

17 July 1965.  
[Laurel, Mississippi]

Dear Dad,

Just a note here. First of all, it appears we are finally going to leave for Marion County tonight. I will send the address as soon as we find it out...

Things were getting interesting here. We finally got a program of welfare organization planned and were beginning to implement the plan. We are apparently the only project in the fifth congressional district which is not torn by racial strife and bitterness (apparently the staff people here have good self-control). We saw much evidence of the bitterness at a district meeting a couple of days ago when people got up and walked out on both sides and little else besides racial conflicts within the district and projects was discussed for about six hours. Again, it was touch and go for several of us, when we saw just how much damage we are probably causing the movement (though it is clearly not totally our fault -- neither side can apparently overcome the ingrained prejudices of 400 years which have been present around them all their lives), whether we should leave immediately or stick the summer out. We decided to stay simply because any exodus of students from the movement would be bound to elicit bad speculation on the part of the press and hurt the movement worse than our staying.

We have had a couple of runins with whites in the town here, several coming close to fights (one car that was following us was later stopped for speeding and the police found a high-powered automatic rifle, a crowbar, and two construction helmets in the car). Last night, a pair of the staff here went up to keep an all night watch on a lady's house, where one of them was staying and had spotted two whites in the rather isolated backyard. We borrowed a 12-gauge shotgun from across the street and stayed up in half night shifts watching from the porch for unwelcome visitations. Nothing happened, and things are back to relative normality.

Now that at last I am getting mail from [snip] (none other has come through) again the address changes. It is frustrating. Anyway, when does Mom get back? And how the lobbying [in Washington, on Vietnam War?] go?

Good luck to us all...

When I get a solid address, could you please send the following from my dresser (the one the radio is on):

Top drawer --	two brief underwear	Second drawer:	construction shoes
	four "leg" underwear		hair clipper set.
	one jock strap		
	three pair sock	Thanks loads	
	one pair blue shorts		
	two knit shirts (blue, tan)		
	two t-shirts (white, blue)		

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