

Dear Folks,

3/30/55

Last ~~week~~ a friend and I boarded a bus for Alabama in response to a telegram from Orloff Miller, SRL staff advisor, to participate in the last part of the march on Montgomery as for equal voting rights (etc.) as ~~representatives~~ representatives of Channing Club at the Univ. of Wisconsin. I meet Orloff at an SRL leadership training conference in Cass Lake Minn. last summer. S.R.L. is Student Religious Liberals, the Unitarian's national organization for college youth. Orloff was one of the two men with Rev. Reeb when he was fatally injured by an attacker in Selma Ala. (Max Guebler, the local Unitarian minister, knew Rev. Reeb personally). Housing, food, etc. were arranged by the UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association) and ~~the~~ (in spite of bomb threats) the Unitarian Church in Birmingham for some 250 of us from ~~all around~~ ^{all around} the country.

Friend Sue Reave & I arrived in Birmingham about 2:25 p.m. Wed. and

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took a taxi from the Greyhound station to the church. We got to see a bit more of suburban Birmingham than we would have (at no extra charge) when the young Negro ~~the~~ driver ~~the~~ missed the church the first time by.

~~Buses Chartered bus~~

after an early supper at the church, ~~chartered buses~~ and instruction in non-violent self-protection and how to cope with tear gas, police dogs, etc., chartered buses took ^{us} to Montgomery Wed. night for a rally at which Martin Luther King spoke and numerous famous entertainers performed. It started late & we left early to get back to Birmingham for the night (a 97 mile trip each way). Church families put us up in their homes. After a 5:45 a.m. breakfast at the church the next morning we again boarded chartered buses for Montgomery to join in the last 3 miles of the march on the capitol with thousands of others (march official estimated 50,000) from all over the country. We collected on the muddy field ^{4/3}

of St. Jude's school - where ~~the~~ thousands had heard the entertainment the night before.

Freedom songs were sung in one main group, and then ~~it~~ in numerous smaller ^{groups} as we started to line up. Placards identified groups from Texas to Massachusetts.

Before ~~we~~ ~~also~~ the march started I had a chance to talk to Rev. Edwin King of

~~Youngdale College~~ and a couple of people I knew from Madison. (One works in Selma for SCLC, Dr. M.L. King's group, and one teaches at Galladege College (Negro), Galladege Alabama.) The march

finally got underway some time after 11:00 a.m.

Young and old, Negro & white, marched six abreast, with men on the outside, women on the inside. There was a young

white couple on the other end of my row

with 3 Negro girls of about 12 yrs in the

middle. The march went first through

the Negro section of town, and the ramshackle unpainted houses were doubtless

an eye opener to many northerners in

the march. The very old and the very

young waved & applauded from the sidewalks and from their front porches.

On the white section there were fewer spectators, and throughout the march we were well protected by the troops. The march ended in the broad street in front of the state capital about 1 p.m. Speeches by most of the major civil rights leaders, Ralph Bunch, & others lasted until 4:00 p.m. Our chartered buses started back for Birmingham about 5:30, and that night we again had supper at the Unitarian church. Sue & I decided to stay another night and talk to one of the church families and a couple of students from the University of the South (in Tenn.) The family we stayed with was also harassed with phone calls, but throughout our stay in Alabama we were relatively insulated from the hostility of southern segregationists. On the bus back we had a chance to talk to the wife of an official of the American Friends Service Committee who had marched all (or part?) of the way from Selma. We got back to Madison last Saturday morning, and the following Sun. night reported on the trip to Channing-Murray Club.

a belated Happy Birthday Dad.
 Sorry I missed it. The trip was the
 main thing on my ~~the~~ mind that week.

The main event on campus this
 week (other than the Military Ball last
 night and the Anti-Military Ball tonight)
 was the 10 hour "teach-in" ~~an~~ in
 which some 26 faculty members
 presented their views on Vietnam
 and related topics. Some 900
 students heard the final 10 to midnight
 panel discussion which was filmed
 by CBS news, reportedly for one of
 Walter Cronkite's programs.

I have written a number of southern
 colleges about a summer teaching position.

There is a tentative opening at my
 first choice, ~~Tougaloo~~ College
 near Jackson Mississippi, in a
 National Science Foundation program
 in chemistry for high school students.

A number of weeks ago Henrietta
 decided to stop seeing me until she
 had worked out some personal
 problems.

I am not presently planning to visit Minneapolis for spring vacation. I may go on a bus trip to visit Negro colleges in North Carolina & Virginia which is being planned by the Wisc. Student Association Human Rights Committee of which I am a member.

Yours,
Robert