropists, the CIC identified a few thousand whites in 13 states interested in “uplifting” Negroes and averting racial conflict. At first there was resistance to letting women join at all, but eventually a Women’s Committee was created specifically to appeal to Southern white women. Methodist women predominated. Negroes and whites usually met separately; the Negro committee in each community asked for what it wanted and the white committee decided what it could do. In the 1920s the Klan was riding high so the CIC did not publicize its meetings. Its primary public focus was on the eradication of lynching. Beyond this, the CIC tried to improve the services and facilities available to Negroes in the different communities where it operated. It did not challenge segregation or disfranchisement. During the Depression it largely ceased to function. (Sosna, 1977, 22; Knotts, 1990; Chappell, 1994, 36; Waskow, 1966, 198; Hall, 1979, 102-3) [<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2919>]

In 1944 the CIC merged into the Southern Regional Council (SRC), which came out of a series of conferences held in the South in 1943. For years, the SRC debated whether to focus exclusively on regional economic development – Southern states were still the poorest in the country – or to take up the challenge of racial injustice. In 1949 the SRC was ready to pass a resolution opposing segregation. This willingness to speak out against such a bulwark of white supremacy, however quietly, prompted a decline in membership and funding. Liberal whites who did not want to butt heads over the issue of race left or stayed away. The SRC continued to research and publicize conditions in the South, through pamphlets, news releases and its journal *New South*. After *Brown* it organized Human Relations Councils throughout the South, where Negroes and those whites willing to accept integration could at least talk to each other. These were more common in the border states than in the five Deep South states. Since the SRC was tax exempt, it also became a conduit through which foundation funds could be channeled into civil rights projects. The Voter Education Project (VEP) was one of these. (Sosna, 1977, 117-19; Muse, 1964, 162) [<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-3035&hl=y>].

The Supreme Court’s decision on May 17, 1954 that segregated schools were unconstitutional hardened the hearts of whites in the Deep South toward any disagreement with segregation. Many of the interracial groups that were bringing blacks and whites to talk to each other found they could no longer find places to meet. Rep. John Bell Williams of Mississippi called the day “Black Monday” on the floor of the House. So did Mississippi circuit judge Tom P. Brady in a little talk he gave in Greenwood, MS later that month. His speech received such a strong positive response from his white, all-male audience that he turned it into a book by that name. Long before Virginia Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr. called for “massive resistance” on

February 24, 1956, organized white resistance was spreading quickly. (Carter III, 1959, 26-30)

The first new organization was the white Citizens' Councils, generally abbreviated WCC as though White was part of its name. Its letterhead proclaimed it to be "The Only Nationwide Organization Dedicated to Preserving the Integrity of the White Race." Founded by 14 men in the Mississippi Delta town of Indianola on July 11, 1954, the WCC explicitly disavowed the violent methods of the Ku Klux Klan in order to remain respectable. Composed mostly of businessmen and professionals, many of whom had been active Dixiecrats in 1948, the WCC used social and economic reprisals to punish uppity Negroes and dissident whites. Elected officials and aspiring white politicians found it expedient to join even when they didn't fully agree with what the WCC did. County newspapers which didn't toe the line saw their advertising dry up, especially of official county notices. Even in bigger cities, the WCC could affect a newspaper's bottom line. During the 1957 Little Rock school integration crisis, the WCC promoted a boycott of *The Arkansas Gazette* for urging compliance with the federal court. The paper won a Pulitzer prize for its coverage and lost ten percent of its circulation. (*NYT* 5-6-58, 39)

The WCCs were particularly active in the blackbelt counties of the four states where the Dixiecrats had won in 1948 (SC, AL, MS, LA). Some received state money. The Mississippi legislature directed \$250,000 to the Councils. (Carter III, 1959, 62) Alabama's Councils did not have the support of Governor Folsom, but did include several state senators among their leadership. When George Wallace became Governor, he found a way to channel some money to Council projects. In Louisiana, the leadership of the WCC coincided with that of the Joint Legislative Committee to Maintain Segregation. Since 18 percent of the registered voters were Negro, the WCC organized a purge. Members went through the registration books looking for the tiniest of mistakes by which to challenge the qualifications of Negro voters. (*U.S. v. Association of Citizens' Councils* Bienville Parish, La. 166-33-10, described at CRD, 1964, 11-12 [1191-2] in 1965 Senate *Hearings*, 1330). The South Carolina legislature officially commended its WCC. (Bartley, 1969, 85-94, 180-81, 200-201; McMillen, 1994; *BN* 1-23-66, 33)

The Ku Klux Klan revived with a vengeance after the *Brown* decision, but not where the WCC was strong. The KKK found its members in urban areas and in rural counties outside the blackbelt where small farms rather than plantations had once flourished. Members ranged from mill workers to owners of small businesses and those who worked in them. Many were members of labor unions. The "leading citizens" in a community joined the WCC, but would not join the KKK. The KKK was particularly active in six Southeastern states, but made an appearance throughout the South and even in some northern states. Given its proclivity for violence, no official bodies commended the Klan, but many relied on it to take care of problems that couldn't be taken care of by more respectable whites. While the most serious crimes were committed against Negroes, their homes and churches, whites were not immune from intimidation and violence. (Vander Zanden, 1960, 458; 1965, 42-48)

The KKK receded then revived again in response to the 1961 Freedom Rides. There were multiple KKKs, not all of which used that name. Different klan organizations emerged, splintered, reorganized and died. A major expansion took place in 1964, in response to the hundreds of young people who descended on Mississippi for Freedom Summer and the publicity

surrounding the murders of three of them in June. The 1965 Selma campaign gave the Klan another boost. As of February 1966, there were 15 major Klans active in the US with almost 17,000 members. An investigation by the US House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) counted 714 klaverns (local units) active between 1964 and 1966, including 56 “ladies auxiliaries.” By far the biggest was the United Klans of America (UKA), with headquarters in Tuscaloosa, Alabama and “realms” in 19 states. Under the leadership of Imperial Wizard Robert Shelton, its membership climbed to over 15,000. (HUAC *Report*, 1967, 18-19, 22, 61-62) The mid-1960s was probably the peak of KKK numbers and activities in the post WWII era. A combination of internecine warfare, public revulsion at some of its extreme actions and the FBI’s COINTELPRO program led to an intermittent decline, but not a disappearance, of the Klan. (Chalmers, 2003, 145-6) After hearings in 1965-66, HUAC reported a bill making it a federal crime to use interstate commerce (e.g. roads) in order to promote crimes of violence. It went no further. (CN II, 1969, 413)

In the years leading up to the civil rights movement public dissenters to the racial status quo were disliked but tolerated. After the *Brown* decision, those whites who did not denounce integration, or were merely curious about its advocates, paid a heavy price, especially in the five Deep South states. Those who could be fired or driven out of business found themselves facing poverty. Those who could survive economically were socially ostracized and sometimes physically threatened. They either reconciled themselves to lonely lives or they left town. In particular, whites on the Human Relations Councils that were created to promote interracial dialog found themselves ostracized by the white community. There was a little bit of tolerance in the border states; virtually none in the Deep South. A few examples from Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and South Carolina will illustrate how whites in the Deep South reacted to any deviance from “massive resistance” to integration. (Carter III, 1959, 18; Muse, 1964, 160-172; Goldfield, 1990, 70-72)

Alabama

Virginia and Clifford Durr were born into old, established Alabama families; she in Birmingham and he in Montgomery. They married in 1926. Virginia bore five children. Clifford practiced law. Virginia’s sister married Hugo Black, who was elected to the Senate from Alabama in 1926. He arranged for Clifford to get a job in a federal agency in Washington, D.C. in 1933. The Durrs became ardent supporters of President Roosevelt – who eventually appointed Clifford to the Federal Communications Commission – and reformers on every issue, including race. Virginia called herself a socialist. In 1938, she was one of the founding members of the SCHW. In 1948 she ran for the Senate from Virginia on the Progressive Party ticket headed by Henry Wallace. Although they both loved Washington, Clifford became disaffected with President Truman over his insistence on loyalty oaths and in 1951 the couple returned to the family home in Montgomery. (Sullivan, 2003, ?)

Because they would not conform to the world view of white Southerners, neither Durr was accepted back into the white community. Earning a living was difficult and would have been impossible had not Clifford been able to get legal work from his family’s business. He also took difficult legal cases representing Negroes who had little or no money and advised those few Negro attorneys who were the attorney of record. Virginia took a business course so she could be

his secretary. A very social person, she had been well connected when in Washington. While she found a very small coterie of progressive whites in Montgomery, she was lonely; the women in all the community organizations she joined kept their distance. She kept up her Washington connections through Eleanor Roosevelt, a personal friend, and brother-in-law Justice Hugo Black. To stay in touch, Virginia wrote to her friends about conditions and attitudes in the South and, after it emerged, the civil rights movement. In one of her letters Virginia Durr concluded: “you can see how the South has maintained itself so long as it has; it punishes its dissenters so badly that no one dares do it.” (Sullivan, 2003, quote on 187)

Even Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black became a pariah in his home state after the *Brown* decision. “[Former] constituents reviled him.... Old friends shunned him.... Politicians blasted him.” For years, the Alabama legislature regularly passed resolutions condemning him. When he visited his son, who practiced law in Birmingham, he needed protection to walk down the street. Indeed, Hugo Jr. was himself blackballed in so many quarters that he eventually moved out of Alabama. (Newman, 1994, 440-41, 443)

During the Montgomery bus boycott, Virginia Durr was one of several white women who drove Negro women to and from their jobs. Cliff Durr helped with legal papers; Fred Gray called him his “silent partner.” Even though they were already isolated and ostracized, Virginia turned down an interview request from an Alabama State professor¹ who wanted to write a book about the boycott because, she wrote, going public “simply means that our tenuous hold here is lost for good.” Her friend, librarian Juliette Morgan, was one of the few whites to support the boycott openly. She had been writing letters to the *Montgomery Advertiser* about racial injustices for years. While she had frequently been castigated for this, her letter comparing the bus boycott to Gandhi’s actions prompted the white Citizens’ Council to demand that she be fired. The Montgomery City library board didn’t fire her, but patrons shunned her and she was constantly harassed. After the boycott ended, Morgan had a nervous breakdown and left her job. When the Klan burned a cross on her lawn in 1957, she committed suicide at age 43. (Sullivan, 2003, quote on 128, 137, 150; *SP* May 1960, 1; <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1581>)

Some of the women in the small coterie of racial liberals joined with a few Negro women to form an interfaith, interracial group which met in Negro churches to “pray and sing and hold hands and have a cup of tea afterward.” By 1958 it contained about one hundred women from all over Alabama. Late that year a spy inside one prayer meeting reported on the women’s interracial meetings while men took down the license plate numbers of those whose cars were outside. After the names and addresses of those thus identified were circulated, their homes received threatening phone calls and a few visits from men wearing guns. Husbands who owned businesses were threatened with loss of trade. “Several husbands took out notices in the papers

¹ The professor, Lawrence D. Reddick, became a good friend of the Kings while researching that book and shifted to writing the first biography of Martin Luther King Jr. (1959) In 1960 Governor John Patterson ordered the ASC president to fire him because he was an “agitator and communist sympathizer.” He taught at several other colleges and published two more books before he died in 1995. Faculty, black and white, at other colleges in other states were also fired for supporting student protestors. (*SP* Sept. 1960, 1; March 1960, 4)

disassociating themselves from their own wives. One man disassociated himself from his aunt and another disassociated himself from his daughter. They were scared of the repercussions to their business.” The group never met again. (Barnard, 1987, quotes on 245; Sullivan, 2003, 168-170)

In 1960 five students at Huntingdon College in Montgomery, a white Methodist church school, met Dr. King and Rev. Abernathy in the local courthouse while they were on trial and later attended a couple mass meetings in Abernathy’s church. Even though they said they were doing research for a course on Race Relations they were taking at school, they were almost arrested and the college president asked them to leave the school. Four complied. Only senior Bob Zellner, who had parental support, stayed to the end of the school year, joining SNCC after graduation. In 1961 the same college expelled a student from England who spoke out in favor of the freedom rides. (Zellner, 2008, Chapter 4; Sullivan, 2003, 254)

The Durrs continued their support of the civil rights movement despite the risks, taking unpopular legal cases and hosting visitors seeking information about the South, integration, the civil rights movement, etc. Despite her efforts to be discrete, Virginia Durr became known as a troublemaker and continued to be ostracized by white society. Once she phoned a real estate agent about renting a vacant house only to be told that he wouldn’t ask anyone to rent to them because “he was sure the neighbors would protest.” On the upside, their home was a popular crash pad for civil rights workers, which was a welcome antidote to isolation. Virginia wrote that “I often feel I am running a station on the underground railroad but I love doing it.” Zellner was one of her favorite guests. (Sullivan, 2003, quotes on 260, 268)

Labor lawyer Charles Morgan Jr. was a part of the small liberal community of Birmingham when the 16th St. Baptist Church was bombed on September 15, 1963. The steel industry made Birmingham one of the few unionized cities in the South and thus a place where a few liberal lawyers could survive economically. But when it came to race, most liberals kept their mouths shut. Morgan had spoken out occasionally, but carefully. After the bombing, while Birmingham was still reeling from the shock of the deaths of four young Negro girls, Morgan spoke at the Young Men’s Business Club, telling his friends that the entire white community was responsible for that crime. His outspokenness shocked white Birmingham more than the crime itself, only this time they knew whom to blame. Potential clients stopped calling. His home received “anonymous bomb threats and ugly phone calls.” His wife and son were threatened. After a month of ostracism and harassment they moved to Arlington, Virginia where Morgan found temporary employment, first with the American Association of University Professors and then with the NAACP Inc Fund. Unlike many other Southern refugees, Morgan returned to the South, but not to Birmingham. A year later he became director of the new regional office of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in Atlanta. He stayed ten years, handling some of the key legal cases for the civil rights movement. (Quote in *WP* 4-22-64, C2; Morgan, 1964, passim; 1979, 19-20, 23)

Morgan was not the first or last white man to be run out of Birmingham for supporting civil rights. Decades later, two others published memoirs about their experiences. Lamar Weaver was born in Georgia and raised in Birmingham. While a young child in rural Alabama he had witnessed a Negro teenager dismembered with axes by a white mob. He later credited this

experience with opening his eyes to the pervasive mistreatment of Southern Negroes, thus escaping the mass denial so common to Southern whites. In the 1950s he worked for the steel company and was active in his church. He was attending a local Bible college as the civil rights movement burst into the public arena. He and a couple fellow students asked God what He wanted them to do. This led them to make missionary trips to rural counties to encourage Negroes to register to vote. They had more than one encounter with the county sheriff, the Klan, and bullets. It also brought him to the Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, with whom he became friends. On March 5, 1957, Shuttlesworth phoned Weaver and told him that he and his wife would challenge the segregation ordinance the next day by sitting in the white waiting room of the train station. Weaver joined him, but since he did not buy a ticket, the cops made him leave – right into the hands of a white mob just outside the door. Since the police would not protect him, Weaver barely escaped with his life. The next day he flew to Washington, D.C. to testify at the Congressional hearing on the civil rights bill. There, Birmingham Congressman George Huddleston told him not to return to Birmingham, because he was “the most hated white man in the South.” He soon relocated to Cincinnati.

Ed Harris also grew up in Birmingham. He later attributed his support of integration to having read the Bible and believed it while still a boy. He first found a few kindred spirits at Birmingham-Southern College in the mid-1950s but they “were all paralyzed, unable to do anything.” (Harris, 2004, 21) Merely inviting Negroes to campus to talk resulted in mass phone calls and bombing threats. Raised a Baptist, only when he joined the Unitarian Church as an adult did he find a community of people who agreed with him; most of those were too fearful to do anything publicly. They worked with the Birmingham Council on Human Relations but tried to stay out of the public eye. Between 1963 and 1965, Harris openly supported the civil rights movement in Birmingham. He was beaten by a gang of whites when he and others tried to integrate the Alabama State Fair in 1963 through the simple act of walking to the grandstand in a racially mixed group. The police charged him with “inciting a riot,” labeling him a “confused white man.” (Harris, 2004, 138) His church was particularly moved by the attack in Selma on three Unitarian ministers, one of whom was beaten to death. It subsequently hosted three hundred UU ministers who came to Birmingham to participate in the Selma march. Harris finally got one too many bomb threats to his home and family. In August of 1965, he packed up and left.

For the Reverend Earl Stallings, who became pastor of the First Baptist Church of Birmingham in 1961, the threats came from his own congregation. One of eight direct recipients of Dr King’s 1963 “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” he was the only one to be commended “for your Christian stand this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a nonsegregated basis.” [http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html] Stallings had signed the letter from the white clergymen of Birmingham that called the demonstrations in Birmingham “unwise and untimely” after King’s arrest on Good Friday. On Easter Sunday he opened his church doors to Andy Young and other demonstrators. He even invited them back. As a result, “harassment, threats and constant pressure from a small minority at the church became part of his daily life.” Stallings transferred his pastorate to another state in 1965. [<http://www.samford.edu/pubs/belltower/090806/stallings.html>]

The reaction to Stallings was typical. Ministers who spoke out against the activities of such groups as the WCC faced intimidation and efforts to remove them from their own

congregations. The one white minister of a white congregation who supported the Montgomery bus boycott was Rev. Ray E. Whatley, who was also president of the Alabama Council on Human Relations. For this, his Methodist congregation harassed him and demanded that the bishop remove him. He was sent to a church in Linden, Alabama, but this congregation refused to accept him and he had to move again. In Mobile six white ministers supported a petition to desegregate the buses of that city. Crosses were burned outside their homes and churches. For years, any white minister who attended an interracial meeting anywhere in the state was confronted when he returned home. Local law enforcement copied the license tags and reported the attendance to home-county law enforcement, who arranged the “greeting.” (Collins, 1998, 17, 25-26, 30-1, 39-41, 49-51; Reiff, 2016, 75)

Colleagues as well as congregations could be intolerant of racial moderation. Rev. Robert E. Hughes had been the executive director of the Alabama Council on Human Relations for eight years when he refused to turn over its records to a Jefferson County Grand Jury in 1961. The North Alabama Methodist Conference recommended that he be dismissed from the ministry. Instead he left Alabama to do missionary work in Southern Rhodesia. (Morgan, 1964, 83) In Selma, Rev. John Conley had run vacation Bible schools for both black and white children, but separately. One year he held a final day picnic for all the children to come together as Christians. When his superiors in the Southern Baptist Church found out, they sent him to teach in a black Seminary in Nashville. (Lafayette, 2013, 16) Moreland G. Smith Sr. served as the unpaid chairman of the Alabama Advisory Committee to the US Commission on Civil Rights. In 1965 his architectural firm removed him as a partner. “My defense of equal opportunity, or freedom of expression and diversity of opinion, had made me a social and economic liability,” he explained diplomatically. He moved to Atlanta to direct a project for the Southern Regional Council. (SC 12-4/5-65 5)

Nor was being in a family firm a guarantee of protection. Attorney Paul Johnson was a member of the SRC and a member of his family’s law firm in Birmingham. At the request of the DoJ, Johnston agreed to represent FBI informant Gary Rowe when he was sued by KKK attorney Matt Murphy Jr. after testifying against Murphy’s client. The firm voted that no one affiliated with it could take the case, forcing Johnston to leave the firm and open his own law office in Birmingham. (NYT 5-30-65, 36)

Georgia

Those whites who didn’t leave the South when they couldn’t take the harassment and ostracism any longer often went to Atlanta. It was one of the few places with a sufficient number of white racial liberals that refugees could at least find work and a community of like-minded people. One of these was Sara P. Mitchell, an upper-middle-class housewife in an Atlanta suburb who ran for the school board with the intention of facilitating integration of the schools. She too was harassed and ostracized, but she didn’t lose her husband, even though he disapproved of her views and political work. He didn’t lose his job as a corporate executive and she didn’t lose all of her friends. She was elected to the school board in 1961, estimating that it took 100 percent of the black vote and 15 percent of the white vote to do so “and that’s about what the percentage of liberal-to-moderate white voters in Atlanta was at the time.” (Parsons, 2000, 47, 64-67)

The building at 5 Forsyth St. in Atlanta was something of a liberal oasis for several civil rights and related organizations. It housed the Southern Regional Council along with its Voter Education Project, the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity (ESCRU), the Law Student Civil Rights Research Council, the National Sharecroppers Fund and the ACLU. Although Atlanta was tolerant enough for the building management to risk renting to liberals, it wanted proof that none of its tenants were tainted by any association with Communism. To open its new office in 1964, the ACLU had to supply proof that it wasn't on the Attorney General's list of subversive organizations. Organizations like SCLC and CORE had their offices in the Negro neighborhoods, where they did not have to prove their loyalty. (Morgan, 1979, 26).

Atlanta might be an oasis but the rest of Georgia could be just as intolerant as Alabama and Mississippi. SNCC ran into this head-on when it started its Southwest Georgia project in 1961. It found an ally in Koinonia Farms, the interracial Christian commune a few miles outside of Americus in Sumter County. Commune members repeatedly violated Southern racial etiquette. This led to their expulsion from the local white Baptist church in 1950. As white anger increased after *Brown*, Koinonia became a target for a "Ku Klux Klan campaign of bombing and sabotage." There were years of threatening phone calls and petty vandalism, punctuated by bombings, burnings and occasional gunfire into their buildings. Those who didn't shoot at them, shunned them. Americus' banks closed Koinonia's accounts, insurance companies canceled their policies and businesses refused their trade. Those who had done business with Koinonia told them to pack up and leave. Those who continued to do business with them often found their own businesses bombed and boycotted. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) looked into Koinonia's "subversive activities." A grand jury concluded that Koinonia looked like a "Communist front" and claimed that they were vandalizing their own property to gain sympathy and donations from their Northern friends. In fact, publicity about the attacks did generate a lot of Northern support, which enabled Koinonia to survive. To stay solvent, Koinonia shifted from growing crops to packaging pecans, which it sold through a mail order catalog. But it was forced to close a lot of its programs, such as the interracial summer camp, vacation Bible school and its agricultural education classes. Fear and stress caused many to leave, though the commune itself remained. By 1959 it was down to three families, plus a few long-term guests. (23:8 *SP* Nov.'65, 2; *WP* 12-4-77, 373; quote in Tuck, 2001, 177; *SC* 2-12/13-66, 4; *NYT* 4-6-57, 28; *WP* 8-6-57, B5; McDonald, 2003, 63-64; K'Meyer, 1997, 59-60, 84-98; 127-44; Auchmutey, 2015, Chapter 3; <http://www.sumtercountyhistory.com/history/Koinonia.htm>)

The commune's white children went to the county white schools, where they were treated none too well. In 1960 three of them tried to transfer to Americus High School, which had the only college prep program in the county. They were refused, until federal Judge Bootle ordered the school board to admit the children. Their fellow students made their lives miserable. One Koinonia student made it through to graduation in 1964. She gave one of her guest tickets to a Negro friend from Koinonia; when he was denied admission she refused to go through the ceremony and walked out. That fall, four Negroes entered Americus High School under the county's "freedom of choice plan." Only one lasted the year. She graduated in June of 1967. A white youth from Koinonia graduated in 1965 after enduring years of harassment and shunning by fellow white students. He was booed when he accepted his diploma and rocks were thrown at him as he exited the graduation. (*Wittkamper v. Harvey*, 1960; Auchmutey, 2015, 96-98, 103, 129-135)

The demonstrations in Americus in the summer of 1965 led to two white moderates being run out of town. The first was Warren E. Fortson, Sumter County attorney and brother of Georgia's Secretary of State. Appalled by the conditions in which the children were jailed in the 1963 Americus demonstrations, Fortson was quick to recommend a bi-racial committee to solve the problems being protested in 1965. When town officials refused to budge, he organized a secret meeting of whites and Negroes to lay the groundwork for an official committee. After his effort became publicly known, locals circulated a petition to remove him from his county job. At a hearing before the County Commission, the only one who spoke up for Fortson was his State Senator, Jimmy Carter, a peanut farmer from nearby Plains. Soon he was being harassed and his family threatened. By September, Fortson's law practice had declined, his friends no longer spoke to him, his church would not let him teach Sunday School, his children were taunted at school, his wife given the frozen treatment by her social groups and rumors circulated that he was a Communist and an atheist. He moved his family to Atlanta to start over. His departure was followed six weeks later by that of Dr. Lloyd Moll, former president of Georgia Southwestern College, and his wife. He had stood by Koinonia during the years it was harassed, but in 1965 there was no one to stand by him. He said they would leave Georgia for good because of harassment from people who had been their friends and neighbors but objected to their views on race. Moll moved to his home state of Pennsylvania, where he died in 1991. (*SC* 8-13-65, 1; *NYT* 8-4-65, 18; 8-3-76, 16; 10-23-65, 21; *CD* 9-18-65, 7; 11-6-65, 7; *NYAN* 9-25-65, 25; *BAA* 10-30-65, 16; 23:9 *SP* Nov.'65, 3; *Newsweek* 9-20-65, 30; K'Meyer, 1997, 97; Auchmutey, 2015, 96-97, 142, 149-50; *The Morning Call* obit, Allentown, PA, 2-5-91)

Mississippi

The WCC was particularly strong in Mississippi, where it was founded. Composed of the "leading citizens" it could easily use "non-violent" means to punish those who voiced the slightest disagreement with white supremacy, or the least objection to how Negroes were treated. No one was immune from attack if they deviated too far from the social consensus. Conform or die was the mandate.

Small newspapers were crucial to communication in the South. Only a few newspapers in Mississippi challenged the conventional wisdom on race and they all paid a price. A 1963 article in the *New York Times* named five editors of small town dailies who had endured boycotts, social ostracism, hate mail and threats for urging compliance with the law, even though they often stopped short of supporting integration. (*NYT* 1-26-63, 4) One of these was Hazel Brannon Smith, a native of Alabama who bought a newspaper in Mississippi on the edge of the Delta. She was a muckracker, who frequently editorialized against the sheriff for not getting rid of bootleggers and gamblers, as well as other elected officials for not doing their jobs. Her editorials opposing the white Citizens' Councils won a Pulitzer Prize in 1964, but also brought down the wrath of the WCC and the local government. Printing the *Mississippi Free Press* brought in a little extra income, but also the attention of the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission. Although Brannon repeatedly said that she favored segregation, she was just as often accused of really supporting integration. What she did was report the facts when Negroes were shot or beaten without cause by the sheriff or otherwise treated like animals. Her personal mandate was to be fair and objective to blacks and whites alike, which in Mississippi was going

too far. The local powers started a competing newspaper to take her business away and eventually drove her into bankruptcy. (Kaul, 2001; <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1826>)

Even better known was Hodding Carter Jr., (aka Hodding Carter II) who also won a Pulitzer (in 1946) for his editorials in the *Delta Democrat-Times*. He too stopped short of advocating integration but he pushed the envelope way past the boundary of white tolerance. While he incurred lots of white hatred, he had benefactors among the local elites so his paper managed to survive. (Carter, 2001) Among his 16 books was one on a white family in McComb, Mississippi forced into exile by their friends and neighbors for just talking to civil rights workers during Freedom Summer. (Carter II, 1965)

Albert W. “Red” Heffner was a well-liked, well-established and prosperous insurance agent, a civic booster and an active member of McComb’s Episcopal Church. His step-daughter was the reigning Miss Mississippi. Both he and his wife Malva had deep Mississippi roots. On July 17, 1964 the Heffners fed dinner in their home to two young white men who were in Pike County as part of Freedom Summer. One was a minister whom Heffner had met through his own minister. Before dinner was over, their house was surrounded with vigilantes – their neighbors. Soon he was asked to vacate the office space he rented. For the next few weeks there were numerous anonymous phone calls and death threats. The Heffner’s pets were killed. Scurrilous rumors circulated about their political beliefs and their private lives. They heard that their house would be bombed. His business shriveled. Their daughter was no longer welcome in the homes of her friends. Their neighbors circulated a petition asking them to move. The “people we thought were our friends ran from us as though we were contagious lepers.” On Labor Day they relocated to Jackson, Mississippi, but their new landlord asked them to move as soon as the newspapers revealed who they were. Leaving Mississippi forever, the Heffners eventually found a permanent home in the Washington, D.C. area and a temporary job with the newly established Community Relations Service. That job was not renewed, supposedly at the behest of Sen. James Eastland (D-MS). Publicity led to a permanent job in HEW. (Carter II, 1965, quote on 91; *BN* 11-24-65, 11; *WP* obit, 5-2-97)

Another crusading editor was Ira B. Harkey, Jr., editor and publisher of the *Pascagoula Chronicle*. The son of a prominent New Orleans family, his views on race were altered by his Navy experience in World War II. From the time he purchased the paper in 1949, he violated Southern customs by writing about Negroes as he did for whites, such as employing the titles Mr. and Mrs. and not limiting coverage to crime stories. These practices were criticized and ridiculed, but he didn’t feel really threatened until he wrote a series of editorials attacking Gov. Ross Barnett’s actions to oppose the entry of James Meredith into the University of Mississippi in the fall of 1962. The sheriff of his county had organized carpools and chartered a bus to take whites to participate in the riots at Oxford, MS and subsequently organized the same men to put the *Chronicle* out of business. Between October of 1962 and February of 1963, the *Chronicle* “was the target for a campaign of vilification, boycott, threats and actual violence,” including gunshots. Newspaper carrier boys were harassed and advertisers threatened until they stopped buying space. Harkey won the 1963 Pulitzer for his editorials but the pressure was so great that in July of 1963 he sold the newspaper and left the South forever. (Harkey, 1967, quote on 13)

The Ole Miss riots on September 30, 1962 forced many people to take stands who had previously been silent. More than 50 professors left the University of Mississippi – not because they opposed Meredith’s admission, but because they didn’t oppose it. Some left voluntarily, some were forced out. Most prominent among them was history professor James W. Silver, who spoke about “Mississippi: The Closed Society” as president of the Southern Historical Society in the fall of 1963. This prompted the governor, the legislature and the University Board of Trustees to look for ways to remove him from the faculty. He soon published a book with that title. He also took an extended leave of absence, from which he never returned. (Silver, 1966, 142; Katagiri, 2001, 128-30; Dittmer, 1994, 142)

James Meredith’s first lawyer in his effort to enter Old Miss was William L. Higgs, a native, white Mississippian who returned from Harvard Law School looking for a political career. After losing a couple races, he took on Negro clients. These gave him a new perspective on race; representing Meredith changed it completely. Meredith’s case was soon taken over by the NAACP Inc. Fund, who could send lawyers from New York. Higgs joined with Medgar Evers in 1961 to found the *Mississippi Free Press* to report civil rights news in the state. As the only white civil rights lawyer in Mississippi, Higgs was despised by the white establishment, especially after he filed a lawsuit in 1961 challenging the delivery of state money to the white Citizens’ Councils. The case was dismissed. In 1963, shortly after he petitioned a federal court to enroll another Negro in Ole Miss, Higgs was arrested on a morals charge. He left the state before trial, was convicted in absentia and soon disbarred. He moved to Washington D.C. where he became a civil rights lobbyist. (Silver 1966, 96-98; Dittmer, 1994, 459n5; Katagiri, 2001, 72-3; *Harvard Crimson*, 3-4-64)

Churches were the primary institutions of social organization and networking throughout the South. Racial liberals found each other largely through the more tolerant of the religious bodies – the Quakers, the Unitarian Church and in some Jewish Synagogues. Churches also produced dissent, especially those with ministers who had spent time outside the South. When it came to integration, white churches were more likely to fire their ministers than follow them. On January 2, 1963, 28 ministers of the Mississippi Conference of the United Methodist Church, all natives of the state, published a statement in the *Mississippi Methodist Advocate* affirming that “all men are brothers.” Quoting the Methodist Discipline that Jesus “permits no discrimination because of race, color or creed,” it specifically opposed closing of the public schools to avoid desegregating or “diversion of tax funds to the support of private or sectarian schools.” The response within the church and without was overwhelmingly negative. Three of the signatories were immediately forced out of their churches and 20 left Mississippi within 18 months. (Reiff, 2016, quotes from “Born of Conviction” statement on 290)

Of the 28 ministers, 16 had gone to Millsaps College, a Methodist school in Jackson, where some had joined the interracial Intercollegiate Council, started in the 1930s by the Tougaloo College Chaplain. They held meetings at different colleges, including Millsaps, even though it was a white college. (Reiff, 2016, 35) In 1965 Millsaps became the first academic institution in the South to voluntarily desegregate.

One of the few Methodist church members who publicly supported them was Florence Mars of Neshoba County, who had attended Millsaps before transferring to Ole Miss. When

Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman disappeared after release from the county jail in June of 1964, most Mississippians claimed it was a hoax, perpetrated to create sympathy and raise money. Mars knew it wasn't and said so. Her friends and neighbors ostracized her as a traitor. After she was subpoenaed by the DoJ to testify on the murders before a grand jury the KKK organized a boycott of the stockyard she owned, forcing her to sell. Threats that her cattle would be poisoned forced her to sell her herd as well. Sheriff Rainey – one of the Klansmen who was indicted – arrested her for drunk driving and jailed her overnight. Her church asked her to give up teaching Sunday School. (Mars, 1977)

On August 22, 1965, a Sunday night, the Rev. Donald A. Thompson, a local Jackson Mississippi minister was shot in the back as he entered his apartment building. Unlike his fellow Mississippi clerics, he had opened the doors of his church to Negroes and joined the Mississippi Council on Human Relations. Thompson had come from Indiana two years earlier to pastor the only Unitarian Church in Jackson and had received threatening phone calls for some time. (CD 5-17-65, 11; 8-24-65, 3; 8-25-65, 4; see also BN 8-23-65, 1)

Members of the Mississippi Advisory Committee to the USCCR were often subjected to personal abuse. As described in their first published report (on police brutality):

They encountered social ostracism in some cases, and received numerous derogatory letters and telephone calls. One member reluctantly relinquished his pastorate of two churches rather than permit them to be split by dissension over his association with the Committee. Another member was threatened by a sheriff, who was also the president of the local white Citizens' Council, and was hit in the face by a neighbor; his children have been taunted and teased at school at the instigation of adults because of their father's religious work and membership on the Committee. Recently, an incendiary device of the "Molotov cocktail" type was thrown into the home of the Committee's Vice Chairman. (1963, 33)

South Carolina

South Carolina wanted a uniform objection to the *Brown* decision. Those who urged acceptance of what was now the law of the land were seen as a greater threat than those who urged open defiance. At the time of that decision Chester C. Travelstead had been Dean of the School of Education at the University of South Carolina (USC) for only a year. In 1955 he wrote a long letter to Gov. Timmerman in response to a speech he had made urging defiance of the Court. He subsequently made a public statement to the student body opposing segregation. Two weeks later the President of USC notified him that he was dismissed. At a hearing before the University Board of Trustees Travelstead was told that university employees should not openly discuss controversial issues. (Quint, 1958, 175-76) All of the state newspapers supported his dismissal except that of the Florence *Morning News*, whose editor wrote that if USC "rejects a valuable educator because he has one unpopular idea, then our university is not a place for hungry minds." Editor Jack O'Dowd continued to write editorials urging compliance with the law for a few more months. He and other staff members received threatening phone calls and physical assaults. Readers complained and newspaper circulation dropped. In March, O'Dowd announced his "retreat from reason" and wrote no more. Defeat was not enough for his accusers. The told him to move North; in August he did just that. His taking up the cause of compliance

lasted less than a year. (Quotes in *MN* 11-26-55, 4 and 3-11-56, 4-A in Quint, 1958, 178-80)

Four protestant ministers published a pamphlet in 1957 titled *South Carolinians Speak: A Moderate Approach to Race Relations*. One of the contributors urged that desegregation start with the first grade because “children are not born with prejudice.” Claudia Thomas Sanders received harassing phone calls. Her friends and family members deserted her. Her house was bombed. Suspects were identified, tried and acquitted. (Jones-Branch, 2014, 71; *AD* 12-14-57, 1; 7-27-58, 6; *CD* 11-21-57, 3; *NYT* 10-23-57)

Members of the South Carolina division of the SRC, known as the South Carolina Council on Human Relations (SSCHR), were often harassed and sometimes attacked. Its executive director, Alice Norwood Spearman, was found lying on the floor of her office, bleeding from her head and face, after a young white man entered and hit her. The SSCHR had to move its office repeatedly after complaints to landlords about the council and its biracial staff. (Synnott, 2012, 206)