

# Whatever Happened to Jesse Parham?

BY BOB LABAREE

BESSEMER, Ala.--It was a month ago this Saturday that Jesse Parham had an argument with his employer, the owner of a small grocery store in North Bessemer. Some words were exchanged, and Parham went home angry.

People can't agree on just what happened in the hours that followed. But one thing is certain--the next morning, Parham and his entire family had disappeared, leaving everything but a few clothes behind.

Artis Parham, Jesse's father, said he hasn't heard from his son since that weekend. "All I know is what folks tell

me," said the father. "He never spoke a word to me before he left."

There is a rumor going around that Parham's sudden departure was the result of night visitors. (Bessemer has a reputation as a Ku Klux Klan stronghold.) But no one knows anything for sure.

On the afternoon of Nov. 4, the neighbors say, Parham returned from delivering a load of packages. They say he told his employer, Ralph Autry, that three white boys had tried to hijack his groceries out in back of the store.

Parham told friends later that evening that Autry said Parham was "talk-

ing foolishness," and that "if it was anybody, it was nigger-boys who did it."

When Parham got angry at this, the story goes, Autry fired him, and Parham went home--some say to get his gun.

"Jesse said Ralph paid him off, took out what Jesse owed him, and let him go," a neighbor recalled.

Autry's mother, co-proprietor of the store, denied this. "He (Parham) was acting nasty, so we sent him home," she said.

Employers and neighbors disagree on whether Parham was drunk that af-

ternoon. Between 4 and 5 p.m., Parham showed up at a friend's house and told his story to the friend's wife.

"He hadn't had any then," the lady recalled, "but when he came back to the house, his husband around 6, you could tell he had drunk a bit of something."

Mrs. Autry said Parham had been "nipping a bit" when the incident occurred.

The people agree that Parham was talking about a gun, but they aren't sure whether he was actually carrying one.

Around midnight that day, a young man from the neighborhood saw four white men walking down the street past

Parham's house.

"They said something to me," he recalled, "but I didn't stop, so they must have been looking for somebody else."

At about the same time, a lady across the street was awakened by a commotion at the Parham home. "I looked out the window and saw two cars in front of Jesse's house," she said, "sounded like someone banging on a door."

"The next morning we detected they were gone," said the lady's husband. "Everything was still there, furniture and all."

The Autrys complained that some people have been staying away from the

store since the incident. "I don't understand why they're doing it," said Mrs. Autry. "We've always had a good relationship with the colored people around here."

A brother-in-law said Parham is now in St. Louis, Missouri, working at a good job. But in a phone call about a week ago, the relative said, Parham didn't say why he left so suddenly.

Mrs. Autry thinks she knows. "He had a paid vacation to St. Louis not long ago, and liked it," she said. "He probably just decided to go back."

But people are still wondering. As one man said, "It just don't seem right."

# THE SOUTHERN COURIER

VOL. III, NO. 49

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TEN CENTS

## 9 Kids, No Bail

BY BOB LABAREE

BESSEMER, Ala. -- Lawyers have been working since March to get bail for Mrs. Ada Pearl Smith, a Bessemer lady accused of killing a white bill collector.

Last week, the Alabama Supreme Court reversed its earlier opinion and set bail at \$5,000, but since Mrs. Smith has no money she is still in jail.

Meanwhile, her nine children have been living on welfare and on donations from friends. Along with two of Mrs. Smith's sisters, they are staying with their grandmother.

The incident occurred on March 10, when two men from the General Acceptance Corporation visited Mrs. Smith's home in the George Washington Carver Housing Project in South Bessemer. They were coming to collect a debt of \$300 owed by her husband.

Mrs. Smith has said she informed the men that her husband was not home, and asked them to leave. In the moments that followed, neighbors say, they heard loud sounds of kicking and banging.

Mrs. Smith later testified that the men were trying to enter, so she shot one of them -- Marc Hammaker -- through the front screen door.

Mrs. Smith's mother, Mrs. Narcisus Dove, said this week that her daughter's children still show the effects of the incident. "All that knocking and hammering scared the children," she said. "They were locked up tight around her legs. Now, every time a white person comes to the door, the children run."

Attorneys Harvey Burg and Oscar Adams have argued that depriving Mrs. Smith of bail was a violation of her rights under the U. S. Constitution.

"Besides," said Burg, "it often works out that those who remain incarcerated get the convictions. It would help us prepare the case better if she were out."

Mrs. Dove wants to raise the \$500 premium for her daughter's bond by this weekend. She said she is getting help from Walter Jenkins of the Bessemer area NAACP.

For the past nine months, she has had almost sole responsibility for the children, who range in age from four to 15. "I had to work myself for two months before we could get welfare," she said. "I hated to leave these children all alone here during the day, but what could I do?"

Both of the children's parents were employed at the time of the incident, but since May the father has not had a job.

## Shots Awaken Lowndes Folks

BY BETH WILCOX

WHITE HALL, Ala. -- Mr. and Mrs. Jackson Sellers' store was shot into last Saturday night. "They just shot--bow, bow," said Mrs. Sellers. "I went to the door and looked out. Nothing."

A bullet went through the window of the store, and just missed the Coke cooler and the freezer. "If they got that, they would've gotten me for \$1,000 or more," said Mrs. Sellers.

Other Negro residents--including Henry Seaborn, the Rev. M. D. Thomas, and A. D. Reeves--said their cars were shot up the same night.

Lowndes County Sheriff John "Bitsie" Julian said this week that "we got some ideas" on who did the shooting.

Many people wondered if there could be a connection between Saturday's shootings and the death of Joe Cephus Thomas at a homecoming dance last week.

"We had a follow-up with the FBI on that (Thomas) shooting, because their civil rights might have been violated," said Julian. "I would say in this case, the people whose houses were shot had their civil rights violated."



SWAFCA HEAD JOE JOHNSON (SECOND FROM LEFT) LISTENS TO BERRY SELMA, Ala.--Theodore M. Berry, a top official of the federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), had congratulations and a warning for the Southwest Alabama Farmers Cooperative Association (SWAFCA) last Saturday.

Berry, the national director of community action programs, came to SWAFCA's open house to praise the "few men and women who caught the spark and developed the idea for creating a farm marketing co-op in the deep Southwest of Alabama." "The success you have realized this summer is the beginning of a larger success you can achieve in the years to come," Berry told people from all of SWAFCA's ten counties.

But, Berry warned, "it is not certain, it is not written" that SWAFCA will get any more money from OEO. He said a new law "would make it impossible for us to make a grant like this, unless it had the approval of (Selma) Mayor (Joe) Smitherman." Smitherman led the fight against the original SWAFCA grant.

Among the government officials who sent telegrams or personal representatives to the celebration at the SWAFCA office were President Johnson, Vice-President Hubert Humphrey, Agriculture Secretary Orville Freeman, Labor Secretary Willard Wirtz, OEO Director Sargent Shriver, and at least 13 U.S. congressmen.

## Man Shot Four Times, Held in Assault Case

BY SARAH HEGGIE

MONTGOMERY, Ala. -- Charles L. Johnson, a Negro youth who was shot four times by a white parking-lot attendant, was bound over to the grand jury last Wednesday on a charge of assault with intent to murder.

Johnson, 19, was shot by Daniel D. Brown, 74, last month in downtown Montgomery. Last Wednesday in Municipal Court, Brown--who signed the warrant against Johnson--was the chief witness against him.

Brown testified that he had told Johnson and Sam Smith III not to throw paper on the parking lot. "The other subject (Smith) threw the parking ticket in my face," he said.

Johnson and Smith drove half-way out of the lot, Brown said, and then Johnson took out a pistol and shot at him. "My pistol was in my belt," said Brown, "and I pulled it out and shot."

Johnson's lawyer, Jerry Cruse, asked Brown if he had shot Johnson in the back. "No," Brown replied.

"Well, he was shot in the back," said Cruse. "I guess that you didn't do it?"

"No," said Brown. "But he (Johnson) shot while I had my back turned." Police Lieutenant R. D. Moody, who investigated the incident, testified that Johnson had not been questioned before Brown signed the warrant. Moody said police never went to Baptist Hospital to get Johnson's version of what happened, because the victim was in serious condition.

But Johnson testified--and hospital authorities confirmed--that he was released from the hospital Nov. 12. Johnson got to tell his story Wednesday, after Smith's testimony set the scene.

Smith said that as he and Johnson were leaving the parking lot, Brown came up to their car and told them not to come back. Smith said Johnson remarked, "Come on, man, let's go."

Then, said Smith, Brown went around to the other side of the car and asked Johnson, "What did you say, boy?"

When Brown said that, Johnson testified, he got out of the car, and Brown shot him in the foot.

"I reached inside the car and got the gun, and shot twice and missed," the defendant said. As he "broke and ran," Johnson said, Brown shot him three more times--once in the back, once in the arm, and once in the leg.

Johnson showed Judge D. Eugene Loe the places on his body where he had

been shot.

In sending the case to the grand jury, Judge Loe indicated that he was relying on testimony given by William L. Mason of the Montgomery County sheriff's office.

Mason--who was within hearing distance of the incident--said he concluded that Johnson had shot first, since Johnson had a .22-caliber pistol and Brown a .38. Mason said the first two shots he heard came from the "smaller gun."

## Tuskegee Forum on South Africa

BY MARY ELLEN GALE

TUSKEGEE, Ala.--"The revolution has begun in South Africa," said the Rev. Gladstone Ntlatlani, a leader in the nation's struggle for black equality.

And, he said, "It has become very clear that the American government does not support us--it supports white South Africa."

"The Western world watches, because it is black people who are being killed. White people will not shoot white people for the sake of black people."

South Africa's all-white government now appears to be winning the struggle, Ntlatlani said. "But the determination a people have for freedom and justice ultimately becomes victorious."

"When we win," he warned, "it might be very, very difficult for Africans to forget the years of suffering and the years of slavery."

The South African spoke to some 450 Tuskegee Institute students and faculty members at a forum sponsored by the Student Government Association. Appearing with him were James Forman, director of international affairs for SNCC, and G. Edward Clark, director of Southern African affairs for the U. S. State Department.

Forman joined Ntlatlani in condemning U. S. policy on South Africa as "racist." He urged "the millions of Africans living in the United States" to support the blacks in South Africa.

"We are not Americans, brother, we are not Americans," said Forman. "We are victims of the U. S. force which has colonized black people all around the world."

Forman quoted at length from SNCC statements presented to a United Na-

## Federal Funds Misused, Barbour Group Charges

BY MARY ELLEN GALE

EUFAULA, Ala. -- NAACP leaders in Barbour County have accused school officials of discriminating against Negroes in the use of federal funds.

In a letter made public this week, two local NAACP branches charged that the Barbour County Board of Education has misused thousands of dollars received under Title I of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Although Title I funds are meant to improve the education of low-income children, the NAACP said, the county school board has "systematically spent more money per pupil in affluent, predominantly white schools than in poor Negro schools."

The NAACP letter--signed by John Kelly Jr., president of the Eufaula branch, and John D. Knights, president of the Southwest Barbour County branch--was sent two months ago to the Rev. G. H. Cossey.

The NAACP leaders said they wrote to Cossey because he is the highest-ranking Negro board member of the Barbour-Dale-Henry Community Action Program (CAP).

They pointed out that, under federal law, the CAP board must approve the county's application for Title I money.

The NAACP leaders asked Cossey--and other Negro board members--not to endorse Barbour County's application for 1968-69 funds unless certain conditions were met.

Specifically, the NAACP leaders asked Cossey to get "assurance in writing" from county Schools Superintendent Raymond E. Faught that the Title I program would comply with federal laws against racial discrimination.

They also asked Cossey to "require that the money be spent in schools where the greatest poverty exists," and to get a guarantee that free lunches



JOHN KELLY JR.

would be provided for children too poor to buy food.

About two weeks ago, Kelly said, he learned that Cossey and two other Negro CAP board members had approved Barbour County's Title I application without making any conditions.

"This is something against us, not for us," Kelly said this week. "This will not help progress for the Negro."

But Cossey--who recently moved up from vice-president to president of the CAP board--said he approved the Title I application because "it was satisfactory on paper."

"Of course, action is something different," he said. "But complaints, to be effective, have to come from parents--not from the CAP committee."

In their letter, the NAACP leaders noted that federal law requires Title I projects to be "developed in cooperation with" the local CAP. This, the letter said, means a "continuous and genuine working relationship," not just a blanket approval of the school board's plans.

But Cossey said, "The first time I had any information on it was when we (a CAP committee of three Negroes and

three whites) met with the superintendent. He explained the program, and we were satisfied with the explanation."

He said the CAP board members had "no other information" to indicate that the Title I money would be spent unfairly.

Kelly said, however, that everyone in the county knows the Negro schools are inferior to the white schools, especially in rural areas.

One rural school--Center Ridge--was included in a survey last year by the Alabama Council on Human Relations (ACHR). An investigator reported that the classrooms and cafeteria were almost without equipment, and that the three frame buildings were badly in need of repair.

"One building was once a barn owned by a white farmer," the ACHR report noted. "When he decided it was unfit for cows, he sold it to the board of education."

Superintendent Faught has declined to discuss the schools on several occasions. A secretary said this week that he was not in his office and could not be reached.

## Another Bombing

JACKSON, Miss.--Police have been working extra shifts since the area's fourth bombing in a little more than two months. A total of \$50,000 has been offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the bombers.

Robert B. Kochitzky, a white moderate whose house was bombed Nov. 18, asked, "Why did they have to wait until the bombings hit exclusive white neighborhoods? As long as they bombed Tougaloo or a Jewish synagogue, that was all right."

The home of a dean at mostly-Negro Tougaloo College was bombed Oct. 6, and the Beth Israel temple was struck Sept. 18. The home of Perry Nussbaum, rabbi of Beth Israel, was shattered in the most recent bombing Nov. 21.

## 'We're Not Americans, Brother'

BY MARY ELLEN GALE

TUSKEGEE, Ala.--"The revolution has begun in South Africa," said the Rev. Gladstone Ntlatlani, a leader in the nation's struggle for black equality.

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REV. GLADSTONE NTLATLANI SPEAKS TO TUSKEGEE CROWD

tions conference in Zambia, Africa, last summer, and to a United Nations committee in New York about two weeks ago.

The statements "were carried in the press all over the world, but not in this country," Forman noted. "They did not want us to know, because that would further unify us."

He said that U. S. business has invested millions of dollars in South Africa, and that the U. S. government operates a "filthy-white" embassy there, as well as several military and space installations.

By allowing business investment and accepting South African racial laws,

ter of policy we couldn't support violence," "What about Viet Nam?" called out Forman.

"We're not talking about Viet Nam," Clark replied.

Several questioners pressed Clark to say which side the U. S. will take in South Africa's "revolution." But Clark insisted that the U. S. doesn't expect "a bloodbath, or revolution if you wish to call it that."

"I don't think any responsible government can answer a hypothetical question," he added. "You must know the issues at that particular time."

"The issues are very clear," shot back Ntlatlani. "The problem (the U. S.) is hoping will be solved peacefully is being solved ruthlessly by our government. . . . There is no peace for us (black people). We are dying."

Clark admitted that U. S. business has invested "a considerable amount" in South Africa. But he said such investments could not be prevented by the U. S. government.

"We don't have any investments in Cuba," said Forman. "We don't have any investments in China. Don't let anybody tell you we can't stop investments in South Africa."

Clark also conceded that the U. S. embassy in South Africa is staffed by white people. "As long as we have diplomatic relations," he explained, "we have to abide by the controls one finds in the country where you are."

A fourth speaker--Vere G. Stock, South African consul-general in New Orleans, La.--was also invited to participate in the forum. But he refused to attend. In a letter, Stock cited "the circumstances of race relations within the United States."

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Table with 2 columns: City, Alabama and Phone Number. Lists various Alabama cities and their corresponding phone numbers for the newspaper's office.

Vol. III, No. 49 December 2-3, 1967

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor: I have a son was drafted in the Army, served in USA and overseas, was 18 in March, was called in June. His name is Curtis William Jones, serial number 34633030.

to show the Negroes what a mistake they made when they voted "white." It takes a white man to show the "big-minded" Negro man that he did wrong.

Miss Jessie Reynolds
Student
Miles College
Birmingham, Ala.

Soldier Jailed, Students Picket

GREENWOOD, Miss.--Walter Frank Leonard, a 22-year-old Viet Nam veteran, was bound over to the grand jury last Monday on a charge of killing James Melvin Parkerson, a white gas station operator.

Eleven college students from St. Paul, Minnesota--including Miss Rosemary Freeman, a Greenwood native--demonstrated here Nov. 17, seeking Leonard's transfer to a federal prison.

Selma Strikers Look Ahead To Opening of New Plant

BY BETH WILCOX
SELMA, Ala.--Strikers at Laura Industries say an official of the Villager dress chain has promised to start building a new plant in Selma within 90 days.

sylvania) firm told a strikers' meeting that he will soon pick "45 or 50" workers for a pilot training project.



UNIONTOWN, Ala.--"This is the biggest thing to come this way in a long time," said master of ceremonies A. M. Hayden last Friday, before the annual Miss Uniontown pageant began in the gym of Robert C. Hatch High School.

As she sewed a friend's cotton dress on a machine in the union hall, Miss Beulah Lee Brown added, "Mr. Altman said he would choose the ones who go in to training by how many children they have--how much they need work, you know."

About 250 workers are striking against the Laura raincoat plant. The strike--seeking recognition of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union--is now in its fourth month.

What Do They Want? JOBS

Tuskegee: Long Way to Go

BY MARY ELLEN GALE
TUSKEGEE, Ala.--Although Tuskegee has made progress toward ending racial discrimination in employment, there is still a long way to go.

naires," he noted. Of the 25 firms which have responded so far, he said, "23 replied that they had an open policy on hiring, training, and promotion--or would have an open policy in the future."

Drive Opens In Coghah



EVERS IN CRYSTAL SPRINGS
BY ESTELLE FINE
CRYSTAL SPRINGS, Miss.--About 150 people marched from the Morning Star Benevolent Society to City Hall last Saturday, to dramatize a selective buying campaign that began here Nov. 21.

He said the 20 white and five Negro businesses together employ more Negroes than whites in all positions except the top ones. Of the total of 166 employees, he said, 64% are Negro and 36% are white.

"Progress is being made," he said. "And even greater progress is being made in atmosphere. Two years ago, one firm wouldn't even discuss it. This time, they filled out a questionnaire."

But several NAACP members pointed out that some of Tuskegee's largest employers--the Leemar sewing factory, and the A & P and Big Bear grocery stores--have not yet replied to the questionnaire.

"I'm not afraid to name names," said Buford. "Down here at the A & P there is a real die-hard segregationist that doesn't want any Negroes in there."



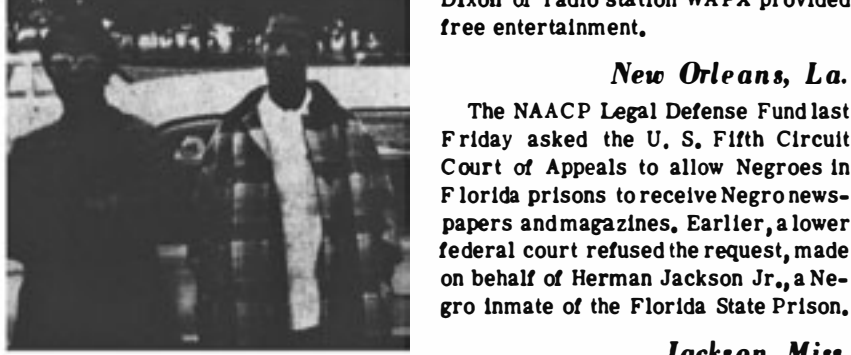
BESSEMER, Ala.--After almost two weeks of rest, Negropickers are out on the streets again, seeking more jobs in the stores where they buy.

Earlier, nine days of picketing and boycotting ended Nov. 13, when four large department stores agreed to nearly every Negro demand on jobs.

"Now we begin on the food stores," Howard said this week. "This time it's Bruno and the 20th St. A & P. But we intend to hit each one, one by one--unless they get wise sooner."

"I am more concerned with the 25 who didn't answer than those who did," said the Rev. K. L. Buford, the NAACP's Alabama field director.

Mrs. Clevana Wooten and her daughter, Miss Annie Grace Wooten, are spending the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays together for the first time



MRS. WOOTEN AND HER DAUGHTER in six years. Miss Wooten has been a patient at Partlow Hospital in Tuscaloosa, and Mrs. Wooten hasn't had enough money to visit her.

Washington, D. C.
U. S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark said convictions have been obtained against 580 of the 625 adults arrested during October's anti-war demonstration at the Pentagon.

Montgomery, Ala.
"Operation Goodwill," sponsored by Ralph Featherstone of radio station WRMA and Roosevelt Barnett of the Alabama Action Committee, made Thanksgiving happier for 30 families last week.

Montgomery, Ala.
Some 55 Neighborhood Youth Corps trainees, parents, staff members, and Community Action Committee officials



FEATHERSTONE AND BARNETT (LEFT) DISTRIBUTE FOOD

'I'm Going to Tell It To the High Heavens'

BY MARY ELLEN GALE
TUSKEGEE, Ala.--"I tried to work it out (in private)," said Mrs. Beulah C. Johnson, director of the Macon County Community Action Program (CAP).

"I bring you this information because the way things are going, this county stands to lose... every program you have," Mrs. Johnson said.

She charged the CAP board members with telling "untruths" about her activities as CAP director.

Although board members have said she mismanaged CAP money, Mrs. Johnson said, they are the ones at fault.

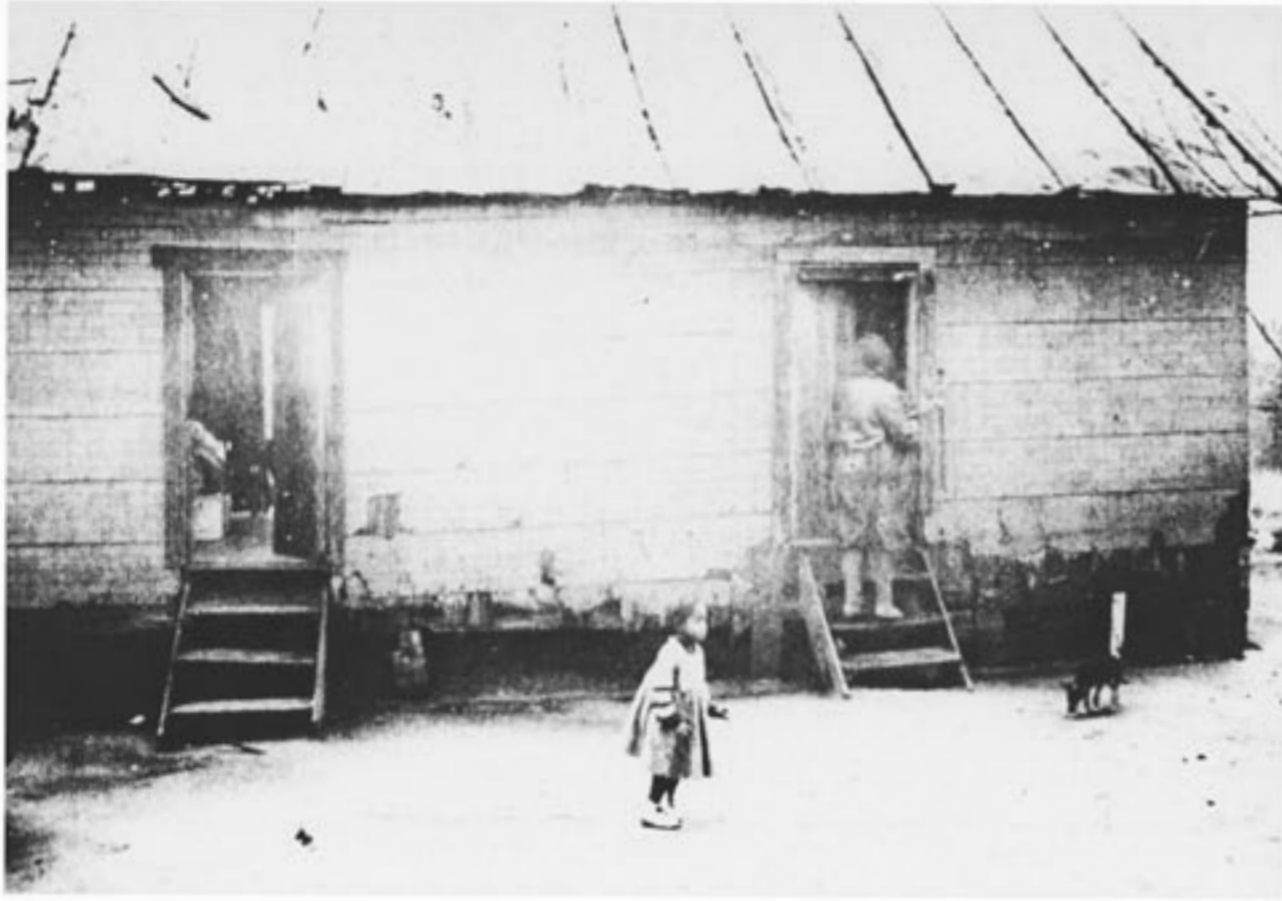
Mrs. Johnson said there is a "little trick" behind the CAP board's attempt to fire her. "A member of one person's family is involved," she explained.

But two weeks ago, OEO approved the CAP's re-written employment rules, and lifted the ban on personnel action.

In her letter to the churches, Mrs. Johnson said the community shares the blame for the CAP's problems.

MACAC Hit

BY EDWARD RUDOLPH
MOBILE, Ala.--At a MACAC (Mobile Area Community Action Committee) meeting last month, Dr. Hollis Wiseman of the planning committee read a resolution saying that after Dec. 31, MACAC will have control of Head Start here.



*The Story of the Bracy Family*

HOME FROM APRIL, 1966, TO MID-1967 (TOP LEFT)

NEW HOME (ABOVE)

# On Jan. 1, 1966, the House Was Bombed



ALEXANDER BRACY (ABOVE)

WETUMPKA, Ala.--In August, 1965, my sister Sophia and I were two of the 20 Negro students who enrolled at formerly all-white Wetumpka High School. Trouble began for us about two weeks after we enrolled.

First, the bus driver told us he couldn't pick us up at home any more. Then on Sept. 14, I jabbed a white boy with a pencil after getting hit in my back by a rubber wad. That got me an assault and battery charge, and a "five-day" suspension--which lasted until Jan. 3, 1966.

On Jan. 1, 1966, the house was bombed. We managed to save a mattress, the sewing machine, a dresser, and the washing machine before the house was engulfed in flames.

After that, we went to live with my uncle and aunt. In their five-room house, there were four beds for 12 people.

In April, 1966, we moved into an old two-room house. In the winter, we had to stuff rags in the cracks of the house, and we stacked coats, quilts, and other coverings on the beds when we slept. But we made it through the struggle.

Now our new house is almost finished. There are six rooms and a bath, and we have water in the house.

For the time being, most of our work is centered around our farm. It takes some time to gather the crops, especially with the children in school. However, it is our own, and we are very proud of it.

**Text by Debra Bracy**



DENISE BRACY AT HOME (BELOW, CENTER)

ON WAY FROM SCHOOL (ABOVE)



MRS. MARIE BRACY (ABOVE)



ONE OF BRACY COWS (BELOW)

**Photos by Jim Pepler**



SOPHIE SERVES DINNER (BELOW)

ED BRACY PILES COTTON (ABOVE)





BOB WRIGHT OF THE SRRP INTERVIEWS A DALLAS COUNTY FARMER

# Family Shares Home With Rats

(Last summer, workers from the Southern Rural Research Project (SRRP) investigated living conditions and food and health problems through interviews with 986 Negro farmers in five Alabama Black Belt counties.

(The Browns--not their real name--are not unusual. According to the SRRP, hundreds of Negro farm families live in similar conditions and face the same problems.)

COY, Ala.--The Browns, a family of tenant farmers in Wilcox County, live three miles off the nearest paved road in a one-room wooden shack surrounded by cotton fields.

The narrow dirt road leading to the Browns' home is in a state of almost total neglect. When it's dry, a car can bounce among the ruts at a speed of about five miles an hour. When it's wet, you have to walk.

The Browns' home is a frame box, with one door and two shuttered windows. Unlike most farm homes, it has no porch. The door-step is a sawed-off tree stump.

To escape the summer heat, the family often sits outside on an old horse cart. But there is no escape from the winter cold. The tar-papered roof does not always keep out the rain. Holes in the roof and walls are covered with pieces of cardboard, but the wind gets through.

The only heat comes from a small fireplace and

a wood stove, which is also used for cooking.

The inside room is dark and cluttered. A naked light-bulb dangles from the ceiling. Two foldaway beds are shared by six of the Browns' eight children--and by fleas, flies, and cockroaches. Rag quilts on the floor provide beds for the rest of the family.

Dust, dirt, paper, and food scraps are swept into a large hole in the floor, left by a rotting plank. At night, rats crawl up through the hole to gnaw at the fertilizer sacks the family uses for bedding.

There are no toilet facilities, not even an outhouse. But the Browns are lucky--they have a water pump in the back yard. Some Negro families have to walk a mile or two to get water from a friend's pump, or from a creek.

The Browns usually eat two meals a day. They often have grits for breakfast, and greens or field peas and chicken necks for dinner. Most of their food comes from a small vegetable garden. Sometimes, the children catch squirrels or wild turkeys in the woods nearby. The family spends about \$5 a week on other food supplies such as rice, cornmeal, sugar, and fat-back.

Mrs. Brown's husband has not been home for several months, so she manages the rented, 40-acre cotton and truck farm. With the help of her six oldest children (ranging up to age 16), she

clears, plants, and harvests the land.

Like most Alabama farmers, Mrs. Brown works from sunrise to sunset. Last year, her farm products sold for about \$1,200. But the cost of seed, the family's debts, and other expenses gave the Browns very little money to live on.

The Browns seldom buy clothing. Mrs. Brown works in an old janitor's dress that someone gave her. Her daughters work in old slips, polo shirts, and material scraps, saving their few dresses for school.

The children are all small and thin. In the summer, when they are not working in the fields, they sleep or sit. There is none of the active play--or mischief-making--of healthy, well-fed children.

The youngest child, a two-year-old, cannot walk because his stomach is swollen by hunger and improper food, and because his legs are so thin. He does not talk yet. The oozing sores on his head attract flies and fleas, which he does not bother to brush away.

Mrs. Brown, like many Negro farmers in their 40's, complains of headaches and fainting spells. She thinks she may have high blood pressure. But she has not seen a doctor herself for taken her children to see one.

It wouldn't do any good, she says, because the price of medicine is too high for her to pay.

## Says Farm Agents Deny Help to Negroes

# Rural Study Links Poverty With USDA Discrimination

BY SARAH HEGGIE

SELMA, Ala.--"Poverty in the Negro South is directly related to active discrimination by Southern federal employees of the USDA (U. S. Department of Agriculture)."

This charge is made in a report issued by the Southern Rural Research Project (SRRP), which has spent six months investigating poverty among Negro families in Alabama and Mississippi.

The report is based on interviews with 1,800 Negro farmers--over 1,000 of them from eight Black Belt counties in Alabama.

Eventually, SRRP workers hope to talk with more than 10,000 black farmers in Alabama, Mississippi, and southwest Georgia.

But already, the report says, replies to the SRRP questionnaires show that local USDA employees have prevented Negro farmers from getting the help they need to make a good living from their land.

And, the SRRP charges, the national USDA has chosen to ignore the situation--leaving the farmers with nowhere to turn for aid.

As a result, says the SRRP report, most Negro farm families live in flimsy frame houses, wear rags for clothing, have little to eat, and cannot get medical care.

The children of these families face one of two choices, the report says. The young Negroes either stay on the farm and repeat the pattern of poverty--or flee to a city ghetto, where the problems are different but just as hard.

On the basis of replies from black farmers in Alabama and Mississippi, the SRRP reports that:

1. "The vast majority of Negro farmers are not aware of the federal farm programs for which they are eligible and, therefore, are not able to participate in them."

2. Negro farmers who do apply for the programs are usually turned down by the USDA's local representatives,

"who often do not even record the request."

3. Most Negroes who go to federal offices "are treated in a degrading and humiliating manner, and usually only dealt with after all white farmers have finished their business."

4. Negro farmers are given smaller cotton allotments (acres to plant) than white farmers and smaller "projected yields (a figure which determines the amount of the government subsidy check)."

5. The USDA's two food programs--food stamps and surplus commodities--do not work properly, because "the very poor cannot afford food stamps" and the surplus food is not "sufficient."

The SRRP also began collecting information on the related problems of food and health.

Besides investigating the effect of federal farm programs on Negro poverty, the SRRP also began collecting information on the related problems of food and health.

According to the report, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS)--which tells farmers how many acres to plant--systematically favors whites over Negroes.

Although landowners, sharecroppers, and tenant farmers have "an equal vote" in elections for the powerful ASCS county committees, the SRRP notes, "Negroes have been unable to elect decision-making officials, even in counties where there is an 80% Negro majority."

"The reasons were violence and intimidation previously, but more recently it is fraud and intentional lack of educational programs," the SRRP charges.

The Federal Extension Service--which provides technical aid to improve farming methods--"denies effective assistance to Negro farmers, preventing them from properly using their land," the SRRP says.

The report charges that the Farmers Home Administration (FHA) "grants loans to Negroes for operating expenses which further increase (the farmers') debt," but is reluctant to lend Negroes the money to buy land of their own.

"One farmer in Selma... was afraid even to let the FHA agent know that he was buying land--lest the agent spread the word which would eventually intimidate

the white landowner involved from selling the land to a Negro," the report says.

The SRRP began last April 20 in Selma, when local Negroes met with project director Donald A. Jellinek to discuss ways of fighting farm poverty in the South.

In mid-June, a group of SRRP workers came to Tougaloo, Miss., to hear a panel of experts--ranging from a university professor to SNCC chairman Rap Brown--talk about farm problems.

Then some 150 interviewers--two-thirds local people, one-third college students--fanned out across Alabama, Mississippi, and southwest Georgia to begin gathering data.

They worked in eight Alabama counties -- Autauga, Crenshaw, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Perry, and Wilcox--and 23 Mississippi counties, including Bolivar, Grenada, Hinds, Holmes, Issaquena, Quitman, Simpson, and Sunflower.

Besides investigating the effect of federal farm programs on Negro poverty, the SRRP also began collecting information on the related problems of food and health.

Jellinek--a lawyer who has handled many civil rights cases--said the SRRP hopes to give this data to legal groups to use as evidence in civil rights lawsuits.

The SRRP staff is continuing to interview Negro farmers. When the results are compiled, the project workers hope to suggest new ways of solving the old problems of poverty and racial discrimination.

The just administration of federal farm programs could halt the flight of Southern Negroes to Northern cities--"a circumstance that would have a dramatic effect on ghetto riots where overcrowding is a major contributing cause," the report notes.

"There are over a quarter of a million Negro farmers in the South," the SRRP report concludes. "These are the Negroes who will be forced into the ghettos of Northern cities if their farms or livelihoods peter out."

"Proper application of the federal (farm) programs could give Negroes a chance to work the land, obtain cotton and other crop allotments, improve farm and soil conditions, . . . make a profit, and employ more labor to work the land--and remain on the land."

# Federal Programs Fail to Reach Black Farmers in Hale County

BY BETH WILCOX

SELMA, Ala. -- Joseph Nicholas, who once planned to be a priest, came to Alabama last summer to work for the Southern Rural Research Project (SRRP).

Nicholas and Stephen Weintraub interviewed 450 Negro farmers in Hale County for the SRRP. Like most of the survey workers, they were paid only \$5 a week.

Smoking a pipe and wearing a university sweatshirt, Nicholas last week recalled his experiences in Hale County.

"We stayed with a family at first," he said. "Then we moved into a freedom house rented by the community. Since electricity wasn't connected, we read by candlelight or kerosene. We could've bathed in a tub, but we often took a bath in a river."

"Many people gave us meals, but

two ladies in particular--Mrs. Betty Miller and Mrs. Lizzie Mae Bradley--helped us the most. They fed us, and they often drove us to the houses where we were to interview people."

Getting the interviews wasn't easy, Nicholas said, although he attended the SRRP's training session in Tougaloo, Miss.

The real stumbling-block was his ignorance of agriculture and farm programs, Nicholas said. "But the more I learned from the people, the better my interviews became."

Nicholas said he and Weintraub "found in a lot of cases we had to interview a while before we got more sincere answers. A lot of times what people would say in conversation, at the end, completely contradicted what they had said during the interview."

"It was hard to get an estimated income from people," Nicholas noted,



## Going North

BY BETH WILCOX

SELMA, Ala.--The Southern Rural Research Project (SRRP) plans to work in the North as well as in the South.

Miss Kathleen A. Velt, associate director of the SRRP, said the group's interviews with 10,000 Southern Negro farmers will be supplemented by "a follow-up survey in the North."

SRRP workers will go into big-city ghettos, to talk with people who have migrated there from farms in the South.

"They will be asking people where they came from and what they were looking for--and whether they would come back to the South if things were different," Miss Velt said.

Miss Velt said the SRRP thinks the survey will show a relationship between the riots in the North and the number of recent migrants from the South.

"The places that exploded this summer -- like Newark -- were places where there are a lot of new people," she noted. "Not like Harlem, which has just been there for centuries."

In the South, Miss Velt said, the SRRP plans to study the effect of poor food on growing children. "We think these protein-caloric deficiencies contribute to mental retardation during the first three years (of life)," she explained.

The SRRP also plans to study the origins and history of the black people in Dallas County.



FARM IN GREENE COUNTY

--Photos by James E. Lytle

"At first most people just said, 'Nothing,' and we simply didn't believe it. But we came to know that with liens, payments, debts, and the 'furnish' system, that this was pretty much true."

Nicholas explained that most of the sharecroppers he interviewed "were 'furnished' all their materials (by white landowners), and ended up making nothing or were in debt."

The interviewers had other difficulties. White plantation owners occasionally chased the SRRP workers off the farms. Once, Nicholas said, a white woman "came after some of the others with a gun."

The survey workers discovered that Hale County farm families have all kinds of problems.

Nicholas said some people who had been sharecroppers all their lives were being forced off the land because of civil rights work--or because the plantation owner was switching from cotton to soybeans.

In one instance, he said, the owner cleared land for soybeans by bulldozing the tenants' trees--the family's only source of wood for cooking and heat.

Another problem was lack of knowledge about how to choose crops and conserve soil. Nicholas said the interviewers "only ran across two Negro farmers who had diversified farming and pastures."

"We suspected they were show-case farmers, so we interviewed them in depth. They told us they were in close contact with the Negro and white county agents, and that often visitors from (foreign) countries come to look at their farms."

Nicholas said that federal farm agents seldom talked with the Negro farmers. "About 25% had been visited by the county agent," he said, but "some of these visits were only social visits. (Only) 5 to 10% had been visited by the home demonstration agent."

"In general, ASCS (Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service) information has not been given to people by an ASCS agent," said Nicholas. "To most people ASCS simply means being

picked up in a truck and taken to the office with a lot of other people to sign up for cotton allotment."

As for government payments on grains, Nicholas said, "most people didn't grow enough to qualify. Two people who did were not receiving the same parity (payment) as the white farmer with the same amount of land and farming conditions."

Although most people knew about the federal food stamp program in Hale County, Nicholas said, "all the government had done in the way of explanation to the people was to send letters to 'community leaders,' telling them to explain the program to the people."

As a result, said Nicholas, he and Weintraub wound up giving the explanations, and driving people to the food stamp office to sign up. "We were really doing what the government should've done," he said.

Nicholas said most of the farmers had serious health problems--but no money for doctors or medicine. "Absolutely NO ONE, I mean no one, had gotten dental care except for extractions (tooth-pulling)--not even children," he said.

And, he said, some people could not get help even in medical emergencies. He recalled a pregnant woman who was told by the county health service that she must have her baby in a hospital (most deliveries in rural Hale County are made by mid-wives).

But, he said, the hospital told the woman she must have the cash to pay for the delivery before she could be admitted.

Nicholas and a CBS reporter arrived at the woman's farmhouse as she was beginning to go into labor. "The roads were impassable, but we offered to try to bring our car up to the door and take her to the hospital," he said. "We tried, but could not move the car."

"Her husband told us that he would get a pick-up by nightfall and take her in himself," said Nicholas. "I did not find out whether or not she had the money (to enter the hospital once she got there)."

# How Many New Voters in Lee?

BY MARY ELLEN GALE  
 OPELIKA, Ala.--How many Negroes registered to vote during a 30-day special session of the Lee County Board of Registrars?

"I think we got between 900 and 1,000," said William H. Harrison, associate director of the Alabama Council on Human Relations (ACHR), which led the voter registration drive.

The 30 special registration days were held between Oct. 1 and Nov. 15--the six-week period when most Alabamians visit their county courthouse to buy auto tags and pay property taxes. Harrison said ACHR workers made good use of the coincidence.

"We just worked the courthouse when the people were there," he said. "It may not sound like much--but people never did it before. And we got voters we wouldn't have gotten any other way."

But Mrs. J. B. Norris, chairman of the Lee County Board of Registrars, said the Negro voter registration drive wasn't quite as successful as the organizers say it was.

"I haven't had time to do a count yet," she said, "but a rough estimate would be 400 or 500. I'm sure it wasn't as many as 1,000."

The ACHR workers and Mrs. Norris also disagreed about the way Negroes were treated when they came to register.

Harrison said that, at first, employees of the board of registrars "let the whites wait on the inside and told the Negroes to wait on the outside. They (the employees) said, 'Don't let those niggers in.'"

Some people reported that the registrars asked personal questions that had nothing to do with voting qualifications, Harrison said:

"The registrars asked things like, 'Who do you work for?' 'Why don't you have a job?' or 'Where do you get your money?'"

He said the problems didn't stop "until we got some Justice Department lawyers down here for three days."

But Mrs. Norris denied the charges, "I just don't know why they start those

rumors," she said. "Everybody is treated just alike."

"Our courthouse office is so small it will hardly accommodate us. There's no special place for people to wait. They all wait together wherever they can."

And, she said, "we asked the white people the same questions we asked the Negroes--the questions on the (registration) sheet."

"They never mention this," Mrs. Norris said about the civil rights workers, "but we stayed there after office hours to register people who couldn't get there in the morning. They requested us to stay two afternoons a week, and we did."

## Equal Streets?

OXFORD, Miss.-- Negro residents of Shaw and Itta Bena have asked a federal court for an order giving them the same city services that white people get.

In suits filed last Friday by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Hawkins of Shaw and Scott Harris of Itta Bena asked for more paved streets, sidewalks, street lights, and fire hydrants, and better trash collection.

The suit said city officials should be ordered not to spend any more money on white neighborhoods "until the facilities and services furnished the residents of Negro neighborhoods have been brought up to substantially the level now enjoyed by white residents."

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# People Hit Plans For Renewal in Tuscaloosa

BY ANDREW J. MCKEAN  
 TUSCALOOSA, Ala.-- Tuscaloosa's urban renewal project--still in the planning stage--is already running into opposition.

A triangular piece of land, located on the east side of town and bordered by Hackberry Lane, University Ave., and Tenth St., has been designated as an urban renewal area.

About 90 Negro families now living there will be re-located, many of them in a new housing project. But wherever the new project be built?

Hal McCall, Tuscaloosa housing director, said there has been no final selection of a site for the new project. McCall said the city is still waiting for the go-ahead from Washington.

But many people think the new project will be built on the city's West Side, possibly in the College Hills area west of Stillman College.

Dr. Emmett Parker, president of the Tuscaloosa Council on Human Relations, said he has "no reason to doubt" that the city will give advance warning and a reasonable amount of money to the families who must re-locate.

But Parker said he doubted the ad-

visability of building the new project on the West Side, because many of the people who will have to move are employed in the vicinity of their present East Side homes.

Noting a tendency of whites to move east and Negroes to move west, Parker charged that the West Side is beginning to become a "ghetto."

And W. H. Henton, leader of a group of middle-class Negro families in the College Hills area, said he doesn't want public housing in his neighborhood. He said his group will fight any attempt to put the new project in College Hills.

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# NAACP Discusses Jobs

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO)

action if necessary."

Several NAACP members suggested publishing the names of stores which do not reply to the questionnaire or refuse to provide equal employment opportunities.

Johnson said the committee will probably do that--eventually. "We don't want to use stiff-arm tactics," he said. "We want to be open-minded."

"Integration is a two-way street," Johnson pointed out. He said the man-

ager of a Negro business "said to me, 'What would my customers think if I put a white person in here?'"

When one man suggested that all firms advertise job openings publicly, Johnson noted that the Negro-operated Tuskegee Federal Credit Union recently hired a new employee without advertising.

"We have to do a big selling job on both sides," he said. "We must try to build a community where employment and promotion will be based on ability."

# Announcements

**FOR A BETTER ALABAMA--**The Alabama Council on Human Relations has active chapters in Birmingham, Mobile, Montgomery, Huntsville, Florence-Tusculumbia-Sheffield, Auburn-Opeleka-Tuskegee, Talladega, and Tuscaloosa. It has a staff that works throughout the state. The Alabama Council is integrated at all levels: its staff officers, staff, and local chapters all have people of both races working side by side. The Alabama Council wishes to establish local chapters in every county in the state. If you wish to join the Council's crusade for equal opportunity and human brotherhood, write The Alabama Council, P. O. Box 1310, Auburn, Alabama.

**ARKANSAS--**The Arkansas Council on Human Relations has affiliate councils in Conway, Fayetteville, Pine Bluff, Fort Smith, and North Little Rock. We are interested in establishing local councils throughout the state. ACHR is integrated at all levels, working in education, voter education, employment, welfare, and housing. For information, write Arkansas Council on Human Relations, 1310 Wright, Little Rock, Ark. 72205.

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR WANTED--**The Alabama communities of Coosa and Elmore counties have established an agency to study the problems of poverty, and to develop new solutions and new efforts to combat these problems. The agency is established by, and functions under, a group of volunteer leaders from all parts of the community, including the poor themselves. The paid staff consists of Director Elizabeth T. Edwards of Wetumpka, and some professional and non-professional employees who are in this work because of a deep personal dedication to helping the poor raise themselves out of the continuing clutches of poverty and ignorance. These are no easy "9-to-5" positions, and the pay is not fancy. But the rewards of personal satisfaction and pride are great.

**QUALIFICATIONS DESIRED (The "ideal" assistant director would have all of the following qualifications. However, since there are very few ideal people, do not hesitate to apply if you have most of these qualifications):**

1. Education. A liberal arts education is desirable, preferably including study at the graduate level, with majors in such fields as community development, education, sociology, or psychology.

2. Experience. Three years of supervisory or managerial experience, involving responsibility for the organization, direction, operation, and administration of five or more employees. Six months' experience working with the Office of Economic Opportunity or other federal anti-poverty agency would offer important advantages.

3. Important Personal Qualities. Dedication, appreciation of the need for community development, philosophy of maximum feasible participation by the groups to be served. Exceptional energy and drive, mental and emotional stability, and physical stamina. Better-than-average communications and persuasive skills. An exceptional combination of diplomacy, aggressiveness, and initiative. Ability to enter new communities, quickly win the confidence of residents, and identify and develop existing and potential leadership. Ability to recruit and train others to do this type of work.

Male and female applicants accepted, but must be willing to contribute some evening or weekend work as necessary to ensure the success of the program. Ownership or access to a car is very important--mileage will be paid. Salary scale is \$7,000 to \$8,400.

To apply: For preliminary discussion, call 567-9377 in Wetumpka between 8:30 and 11:30 a.m. Monday through Friday, and ask for Mrs. McDonald. Or send letter with summary of your qualifications to Elizabeth T. Edwards, Director, Coosa-Elmore CAC, P.O. Drawer H, Wetumpka, Ala. 36092.

**ART EXHIBIT--**Interesting works of art by four members of the University of South Alabama art faculty are being shown through Dec. 15 at the Alabama State College art gallery in Kilby Hall on the Montgomery campus. Doors are open 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The public is invited.

**MASONS--**The M. W. Stringler Grand Lodge F & A M is holding its annual state-wide grand session Sunday, Dec. 3, to Wednesday, Dec. 6, in the Masonic Temple, Jackson, Miss. Grand Marshal James Gilliam of Clarksdale is presiding.

**CHRISTIAN SCIENTISTS--**"God the Only Cause and Creator" is the subject of the Lesson Sermon to be read in all Christian Science churches this Sunday, Dec. 3. The Responsive Reading includes this verse from Isaiah: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power: not one faileth."

**BAHA'IS--**The Baha'is of Montgomery invite you to their weekly fireside at 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2, at 3222 Santee Dr. in Montgomery. For transportation, call 263-6938 or 264-4394.

**DISTRIBUTORS WANTED--**Sell Pochet exclusive French perfumes and cosmetics. For information, write to Rev. William Allen, 422 N. 17th St., Birmingham, Ala. 35203.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED--**The Montgomery Head Start needs all the volunteer help it can get to work in the classrooms. Men, women, and teen-agers (minimum age 16) can all be of use. Volunteers will assist as teacher's aides and cook's helpers, and will take children on field trips in the area. A volunteer can choose his or her own hours between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. on a convenient day Monday through Friday. Transportation and lunch will be furnished. If you are available, apply to the Rev. E. W. McKinney, volunteer director at 419 Madison, call 263-3474, or go to the nearest Head Start center.

**BIRMINGHAM SERVICES--**Worship with the New St. James Baptist Church, 600 N. Fourth Ave. Birmingham--the church with a program, the minister with a message. Sunday School 9:30 a.m., morning worship 10:45 a.m., Baptist Training Union 5:30 p.m. The Rev. L. Clyde Fisher, pastor.

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