

at the big sign that welcomes motorists to the Magnolia State. Waiting there as cars streamed past with all their occupants craning their necks to look at us, we got quite spooked. We finally got the go-ahead but then had to go back past the sign for a second run. All this time we noticed a big yellow car pass back and forth. We were quite angry at the newsmen's lack of planning and precautions.

After the first ten miles across the sun-bathed delta, the acute tension started to give way to a loose-limbed anxiety. Instead of being braced for what might come, I was ready to give with it. But the fear still clutched at the back of my neck as a car full of white men approached.... At one point the photographer was shooting us from the back of his car ahead when a car full of white rowdies passed us on the left and observed the whole thing. Well, we made it to Ruleville and Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer's house where some of the volunteers plus a whole lot of press and some local people were gathered. Oh, were they a welcome sight!

Love,  
Mike

Moss Point, June 30

I arrived by bus with the two other girls in Moss Point yesterday afternoon. After we waited a few minutes and nobody met us, we made a call to a number we'd been given and were told a ride was coming. We were then approached by a big heavy double-chinned drawing Southern stereotype, who turned out to be the chief deputy sheriff, one "Caesar" Byrd. He claimed he was looking for "a bunch of runaway girls from the North" and had us hand over our identification. After some prolonged verbal fencing which went something like this ... "What part of town you staying in?" "With some friends," etc., it became clear that he knew damn well who we

were and we knew that he knew when he finally gave up the circumlocution with, "You come straight down from Oxford?" I must confess I was scared silly at first, and was already fumbling in my pocket to make sure I had a dime for my one call from jail, but actually it's just as well it happened — he'd find out about us anyway ...

Shortly after this little interview, a car picked us up, and a far laughing Negro woman drove us to our destination. Sheriff Byrd followed us in his car most of the way. The police drove past the COFO office six times in half an hour tonight, and this afternoon a car full of whites stopped and took down all the license numbers of cars in front of the office. But we got theirs, too, even-stephen....

Canton, July 3

Sunday saw the arrival of about 25 Freedom School teachers in Canton. They came in on the train about noon and we had six or seven cars there to meet them.... A couple of car-loads of cops pulled up suddenly and stood around while we unloaded all the suitcases and equipment and put them in the cars.... The county Sheriff and the chief of police asked us to go down to the police station to register. We decided we would cooperate so that our lack of cooperation couldn't be held against us in case of trouble. [*This was not COFO policy, which generally advised against agreeing to register.*] We were all registered, giving our names, home addresses, local addresses, intentions, ages, and various other identifying details. We also had our pictures taken with a little blackboard with our name written on it hanging around our necks. Then we were issued cards which signified that we had been duly registered with the Canton police department.

As a part of the show at the police station we were asked to listen to a tape which had been prepared by the attorneys

of the city of Canton.... We were told that the girls might be raped by the very Negroes whom we have come to help and that the men might be stabbed or worse by the same people. The tape [said] that our presence here is very much resented by the white citizens and that they would be extremely happy if we were to change our minds and go home. We were told that we are uninvited guests in the county — which remark was challenged by one of the workers who reminded the chief of police that we had been invited by the Negro citizens of the county, if not by the whites. This would seem to constitute a rather good invitation as the county is 72% Negro....

*But usually the whites just stared — sullen or curious or hateful — and the volunteers found their fear receding.*

Ruleville, July 5

...We were really expecting much worse. Most of us would not have been too surprised if everybody had been arrested as we crossed the Miss. border and/or beaten. The disappearance of the three boys, tragic as it is, is mild compared to what we expected.

*Their new homes were with Negro families or on Negro college campuses, but always in a Negro community. Some of the families had their own farms, some had no security at all.*

Itra Bena, June 28

Dear Anne,

It's a hot lazy Sunday afternoon. I want to try to give you a description of Itra Bena and the place where we're staying. The Negro neighborhood is literally "on the other side of the railroad tracks." To get over to the white and downtown area you have to either walk past several warehouses, small factories, etc., or cross the railroad tracks. The Negro neighborhood hasn't got a single paved street in it. It's all dirt

and gravel roads. The houses vary from really beat-up shacks to fairly good looking cottages. The beat-up places predominate. There are lots of smelly outhouses and many of the houses have no inside water.

During the day it seems as if there is nothing but small children, hordes of them, and old people sitting on porches. There are quite a few churches. These have the most uncomfortable benches imaginable. I really can't do a good job of describing it; but then I don't have to — you've seen places like this town in movies and magazines a hundred times. But to see the place in the real is so different from seeing pictures of it. It's really there — you feel the heat, breathe the dust, smell the outhouses, hear the kids and the chickens.

John and I are staying with a 67-year-old woman named Rosa Lee Williams. She owns her place, so she doesn't have to worry about being thrown out.

Her house is on East Freedom Street. The street runs along the RR tracks. Across the street is a row of corn and then the RR tracks and a cotton field beyond. The house has a living room, with a double bed that John and I sleep in, a bedroom where Mrs. Williams sleeps and where we eat, then a small kitchen. The only running water in the place is in the toilet. No sinks are hooked up, so we wash out of buckets etc., but at least we have a flush toilet. Those outhouses are too much!

Mrs. Williams gets \$4.00 a week from each of us for room. Originally she said she wasn't going to cook for us, but she's always doing it anyhow, so we're giving her another \$4.00 a week. She said she didn't want the extra money, but she's on a pension and welfare, so she probably needs the money. She's really gotten crazy about us. She calls us "Lil' Bro'" and "Big Bro'" (Bro' is brother). She had a broken leg which wasn't set quite right, so she sort of limps. She also has an improperly set collarbone; it was broken when she was fighting with someone over a shotgun. She's still mad at the Deputy Sheriff for not giving her back the shotgun.

long as I could and finally ran for Mrs. —. She got the pot, and I took it into the bedroom. Now my room-mate was still asleep, and she is a terror in the morning. You can't imagine how terrified I was of her wrath and my humiliation as I squatted above the ringing tln!...

Love,  
Susan

Mileston, June 30

Man, like I don't even believe what I just did. You really had to be here to appreciate it. I took a bath. But no ordinary bath 'cause there's no running water. No, we take this bucket out in the back yard and fill it with water warmed over a fire. It's pitch black so we shine Mr. Clark's truck lights on the bucket. Then I strip down naked and stand in the bucket wash. That is the way you take a bath around here.

*But the most significant new experience for the white volunteers was their reception by the Negro community.*

Batesville

Dear people,

Batesville welcomed us triumphantly — at least Black Batesville did. Children and adults waved from their porches and shouted hello as we walked along the labyrinth of dirt paths and small wooden houses that characterize the Negro section of any Southern town. In a few days scores of children knew us and called to us by name. We had been warned to expect fear and hostility, but we were immediately invited to live and eat in Negro homes and to speak in Negro churches. For many local citizens our coming was a religious event; I found it difficult to be cynical. Sometimes when we pass by, the children cheer....

Geoff

Gulfport

... Fifty times a day people come up to us and thank us and tell us what we're doing is so fine, so good. The kids, playing with boards in the dust, have the greatest smiles. When we're out going from door to door to get people to register, we see a kid get up and run inside. "There they is" we hear. We are "they" and everyone knows who "they" is.

Greenville

It's amazing how you can grow to almost love a place so quickly. The Negro community has been so receptive and welcoming. The other night, a woman who has 17 children invited 20 of us over for dinner. It was a good dinner, too.

Canton, July 10

We are constantly on display when we're at the house; neighbors file in and out to have a look at us. The older ladies like to feel our skin; the kids are fascinated by our hair; everybody makes an appraisal of some sort — either we're "skinny" or "pretty" or "clean" or "young." When we go walking with [*the two*] widows [*were staying with*] one of them invariably greets each passerby with "have you seen my girls yet?"

Meridian

There are the old men and women in old clothing whom you know have little money and none to spare, who stop you as you are leaving the church after addressing the congregation and press a dollar into your hand and say, "I've waited 80 years for you to come and I just have to give you this little bit to let you all know how much we appreciate your coming. I

prays for your safety every night, son. God bless you all." And then they move down the stone steps and disappear along the red clay road lined with tall green trees and houses tumbling down.

Gulfport

Time and again when we go into a restaurant or bar, we start to pay, only to be told that the bill has been taken care of. People bring over a dozen eggs or cake and invite us to dinner. The hospitality seems like that of the old frontier, with its house raisings and quilting bees.

Hartiesburg

Sometimes I think that all the decency the Mississippi human contains is encased in black walls. They're slow and talkative, but they'd shake hands with a mule if it came up to speak to them; if they had one cigarette left, they'd offer to halve it with you before they'd smoke it in front of your face. All this from people to whom \$20 is a fortune ...

*And a medical student assigned to Meridian wrote:*

I gave "medical" advice earlier this week to a father, whose son had an abscess on his chest. I told them to take the kids to a doctor. The father thanked me and kissed my hand. I was embarrassed and didn't know what to do, so I kissed his hand.

*Sometimes, during the first days of the project, the local men showed their concern by standing guard unmasked — at offices and homes where the volunteers were staying. Once in a while the offers of protection created awkward situations....*

Gulfport, July 25

We had a problem with a man, and some of his friends, who took it upon himself to protect us from the white men who visited us yesterday. He came over at night with his friends and brought along a machine gun and ammunition. And told us not to worry. But he finally got ticked off at us, because we got ticked off at him. That machine gun made us edgy....

*But as the volunteers lived longer in Mississippi, the guns seemed more understandable. They learned on the spot — from the things that befell their own hosts and hostesses.*

Canton, July 10

Dear John and Cleo,

Our hostesses are brave women. And their fear is not at all mixed with resentment of us, but that makes it none the easier for them. The other morning a local newscaster offered someone \$400 to bomb all the houses where volunteers are staying. I'm not convinced that that particular story has any basis, but it touched off the terror that must lie latent always in our sisters' hearts. I overheard one of them on the telephone: "My guhls probly think I'm out of mah head; I been singin' all mornin, every song I knows — I just has to." And she had been, moaning "Lord have musee" in between the songs. I talked with her a little bit. She told me she knows people have suffered and died too long and that we must take risks now so it won't go on forever. But that doesn't make the risk any less painful to bear. She sleeps with a hatchet under her bed. She told me she used to have a gun under her pillow until one night when she almost accidentally shot a neighbor boy....

Jo

The Negroes here have been pretty courageous, raking us into their homes and churches. Many of the homes we are staying in were shot up when the people went down to register during the past two years. One family got scared and asked two of us to leave after a car parked all night in front of their home a couple of nights ago — imagine having somebody sit in front of your home all night. Another person was fired from his job yesterday because two of us were staying with him.

July

Ruleville,

... we have been given a wonderfully warm welcome wherever we have gone. In Ruleville the mayor had spent a week warning the Negroes that we were coming to kill them. (The mayor was told by one of the Negro ministers, "You're so low you're going to need a step ladder to climb into Hell.") Yet we were given the best of everything, and housing was found for all forty of us. Two people have already lost their jobs for housing us, and yet in each case half a dozen families begged us to stay with them after we had had to leave....

*More and more, the volunteers found that the people they had come to help were helping them; those whom they had come to teach grammar and history were giving them lessons in life and love.*

Gulfport, July 4

Dear Mom and Dad,

... You both know how critical I always have been of other people — always expecting a high level of performance and rather arrogant when the level is not reached. Thus I was a little worried, coming down here, where — because of a

completely different cultural environment — people couldn't possibly meet those standards, or even aim toward them. That is, I was worried that I would tend to be extremely critical of the people around me, even though intellectually I knew how ridiculous it was.

But this has not occurred... When I talk to someone while I am canvassing, I am able to accept them completely as they are... If Mrs. X can read, fine; if not, I can enjoy talking to her about her life and experiences. Perhaps I've been finding that people everywhere have more in common than I once thought: humanity is so much more basic than education or intellectual achievement.

Related to this — I have met some of the most amazing, great people. Out of nowhere, seemingly, come little old women with so much warmth and wisdom that I almost cry. There's little Mrs. Rachel Fairley, who is about 65 and wonderful and crisp and brisk, yet full of God and sympathy. She's always praying for me — and for the three lost near Philadelphia....

Yesterday, around 7 p.m. I marched up on the steps of a dark little falling apart house. Mrs. Brothens — the lady of the house, I later learned — invited me in. (I keep being invited in for "some barbecue or a cold drink or a rest on the front porch.") Her husband was a beautiful man of about 59, great masses of graying hair. He was crippled with arthritis and thus could not write and could not read either.

It began to rain. We sat in a small dark room, lighted only by a brief flame in the fireplace where Mrs. Brothens was cooking dinner. Their three adopted children sat on the floor and read from schoolbooks or counted bottletops, while the two old people looked on with love. The whole scene was from another century — especially because the little boy had a self-made bow and arrow, bent from a stick and tied with some cord. He proudly shot an arrow into the bushes across the street as I watched....

Love,  
Ellen

*developed a technique for doing it with the assistance of local Negro youths.*

Milleston, August 18

Dear folks,

One can't move onto a plantation cold; or canvas a plantation in the same manner as the Negro ghetto in town. It's far too dangerous. Many plantations — homes included — are posted, meaning that no trespassing is permitted, and the owner feels that he has the prerogative to shoot us on sight when we are in the house of one of *his* Negroes.

Before we canvas a plantation, our preparation includes finding out whether the houses are posted, driving through or around the plantation without stopping, meanwhile making a detailed map of the plantation.

We're especially concerned with the number of roads in and out of the plantation. For instance, some houses could be too dangerous to canvas because of their location near the boss man's house and on a dead end road,

In addition to mapping, we attempt to talk to some of the tenants when they are off the plantation, and ask them about conditions. The kids often have contacts, and can get on the plantation unnoticed by the boss man, with the pretense of just visiting friends.

Our canvassing includes not only voter registration, but also extensive reports on conditions — wages, treatment by the boss man, condition of the houses, number of acres of cotton, etc. Much more such work needs to be done. The plantation system is crucial in Delta politics and economics, and the plantation system must be brought to an end if democracy is to be brought to the Delta....

Love,  
Joel

*Sometimes people said "yes sir" they'd go down to the courthouse — and the volunteer felt they would have as easily said "no sir" if asked not to go down. It made no difference: they didn't go anyway. At the mass meetings, many would get all worked up with shouts of Freedom NOW, but do nothing when the time came. The fact that black Mississippi had become a land of children and old people — so many in between had gone north to escape — was a problem in many areas: "Senator Eastland needn't complain about all us idealists coming here, he's exiled all his in-state leaders." But there were Negroes of all ages who slammed the door in a volunteer's face when they heard the word "vote." And who could really blame them, when a police car was driving slowly by or the boss's brother was watching from the road — or an Uncle Tom?*

Canton

The hardest of all to take are the "Uncle Toms," who sit in on our mass meetings, visit the homes we're staying in, gathering all the information they can to sell to the White Citizens Council....

Clarksdale, July 9

One of the small Negro kids is a spy for Ben Collins, chief of police. He goes around listening to our talk all day, finds out where we live, and reports all we do every night. He calls himself Superman, and rumor has it that he is paid \$3 a day for his services. He is only 12 years old.

*Some of the "Toms" could be found among the Negro cops — a handful of men who were not permitted to arrest whites, weren't paid (except by the head, for each fellow Negro arrested) and had to buy their own uniforms.*

get into the origins of Christianity in Judaism so that they can all (about 12) get a deeper feeling for the roots of Catholicism, and in turn the roots of their *own* faith, Southern Baptist....

August 19

Wednesday I went with a bunch of Freedom School kids to Biloxi where we saw *In White America*. A touring company has been formed this summer to play all over the state.

I guess you know what the play is about — a symposium on the Negro in America. It is pretty strong stuff — what the slave ships were like, what being a slave was like, the lynchings, Father Divine in the 30s, Little Rock, and an added scene: a speech by Rita Schwerner.

This was the first theater most of these people had ever seen. They didn't have theater manners yet and it was great. They shouted "Sho nuff" and "You said it" when they agreed with something and joined in singing the songs. One of the actresses said, "You can't imagine what it was like under slavery" and a 15-year old girl next to me said, "Oh, yes I can."

Clarksdale, August 3

Most of last week was spent working on the "Clarksdale Freedom Press." Getting all the interested kids in the basement of Haven Methodist Church, examining possible articles, editing them, typing them, etc., was great! The place looked just like a newspaper office with people running in and out, with typewriters going, and newsprint everywhere. It was excellent experience for the kids too ... They did most of the work and made most of the decisions....

*Many of the schools mimeographed such newspapers, using material written by the students: reportage, political essays, poetry*

*— always about themselves and their feelings as Negroes and how to change things for the better. But along with this kind of success, each Freedom School had its own problems and each teacher his discouraging experiences.*

Canton, July 10-16

Dear John and Cleo,

I'm sitting in what we've turned into a Freedom School — a one room wooden church ... Most of the windows are half paneled. The only seats resemble picnic benches. One lamp, hung from the ceiling ... A colored U.S. map, a few freedom posters, some prints torn from an old calendar have brightened the room a little since we came. A broom and a scrub brush helped, too, to dispel the terrible depression that fell over my two fellow teachers and me when we first saw the place. That depression got heavier before it became lighter, though. On registration day nobody came and we had our scrubbed benches, clean floors and brightened walls all to ourselves. For several days after, we combed the area for students. Some were holding back out of fear — their own and/or their parents' (this building was bombed a month ago; the police have been circling it almost hourly since we moved into it); many distrusted us; some simply didn't care. But by some mysterious force which I really don't understand, a few people began appearing for classes, averaging about 20 a day now — never the same 20. I don't know how meaningful or lasting a response we're getting overall. Some days I'm kind of thrilled; other days bring bitter discouragement....

Love,  
Jo

*Fear, fear, fear: the same story over and over again. It was no white myth; the volunteers themselves saw intimidation in action.*

Carthage, July 24

... Yesterday, four of us went to a radio station near here to leave off a tape of Martin Luther King pushing the Freedom Democratic Party. The owner was very business-like and agreed to run it 23 times for \$37.50, which he is required to do by the FCC (since it was a paid political announcement). Today, he stopped by, gave us our money back, and signed an affidavit that his home and family had been threatened. It's easy to see why the white community wants to "move slow" on integration — they have nothing to gain and they have a tremendous fear of the lawless element. The whole thing has all the flavor of a TV western where there's a bad guy with a gun who's keeping everybody in town scared — well dammit, it's about time somebody faced up to the bad guy....

*The whites were afraid of each other, afraid of the Negroes, afraid of the volunteers.*

Canton, July 7

... They are scared. They are terribly afraid that the Negroes will treat them the way they have treated the Negroes if the balance of power shifts....

Batesville

Dear people,

One thing which has seemed plain to me, when reading the Jackson newspapers or talking to local officials, is that the whites are just as frightened as the Negroes. They have their own set of rumors....

*Mr. Charlie and Miss Anne*

One evening I drove past an auto accident; a white girl's face had been severely gashed. At the request of her date, I went to a nearby house for help. For a moment I had a cordial conversation with the white college student who came to the door. Then he figured out who I was and rushed back into his house to get his dog and shotgun. Naturally that ended that conversation — and left the girl stranded. Sometimes I think that a hot line is needed between the white and black sections of Batesville....

Geoff

*Entwined with the fear was the obsession with sex; almost every conversation between the volunteers and local white people came around to that theme in the end. It seemed to run so deep that the Mississippians could not bear the sight of physical nearness between Negro and white even when the sexes were not mixed.* "A newspaper editor told me that he had seen one of the white girl volunteers with her arm around a little Negro girl, playing with her hair. This, he said, almost made him vomit. The look on his face proved it was true."

Canton, Aug. 2

Dear Mom and Dad,

Karol and I went canvassing down route 43 last Friday. On the way back, close to our freedom school, a big swamy white man who looked as if he had been drinking stopped beside us in his black Renault. We told him our names and shook hands with him. He identified himself as Mr. Green. First he asked if we wanted a ride, and we said, "No thank you," and said we were headed for the church just ahead. He turned around and followed us so we beat it into the outdoor toilet. He sat in the driveway and honked. When we came out, he stopped us.

"What are you two white girls doin' usin' that nigger toilet?" he asked.

"Using it," we replied.



"We got better places for white girls around here."

"One place is as good as another."

"But not fer white gals. How old is you?"

"Twenty-two." "Twenty-five."

"I got some kids your ages. One of 'em goes to Mississippi State."

"That's a good place to go," I said.

"You've heered of it?"

"Sure."

"What you doin' round here? Are you talkin' to the niggers?"

"We've been visiting with Negroes." His eyes got big.

"You're both purry gals — some of the purtiest I've ever seed.

But you know what? I seed you the other day up at the nigger store talkin' to the worst nigger slum in the county. Why, that nigger slum caint even count to ten!" and he held up ten fingers.

"Yes, we've been talking to Negroes at the store," I said.

"We'd be glad to come to your home and talk to your wife and you together, but we'd rather not talk here," Karol said.

"You married?" he asked.

"No."

"No."

"You reckon you'd ever make anybody a wife?"

"We'll probably get married sometime." He shook his head and dropped the subject.

"I still cant see why purry gals like you would want to go talkin' to them nigger slums what caint even count to ten. This place aint fit fer white gals."

"We're here because we dont like slums, either." (I hadnt quite caught on that he called people "slums").

"But them slums is plumb mean an' ..."

"We'd still like to come to your house to talk to you one day next week, maybe," Karol said again.

"I wouldnt let the likes uv yew in mah house ..."

Love,

Kay

*Mr. Charlie and Miss Anne*

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Columbus, July 7

... To give you some insight into the mind of the white southerner, dig this. I'm the communications and security officer in the project here and this entails answering the telephone whenever I'm here. Following are some of the things I've been greeted with by southern white women: "Is this the place where poor white trash and black bastard niggers live together?" "Nigger, would you mind singing for me?" One day I invited a young lady to come over and we would explain in detail our purpose for being here. She said "and get raped?"

Carhage, July 15

Dear Betty,

... I was in Jackson overnight Tuesday and had my first brush with the Mississippi lawmen. No beatings or anything but they weren't what you'd call polite.... When I told them I was a medical student, they accused me of being down here to do abortions on all of the white girls who are pregnant by Negroes. But this seems to be an obsession all across the country. One of the girls gets a letter from her father almost daily asking her "to come back home and start associating with decent people again." ...

Sincerely,

Clarke

Ruleville, July 18

Dear friends,

Time and again they talk about how we are just spoiling a beautiful relationship. They take great pride in their solicitude for Negroes. When I ask Negroes about whether whites are just lying or really think they are good to the colored, Negroes always answer that they are lying. They can cite cases where the very

*Although both regular voter registration and organization of the Freedom Democratic Party had been carried on simultaneously from the start, by late July the emphasis of the Summer Project had almost totally shifted from regular registration to getting people "Freedom registered." A simplified form was used, modeled on that of a northern state, and the purpose was to show how many people would register if they could in Mississippi. Their numbers would support the convention challenge at Atlantic City.*

*The underlying idea of the FDP was as real as grits, but it didn't always seem that way to a volunteer standing on somebody's porch trying to explain the national Democratic Party and Mississippi Democratic Party and Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and how they were related thus and so. On the other hand, Freedom registration had the advantage of being secret — unless the police arrested a worker and seized his forms, which happened once in a while. But still....*

Greenville, August 19

One of the difficulties is that most Negroes in Mississippi are instinctively apprehensive of the word "registration." They connect it with going to the courthouse and answering a lengthy trickily worded form. Also, some ask if they have to pay any money, associating it with the poll tax which is still required in state elections in Mississippi (the 24th amendment to the constitution of the U.S. applies only to federal elections.)

Rural Madison County, July 28

Dear Mom, Dad and Vickie,

Yesterday we canvassed ... One lady couldn't work because she had cut her leg badly with the hoe while chopping cotton, and her leg was full of stitches. She lived in a two-room unpainted shack (kindly provided by the management). You climbed on

the porch by stepping on a bucket — there were huge holes in the porch for the unway. The woman was sitting dejectedly on the bed as she couldn't walk very well. She was surrounded by shy children, some of them naked ... We tried to explain what Freedom Registration meant — it seemed like a rather abstract approach to her problems....

Another time, we were walking behind the church where we have our Freedom School and saw the gleam of a rooftop between the trees and heard children's voices. I went back and asked the Negro girl who had come with us if it would be all right to visit the house and she said "Yes." So Karol, Minnie Pearl and I undid the latch and walked down the lane. Tall pines lined the road with blackeyed susans and great elm trees in between. The house, if you could call it that, was made of unpainted boards ... Three planks served as porch steps. Two little girls on the porch disappeared into the house as we reached the gate. A woman in a ragged dress looked out of the door and told us to come on in ... Several children who looked about the same age came out to see us, their little stomachs sticking out with the bloated look of starvation and their eyes dazed and listless. Inside a baby cried. I asked the mother how old the baby was and she said two months and added that her oldest was seven. She had six children. I started explaining about the Freedom Democratic Party and she listened, saying "yes man" to everything I said....

The construction of the place was very shabby and would have been unbearably cold in the wintertime. The house belongs to a white man whom the couple works for. They work in the cotton fields from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. and when I asked what they do with the kids while they are in the fields, the lady said "We have to take them with us." The seven-year old, she said, takes care of the baby.... She signed a Freedom Democratic party registration form, but I'm not sure she understood it. I found out her age when I filled out the form for her — she is only 22 ...

Love,  
Kay