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Liberty's Hidden History: The Dorchester Center and Citizenship Education in Southeast Georgia during the 1960s

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LIBERTY'S HIDDEN HISTORY: THE DORCHESTER CENTER AND CITIZENSHIP
EDUCATION IN SOUTHEAST GEORGIA DURING THE 1960S.

by

AMY BLANTON

(Under the Direction of Daniel Chapman)

ABSTRACT

The Citizenship Education Program held at the Dorchester Center in Midway, Georgia was an adult literacy program piloted by the Highlander Folk School and eventually transferred to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The purpose of the program was to teach literacy skills to black adults so they could pass their state's voter registration test. Believing that first class citizenship could only be achieved through the ballot, and that the ballot was the key to changes in the lives and welfare of Southern blacks, ordinary citizens traveled to Dorchester for weeklong workshops on how to teach reading and writing to others. Once students completed the training, they went back into their communities and started Citizenship Schools teaching their neighbors and friends how to read and write and ultimately register to vote. This program was successful because it relied on three basic keys: the students determined the content of the curriculum based on their experiences and needs, the lessons focused on real problems within their community that needed solving, and the students were inspired to action to solve these problems. These keys can breathe life into our standards-based business classrooms today by shifting the focus away from teacher-directed classrooms to spaces where students determine the content of the lesson, the focus on real-life situations, and the skills learned prepare students to solve their own problems.

INDEX WORDS: Dorchester Academy, Citizenship Education Program, Citizenship School, Highlander Folk School, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Chatham County Crusade for Voters, Savannah Herald, NAACP

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CHAPTER 1

LIBERTY'S HIDDEN HISTORY

“Democracies do not just sustain themselves; they must be nurtured by engaged, knowledgeable citizens. Engaged, knowledgeable citizens are not born, they are developed through citizenship education.” Robert S. Leming (Cotton, 2012, p. 285)

The Civil Rights Movement was a pivotal time in the history of the United States of America. Over a ten year period of time, black Americans tired of unequal treatment and unjust laws, bonded together to protest segregation. White businesses that only allowed black customers to enter through the back door were boycotted. At department store lunch counters across the South, black customers refused to sit separately from white customers. Black bus riders refused to move to the back of the bus to allow white bus riders a seat in the front of the bus. Countless marches were organized and led through city streets to draw attention to unequal treatment and unjust laws.

During this same period of time, countless numbers of black Americans were jailed for their efforts. Often, a trip to jail included physical abuse and bail amounts were set at levels reserved for only the most dangerous of criminals (Young, 2008, p. 213). Supporters of the movement suffered direct attacks on their homes, including arson and bombs. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (2015), upwards of forty individuals, including several children, lost their lives from 1954-1968 as a result of the Civil Rights Movement.

In celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, stories on the nightly news and in the newspapers recounted the leaders, events, and places important to the Civil Rights Movement's success including Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, marches on

Washington D.C. and Selma, boycotts, and violence in several Southern states. Left out of the headlines was one of the key components of the Civil Rights Movement – the Southern Christian Leadership Conference’s Citizenship Education Program. This educational program saw the enrollment of over an estimated 8,000 adults between 1961 and 1968 (Cotton, 2012, p. 112). While there were satellite locations of this program arranged when the need arose, the primary site for the Citizenship Education Program was at the Dorchester Center in Midway, Georgia.

The Dorchester Center was no stranger to black education when workshops began in 1961. While it had been twenty years since the last classroom was filled with students, the Dorchester Academy had been the site of black education since 1868 when the American Missionary Association set up a boarding school for recently freed slaves to learn to read and write.

Establishing Dorchester

Prior to the Civil War, very few slaves were able to read and write. There was no formal system of education for slaves and as a matter of control, slave owners did not permit this type of education to take place so as to limit the ways slaves were able to communicate (Schneider, 2014, p. 118). Being able to read and write could allow slaves to “...write a pass to freedom, to learn of abolitionist activities, or to read the Bible” (Williams, 2005, p. 7).

During this time period, Alabama, Georgia, Missouri, and Virginia passed laws that forbade enslaved and free blacks from learning to read and write (Schneider, 2014, p. 119). With the circulation of abolition pamphlets and newspaper accounts of slave resistance and unrest between the states, it was important to close the slave population off from information that could fuel their resistance. On December 22, 1829, the Georgia State Assembly passed Act 1729

prohibiting any person from teaching reading and writing to blacks and from bringing literature into the state that encouraged resistance among blacks, whether free or enslaved (William, 1831, p. 413). By extension, slaves were not allowed to do business with whites in writing.

Because of these laws, slaves who learned to read and write did so in secret. The way that slaves secretly learned to read and write often differed by gender. Men and boys were often allowed to leave the property and go into town to run errands and therefore had exposure to different sources for learning. Heather A. Williams, in her book *Self Taught* wrote of a slave named G. W. Offey, "...who traded boxing and wrestling lessons with white men for writing instruction" (Williams, 2005, p. 20). Frederick Douglass, in his narrative, describes his most successful plan to convert all of the little white boys he met into unknowing teachers (Fraser, 2001, p. 106). For the female slaves, who were often less mobile, secret learning took place through the children of the slave owners or books left lying around the house. Those slaves who were able to learn to read and write became a source of learning for other slaves whose movements and activities were more restricted. Lessons took place at night in cabins or while the slave owner and family was gone to Church on Sunday.

During Reconstruction, freed slaves were persistent in their demand for teachers and places for learning. While white teachers from the North were being mobilized by missionary agencies, black teachers were providing what they could in the form of education. Williams notes that "...any space that the teacher occupied was transformed into a classroom" (Williams, 2005, p. 39). It is important to note that during this time, blacks in the South were not only persistent in their quest for education, they also went to great lengths to gather resources to pay teachers and build schools (Anderson, 1988; Williams, 2005). Anderson describes an "...anger at slavery for keeping them illiterate" (Anderson, 1988, p. 5) and although assistance from

missionary agencies and the Freedmen's Bureau were needed, blacks very much wanted to oversee their educational efforts.

Even before the end of the Civil War, missionary groups from the North were gathering resources to assist freed slaves. Watkins notes that missionary societies were "...fervent believers in education as a tool for racial advancement" (Watkins, 2001, p. 15). According to Anderson, "...the short-range purpose of black schooling was to provide the masses of ex-slaves with basic literacy skills plus the rudiments of citizenship training for participation in a democratic society" (Anderson, 1988, p. 31). Expecting to find scores of savages in need of saving and educating, missionaries were met with large numbers of blacks eager to learn to read and write.

The Dorchester Academy was a one-room school established in Midway, Georgia (Liberty County) in 1868 by the American Missionary Association (AMA) in response to a request from William A. Golding. Golding, one of the first blacks in Georgia to hold public office during Reconstruction, donated 30 acres of land for the establishment of a school for blacks in the area. In 1879, the community, along with the assistance of the AMA, raised funding for another building to facilitate the increase in enrollment. By the end of the century, the campus consisted of several buildings used for classes - a library, chapel, dining and laundry facilities, a building for farming activities, and separate dormitories for boys and girls. Classes offered at Dorchester ranged from elementary to vocational adult education. By 1917, the school was fully accredited and enrollment was approximately 300 students (libertycounty.org/Dorchester-academy/).

The Dorchester Academy continued to thrive and began to rely on its graduates to fill its staff positions. In 1925, Dorchester hired its first black principal, Ms. Elizabeth B. Moore, who would serve until her untimely death from a sudden illness in 1932. During her tenure at the Dorchester Academy, she added physical education and science to the curriculum, which allowed the Academy to fulfill the requirements for accreditation. She would also establish an alumni association and encourage parents to be active in the Parent-Teacher Association. In 1932, the boys' dormitory was destroyed by fire. A new brick building was built in its place in 1935, which currently stands today. In 1940, Liberty County moved to assume control of educating its black population and built a school in the city of Riceboro, approximately five miles from Midway. The Dorchester Academy was officially closed and all of the buildings except its boys' dormitory were demolished. While the American Missionary Association still owned the land and the building, it turned oversight of the facility and land over to the Dorchester community for use and renamed it the Dorchester Center.

During the time between the closing of the Dorchester Academy in 1940 and 1961 when the first Citizenship Education Program workshops were held, the facility was used by the community. From 1942 to 1948, the boys' dormitory served as temporary housing for black soldiers and their families stationed at Fort Stewart (White, 2002, p. 5). In 1948, the Dorchester Improvement Association was created and the facility was turned into a community center. A small house was built on the campus to house the first director and groundskeeper, Mr. Claudius A. Turner. Members of the black community came together and formed the area's first Farmer's Cooperative to be completely owned and controlled by blacks. They pooled their resources and were able to purchase several pieces of farm equipment to be used by members of the cooperative. The Dorchester Center also housed the first black owned and managed credit union.

Throughout the 1950s, the Dorchester Center would be the gathering place for many community events and meetings.

In 1960, a young black Congregationalist minister named Andrew Young would discover the Dorchester Center in Midway, Georgia as he was looking for a location to house an adult literacy teacher training program needing a new home. Midway, a small township located in Liberty County, was home to the historic and influential Midway Congregationalist Church which was established in 1752. Notable church members included Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, and George Walton – all signers of the Declaration of Independence.

The adult literacy teacher training program, known as the Citizenship Education Program, originally began on Johns Island in South Carolina. The idea of Esau Jenkins, who had a desire to see island blacks learn to read and write so they could register to vote, was developed and made a reality through the financial assistance and guidance of Myles Horton of the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee and Septima Clark, former South Carolina educator who lost her job due to her affiliation with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). After Jenkins secured a location on the island and hired Bernice Robinson to be the first teacher, evening classes began in secret with the goal of teaching the first group of students how to read and write well enough to pass the South Carolina voter registration test.

As the first class of students successfully registered to vote, word of the newly named Citizenship School began to travel among the islands of South Carolina and additional teachers were trained and provided with secret places to teach new groups of adults how to read and write. Within three years the schools were so successful and so sought after that Jenkins,

Horton, and Clark established the Citizenship School Teacher Training Program at the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee.

For several years, the Highlander Folk School was able to facilitate the teacher training program and train hundreds of teachers to set up Citizenship Schools in their own communities. As more Citizenship Schools were established, more blacks were able to pass the voter registration test. Unfortunately, the Highlander Folk School began to attract negative attention from Tennessee state officials because the school and its programs were fully integrated. Sensing that Highlander's charter was in danger of being revoked, Horton began to talk with Martin Luther King, Jr., President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), about taking over the Citizenship School program to include the teacher training program. To assist with this transition, Horton hired Andrew Young to oversee the transfer of the program and to find a new location to house the Citizenship School Teacher Training program.

In 1961, Horton turned the program over to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which was headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. The new program, called the Citizenship Education Program, would later be described as the backbone of the Civil Rights Movement and a place "...where great, important work happened – work that helped change our country," (Cotton, 2012, p. 279). The Citizenship Education Program did not capture newspaper headlines, but was critical to the movement's success. For a period of approximately eight years during the 1960s, blacks with leadership potential from all over the South joined together for weeklong workshops at Dorchester to learn about the constitution of the United States, their rights as citizens to vote and be active in the political process, and the fundamentals of peaceful protest. Upon graduation from the program, these students went back to their communities as

leaders and set up Citizenship Schools, recruiting neighbors and friends to attend to learn to read and write and register to vote and take action in their communities.

The purpose of this study is to take an in depth look at the evolution of the Citizenship Education Program held at the Dorchester Center in the 1960s and the impact on voter registration in Southeast Georgia. The study begins with a history of the Highlander Folk School where the basics of the citizenship program were created and overseen by Septima Clark, Esau Jenkins, and Myles Horton in the 1950s. The study then looks at the evolution of the program after its transfer over to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1960. Through the biographies and autobiographies of those in charge of the Citizenship Education Program and historical documents from the SCLC archives, a picture of the program's key components, curriculum, and the intended results emerged. Newspaper articles, teacher notes, and field reports from Citizenship Schools and community organizations provide a glimpse of the mobilization of local communities tied to Dorchester during this period. Through historical documents, biographies, and personal accounts pertaining to this period, a comprehensive view emerged of the Citizenship Education Program held at the Dorchester Center during a pivotal time in the history of the South as the Civil Rights Movement took root.

Liberty's Hidden History

My interest in this study began with a newspaper article on the Dorchester Academy in the *Coastal Courier*, a Liberty County, Georgia newspaper. The September 21, 2013 article told of the descendants of sisters Ruth and Mabel Daniels visiting the Dorchester Academy Museum to bring photographs that were found in the attic (Etheridge, 2013). The Daniels sisters, originally from Ohio, traveled to Midway in 1913 to teach at the Dorchester Academy. The

article went on to describe the American Missionary Association's involvement in establishing the Dorchester Academy in 1868 to provide education for freed slaves.

Being an enthusiast and supporter of local history, I visited the Dorchester Academy Museum on October 19, 2013. The museum is located in the former home of Mr. Claudius A. Turner, the first Director of the Dorchester Improvement Association (Reflections, 2004, p. 1). Being the only patron at the museum during my visit, I was given a personal tour by the volunteer on staff, Mr. Maurice Bacon. The collection at the Dorchester Academy Museum was relatively small and consisted mainly of artifacts dating between 1863 and the 1940s, when the American Missionary Association oversaw the education of Liberty County blacks. I asked for and was given the contact information for the current director of the Dorchester Improvement Association, Mr. William "Bill" Austin, who is also the Mayor of the city of Riceboro, Georgia.

After speaking with Mr. Austin on the phone on October 30, 2013, he and I met for the first time on the morning of November 2nd at the Dorchester Academy. Mr. Austin gave me a thorough tour of the old school, explaining the purpose for each area and the current state of renovations. After the tour, he and I sat down and talked for an hour or so about the history of the Dorchester Academy. This is when I first learned of the Citizenship Education Program held at Dorchester during the 1960s. He gave me the names of Andrew Young and Dorothy Cotton and recommended that I read their books on the Citizenship Education Program.

Through my initial inquiry into the Citizenship Education Program, I was curious as to why Liberty County was chosen as the site for this program. I also became increasingly curious as to how such a program could be held in a South Georgia county without resistance from the white residents and city officials. Looking through the curriculum and the estimated number of

people that attended the workshops, I knew that the program was important to the overall work of the Civil Rights Movement; I could not understand why I had never heard about Dorchester prior to 2013.

As I began my research, my focus was solely on the Citizenship Education Program overseen by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. As I continued to research and read, I learned that the SCLC's program was adapted from the first Citizenship School founded by Esau Jenkins, Septima Clark, and Myles Horton at the Highlander Folk School. Prior to being involved with the Citizenship School program, Myles Horton and the Highlander Folk School were pivotal in helping poor Tennesseans organize and stand up to unfair and unsafe labor practices. Horton then turned his attention to the challenge of segregation in the South. The educational philosophies of Horton were viewed as revolutionary during that time period and are worth exploring because much of the Citizenship Education Program that was overseen by the SCLC was based on the same ideologies that Horton infused into the Citizenship Schools overseen by the Highlander Folk School. In fact, several of those that led and taught the SCLC's Citizenship Education Program spent time either as students or teachers at Highlander.

Horton learned early in working with the labor union movement that neither he nor any other teacher at Highlander could go to a group of people and tell them what they should do about their problems (poverty, segregation). The people had to learn about and evaluate their own circumstances and then collectively decide what action to take in response to what was learned (Horton, Kohl, & Kohl, 1998, p. 68). Horton and the Highlander Folk School basically acted as facilitators in this process. This very important concept was the basis for how the Citizenship Schools were structured from their inception through the 1960s. Once the Southern

Christian Leadership Conference took over the citizenship program, important changes were made that reflected the ideas and intentions of this new leadership.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference archives contain insight into the organization's goals and plans for spreading this program throughout the South. By studying the workshop lesson plans, annual reports, and correspondence from Citizenship Education Program staff to workshop participants, I gained insight into the guiding principles behind the citizenship programs. The workshops often had the same foundational aim – to train ordinary men and women how to teach adults to read and write, register to vote, and become active in their communities. According to Dorothy Cotton, prior to recruiting and receiving a group of new teachers for the week, the staff would tailor the lessons to fit their particular community needs and situations (Cotton, 2012, p. 106).

Through the biographies of the leaders and copies of personal communication with workshop participants, I could document the experiences of the staff and students of the Citizenship Education Program at the Dorchester Center. After each week long workshop, the participants were expected to go back home and share what they learned and recruit others to attend future workshops. Workshop leaders kept in contact with participants through correspondence, field visits, and monthly reports.

Ultimately the goal of the Citizenship Education Program was to send the students back into their communities to teach and lead others to action. Articles from the *Savannah Herald* during this period add insight into the activities of the community as Citizenship Education Program graduates returned home, set up Citizenship Schools, and recruited others to learn and lead.

Research Questions

The changes that were brought about by the Civil Rights Movement could not have happened without leaders meeting, planning, and organizing the events that were used to make the nation aware of the severity of White Supremacy in the South but the Movement also would not have been successful without the countless community level leaders who taught neighbors how to read and write, held voter registration drives, boycotted, marched, picketed, sat, and served as the “ground crew” (Cotton, 2012, p. 115). While much of the focus was on the Movement’s charismatic leadership and large scale protests, on more than one occasion, Andrew Young heralded the Citizenship Education Program and the Citizenship School teachers as the backbone of the Civil Rights Movement (Young, 2008, p. 189). Without leaders at the community level, a nationwide movement would not have been possible.

The students who were recruited to attend the Citizenship Education Program came from different backgrounds and experiences but all experienced varying forms of segregation and oppression. For Dorothy Cotton, who designed each Citizenship Education Program workshop, her first order of business was to deprogram her students - to strip away the layers of lies that society heaped on the black population so each student could begin with a firm foundation based on those basic liberties that each citizen was guaranteed in the United States Constitution. The goal of every program, though it may have been tweaked and changed to address specific concerns, was always to “...help people discover their own power” to change their circumstances through collective action (Cotton, 2012, p. 104).

These questions guided my research:

What were the underlying principles of the Citizenship Education Program?

What role did Citizenship Schools play in furthering the goals of the Citizenship Education Program?

How can the principles of the Citizenship Education Program transform business education into a program that equips students to solve problems and enrich communities?

Method & Sources of Data

This historical study was conducted using qualitative methods and began with the history of Highlander Folk School's Citizenship School program led by Septima Clark, Esau Jenkins, and Myles Horton. The Highlander Folk School was directly involved in the Citizenship School program for over a decade and there were several components of the original program that were important to its success. Sources for this portion of my study came from the Highlander Folk School archives, as well as biographies on Myles Horton and Septima Clark and several books written about the Highlander Folk School. Andrew Young's biography *An Easy Burden* (2008) provides details about the transition from the Highlander Folk School to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, as does Highlander and SCLC staff memos and reports.

The Highlander Folk School archives are primarily located at the Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market, Tennessee but there is also a significant amount of documents pertaining to the Citizenship School program that are part of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference archives in Atlanta, Georgia. The archives contain primary source documents like lesson plans, personal letters, program memos, minutes of meetings, transcripts

of speeches, reports, and photographs. These source documents were used, in addition to the biographies of Septima Clark and Myles Horton, to highlight the history of the concept and ideas behind the Citizenship Schools program directed by the Highlander Folk School until its transfer to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1960.

The primary focus of this study was the Citizenship Education Program directed by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and held at the Dorchester Center in Midway, Georgia from 1961 - 1971. Sources for this portion of my study came from autobiographies written by Dorothy Cotton, Septima Clark, and Andrew Young and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference archives located at Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. The archives at Emory contained numerous primary source documents on the Citizenship Education Program including workshop lesson plans, personal letters written by Dorothy Cotton, Septima Clark, Andrew Young, and Martin Luther King, Jr. regarding the program, minutes of SCLC meetings pertaining to the Citizenship Education Program, workshop lesson plans and records containing the names of students and teachers who attended the workshops, annual reports, and photographs. These source documents were invaluable in detailing and describing the components and curriculum of the Citizenship Education Program.

Chapter Two describes the history of Myles Horton and the Highlander Folk School and its involvement in helping to establish the first Citizenship School on Johns Island in South Carolina. Myles Horton and his work at Highlander with the labor movement prior to the 1950s are discussed because many of his philosophies about adult education and movements can be clearly traced from the labor movement to the Civil Rights Movement. This chapter also includes brief personal histories of Septima Clark, Esau Jenkins, and Bernice Robinson all of

whom were instrumental in establishing the Citizenship School program and overseeing its spread throughout South Carolina and Georgia. The goals of the program along with a timeline for the program's implementation and a description of the classes and curriculum are included along with details of the events that ultimately led to the program's transfer over to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1961.

Chapter Three focuses on the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's vision for citizenship education. After being transferred from the Highlander Folk School, the program was renamed and its materials reworked to fit the ongoing mission and organizational goals of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Beginning with brief personal histories of Dorothy Cotton and Andrew Young, the chapter describes the efforts of the team primarily responsible for overseeing the Citizenship Education Program. A detailed look at the materials and curriculum of the program shed light on the SCLC's goals for the program and the evolution of the workshops as the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum.

The purpose of the Citizenship Education Program workshop was to train ordinary men and women to go back in to their communities and start Citizenship Schools. These teachers often opened their homes to neighbors and friends to teach them how to read and write so they could register to vote and become active participants in their communities. Chapter Four looks at the culmination of the Citizenship Education Program – fully functioning Citizenship Schools. These schools were where oppressed blacks were given the skills and training to act and make changes in their communities. This is where the momentum for the Civil Rights Movement was found. Citizenship School lesson plans, monthly reports, and personal correspondence with Citizenship Education Program staff shed light on recruitment efforts, successes, and community activities. Newspaper headlines from the *Savannah Herald*, a black newspaper which was first

published in 1946 and continues to be the voice of the black community in the Low Country area, sheds light on the events and leaders in Savannah who were connected to the Citizenship Education Program. Finally, reports by Annelle Ponder, field supervisor for the Albany and Savannah area Citizenship Schools, offer insight into the successes and struggles to establish schools and recruit for classes. While Citizenship Schools were established in all eleven Southern states, for the purposes of this study, the focus is only on those schools established in Georgia and primarily located around Liberty County, where the Citizenship Education Program was held at the Dorchester Center.

Chapter Five summarizes and concludes the purpose of my study and contains my reflections of the research process. This chapter also discusses the potential use of my research by the Dorchester Improvement Association to build a display chronicling the Citizenship Education Program. Being a historical study, part of my purpose for conducting this study was to learn more about the legacy of the Dorchester Center. The site has been granted historical status, yet it remains largely unknown and unrecognized for its contribution to the black history of Liberty County and its contributions to the Civil Rights Movement. I would like to share my research with the Dorchester Improvement Association and look at possibly working with them to organize a section of the Dorchester Museum dedicated to telling the story of its involvement with the Citizenship Education Program.

CHAPTER 2

STRONG ROOTS

To analyze the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Citizenship Education Program at Dorchester, it is important to understand the roots of the program. In 1961, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference took over the Citizenship School program from the Highlander Folk School. Under the SCLC's direction, the program's name was changed and the instructional materials modified, but much of the leadership stayed the same. To get a full understanding of the concept behind the Citizenship School program, it is important to look back at the history of the Highlander Folk School and the history of the figures responsible for the program and its success.

The Highlander Folk School first opened its doors to students in 1932 in Monteagle, Tennessee. The school specialized in adult education and offered residential programs, workshops, and outreach programs. The school was not designed to house wealthy, academic students. On the contrary, the school was designed as a place for the poor and exploited to come together to work on community issues. Situated in the Appalachian mountains of Tennessee, the surrounding communities were mostly poor, white working class folks that were connected to the numerous textiles and mining industries in the area. The workshops offered to the community were designed to help identify the economic and social problems facing the residents of Appalachia and then to collectively come up with solutions or courses of actions to remedy those problems. For approximately twenty years, the primary focus at the Highlander Folk School "...was on helping workers fight for just and fair wages and safe working conditions" (Cotton, 2012, p. 98).

Myles Horton & the Highlander Folk School

Myles Horton, who is overwhelmingly credited with the Highlander Folk School concept and its oversight, was born in Savannah, Tennessee in 1905. The mountains of Tennessee were full of the working poor. As industrialization spread throughout the region, many in the community found employment in textile mills, mines, or as laborers in the fields of large agricultural businesses. The working conditions in the mills and mines were deplorable and the wages barely enough to live on. Horton's parents, who were both school teachers, lost their jobs when state regulations were changed and they no longer met the minimum educational requirements to be teachers. Financially unable to go back to school and continue to care for their family, they moved out to the country and took various jobs where available to make a living. Horton recalled that his father, being slightly more educated than his peers and having good penmanship, secured a position as the court clerk for a while until someone with more education came along and he lost his job (Horton, Freire, Bell, Gaventa, & Peters, 1990, p. 13). Horton's mother would often use her teaching experience and great compassion to visit and care for the poorest Appalachian families, usually without much compensation. Never bitter or consumed with self-pity, Horton's parents would continue to work until they were no longer physically able to do so.

Educational opportunities in rural Appalachia where they lived were not very good. Often, Horton's teachers had only a few more years of education than he did. With education being a priority in his family, Horton's parents arranged for him to live in the garage of a friend in town so he could attend high school (Horton et al., 1990, p. 14). Because the family was barely making enough to get by, Horton found a job at the local grocery store to pay for his own expenses. He notes in his autobiography *The Long Haul* (1998), that while growing up and

attending school, he realized that schools did not really teach what the majority of students needed to learn. Horton was always supplementing his learning through books and conversations with people in the community. He says that he was aware at a young age that his family was struggling, but he didn't blame anyone because he figured it was just the way the system was designed (Horton et al., 1990, p. 15). He would spend the rest of his life helping people fight that system.

Despite his economic circumstances, Horton was able to attend college in 1924 with the help of the family's church and some of the money that he had saved. Intending to become a teacher, Horton quickly realized that he did not want to teach in any of the schools or colleges that he had attended. He felt that none of them offered students an education in anything that would be useful outside of school - it was more about getting a piece of paper that was supposed to unlock great career opportunities after graduation. What he found was that whether graduating from a poor college or an Ivy League college, graduates were struggling to find and keep their jobs (Horton, 1983, p. 15).

While in college, Horton became active in the Student YMCA for the state of Tennessee. Horton, who was always against segregation, first experienced actively working for racial equality during his involvement in planning and coordinating the 1928 Student YMCA State Convention in Knoxville. He stated that he felt strongly about being a part of the effort to break the pattern of segregation and stressed that action was the key, as opposed to just talking about it (Horton et al., 1998, p. 16). Therefore, he could not, in good conscience, plan a segregated state convention. Arranging to have the opening session and meal at a white-only hotel in Knoxville, Horton waited until the last minute to let the hotel know that black students would also be in attendance. He recalls that he took a big risk that day, but counted on the fact that the hotel staff

would give in to the integrated meeting when faced with the alternative of throwing everyone out and wasting a meal that was already prepared for the group of over one hundred students (Horton et al., 1998, p. 18).

During his summers off from the Cumberland University, Horton taught Sunday school and Vacation Bible School for the local churches. The first summer, he spent the majority of his time establishing the various programs. The second summer, he let his staff do the teaching and he spent the majority of his time visiting with members of the church throughout the community. During these visits he was able to get a better idea of the issues and struggles the local community faced. Always being more interested in educating adults, Horton decided to invite the parents of the Vacation Bible School students to an evening meeting in the small town of Ozone.

Horton describes this meeting as his first real attempt to talk with adults about community problems like fair wages and safe working conditions (Horton et al., 1998, p. 22). Horton did not advertise the meeting as a community forum, so most parents assumed the topic would be related to the Bible school. He noted that almost no one in that community had a vehicle, but the parents came out anyway and he started the meeting with a few words on the progress of the Vacation Bible Schools. Once he had their attention, Horton went on to talk about the struggles he had noticed in the community with the mine workers and farm laborers. The community members were interested in talking about their problems, but thought that Horton would have the answers. While he was able to offer his perspective on some of the issues, he knew they were expecting more. He offered to bring in representatives who could address health and working conditions, but they wanted answers that night. Finally, being desperate to provide solutions, Horton began to ask the people what they had already done to

address the problem. As the conversation took off, others offered their experience on the topic or possible ideas or solutions.

Horton recalls that he learned something valuable that night. Despite his education, the people at that meeting did not learn anything from him that night. What was learned from that initial meeting was learned from the experiences and ideas of others in that same situation (Horton et al., 1990, p. 49). Horton would later credit those Ozone community meetings held that summer as being the inspiration for the idea for Highlander – for a place where people could come together, discuss, and address issues. As word of the community meetings spread, people would come from miles to attend and share their experiences. Horton knew then that he wanted to help people solve their problems and change the world – he just didn't know how to accomplish his goal.

In the fall of 1929, Horton left to attend Union Theological Seminary in New York where he spent considerable time studying and learning about the power of collective action. Horton states that while the Bible and religion played an important part in his life, he never went to Union to be a minister; he went to learn useful things to bring back to his community (Horton et al., 1998, p. 46). Without graduating, Horton left Union to attend the University of Chicago in 1930. He took classes that focused on “group problem solving and conflict as a tool for learning” (Horton et al., 1998, p. 47) and came to realize that alone an individual did not have problem-solving power, but collectively, through groups and organizations, things could be accomplished. He confesses though that even at this point, he was still not thinking about opening a school for adults.

While in Chicago, Horton met a couple of Danish ministers and in explaining his goals became intrigued with the idea of Danish Folk Schools as a model for community adult education. After researching the Danish Folk Schools in the university library, Horton still had questions about how the Danish Folk School model could achieve his goals. In 1931, Horton left for Denmark to learn more about the concept of these schools and how they could help him lead others to solve community problems back at home.

While in Denmark, Horton stated that he learned a lot about what not to do from the modern Danish Folk Schools. It was only by studying the writings of Bishop Nikolai Grundtvig's original Folk School Movement that he began to understand how some of the key components of the Danish Folk School tradition could be applied to his dream (Horton, 1983, Denmark). Some of the key components that Horton brought back from the Danish Folk School tradition included having the students and teachers live together and learn from each other, freedom from government regulation and assessment, group singing and social interaction to build unity, and a clear purpose for gatherings (Horton et al., 1998, p. 53). During his time in Denmark, Horton penned the basic concept for the Highlander Folk School. Horton wanted to teach the whole person and understood that "...teaching for social change...is not an act that is done *to* students but an act that, along with learning, is done *with* students" (Jacobs, 2003, p. XXI).

Upon returning home, Horton set out to find the perfect location for the school and to secure the funds necessary to make it happen. For the next twenty years, the Highlander Folk School would become pivotal in the labor union movement in Tennessee by leading "...an experiment in grassroots problem solving by the people themselves" (Cotton, 2012, p.102).

Highlander & the Labor Movement

While the labor movement is not directly related to the Citizenship Schools, many of Horton's original ideas about adult education and collective action were first used during workshops aimed at improving wages and workplace conditions. These ideas and practices were refined during the twenty years that Highlander was involved with the labor movement. Through the labor union movement, Horton learned a lot about working with the poor and oppressed. While it was never Highlander's intent to go into a situation and solve the problem, Horton and the Highlander staff had to unlearn their preconceived notions about what education should look like and learn to listen to and learn from the experiences of the people that came to the workshops. Horton stated that "what we needed was a schooling by the people we were trying to teach, so we could understand how they learned and how they perceived their problems" (Horton, 1983, Denmark).

The Highlander staff worked to help the poor and exploited to identify their problems through group discussions and use their collective power of experience to come up with possible solutions to those problems. He stated that "since I chose to work with the poor, oppressed people, I had to take into consideration that they'd never been allowed to value their own experience" (Horton et al., 1998, p. 57). It was the people's experiences that made them experts in finding solutions to these problems; the Highlander staff helped to guide people to discover their voice and to facilitate the conversations that would ultimately lead to action. Horton notes that they didn't get this process right in the beginning, "we still thought our job was to give students information about what we thought would be good for them" (Horton et al., 1998, p. 68). He and the staff also learned that the best way to teach the people was by allowing the students to experience first-hand what they were learning and that there was a big difference between what the Highlander staff perceived in a situation and what the people themselves

perceived. They had to start where the people were and to do that, they had to observe and listen to the community.

The labor movement workshops at Highlander taught the participants how to discuss and really listen to each other, but it also taught them that a lot of talk without action would not result in any change. Horton said, "...the number of people who are angry is not big enough to bring about social change" (Horton et al., 1998, p. 79). Change would only happen through the planned and coordinated efforts of groups of people. Staff members and students attended local union activities together. They picketed together and spent time learning to interact with labor officials and business managers through dramas and they learned how to express their demands through written correspondence. They also learned songs that would be sung along picket lines to keep the momentum and their spirits high in the face of exhaustion and adversity. Horton's wife, Zilphia, was instrumental in leading the students in song, often taking well-known melodies and replacing the words to fit their purpose on the picket line.

In 1935, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) began holding educational training workshops exclusively at Highlander (Horton et al., 1998, p. 87). The CIO served to organize the various labor unions throughout the South and made great strides in educating union members throughout the region on the power of collective bargaining and negotiations. However, by the late 40s, new CIO management sought to exclude blacks from training and negotiations, which contradicted Highlander's chief belief of never discriminating against anyone. So, in 1950, Highlander severed its ties to the CIO and began to look at becoming more involved in actively fighting against segregation.

From 1950 to 1954, Highlander closed out its remaining labor movement programs and began to put itself in the position to be part of the movement to end segregation. During the labor union movement at Highlander, racism was always an underlying issue because all aspects of Highlander were integrated, so it seemed logical to focus Highlander staff, funds, and efforts in that direction (Glen, 1996, p. 183). During the summer of 1953, Highlander held two workshops on “The Supreme Court Decisions and the Public Schools” (Glen, 1996, p. 156). The groups attending the workshops held numerous discussions on the problem of segregation and produced materials to help communities be proactive in desegregating its school systems. With the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education*, Highlander began to gather maps and other resources to assist communities in implementing desegregation. Horton realized that the school systems were not going to begin desegregating immediately; it would take pressure from the community.

In the summer of 1954, Highlander held a couple of workshops on the desegregation of public transportation. For many of the black folks who attended the workshop, it was the first time that they had ever been in an integrated setting where members could discuss and learn from each other. In fact, prior to the summer of 1954, most of the Highlander workshops were made up of white participants. During one of the summer workshops, Horton noted that a group of black women from South Carolina showed up with enough fried chicken from home to feed themselves for the duration of the workshop because they did not believe that they would be eating alongside white folks, so they brought their own food (Horton et al., 1998, p. 92). Part of the experience of being at Highlander was seeing in practice the goal of the movement to end segregation. At Highlander they didn’t just talk about integration, they practiced it in every aspect of the program.

With the ultimate goal of ending segregation completely throughout the world, Highlander held an exploratory workshop in 1954 on “World Problems, the United Nations, and You” (Glen, 1996, p. 158). The premise behind this workshop was to get people thinking about what they could do on an international scale to end segregation and racism. Horton notes that they “did a lot of analysis in that workshop, but it was analysis of the South, not the United Nations” (Horton et al., 1998, p. 99). Attending this workshop were South Carolina natives Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins and their particular community need grew into one of Highlander’s most successful programs – the Citizenship Schools.

Highlander, Literacy Education, & Johns Island

Septima Clark was born in Charleston, South Carolina in 1898. Clark’s parents recognized the value of a good education and worked hard to pay tuition for her to attend a normal school in Charleston. Clark’s teachers were white because in that time black schools were not allowed to hire black teachers. She excelled in school and her teachers encouraged her to attend Fisk University, but the tuition was too expensive (Brown, 1990, p. 102). Unable to teach in the black public schools in Charleston, Clark found a teaching position in 1916 at the Promise Land School. This private school provided an education for the children living on the plantations on Johns Island and Clark served as one of two teachers (Brown, 1990, p. 105). Johns Island is part of a chain of small islands situated off of the coast of the Charleston, South Carolina.

In 1918, a representative from the NAACP came to Johns Island to recruit members and Clark joined for one dollar. For the next thirty years, Clark would teach at various schools in the South, be actively involved with the NAACP, and advocate for equal pay for black teachers. She

would also earn her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Education. Clark stated in her narrative *Ready from Within* (1990) that "there weren't too many black people who considered the NAACP worthwhile" at first (Brown, 1990, p. 36). She felt that they were afraid that the white folks would find out about their involvement and it would cost them their jobs. She, on the other hand, was not afraid to talk about her involvement with the NAACP and in 1955, when the state of South Carolina passed a law stating that city and state employees could not be members of the organization, she knew her teaching contract at Henry P. Archer School would not be renewed.

Clark's first visit to the Highlander Folk School happened during the summer of 1954, where she attended a meeting on the United Nations (Brown, 1990, p. 30). Clark would return to Highlander once more during the summer of 1954 with several other Johns Island residents including former student and Johns Island businessman, Esau Jenkins. It was during this workshop that Jenkins would describe his efforts to teach Johns Island blacks how to read and write so they could register to vote.

Esau Jenkins, a lifelong resident of Johns Island, was born in 1910. Ever the businessman, Jenkins formed the Progressive Club in 1948 whose purpose was to encourage blacks to register to vote. His main source of income, however, was as a bus driver. Many of the Johns Island black residents did not own vehicles so Jenkins drove a bus from Johns Island to Charleston every morning filled with those headed to work and in the evenings, he would drive them home (Horton, 1990, p. 68). One day on the way in to Charleston, bus rider Alice Wine asked Jenkins if he would teach her how to read so she could pass the South Carolina voter registration test. South Carolina voting laws at that time required that those who wished to register be able to answer questions about the state constitution (Brown, 1990, p. 43). Jenkins agreed and began holding lessons on the bus each day as he transported his fares to work and

then back home (Schneider, 2014, p. 124). As the workers would clock out and board the bus, Jenkins would help them memorize parts of the South Carolina Constitution and other information needed to pass the voter registration test. Jenkins felt, though, that he wasn't really teaching them how to read, which he felt was key to being an active citizen (Brown, 1990, p. 45).

At the United Nations workshop, Jenkins explained his efforts to help Johns Island residents register to vote, but stated that what they really needed was a school to teach adults how to read and write. Intrigued by the problem, Myles Horton spent the next year traveling back and forth from Highlander to Johns Island to get a good understanding of the situation and need. In researching the Charleston area, Horton found that the local school system had indeed made an attempt at teaching literacy to its adult black residents; however, very few actually attended the classes. In talking with some of the Johns Island residents, Horton discovered that the classes were held in elementary school classrooms and taught by certified teachers who were very condescending in their efforts to teach literacy (Horton et al., 1990, p. 69). Residents complained that they literally had to fold themselves up to fit in the small student desks. After several visits and many conversations with local residents, Horton, Clark, and Jenkins came up with a plan for literacy classes.

Through a fifteen hundred dollar loan from Highlander, Esau Jenkins purchased a small store on Johns Island. Clark notes that the building was originally listed for one thousand dollars but when the owner found out that blacks were trying to make the purchase, they increased the price to fifteen hundred dollars (Brown, 1998, p. 47). In the front of the building, Jenkins set up a co-op grocery store where members of his Progressive Club could buy and sell groceries to each other. In the back of the store were two rooms that were converted into classrooms. The store front served as a disguise for the classes being held in the back, but it also provided some

income to pay back the money borrowed from Highlander and to later purchase supplies. With an actual building to host the literacy classes, all Jenkins needed was a teacher.

By this time in 1956, Septima Clark was employed full-time by the Highlander Folk School as the Director of Workshops. Clark spent the majority of her time hosting workshops on integration at Highlander and traveling throughout the region to secure funding for Highlander's programs. She knew she would not be able to stop her work to teach the literacy classes and Horton and Jenkins preferred using someone who was not a formally educated teacher (Horton et al., 1990, p. 70). She recommended to Horton and Jenkins that her cousin, Bernice Robinson, teach the literacy classes.

Robinson, a black beautician by trade, had attended several workshops at Highlander previously and always expressed a desire to help; however, she was taken aback when Clark and Horton approached her to teach the literacy classes. She tried arguing that she was not a teacher but Horton explained to her that she was perfect for the job because she genuinely cared for others and was an excellent listener (Horton et al., 1990, p. 71). Fearing that illiterate adults would be intimidated by formally trained and college-educated teachers, it was crucial that the person chosen as "teacher" would relate to the students more as a fellow learner than an authority on reading and writing (Cotton, 2012, p. 102). Not only that, but Robinson's very successful business was not tied to the white community, so there would be no repercussions if the school was discovered.

In January of 1957, the very first literacy classes were held on Johns Island. Septima Clark recalled that Esau Jenkins drove around the island with his bus and picked up the adults that came to class. She said many of them brought their little children with them since they

could not be left at home, but they made it work and even taught some of the older children about how to speak in front of an audience (Wigginton, 1992, p. 243). Robinson began with fourteen students, three men and eleven women (Brown, 1998, p. 51) and knew the very first night she tried to teach that the elementary school level materials she had collected would not be appropriate for her students. She was very honest with her students and told them that she was not a real teacher, but that they were going to learn together (Wigginton, 1992, p. 251).

Knowing that there was a limited time to teach literacy, they “had to start closer to where the people had to end up in a short period” (Horton et al., 1990, p. 71) Robinson secured copies of voter registration forms, the South Carolina Constitution, and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights to use during reading instruction (Horton et al., 1998, p. 103). She taught the students how to write their name in cursive and how to fill out voter registration forms. Because she had no formal instructional materials, Robinson would have the students tell her stories about their daily lives and then she would write down the stories and use those stories to teach the students sight words and how to read. The students would also ask Robinson to teach them specific things like how to fill out money orders and catalog order forms. One of the women wanted to learn to sew, so Robinson purchased a sewing machine and taught the women to sew. This first class even came up with a name for the literacy classes – the Citizenship School. Horton states that it was less about literacy and more about community organization because “...they were talking about using their citizenship to do something” (Horton et al., 1990, p. 72). Learning to read was just a stepping stone to being able to do something about the problems in their communities. The first Citizenship School class met two nights a week during January and February, mainly because it was the off season for agricultural work and at its completion, all fourteen students successfully registered to vote.

Within weeks of completing the first Citizenship School on Johns Island, Robinson was asked to teach the classes again. Horton confessed that they weren't really prepared for the response they received to the first sessions (Horton et al., 1990, p. 73). The next year, the Citizenship School met during the months of December, January, and February (Brown, 1990, p. 51). Within three years, the program would spread throughout many of the other islands off the coast of South Carolina. As news of the Citizenship Schools traveled and the amount of black registered voters began to climb, Clark and Horton quickly realized that they needed to train more teachers. Robinson took four of her best students and trained them to teach the Citizenship Schools so they could respond to more requests for classes (Horton et al., 1990, p. 73). Clark would spend many of her evenings on the road fundraising and writing out and refining the program so that it could easily be duplicated by those receiving the training (Morris, 1984, p. 152). By the end of 1957, communities were sending women to the Highlander Folk School to attend Citizenship School Teacher Training. The communities were responsible for providing a place for the citizenship school to take place once the women returned and they were also responsible for the cost of reproducing the instructional materials provided by Highlander. By the time the program was transferred over to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, over four hundred teachers had completed the Citizenship School Teacher Training program at Highlander (Horton et al., 1990, p. 74).

Training the Teachers

The Citizenship School Teacher Training program held at the Highlander Folk School had a different structure. The students who came to the two week long workshop were mostly women. These women often did business out of their homes or had jobs that were independent of the white community. The workshops at Highlander were residential, meaning that the

students and teachers lived together during the program. The women at the teacher training workshop had to be sponsored by or sent by a group with the intention of returning back to the group and establishing a Citizenship School for the community out of a home or another designated building. The workshops were always free for the participants and often travel was reimbursed. The training workshops also followed the typical Highlander format and included formal training, a time to discuss and address specific community needs, singing, and fellowship when classes were finished.

The Highlander staff made it a point to conduct field visits with each of the teachers after the training program to address additional needs and often scheduled additional training workshops and refresher courses. Many of the Citizenship Schools that were established were sponsored by local churches and civic organizations that had facilities available for use, but a few teachers held class in their homes. As women would attend training, return home and set up Citizenship Schools, word would spread and other communities would pool their resources and send someone to be trained. The spread of the program over the years that Highlander oversaw the program was exponential and resulted in thousands of new registered voters across South Carolina.

Clark and Robinson continued to refine the teaching process and created an instructional text, *My Reading Booklet*, to be used by students who attended the Citizenship School to teach literacy but also to “provide them with information that would help them as they moved toward first-class citizenship and empowerment” (Gyant & Atwater, 1996, p. 586). The first version of *My Reading Booklet*, used from 1958-1959, was thirteen pages long and included a history of the Highlander Folk School, a copy of a South Carolina voter registration form, a summary of South Carolina’s government structure, the importance of a social security card, a list of health services

available in Charleston, and blank money order and catalog order form (Schneider, 2014, p. 129). The booklet was revised in 1959 to include a map of the United States and pictures of the Capital Building and the Supreme Court and was used until the program's transfer over to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1961.

It is estimated that during the time that the Highlander Folk School oversaw the Citizenship School program that approximately 5,300 students completed the workshops (Schneider, 2014, p. 134). Horton notes that the teacher training program became "bigger than everything else we were doing at Highlander" (Horton et al., 1990, p. 75). Using the practice of training the teacher and then sending that teacher back into her own community to teach others ensured the spread of this program over a wide geographic area. The teachers were paid by the local community, not Highlander, so the only costs associated with the program were those incurred in administering the training workshop and travel reimbursement. In terms of success, Horton estimated that roughly seventy-five percent of those who completed Citizenship School classes successfully registered to vote, which was always the goal of the program (Horton et al., 1990, p. 76).

The Highlander Philosophy

Looking back at the educational philosophy of Myles Horton, there are four beliefs that were consistent throughout the years that the school was active in the labor and Civil Rights Movement. First, Horton believed in teaching the whole person. Horton noted that:

We tried to involve everybody in singing and doing drama and dancing and laughing and telling stories, because that's a part of their life. It's more of a holistic approach to education, not just a bunch of unrelated segments. The way people live was

more important than any class or any subject that we were dealing with. That's an extremely important experience. They had that learning experience, making decisions, being in an unsegregated fashion, enjoying their senses other than their minds. It was that experience that was probably worth more than any factual things that they learned, although you know there were some factual things that they learned (Horton et al., 1990, p. 168).

The use of drama was instrumental during the labor movement. The workers needed the opportunity to practice the strategies and solutions they came up with during the sessions. Instead of waiting for a real life situation to find out their strategy had a flaw, they were acted out in dramas. Some of the best ideas, once presented through drama to the group, had to be modified when someone in the audience brought up a possible problem. Drama would also be used during the citizenship training to act out possible scenarios at the voter registration office. Prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, registration officers could change the requirements for voter registration or ask questions not on the original voter registration test. Those who wanted to register had to be ready to act in such instances and dramas helped to practice their ideas. Later, during the Civil Rights Movement, drama would be instrumental during the Citizenship Education Program to prepare the students for non-violent direct action.

Second, Horton believed that it was critical to practice equality and social justice in every aspect of what Highlander did on a daily basis. What was the point of saying that segregation was wrong if blacks and whites were kept separate at the school? What was the point of dreaming of a democratic society if students were not allowed to make their own decisions determining what and how they would learn? Horton severed its partnership of more than ten years with the CIO when it became apparent that new management was determined to exclude

blacks and other minority workers from union policy. Bernice Robinson remembered, "...that was Highlander's success really, because nobody was intimidated by anyone else" (Wigginton, 1992, p. 247). Highlander quickly became known as the one place in the South where blacks and whites could meet openly. Living out this belief is what ultimately led to the closing of Highlander in Monteagle, Tennessee in 1961 but the school was quickly reestablished in Knoxville and then ultimately in New Market, Tennessee where it is to this day.

Third, Horton refused to impose his ideas on others. In fact, he was adamant that neither the Highlander staff nor any special guests were going to give groups advice on how to solve their problems. Horton said, "...the best teachers of poor people are poor people themselves" (Horton, 1967, Tennessee). Acting as facilitators, the staff would guide discussion on identifying the group's issues and then guide the sharing of experiences and identifying possible solutions. Horton tells a story of a time he went to speak to a group of black farmers in Atlanta at the request of Hosea Williams. He said,

I hope that you never ask another white man to come down here to give you advice. That's what you asked me to do. The advice I'm going to give you is not to take any more advice from a white man. Get busy and start making your own decisions and start thinking for yourselves, and while I'm here, since I took the trouble to get down here, I'll discuss how you go about making decisions, but I'm not going to help you make decisions... (Horton, 1976).

Horton knew that the poor and exploited had been taught that their opinions and experiences didn't matter and an essential piece of what Highlander aimed to do was to give that back to the people, to teach them that their experience did matter. He felt that most issues could be solved

through the experiences of the group. Occasionally, the staff would bring in someone from outside to provide information, but would not allow the speaker to impose their ideas for solving the group's problem. In fact, Horton recalled an attorney who was brought in to explain the process of starting a lawsuit to a group of black parents wanting to sue the school system. He said after the information was presented to the group the attorney attempted to give advice on how he would handle the situation and Horton had to escort him out the room quickly. He said that, "stretching people's minds is part of educating, but always in terms of a democratic goal. That means you have to trust people's ability to develop their capacity for working collectively to solve their own problems" (Horton et al., 1998, p. 132).

Finally, Horton believed that people learn best when they are trying to solve a problem. In fact, he felt that learning should lead to action. He said, "...we believe that you can only learn if you are trying to get answers to a problem. You can't learn unless you have a reason for learning and want to learn" (Horton, 1967, Tennessee). All of Highlander's sessions, whether during the labor movement or Civil Rights Movement would end with a question, "What are you going to do back home?" (Brown, 1990, p. 30) This is the question that prompted Esau Jenkins to share his desire to help the Johns Island people to read and write so they could pass the voter registration test. That answer prompted one of the most successful programs Highlander ever implemented.

In February of 1961, Horton addressed one of the last groups of teachers that would be trained at the Citizenship School at Highlander. In his speech, Horton described his excitement for the direction the program was heading and explained how those future teachers were instrumental to the success of the program. He said that when working with the people, you have to start where people are - "it may be teaching them how to write a check, to make a motion

in a business meeting, or registering to vote” (Horton, 1961, Highlander). He said that this is where most programs fail, because they stop there and only address the needs of where people currently are but he believed the success of the Citizenship Schools was due to the fact that they also kept an eye on what “ought to be – human brotherhood, dignity, and democracy” (Horton, 1961, Highlander). He urged them to remember that “teachers are the ones who will really make the difference” because even though they may be teaching them skills needed in the “now,” like reading and writing, they are always moving the student in the direction of what they can become with those skills and because of this, the student will think differently about their abilities and be able to accomplish more.

Horton’s key beliefs about education were integrated into their most successful programs including the Citizenship Schools. When the program was transferred over to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Septima Clark was transferred to the SCLC to help run the program along with Dorothy Cotton and Andrew Young. The majority of the program was kept intact and these key beliefs continued to be a constant during the eight years the Citizenship Education Program was held at the Dorchester Center in Midway, Georgia.

Trouble at Highlander

Due to the controversial nature of the work at Highlander, the school was often the victim of bad press dating back as far as the school’s inception in 1930. Jacobs notes that, “from its inception, Highlander was controversial because education was seen as a way to understand and change one’s world rather than as a way to advance within the existing socioeconomic system” (Jacobs, 2003, p. XV). As their work to support desegregation and promote literacy for political action began to grow, so did the controversy surrounding the school. Clark notes that “anyone

who was against segregation was considered a Communist” and rumors of Highlander’s Communist beliefs and activities began to spread in the media (Brown, 1990, p. 55). In 1957, Martin Luther King, Jr. was asked to speak at Highlander’s twenty-fifth anniversary. Pictures were taken by journalists attending the anniversary celebration of King sitting in the audience with blacks and whites. Soon billboards and advertisements picturing this photograph were posted as “proof that Rev. King had attended a Communist training center” (Brown, 1990, p. 55).

Horton notes that the state of Tennessee wanted to close the school down, but they could not charge that the school was violating integration laws because *Brown v. Board of Education* had passed several years prior desegregating all educational institutions. So, under the direction of the District Attorney for the State of Tennessee, the school was raided during a summer workshop in 1959 under the suspicion that the Highlander Folk School was making and selling whiskey for profit. Myles Horton was overseas attending a conference at the time, but officials stormed the school during the middle of a Citizenship School teacher training session and arrested Septima Clark and several other staff members who were present. While there was no evidence of alcohol found at the school itself, officials did find the remnants of a whiskey making operation that belonged to the prior owner in the basement of Myles Horton’s home (Clark, 1990, p.57). Clark was bailed out of jail that night, but this event triggered the beginning of a series of legal battles that would eventually lead to the revocation of the school’s charter and confiscation of the land and facilities in 1961.

Believing that the Citizenship School Teacher Training Program was becoming too big for Highlander and sensing that the legal battles, as result of the raid in 1959, could impede the progress with the program, Horton began to search for a way to turn the program over to the people it was designed to help, the black community.

Reaching the Rural Black Masses

Highlander never intended to initiate a program that could not eventually be given back to the people that it benefited. With the labor union movement, Highlander was forced to withdraw from its leadership position when the CIO refused to treat all individuals within the movement equally, which violated everything that the Highlander Folk School fought to maintain. With the Citizenship School Teacher Training Program, many factors contributed to Highlander's withdrawal. First, due to the negative publicity and legal issues surrounding Highlander, some blacks were becoming hesitant to travel to the school for training. Second, the program had reached the point where it was successfully off the ground and able to grow without Highlander's involvement. Septima Clark, in her efforts to raise funds for the program, had applied to the Marshall Field Foundation for a grant to sustain the Citizenship Schools Program and it was approved. Therefore, the program was no longer dependent upon Highlander for its funding. Third, while the program was successful in increasing voter registration where Citizenship Schools had been established, these areas were mostly in and around some of the larger cities in coastal South Carolina. The majority of the deep Southern states and rural areas, where the majority of the black population lived, were untouched by the program.

Expanding in the South

In an unsigned report from Highlander Folk School staff dated January 27, 1961, the writer recounts the decision at a July 1960 Executive Staff meeting to extend the Citizenship School program into the South (SCLC, Box 545, 3). Eight classes were set up in Savannah, Georgia and Huntsville, Alabama to determine whether the program could be successfully implemented in local communities. To train the teachers who would run the eight schools, two workshops were offered, one for the Georgia group and one for the Alabama group. At the time

of the report, the writer concluded that the program could successfully be implemented in both rural and urban communities. The report closed with a note that Highlander was “...negotiating with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Montgomery Improvement Association, Lane College, and the Southeast Georgia Crusade for Voters...” (SCLC, Box 545, 3) all of whom had interest in sponsoring Citizenship Schools. Representatives from each of those organizations were scheduled to attend a special training workshop to learn more about the program.

In April of that same year, a report would note that twelve people from the Chatham County Crusade for Voters and Southeast Georgia Crusade for Voters would attend training at Highlander Folk School (SCLC, Box 545. 3). Two other groups were present for that workshop, one from the Montgomery Improvement Association from Alabama and the other from the Original Fayette County Civic and Welfare League from Tennessee. A report was made for each as to their ability to start Citizenship Schools in their communities. The group from Chatham County was “very alert” and their closing skit called “Find a Place” was about finding a location to have Citizenship Classes. Not every group was given a good report. The Fayette group reportedly struggled with the basic understandings of the political process in their area and concepts taught during the workshop. While Clark and Robinson considered them to possess an “eagerness” to help, they did not recommend moving forward with that group, at that time. The Alabama group was reported to be highly “educated and equipped” to organize the Citizenship School idea. Their closing skit on “Recruiting of Students and the need for more Schools” was highly commended by Clark and Robinson.

In the spring of 1961, Myles Horton would seek out Andrew Young and recruit him to come to the Highlander Folk School to begin the process of moving the Citizenship School idea

into the South (Young, 2008, p. 131). Andrew Young was born in New Orleans in 1932. Young stated that “my parents believed in three things: God, hard work, and education” (Young, 2008, p. 8) and that upbringing would form the foundation on which he was raised and would later stand upon during the Civil Rights Movement. Young’s parents were supportive of and active in the Central Congregational Church which modeled structured and conservative services. Being the son of a successful, middle-class dentist who served both the black and white communities, Young’s middle-class upbringing helped him to understand the hesitation his parents and others from their generation felt about actively resisting the segregation system. Andrew Young would use this knowledge in his work with the Civil Rights Movement to relate to middle-class blacks who were fearful of a loss of status and steady income by supporting the movement to end segregation (Young, 2008, p. 45).

Although Young’s father expected him to attend college to be a dentist and continue the family practice, he began to feel the call to vocational ministry. During the summer of 1951, after Young’s graduation from Howard University, he attended an interdenominational and interracial retreat at Lake Brownwood. Through his experience at this retreat, Young began to seriously consider attending seminary. Upon returning home from this retreat, Young received a call to work at a youth camp at Lake Mack in Indiana. The camp was designed to “...organize and empower youth...” (Young, 2008, p. 57). Young would be introduced to the teachings of Gandhi and the tenets of nonviolence at this camp. In 1955, Young graduated from the Hartford Theological Seminary, married the love of his life Jean Childs, and began pastoring a small Church in Thomasville, Georgia. Within two years, he accepted a job as Associate Director of Youth with the National Council of Churches, and moved his family to New York where he would serve as the only black member on the executive board (Young, 2008, p. 99). During his

time with the National Council of Churches, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Myles Horton would both approach Young with job offers.

In the spring of 1961, Andrew Young received an invitation from Martin Luther King, Jr. to join the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which he initially turned down. Young said that “at that time I did not feel ready to join SCLC” stating that as a Congregationalist minister, he was unsure of how he would fit in with the other Baptist minister leaders (Young, 2008, p. 131). Instead, Young accepted a job offer from Myles Horton at the Highlander Folk School and prepared to move his family to Tennessee to take over the leadership training program for the Citizenship Schools. Before Andrew Young and his family could actually move to Tennessee, the Highlander Folk School was shut down by the courts; however, believing in the work of the Citizenship Schools and still needing a job, Young used his contacts within the United Church to find an alternate location for the Citizenship Education Program at the Dorchester Center in Midway, Georgia. Ironically, after initially declining the position at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Andrew Young would soon run the Citizenship Education Program from the SCLC offices located in Atlanta, Georgia (Young, 2008, p. 134).

Analyzing the Citizenship School Program

According to Myles Horton, it was never the mission of the Highlander Folk School to initiate programs. Their purpose was to facilitate the process of community leadership and problem-solving. The Citizenship Schools were a perfect example. The idea of literacy training came out of an expressed need on Johns Island and the Charleston area brought by a concerned citizen of that community. Esau Jenkins needed help with the organizational aspect of setting up the school and Highlander was able to help initially with the funding for the building and later

with the training for more teachers as the program grew. At no time did Horton or any of the staff desire to oversee or run the program. In order for the literacy school idea to be successful, it had to come from a member of the community for the benefit of the community.

Horton was always careful to ensure that he did his research before agreeing to provide assistance for programs. He stayed away from programs with temporary goals and gravitated toward programs with revolutionary goals, like that of the Johns Island Citizenship Schools. Horton was also a firm believer that once a program was off the ground and running, it should be given back to the community to oversee. The Citizenship Schools established on and around Johns Island and the Citizenship School Teacher Training program held at Highlander had several components that are worth mentioning for later comparison to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's Citizenship Education Program.

The Citizenship Schools were designed to teach basic literacy skills and enough voting information to ensure that the student could register to vote by the end of the program. Reading was taught using documents that were important to understanding the student's rights as a citizen and the information needed to register to vote like the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the South Carolina state constitution. Reading was also taught by using the stories and experiences of the students. The teacher would write these stories down and then use them in class to teach reading. There were two main reasons for this approach. First, the teachers had little to no textbooks or other instructional materials to teach reading, especially during the first few years of the program. Second, the students learned the material easier because it was familiar to their experience or applied directly to their desire to register to vote. They could associate the written words in the stories with the things they did on a daily basis at home or at work. They could read about their expressed rights as citizens in the government documents. In

other words, they were learning a functional vocabulary, not just random words that did not apply to their daily situations.

Writing was also taught using material that was important to the students' daily lives. Learning to write one's own name in cursive was important not only for voter registration, but also for signing money orders and catalog orders. Learning to write also allowed the students to correspond with family members that lived away from home and state and local government officials.

Other content was taught during Citizenship School including basic arithmetic and things that were specific to the particular group being taught. For example, one group of women wanted to learn to sew, another group of students wanted more specific instruction on banking. Each group brought its own special community needs and those needs were addressed as much as possible by the teachers. Myles Horton recalled that often Bernice Robinson would have to spend time teaching the students how to correctly hold their pencils and not press so hard that they broke. He said that they spent a lot of money on replacement pencils, but they didn't want to discourage anyone from coming to class.

Each Citizenship School was slightly different, but most held classes in the evenings and primarily during the winter months so as not to interfere with the main agricultural season. Classes were taught by non-traditional teachers, in fact, the basic requirements were only that the teacher be able to read and write well enough to teach others and be a good listener. The Citizenship School students were always a mixture of gender, age, occupation, and literacy levels. Some students had some basic experience with reading and writing and others could barely hold pencils and form letters. Regardless, the teacher always started where the student

was while guiding them to a place where they could have more control over their daily lives and activities.

CHAPTER 3

DOCUMENTING DORCHESTER

When the Citizenship School program was transferred over to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1961, the newly named Citizenship Education Program was not the SCLC's first attempt at increasing voter registration. One year after the establishment of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957, the organization launched one of its first voter registration campaigns – the Crusade for Citizenship. A brief look back at the events surrounding the birth of the SCLC will give context to the organization's vision for citizenship education.

The Birth of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference grew out of the Montgomery Improvement Association's bus boycott. While the Montgomery bus boycott was not the first boycott of public transportation, it was the most significant in that it attracted national attention. The Montgomery Improvement Association was formed on December 5, 1955 and was made up of several Montgomery area ministers. The boycott was in response to the arrest of Rosa Parks just a few days earlier for refusing to give up her seat on the bus for a white man. Largely supported and organized through the black church, the boycott quickly gained momentum and drew the spotlight for national media. Martin Luther King, Jr., minister of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, emerged as the movement's leader and Montgomery Improvement Association president (Fairclough, 1987, p. 23).

Black churches were instrumental to the success of the Montgomery bus boycott and would later assist in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's efforts to promote citizenship education. Black ministers were largely independent of the white power structure so

their efforts to speak out and rally the congregation to support the boycott did not put them at risk economically (Morris, 1984, pg. 4). The church served as a channel for the distribution of information on the movement and also served as a funding source for the various activities and campaigns (Morris, 1984, pg. 12; Fairclough, 1987, p. 17). For more than one year, church members would be instrumental in providing alternative transportation for those boycotting Montgomery buses.

Wanting to build on the momentum of the Montgomery bus boycott and the nonviolent action movement, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., joined with Reverend C.K. Steele, leader of the Tallahassee boycott, and Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, leader of the Birmingham boycott, and extended an invitation to black leaders across the South to attend a conference in Atlanta in January of 1957. During that meeting, the Southern Leadership Conference on Transportation and Nonviolent Integration was established. According to an early undated SCLC brochure titled *This is SCLC*, the organization was formed to "...serve as a coordinating agency for local protest centers that were utilizing the technique and philosophy of non-violence in creative protest." By August of 1957, the members, who were largely made up of clergymen, would vote to change the organization's name to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference wanting to stress that the organization was rooted in Christian beliefs. They would also agree to keep the organization non-partisan and non-violent so as to project a "non-controversial image of peace and moderation" (Fairclough, 1987, p. 41).

Adam Fairclough, in his study of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr. (1987), noted that the governing board of the SCLC was made up of thirty-two members. All of the members were black and came from the larger cities in the Southern states. Two-thirds of the members were ministers and most came from the upper

middle class. Fairclough stated that although the board was established as the governing body for the organization, it merely “functioned as a rubber stamp” for King’s ideas, who was elected to be the first president of the organization (Fairclough, 1987, p. 38).

Membership into the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was exclusively for organizations or groups, rather than individuals. According to an SCLC brochure, groups wishing to become an affiliate had to submit a membership application describing “...the structure and purpose of the organization” they were trying to affiliate (SCLC brochure, undated). Affiliate members were represented by voting delegates at the annual convention. Affiliates paying the minimum twenty-five dollar annual membership dues were allotted one voting delegate. Dues began at twenty-five dollars and rose in twenty-five dollar increments with no cap. With each twenty-five dollar increase in dues, affiliates would receive another voting delegate; however, the maximum number of voting delegates an affiliate could have was five. Delegates voted on items such as who would serve on the SCLC board and issues concerning the organization and its programs. As the name of the organization indicates, membership was only available to groups in the South. The majority of the SCLC’s affiliates were made up of churches, newly created regional movement organizations like the Baton Rouge Christian Movement, and civic groups that focused on voter registration (Fairclough, 1987, pg. 33).

The goal of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was to promote “...full citizenship rights, equality, and the integration of the Negro in all aspects of American life” and this was to be accomplished through the use of nonviolent activities to increase awareness of White supremacy and voting (SCLC brochure, undated). The SCLC believed that voting was

one of the most important aspects of American citizenship and that right was being systematically denied across the Southern states.

In a letter to SCLC affiliates by Martin Luther King, Jr. on February 12, 1958, he wrote that,

The right to vote is related to all other rights. When Negroes have won and fully exercise their right to vote, many changes can then occur – segregated buses will disappear, wages will be increased, police brutality will be a thing of the past, men who believe in justice will be sent to Congress, “mob violence” will fade away, and justice will be established in the courts (Martin Luther King, Jr., February 12, 1958).

With this core belief in the power of the vote in mind and the Civil Rights bill being negotiated in Congress, the SCLC shifted its focus away from protesting public transportation. The Crusade for Citizenship would become the primary focus of the SCLC with the program’s goal to “...double the black vote in the South for the 1958 and 1960 elections” (Morris, 1984, p. 101).

The Crusade for Citizenship

Just weeks prior to the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, Martin Luther King, Jr. penned a letter to then Vice President Richard Nixon. In the letter, King encouraged Nixon to support the civil rights bill, but he also stated that the bill would not be enough.

It is also my firm conviction that the full effect of the Civil Rights Bill will depend in large degree upon the program of a sustained mass movement on the part of Negroes. History has demonstrated that inadequate legislation supported by mass action can accomplish more than adequate legislation which remains unenforced for the lack of a

determined mass movement. This is why I am initiating in the South a crusade for citizenship in which we will seek to get at least two million Negroes registered in the South for the 1960 elections (Martin Luther King, Jr., August 30, 1957).

In the weeks following the passing of the Civil Rights Act, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference would work to establish an office in Atlanta, Georgia and get the Crusade for Citizenship program off the ground.

Crusade planners knew that there was much fear and ignorance to overcome in urging Southern blacks to vote. Because the SCLC was set up to be an organizer of many organizations, overcoming these obstacles required a concerted effort to plan, create, and distribute materials to the affiliates for disbursement to the affiliate members. Literature and other promotional materials distributed by the SCLC in preparation for the Crusade launch included ideas and instructions for "...workshops, mass rallies, and politically relevant sermons..." (Morris, 1984, p. 108). Crusade planners knew that because many blacks had never voted before, time would need to be taken to cover the fundamentals at voter clinics to teach new voters how to work the voting machines. Also, because part of the recently passed Civil Rights Act established a procedure for reporting voting issues to the Justice Department, materials would need to be distributed on how to document and report voting injustices.

Ella Baker, hired in 1957 as the first Associate Director, set up and organized the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's office in Atlanta. Prior to her work with the SCLC, Baker worked with the NAACP home office in New York as the National Field Secretary and then later as the Director of Branches, bringing years of organizational experience to the organization (Morris, 1984, p. 103). While Baker's time with the SCLC would be filled with

frustration over differences in ideologies and the constant struggle to organize the executive board, her contribution to establishing the Atlanta office and her work with the Crusade for Citizenship were instrumental to the longevity of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Handling most of the correspondence coming out the Atlanta office, Baker transcribed and distributed letters, memorandums, and other materials to prominent clergy recruiting speakers for the Crusade launch to be held in February. Meanwhile, King visited several churches throughout the region promoting the SCLC and its new initiative. In a press statement released after a meeting at the Mount Olive C.M. E. Cathedral in Memphis, Tennessee, King stated that "...there cannot be citizenship without the right vote. A voteless citizen is no citizen" (SCLC press statement, October 5, 1957).

On January 20, 1958, correspondence went out from Martin Luther King, Jr. to the ministers who would be assisting with the launch of the Crusade for Citizenship scheduled for Wednesday, February 12th. The Crusade would be launched simultaneously through mass meetings held in over twenty major cities across the South. Martin Luther King, Jr. would be speaking that night in Atlanta, Georgia and his father would be speaking in Nashville, Tennessee while other prominent clergy would do the same from their church. The letter detailed the purpose of the Crusade and the efforts of the Atlanta office to produce posters and handbills to help the ministers get the word out about the meetings. King asked that the ministers reach out to other ministers of all denominations to get the word out about the launch. The hosting church was responsible for advanced funding of the meeting and speaker, if it was not the church's own minister. The hosting church was also responsible for taking up an offering to help fund the Crusade. Each city was given a quota based on the estimated attendance with an overall goal of

raising \$200,000 across all twenty cities in that one night (Martin Luther King, Jr., January 20, 1958).

In another letter that went out from King on February 4, 1958 to the speakers and churches lined up for the Crusade launch, he gave detailed instructions for what to cover the night of the launch. First, King stressed that the Crusade for Citizenship was a “Southwide” movement and hoped that by the end of the night those who attended the mass meetings would be united in their efforts to double the number of black voters in the South. He said the Crusade “will place emphasis on preparing spiritually and tactically for registration prior to the 1958 and 1960 elections.” He stressed the Crusade was to be non-partisan and that at no time should the speaker promote or encourage those attending to vote for a particular candidate. King stated that, “We believe in the people. When they are aroused to vote, they will vote intelligently.” King again emphasized that the right to vote was the gateway to solving many of the problems currently facing Southern blacks and stated that the Crusade’s goal was to “urge Negroes to vote where they have the right to do so” stating that “many fail to exercise the right they possess” and to “get the right to vote where it does not exist.” Calling on every person to be part of the Crusade, he said that this was a campaign for action, not just talk. Every person had a part to contribute to make the movement successful. In closing, King stated that this Crusade would ensure implementation of the Civil Rights Bill that was recently passed and that it “must succeed for God has promised His children that the loving and the meek (non-violent) shall inherit the earth” (Martin Luther King, Jr., February 4, 1958).

On the evening of February 12, 1958, in over twenty Southern cities to an audience of over 13,000, the Crusade for Citizenship was launched (Morris, 1984, p. 109). Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke from Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. He began his speech with

examples throughout the history of the United States of America of people fighting for their right to vote. Non-property owning men fought for equal representation in government through the ballot and the women's suffrage movement demanded equal voting rights for women. King stated that blacks must now gain the right to vote "for the inability of Negroes to vote is not only unjust, it is a very real embarrassment to our nation." King emphasized that blacks had to unite and act now for change because they did not "want freedom fed to us in teaspoons over another 150 years." King admitted that disorganization and apathy were partly to blame for the lack of black voters, but called on everyone in attendance to take their part in the Crusade. He closed with a reminder that "hope, love, and non-violent resistance must become the cornerstone of our movement" (Martin Luther King, Jr., speech transcript, February 12, 1958).

Turn out for the Crusade launch was as estimated, but the financial support was less than expected and needed to fund the program with only \$50,000 of the \$200,000 raised (Fairclough, 1987, p. 48). Following the Crusade launch, correspondence from the SCLC encouraged affiliates to come together and "create citywide, countywide, and statewide voter registration committees" and offered to provide resources and trainers from the SCLC main office that would help educate committee members so they could take that information back to their community (Morris, 1984, p. 109).

In a report issued by the SCLC two months following the Crusade launch, the organization reported some progress and gave examples of church affiliates' efforts to organize voter registration committees and voter registration clinics but the truth was that the launch had failed to generate the interest needed to make the program successful (SCLC report, 1958). To address this, in May of 1958, the SCLC Executive Board hired the Reverend John Tilley as the Executive Director. Coming to the SCLC from a successful voter registration campaign in

Baltimore, the board hoped he could take the struggling Crusade and turn it into a success. One of his first acts as Executive Director would be to send out correspondence to ministers across the South encouraging them to take the lead in voter registration efforts in their community. The flyer stated that ministers are “more independent than most other community leaders” and are therefore easily able to fit this community service into their schedule. Ministers were also reminded that most communities had a church that met at least weekly and efforts to encourage voter registration from the pulpit would be heard by all “ages, economic, educational, cultural, class, and geographical lines in society” (Martin Luther King, Jr., May 22, 1958).

Tilley also saw that promotional materials for the Crusade were created and distributed throughout the region including a Crusade for Citizenship pamphlet that listed facts about black voters in the South. The pamphlet claimed that there were “4,980,000 Negroes of voting age in the South” but only a quarter of them actually voted and that several Southern states had implemented literacy laws to replace the outlawed white primaries (SLCL pamphlet, undated). Tilley and Baker would travel throughout the Southern region distributing materials, holding voter registration clinics, and collecting complaints to be sent to the Justice Department (Morris, 1984, p. 111).

Tilley, who continued to pastor his church in Baltimore while acting as the SCLC Executive Director, was often absent from the office, placing a considerable burden on Baker to coordinate the Crusade alone. Despite efforts to recruit affiliates and spread the mission of the Crusade, the program continued to struggle and on April 15, 1959, Tilley resigned and Ella Baker became the acting Executive Director. Baker worked tirelessly with little to no help on the Crusade for Citizenship while also performing other administrative duties like preparing newsletters and reports (Fairclough, 1987, p. 48). Using her extensive contacts in the South

gained through her work with the NAACP, Baker was able to go into communities and get the support needed to organize the Crusade for Citizenship (Ransby, 2003, p. 179).

Instead of relying on the affiliate ministers, who mainly encouraged voter registration from the pulpit, Baker traveled extensively throughout communities speaking to folks and listening to their concerns and complaints of harassment when trying to register. Baker noted that often once blacks were persuaded to overcome their fear of voting, they were unable to pass the state's literacy test to actually register. Believing this to be a huge obstacle to the goals of the Crusade, Baker spent time looking into the possibility of coordinating literacy classes that would be arranged through the SCLC but utilize women's groups like the Women's Baptist Convention to actually instruct the classes (Morris, 1984, p. 114). Baker also contacted the Highlander Folk School to get information on their successful Citizenship Schools program.

In her first Executive Director's report, Baker described her visit to the Highlander Folk School over Labor Day weekend to meet Septima Clark and learn more about Highlander's program (Ella Baker report, 1959). She described the basics of the citizenship program to the SCLC Board members and suggested that the program might be beneficial to the overall goals of increasing registered voters. On October 23, 1959, Baker sent a memorandum to the Committee on Administration with suggestions for the future direction of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In it, she stated that in order to develop the "crusading potential of the SCLC" the committee should search for and sponsor leaders in each of the states, recruit 1,000 ministers willing to donate eight hours a month to promote voter registration, and to find organizations willing to allow use of their facilities to teach literacy. Baker reiterated that "3 out of every 5" blacks were illiterate and that literacy was essential to "effective social action" (Baker, October 23, 1959). Despite Baker's repeated attempts to provide organizational guidance and insight on

how to make the Crusade more effective, her advice was largely ignored by the men who made up the committees. Eventually, frustrated with the lack of organization of the Board, their condescending views of women, and dismissal of the idea that the people should lead themselves, Ella Baker would leave the Atlanta office to be over the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee which formed at Shaw University in 1960.

While the Crusade for Citizenship did not meet its intended goal of doubling the black vote in the South by the 1960 elections, it did put a spotlight on the need for literacy education for blacks across the South. Aldon Morris, in his book *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (1984), notes that while white resistance to black voting efforts and a lack of organization of the SCLC were contributing factors to the poor results of the Crusade, he also states that black communities were simply unable to organize and unite to form the vehicle for the Crusade to reach mass movement proportions (Morris, 1984, p. 119). Morris contends that while the Crusade was not successful in meeting its mission, it did serve as the foundation for what would later become a direct action mass movement.

Finally, late in October 1959, after having little impact through the Crusade on increasing the number of black voters, King and the executive board met and discussed the direction of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and made some recommendations for moving forward. Mostly organizational in nature, the recommendations helped to streamline the focus of the SCLC and its organizational structure to make it more cost-effective and productive. A subcommittee consisting of four ministers and one layman was formed to assist Baker in planning for the next year and King agreed to resign as pastor of his church in Alabama and move to Atlanta to be at the office full-time. The SCLC would still continue to focus on voter registration, but it would also begin to look at campaigns in other areas. It was also agreed that

King would check into the literacy program that was currently being organized through the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee (Fairclough, 1987, p. 51).

Following the meeting, Martin Luther King, Jr. contacted Myles Horton at the Highlander Folk School to see if an educational program could be set up for use by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Horton notes that he and King had several conversations about the nature of the program that King envisioned for the SCLC and eventually Horton suggested that the Southern Christian Leadership Conference take over the Citizenship Schools program from Highlander (Horton et al., 1998, p. 107). King initially turned Horton down, but continued to look into the program and its success.

Through the end of 1959 and into the New Year, King would continue to travel and speak at various churches across the South promoting non-violent direct action and raising funds for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Morris notes that the SCLC had an approximate annual budget goal of \$200,000; however, actual money raised was less than half of that number (Morris, 1984, p. 117). The majority of the funds collected came from Northern organizations, as opposed to SCLC affiliates and speaking engagements. Of the money raised, approximately two-thirds went towards SCLC administrative and staff salaries, leaving little for office upgrades and program administration. In a memorandum from King to Ralph Abernathy the SCLC Treasurer, King stated that it was “imperative that we assemble and work out a clearly defined program...and a method for future financial expansion” (Fairclough, 1987, p. 48).

With this goal in mind, King called a two-day meeting to be held in New York in May of 1960. The purpose of the meeting was to “redefine SCLC’s structure and map out a new program” (Fairclough, 1987, 67). King called in several of his top advisors and the Reverend

Wyatt T. Walker, pastor of Gillfield Baptist Church in Petersburg, Virginia. Walker and King had met months earlier when King spoke at Gillfield Baptist Church. Reverend Walker was known for powerful sermons on the awareness of unjust laws and social patterns and also served as a leader with the local chapter of the NAACP (Cotton, 2012, p. 75). King was interested in Walker because he had experience with leading non-violent direct action in Virginia.

At the close of the two day meeting, plans were put in place to streamline the organizational structure of the SCLC for better efficiency and Walker was offered the position of Executive Director. He accepted the position with the stipulation that he be allowed to bring two employees with him to Atlanta, Dorothy Cotton, who would be Walker's Administrative Secretary and Jim Wood as Press Secretary (Cotton, 2012, p. 89). Still believing that the black vote and mass movement were critical to fully implementing the Civil Rights Act, King charged Walker with ensuring that the organization had a program that could make those goals a reality and to secure the funding to see those programs fully implemented.

Dorothy Cotton was brought to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference staff by the new Executive Director, Wyatt Tee Walker. Born in Goldsboro, North Carolina in 1930, Dorothy Lee Foreman and her three sisters were raised by their widowed father. In remembering her childhood, Cotton recalled her father's constant efforts to find work to provide for his four daughters until they were old enough to begin working as domestics for the white women in the neighborhood. She also distinctly remembered feeling that she had to get out of her situation and felt her best chance was through a high school education. Dorothy Cotton was an excellent student and it did not take long for her English teacher, Miss Gray, to recognize her potential and provide learning opportunities that complimented Cotton's strengths. Cotton says she learned many lessons from Miss Gray that she still uses today including "learning to pick my battles"

(Cotton, 2012, p. 41). With Miss Gray's help, Cotton was able to attend Shaw University and then transfer to Virginia State College to complete her degree in English. It was at Virginia State College that Cotton became an active member of Gillfield Baptist Church where Walker was the minister.

Wyatt Tee Walker believed that only through non-cooperation and direct action like picketing and boycotting would the white population become aware of some of the unjust practices going on in the South. Following Walker's leadership, Dorothy Cotton trained volunteers recruited through church on how to protest the unfair practices at the local library and Woolworth's department store without using violence (Cotton, 2012, p. 81). Training sessions often included how to respond to being arrested or physically assaulted during a protest. Dorothy Cotton recalls that she used drama with the volunteers to act out what to say and do while protesting and picketing. During the dramas, she would yell, shove, and pull the hair of the volunteers to simulate the intimidation that they might experience while protesting so that the volunteers had a chance to plan out how they would respond without violence.

The success of the sit-ins, picket lines, and boycotts held in Petersburg attracted national media attention which is what drew King's attention to Wyatt Walker (Cotton, 2012, p. 86). In 1960, after graduating with her Master's degree from Boston University, Dorothy Cotton moved from Petersburg, Virginia to Atlanta, Georgia to become Walker's Administrative Assistant at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Dorothy Cotton recollects that serving as Walker's Administrative Assistant was really a job for several people, but she was able to manage the massive amounts paperwork and phone calls that the position required (Cotton, 2012, p. 101).

From Tennessee to Georgia

Early in 1961, as the legal battles against the Highlander Folk School began to intensify, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Wyatt Tee Walker would once again reach out to Myles Horton regarding the Citizenship Schools. Horton traveled to Atlanta to meet with King and Walker to go over the program. Horton recalled that after four hours of going over every detail of the program, King agreed to transfer the Citizenship School program over to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (Fairclough, 1984, p. 237). Andrew Young, who had just been hired by Highlander to oversee the Citizenship Schools program, Septima Clark, and later Bernice Robinson, would all transfer over to the SCLC to help with the administration of the program. King asked Dorothy Cotton to travel to the Highlander Folk School, where she would meet Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins, to learn more about the Citizenship Schools program while preparations were being made by King, Horton, and Young for the transfer of the program. Cotton also traveled to Johns Island to meet with the residents who had completed Citizenship School training (Cotton, 2012, p. 98).

The transfer of the Citizenship Schools program was not without issues. Because the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was not a tax-exempt agency, the Field Foundation funds could not go directly to the SCLC for the citizenship program. Andrew Young was able to use his contacts at the National Council to set up a meeting with Dr. Wesley Hotchkiss, of the American Missionary Association, which was a subsidiary of the Congregational Christ Church, to discuss a way around this problem. Hotchkiss agreed to assume control of the Citizenship Schools program for funding purposes, but allowed Young to direct the program from the SCLC office in Atlanta (Young, 2008, p. 133). It was decided that the Field Foundation funds would be channeled through the Congregational Christ Church to Andrew Young, who would be over the

Citizenship Education Program. Young, Clark, Robinson, and Cotton were all housed in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference home office in Atlanta, but were paid their salaries through the Congregational Christ Church. Additionally, all expenses for the Citizenship Education Program were paid through the Field Foundation grant funds being channeled through the Congregational Christ Church.

The American Missionary Association held the deed to the Dorchester Center, so the facility was the perfect place to host the Citizenship Education Program. Once it was determined that Dorchester would be used for the Citizenship Education Program, arrangements were made with the Congregational Christ Church for the channeling of funds. In a letter from Dorothy Cotton to Dr. Wesley Hotchkiss, Cotton suggested that a checking account be established with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference home office to ensure timely payment of workers and other bills associated with the weeklong workshops at Dorchester (Dorothy Cotton, Correspondence, July 23, 1961). Meticulous financial records were kept to show spending of the Field Foundation funds and detailed records were also kept of every workshop and field visit for required reports. Cotton and Clark wrote quarterly, semi-annual, and annual reports detailing their progress with the CEP which were used to determine whether the grant funds would be given each year.

The Dorchester Center

Because the Citizenship Education Program staff had their offices in Atlanta, arrangements had to be made monthly to conduct workshops at Dorchester. Initially, CEP staff would write to Dr. Wesley Hotchkiss to confirm the use of the building and arrangements would be made to have the building cleaned, supplied, and staffed for the week of workshops. As use

of the facility grew due to the demand for monthly workshops, a superintendent, Mr. J. Taylor Stanley, was appointed. Citizenship Education Program staff were charged for the use of the facility including the labor to clean and cook, the purchase of groceries, and any utilities used during the week of workshops.

While the Citizenship Education Program would always consider and refer to the Dorchester as “home” it was not without issues that the facility would be used. In a series of correspondence between Dr. Hotchkiss, Mr. Stanley, and CEP staff, it appeared that there were issues with the facility’s upkeep during the first few years the site was used for workshops (SCLC, Box 544, 6). In a three-page letter to Dr. Hotchkiss, Septima Clark explained that in June of 1962 plumbing problems with the men’s upstairs bathroom resulted in the use of only the bottom floor bathroom, which was reserved for the women (Clark correspondence, Feb. 20, 1963). Hosting groups of 40-55 people to meet the demand for workshops meant that all participants were restricted to using just the one bathroom, which more than six months later, was becoming a nuisance to work around during each workshop. Extra time had to be scheduled into the agenda to allow for separate use of the facilities by men and women. Mrs. Clark also shared that upon arriving for their scheduled November workshop, no preparations had been made for their arrival and again the same in January. The trash had not been emptied, the beds had not been made, there was no heat, and groceries had not been purchased.

While the staff made every effort to speak with the superintendent, Mr. Stanley, he refused to meet personally with the staff to go over the problems they needed corrected. In the letter, Clark closes by stating that it was embarrassing to bring people in from all over the South for training and have less-than-adequate facilities available (Clark correspondence, February 20, 1963). In response to Mrs. Clark’s request, Mr. Stanley wrote to Dr. Hotchkiss and admitted the

need to have the plumbing problem estimated and fixed immediately (Stanley correspondence, February 23, 1963). He was also determined to get to the root of the problem with the services being provided at Dorchester by arranging a meeting with his preparation staff and Mrs. Clark. Dr. Hotchkiss responded to Septima Clark's letter (Hotchkiss correspondence, February 26, 1963) and explained that the Dorchester facility was owned by the American Missionary Association and that repairs had to be coordinated through their representative, Mr. William J. Nelson. Dr. Hotchkiss agreed to arrange a meeting immediately to see to the repairs. Unfortunately, CEP staff would not report the plumbing problem fixed until February 1964 (Clark correspondence, February 25, 1964). By July 1964, a new director for Dorchester, a Reverend Jackson, would be hired to ensure preparation for the facility's use by CEP staff (Clark correspondence, July 1, 1964).

In later correspondence between CEP staff and Reverend Jackson, questions were raised as the cost of the meals, sharing the telephone with the community doctor, and the cleanliness of the bathrooms (CEP correspondence, March 30, 1965). Enclosed in the letter was a sample statement of expenses that the CEP staff requested Reverend Jackson use for itemizing expenses for each workshop. A copy of an itemized expense statement for a weeklong workshop held in March of 1965 shows that the Citizenship Education Program was charged \$1,794.50 for the workshop (SCLC, Box 544, 6). A breakdown of the charges included just \$205.50 for the lodging and the rest of the expenses in the form of groceries and labor for cleaning and cooking.

In later years, a second site would be used for workshops although it doesn't appear from correspondence or reports that the alternate location had anything to do with the maintenance issues at Dorchester. The Penn Community Center in Frogmore, South Carolina, which was originally considered as a primary site for the Citizenship Education Program workshops, was

used periodically. According to records from a December 1966 workshop (SCLC, Box 564, 8), this site was occasionally chosen if the location was more convenient to the group attending the workshop. While the format of the workshop was essentially the same, there was different staff leading these workshops as often there were workshops being held at Dorchester and Penn Center during the same time period.

The Citizenship Education Program Team

With a location selected and funding in place, Young, Clark, and Robinson relocated to the SCLC's office in Atlanta. Young noted that as the newly named Director of the Citizenship Education Program, there could have been a power struggle, but each member of the team came together, each with his or her skill set, and worked to make the program successful (Young, 2008, p. 139). Having more experience working on equal ground with women during his time with the Congregational Church, Andrew Young had no problem recognizing the depth of knowledge which Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson brought to the team or the direct-action experience which made Dorothy Cotton such a valuable asset. Andrew Young oversaw the funding of the program, Dorothy Cotton served as the educational consultant and Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson were in charge of teacher training.

Young, Clark, and Cotton all recall in their autobiographies the process of getting settled in Atlanta and getting used to the office politics that surrounded the men on the executive board and their inflated egos. As with Ella Baker, Dorothy Cotton and Septima Clark both recalled feeling that the Baptist ministers, who largely made up the executive board, held condescending views of the women in the office. Clark noted that Ralph Abernathy was always asking Martin Luther King, Jr. why she was included in the board meetings and would often send her off to get

coffee for the men in the meeting (Brown, 1990, p. 77). Even Andrew Young described feeling like an outsider because he was a Congregationalist minister, instead of a Baptist minister, like the rest of the board. He remembered one occasion when he saw Martin Luther King, Jr. in the office and went up to him to share an update on the progress of renovations at the Dorchester Center only later to be told that Wyatt Walker disapproved of the direct contact with King and wanted all information to flow through him instead (Young, 2008, p. 138).

Choosing to focus on the newly transferred Citizenship School program, Young, Clark, and Cotton had ample time to get acquainted with one another as they drove throughout the Southeast recruiting for the first five-day Citizenship Education Program workshop. Young recalls setting out to find “the natural black leaders of the South” who had “Ph.D. minds, but third-grade educations” (Young, 2008, p. 141). When they were not on the road recruiting, they were at Dorchester planning instruction or at the Atlanta office preparing materials.

The First Class

The very first workshop held at Dorchester by Citizenship Education Program staff was a refresher course for Citizenship School teachers who had been trained at the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee. Eighteen people from Candler, Chatham, Emanuel, and Tattnall counties attended - “eleven teachers, four supervisors, two observers, and one musician” (SCLC, Box 545, 2) in June of 1961. The CEP staff went over how to recruit students for classes, find a location to hold classes, and how to handle a lack of interest in the community for the classes. A session was also given on teaching and grouping methods, choosing equipment, and record keeping.

Each teacher gave a report of their class including the number of students enrolled in classes and their involvement in the community, protest activities, and voting. Only two teachers reported taking part in community protests and both teachers were located within Savannah where active boycotts of local department stores and other downtown businesses had been taking place at the direction of the Chatham County NAACP and Chatham County Crusade for Voters. All reported participating in the local, state, or national election during the past year.

Each teacher also had an opportunity to discuss issues of concern and get answers to questions about important matters. Individual comments by teachers during discussions were recorded in the notes for this first workshop. One teacher claimed, “We need a man to come, to make the men understand they should stand up and be men.” Another shared that her job was not just to get the students registered to vote, but also to “...fit into their community and participate in their community.” Several suggestions were offered by teachers for how to teach classes including using a situation or community problem that was meaningful to the students, like “...children who have no buses to take them to school.” Other suggestions included letting the students teach each other, using films, putting on skits, telling stories, having a speaker, and sponsoring trips (SCLC, Box 545, 2).

Interestingly, teachers claimed that the biggest opposition to the Citizenship School classes came from black churches from within their very own community. One teacher explained, “There is a minister who is taking free shirts, etc. from white businesses, and is discouraging his congregation from boycotting the store.” Another reported, “You don’t know how nonchalant some of those ministers are, if it isn’t something to give them more money in their pocket. There’s something like 75 ministers in Savannah, and we get cooperation from about 3” (SCLC, Box 545, 2). In discussing white opposition, the general consensus was that

white folks did not care if blacks learned to read and write, but “...they don’t want us to learn that a black child is worth just as much as a white child.” Other opposition to classes came from educated Negroes who feared for their jobs and family members who feared bodily harm for those teaching the classes.

Recruiting Teachers

After completion of the refresher course, the Citizenship Education Program staff traveled throughout the Southern states recruiting for the first new group of teachers to be trained at the Dorchester Center. Clark noted that they did have trouble convincing people to come to the workshops, even though expenses would be paid, because of the program’s association with the Highlander Folk School (Charron, 2010, p. 42). Clark, Young, and Cotton were looking for people who could read and write well enough to teach others. As with Highlander’s Citizenship Schools, they purposely avoided recruiting those with college degrees because they did not want the students to feel intimidated or belittled. Those who were recruited, like Mrs. Ella Mae Morton in Selma, Alabama, received a telegram stating that she was to meet a chartered bus at the Selma SCLC affiliate office and that all of her expenses for the week would be paid (SCLC Telegram, August 17, 1965).

Those recruited agreed to attend the workshop and then return home to recruit others and start up a Citizenship School in their community. The Atlanta office provided all of the instructional materials, which varied according to the state’s election laws and voter registration requirements (Charron, 2010, p. 42). The teachers were to hold class twice a week for two hours over a period of three months and keep good records to submit to the SCLC Atlanta office. In return, they would be paid \$30 for expenses related to having class (Brown, 1990, p. 67). All

compensation was paid with the Field Foundation grant money. Compensation was a big selling point when recruiting teachers and students. In fact, Dorothy Cotton recalled speaking to a group in Norfolk, Virginia where she learned a valuable recruiting tool. Up to that point, Cotton would always follow a format in her recruiting sessions where she explained the purpose of the school and closed by letting the group know their expenses would be paid to travel to the Dorchester Center and that they would be compensated for teaching classes back at home. At the end of this session, a former acquaintance told her that she should mention up front about the money “so people could hear better” (Cotton, 2012, p. 120). He said that he felt that many may have tuned her out because they knew they could not afford to miss a week of work. Despite offering to pay expenses and the promise of compensation, many were still fearful of the repercussions of whites finding out about Citizenship Schools in their community.

Eventually, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference developed a recruitment brochure that could be used during an information session or mailed to affiliate sites to be distributed throughout the community. The brochure’s (CEP Brochure, undated) cover featured a picture from a class at Dorchester Center being taught by Septima Clark. Inside the front cover was a note on “What Makes a First Class Citizen?” by Martin Luther King, Jr. In it, he explained that those that do not vote or get involved in civic affairs were not “full citizens” and that those people needed citizenship training. According to King, a first class citizen could read and write, have a basic understanding of the government and how it works, and participate in community affairs by voting. The brochure went on to explain that the Citizenship Schools were for adults “who face problems related to first class citizenship and want to do something about them.”

Persons not registered to vote fall into three classes (1) Those too lazy, (2) Those who need brief instruction in a registration clinic, and (3) Those who need general instruction and encouragement. The Citizenship School is specifically designed to work with group 3. (CEP Brochure, undated)

The brochure went on to state that because every church and community needed a Citizenship School, the SCLC would train a qualified person designated by the organization as long as the organization agreed to provide a place for the classes. The SCLC would pay for all travel fees, training, materials, and provide follow-up visits and assistance, if needed. Potential Citizenship School teacher recruits had to be 21 years old and respected in their community, able to read well aloud and write legibly on a blackboard and willing to recruit students and teach the twelve week course. Suggestions for possible applicants included “persons with practical skills” like beauticians and tradesmen, retired teachers, and Sunday school teachers. The final page of the brochure included an application that was to be filled out by the sponsoring organization and mailed to Dorothy Cotton for consideration.

Clark noted that initially recruitment was low, “those who came had to feel that we could get away with it or that we didn’t mind if we had to die” (Brown, 1990, p. 65). Fear of repercussions from whites and distrust of blacks from the city kept rural enrollment low in the beginning but eventually, enrollment grew as word of mouth about the program began to spread. Many of the first recruits came from Southern Christian Leadership Conference affiliates in some of the larger cities across the South. While not an intention of the Citizenship Education Program, many of the organizations that sent teachers to train at Dorchester later became SCLC affiliates further spreading the support base for the Civil Rights Movement. One of the most successful recruiting ideas came out of one of the workshops. One of the students suggested that

the teachers should recruit the next group of students for workshops once they returned home (Cotton, 2012, p. 115). This tactic was integrated into the training workshop and was so successful that occasionally the staff had to arrange accommodations off campus for the largest groups.

Once the program got off the ground, there were consistently forty to fifty people at each workshop. The workshops, which were five days long, were held once a month at the Dorchester Center. The workshop would begin on a Monday and end on Friday. Depending on where the students were coming from, they often rode the bus all night to arrive on Monday for the start of the workshop. The Reverend John Golden from Camden, Alabama received a telegram informing him that he was to meet the chartered bus at the local SCLC affiliate office on Franklin Street at midnight, Sunday, August 22nd and that he would return by bus Saturday morning, August 28th (SCLC telegram, 1961).

At the close of the week of workshops, Dorothy Cotton, Septima Clark, Andrew Young, and Bernice Robinson would travel back to Atlanta, Georgia to file reports and follow up with the names of people given by the students for future training workshops. When not at the Dorchester center leading workshops or at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference office in Atlanta, Cotton and Young often traveled together holding recruitment sessions. Cotton states that they often visited churches and spoke for a few minutes (Cotton, 2012, p. 115). Clark and Robinson would also be spending time conducting field visits with those who completed the teacher training workshop to provide updates and assistance with their Citizenship Schools.

The First Years

After the first couple of Citizenship Education Program workshops held at Dorchester and lackluster registration, it was decided that the remaining months of 1961 be used to focus on spreading the word about the program and recruiting for workshops for the upcoming year. Young, Clark, and Cotton set out to travel throughout Georgia to speak at various civic organizations and churches. By December of 1962, organizations and churches were contacting the CEP staff asking for someone to come and conduct an information session on the workshops and the need for local Citizenship Schools (Smith correspondence, December 28, 1962).

In the Spring of 1963, Fred Powledge, a reporter from The Atlanta Journal traveled to Dorchester to observe workshops, take pictures, and gather information for a piece on the Citizenship Education Program (Powledge correspondence, April 2, 1963). After the visit, he wrote that he intended to visit some of the Citizenship Schools around the Atlanta area to see how classes were being conducted for another piece.

By August of 1963, word of the Citizenship Education Program had spread and the demand for training was so high that the staff began to turn applicants away and schedule them for later workshops. In a letter to an acquaintance, Clark shared that they had so many attend a recent workshop that the staff had to make arrangements in the community for places for the attendees to stay because the Dorchester facility was full (Clark correspondence, August 20, 1963).

Recruiting for Workshops

According to records and correspondence, recruiting for the Citizenship Education Program workshops was very deliberate. In an unaddressed January 1968 form letter (SCLC, Box 564, 3) for those accepting the invitation to Dorchester, Citizenship Education Program staff

included information on how to get to the Dorchester Center and what to expect when they arrived - stating that the workshop would be a "...good time to share our community problems and begin to work out ways of solving them." The letter also reminded the participants that their expenses would be paid and if they knew of anyone else who wanted to attend to call CEP staff at the Atlanta office.

As mentioned before, Citizenship Education Program graduates were all encouraged to go back into their communities and recruit for the next set of workshops. In a letter to Mrs. Victoria DeLee dated February 14, 1968, Dorothy Cotton expressed her delight at having hosted Mrs. DeLee the month before and enclosed several copies of blank applications for use in recruiting for the April 1968 workshop. Names of possible Citizenship School teachers were given to staff members who then sent letters to the potential recruit with an invitation to attend the upcoming workshop and other information. In a letter sent to Mrs. Mable Willington in Grenada, Mississippi on January 27, 1967, Mrs. Willington was informed that there was space available during the February 13-17 workshop (SCLC, Box 564, 1). An application was attached for Mrs. Willington to complete and return and she was also asked to check into the cost of a roundtrip bus ticket from Grenada, Mississippi to McIntosh, Georgia so that the money could be mailed to her immediately.

Not everyone recruited for the CEP workshops was willing or able to attend. In a letter from Mrs. Irma Faulk from Charleston, South Carolina dated February 10, 1967 (SCLC, Box 564, 1), Mrs. Faulk regretted to inform Septima Clark that "...I find that my joining SCLC at this time may not be wise, in that my husband will still be here working." In another letter to CEP staff, the writer, Mrs. Rosa Robinson from Augusta, Georgia, wrote to apologize for recruiting and registering a group of girls that were ultimately unable to attend the workshop because of

work obligations. “They had been out of work over a year and one week to the time they were to leave 2 of them got a job and they couldn’t get off to make the trip...” (SCLC, Box 564, 1) (Robinson correspondence, undated).

In several cases, someone would contact Citizenship Education Program staff to register multiple people on behalf of an organization. Mrs. Dovanna Holt sent a handwritten letter to Septima Clark by air mail special delivery on March 7, 1967 to let her know that there would be seven people from Newton, Georgia coming to the next workshop in March (SCLC, Box 564, 1). The letter contained the names and addresses of the women who would be attending and requested that travel funds be sent to her to make arrangements. In response, a letter was sent from the CEP staff with a check enclosed for \$111.30 to purchase round trips tickets to McIntosh, Georgia and \$4 each to purchase food while traveling. There are also records of telephone calls received by CEP staff in Atlanta requesting registration at a future workshop and requesting travel funds (SCLC, Box 564, 1).

Once confirmation was received that a recruit was attending a particular workshop, a check was mailed to the participant with instructions for arrival. “Bus tickets may be purchased directly to McIntosh, Georgia. When you get on the bus in Savannah, Georgia, ask the bus driver to let you off at the Dorchester Cooperative Community Center” (Banks correspondence, February 8, 1967). Mrs. Banks was also advised that she could request to be dropped off in Midway, Georgia but then she would have to call the Dorchester Center and request a ride. Those receiving checks in advance for travel were always asked to return the uncashed check if they were unable to attend the workshop at the last minute or contact CEP staff to be scheduled for another workshop.

Detailed records were kept for each scheduled workshop that included a contact list, whether the participants had confirmed or denied their attendance, and a short biography of the person - usually one to two sentences (SCLC, Box 564, 3). Beside the list of names were notes on how funds for travel would be received, either by check, picked up at the SCLC office in Atlanta, and there were some with notes that they would be reimbursed for travel once they arrived at Dorchester; however, without funds for travel sent in advance, most participants would not have been able to afford to attend the workshop.

There were several pieces of correspondence from Citizenship Education Program staff trying to reschedule participants who were unable to attend the workshop due to last minute emergencies. There was often less than two weeks of time between the letter from CEP staff inviting a participant to attend a workshop and the actual date of the workshop. In a letter to Mrs. Marie Martin in Atlanta, Georgia dated February 16, 1968, Dorothy Cotton invited Mrs. Martin and any other people that she could recruit to the February 26 - March 1st workshop at Dorchester (SCLC, Box 564, 3). There would have been little time after receiving the letter to recruit for the workshop and receive funds in time to attend.

There were also a few letters requesting the traveling funds be returned. In a letter to Miss Gwen Holland of Atlanta, Georgia, Dorothy Cotton requested that Miss Holland call the SCLC office in Atlanta to explain where the \$224.55 for seven people to attend a workshop was since none of the seven attended (SCLC, Box 564, 3). In another letter to a participant unable to attend, Cotton writes, "To get our books in order, may we have the check by return mail as we have to account of each one. We expect to hear from you right away" (Givens correspondence, March 26, 1969) (SCLC, Box 564, 3). In at least one letter coming to Cotton, a participant who was unable to attend the workshop explained that the check for travel funds had been cashed and

given to another person who was able to attend the workshop that had not previously received travel funds (Johnson correspondence, April 14, 1968) (SCLC, Box 564, 4).

In addition to recruiting students for the workshops, Citizenship Education Program Staff also spent considerable time recruiting speakers for the workshops at Dorchester. Mr. Eugene Tournour from New York received a letter from CEP staff member, Carl E. Farris, confirming Mr. Tournour's attending a March 1968 workshop as a speaker (SCLC, Box 564, 4). The letter explained that though they did not pay speakers, the CEP staff would provide a \$50 stipend and pay all traveling expenses as long as receipts were provided.

Members of the Citizenship Education Program staff were often invited to speak and promote the workshops and Citizenship Schools at mass meetings and freedom rallies. In a "Huge Freedom Rally" held in Weldon, North Carolina on May 17, 1964 (SCLC, Box 544, 12), Mrs. Septima Clark was the featured speaker. She was introduced by Mr. Douglas Harris, who served as a Field Worker for the Southern Christian Conference Education Fund. The evening's festivities included group singing, scripture readings, prayer, an offering, and the keynote address by Septima Clark. The event was sponsored by the Halifax Voters Movement.

As mentioned before, recruitment efforts were very deliberate and detailed records were kept. Between the Citizenship Education Program staff members and administrative assistants and secretaries back at the home office in Atlanta, hundreds of pieces of information and correspondence were mailed out weekly to plan and prepare for each five day workshop.

Citizenship Education Program Basics

The goal of each teacher training workshop was to help people "discover their own power" and to prepare the students to teach others (Cotton, 2012, p. 104). Therefore, the

sessions helped to refine the reading and writing skills the students already possessed and to teach new skills that would be useful for teaching the citizenship classes to others. For example, the teachers were taught different types of questions to ask when recruiting and how to prepare records to send back to the SCLC office in Atlanta. Teachers were also taught how to teach others through the techniques used by Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson during the teacher training workshop. At the end of the week, students would be called on to perform skits and dramas depicting how they would teach their classes once they return home.

While much of the teacher training curriculum was standardized, every five day workshop was different. With groups coming in from all over the Southern states, there were always local community issues or specific needs that the group would want to address. One of the purposes of the weeklong workshop was to “help people discover their capacity to solve their individual and community problems” (Cotton, 2012, p. 112). Often the staff was aware of some of the major issues prior to receiving the group; however, after the buses would unload and everyone unpacked, they would share a meal together and then the staff would start asking the students about issues in their community to find out what they wanted to learn while at the workshop (Brown, 1990, p. 65). Some wanted to learn how to write letters to local officials about the condition of roads, others wanted to find out how to get the school buses to come into their neighborhood. Clark, Cotton, and Robinson would work to address their specific concerns, sometimes by bringing in outside speakers, in addition to covering the standard workshop content.

Each student who came to the teacher training workshop at Dorchester received an instruction booklet (CEP workbook, undated). The booklet opened with a message from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference stating that the primary purpose was to increase

literacy throughout the black population so they could register to vote. The next page titled “The Bible and the Ballot” gave a biblical justification for voting by recounting Jesus’ first words in the Gospel of Luke on his public ministry.

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives. To set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18)

Equating voting with releasing captives from segregation, this portion of the booklet convinced the teachers that they were doing the very work of God by teaching literacy and encouraging people to vote.

The next several pages of the booklet included the alphabet with pictures to help with pronunciation, a vocabulary list, paragraphs for reading practice, and instruction on how to write the alphabet in cursive. The booklet contained a sample letter to teach basic letter addressing and formatting and a blank money order form. There were two pages of basic math instruction that included how to recognize numbers in written form, word problems, understanding the different types of currency, fractions, multiplication, and division problems. There were several pages dedicated to Negro history that were used for reading instruction, but also to educate blacks about their history. One page of the booklet was designated to record responses as the teacher canvassed the neighborhood asking if people were registered to vote. This information was used to help teachers recruit students for the Citizenship Schools. The last page of the booklet contained the lyrics to four freedom songs used at every teacher training workshop. Students at the teacher training workshop completed the booklet during the week and learned how to use it to instruct the students that they would recruit for Citizenship School classes once

they returned home. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference provided copies of this same booklet for the teachers to use with their students.

The Citizenship Education Program workshops typically lasted five days and began with a Monday arrival. Dinner would start off the evening followed by singing, introductions and the "...nature of the movement" (SCLC, Box 563, 17). Cotton stated that "...in this great room we would begin with a community sing, a gathering song or two" (Cotton, 2012, p. 126). "As people began to feel more and more comfortable in this new environment, a bonding occurred, and in this atmosphere people began to articulate specific reasons they had accepted the invitation..."

Tuesday sessions would cover Negro History, how to teach writing, how to conduct the first night of class and record keeping, and the Constitution. Wednesday's sessions would focus on how to teach reading, recruiting, and small group discussion on any topic brought by the group. Thursday's sessions would cover Banking and Consumer Education and film and small group discussion. Friday morning sessions would include New Trends in Politics and Federally Assisted Programs. Each weeklong workshop would include a field trip, films, shared meals, and daily recreation. Field trips were often a trip to the beach during the summer months and trips to Savannah during other times of the year. Each workshop would end with a review of duties and expectations and a commencement banquet.

The commencement banquet was the only dress up event during the week of sessions (Banks correspondence, February 8, 1967) (SCLC, Box 564, 1) and those attending the workshop were encouraged to "...wear whatever you wear to church." A banquet program from March 1969 listed the meal menu as including "Non-Violent Tomato Juice Cocktail, Citizenship

Baked Ham with Freedom Glazed Raisin Sauce, Community Developed Candied Yams, Full Equality Green Beans, Fully Integrated People's Peach Salad with Union Cottage Cheese, Organized Party Rolls, Educated Pineapple Punch, Representative Government Ice Cream and Cake, and Organized Labor Paper Cups with Mints and Nuts." The program included an invocation, music, a skit, and keynote speaker, and finally the presentation of certificates and a benediction.

As the years passed and laws and the needs of the groups evolved, changes were made to the workshop schedule (CEP Workshop Schedule, June 19-23, 1967) (SCLC, Box 564, 2). Participants were brought in a little earlier, starting the week of sessions with lunch on Monday followed by a two-hour orientation and a film on "Rural Poverty" after dinner. A session on "Solving Community Problems" would follow the film. Tuesday's sessions would cover the Constitution, The Teaching of Writing, Planned Parenthood, and Negro History. Wednesday's sessions would cover Reading (How to Teach It), Family Management, and Government by the People. Thursday's sessions would cover Government and Political Trends, Recruiting, and instruction on how to use audio/visual equipment. Friday, the last day of the workshop, would start with sessions on Community Organization, Credit Unions and Coops, and small group instruction and student demonstration of the Art of Teaching. The workshop would conclude with the customary banquet and commencement. As with earlier workshops, relaxation or recreation would be scheduled into each day in addition to one scheduled field trip away from the Dorchester center.

Citizenship Education Program workshops were often tailored for specific groups. In a weeklong workshop held March 17-21, 1969 (SCLC, Box 564, 4), sessions were much more political in nature. Monday's activities began a two-hour orientation and film "Lay My Burden

Down” with planned discussion on “Poverty in Appalachia.” Tuesday’s sessions centered around Representative Government including political organization, voting, problem-solving, the Constitution, and voting laws. The annotated agenda noted, “The small group discussion will deal with instruments that are useful and needed in order to bring about representative government.” Wednesday’s sessions focused on American History - Labor and the Negro, The Exploited class with discussions on legal knowledge, consumer education, credit unions, and politics. Notes indicated that “...divisive barriers which separate the exploited class will be discussed.” The evening closed with a session on Labor Organizing and Economic Development. Thursday’s sessions included time on New Moves with Labor with notes indicating that the speaker would be knowledgeable about the International Women's Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) and discuss “...short-comings and mistakes of the labor movement will be noted with an aim toward correcting them with heavy emphasis on community involvement.” Thursday would conclude with a “Music of the Exploited” and Afro-American Folk Singer, Bernice Reagon. Friday’s sessions were on recruitment and the demonstration of teaching. This workshop did not have the typical content or format and was obviously tailored for the audience, although the records do not indicate the identity of the group, it could reasonably be assumed it was a group of textile workers from the Appalachia area. There were no breaks for recreation, a field trip, or commencement banquet at the closing of the workshop.

For each workshop a log was kept of who attended. Information collected included a name, address, occupation, telephone number, affiliate or representing organization, and county (Workshop Log, March 13-17, 1967) (SCLC, Box 564, 1).

Citizenship Education Program Refresher Course

Citizenship Education Program Refresher Courses (SCLC, Box 563, 17) were held periodically throughout the year at Dorchester for two purposes: first and foremost, to provide instructional updates to Citizenship School teachers. Second, to re-energize Citizenship School teachers who struggled to recruit and carry out the classes. Refresher courses were typically held Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. Friday's activities included arrival, dinner, and reports from each teacher in attendance about their progress and struggles. Saturday would be spent in sessions devoted to enhancing teaching strategies on topics like updated voting requirements and Constitutional amendments. The evening would often end with a film and small group discussion.

Sunday's morning session was completely devoted to unpacking the new Civil Rights Act of 1964 and how to integrate the law into the Citizenship School lessons. As the editor from the Savannah Herald (Adams, 1964) wrote just after the passing of the bill, "the movement is not new, but never before has there been opportunity for direct action." The Civil Rights Act contained many pieces of legislation that directly impacted black citizens. It was critical that Citizenship School teachers understand the components of the law and the freedoms and entitlements described so this understanding could be passed on to members of the teacher's class and community.

Breakout sessions were often used during refresher courses to allow teachers to gain more information in areas that were of particular interest to their community. A list of breakout sessions held during a refresher course at Dorchester listed the following options with knowledgeable speakers leading each group: cooperatives, rural housing loans, credit unions, county agricultural committees, and community services (SCLC, Box 545, 18).

Citizenship School teachers in attendance were also asked to respond to a series of questions about their class and local community. The staff asked teachers to describe the problems they encountered “getting the program started in their community” and operational problems like record keeping or audio/visual equipment. Answers to these questions would be reviewed and discussed at the close of the weekend. Later, the Citizenship Education Program staff would pour over the answers during staff meetings to look for ways to strengthen and improve their teacher training program. The answers to the questions were also useful to field supervisors who would periodically meet with the Citizenship School teachers and sit in on classes.

A brief report filed by Septima Clark following an August 1963 refresher course offers insight into the training and discussion held over the three days (SCLC, Box 545, 3). This workshop was attended by Georgia Citizenship School teachers from five different counties. The teachers reported using “printed leaflets, church announcements, and public meetings” to recruit their students for class. Teachers noted that their recruitment efforts were difficult because students were concerned about their safety and others were “afraid of being laughed at because of illiteracy.” Despite this, Clark reported that the teachers’ accomplishments were “numerous” including “many persons registered to vote” and one group “raised \$208 for the freedom movement.”

Special Workshops

In addition to Citizenship Education Program workshops and refresher courses, staff members also held special workshops. Special workshops were often one to two days long and held over a weekend. One weekend workshop held at the end of January (undated) was

specifically for “All South Carolina Workers for Freedom” (SCLC, Box 564, 13). The purpose of the workshop was to come up with a plan on “...what we will do in the upcoming election” and listed six questions that would be answered during the workshop including “Who speaks for us in Congress? Who should run for office? What can you do to get out the vote? What other issues must we concern ourselves with?” The workshop flyer claimed that “top-notch workers” would be available to guide and organize their efforts.

In January of 1964, the CEP staff hosted a Supervisor’s Workshop (SCLC, Box 545, 18). The workshop began with a ninety minute session on local problems, which were written out and shared before the whole group. The experiences of the other supervisors and CEP staff were often discussed as a group and suggestions were made by the group to solve the problems presented. It was important not only to discuss the problem, but have a clear course of action upon the supervisor’s return to the field. Problems that were not easily solved sometimes required bringing in an expert for guidance. Saturday was a full day of sessions addressing issues like “How to Know Your Community,” “Use of Materials,” and “Record Keeping.” Sunday’s activities included a two hour block of practicing teaching and a review.

In March of 1964, the CEP staff hosted a special workshop on “Rural Federal Programs and the Role of Community Leaders” (SCLC, Box 545, 18). The workshop featured a panel discussion with members of the Citizenship Education Program staff and representatives from the South Carolina Council on Human Relations, and a representative from the Methodist Church in Walterboro, South Carolina, the Federal Housing Authority regarding farm home loans and grants, and an expert on rural development loans.

Special workshops were scheduled as needed and often at the request of specific groups or organizations. As with all other workshops, Citizenship Education Program staff would build the workshop curriculum and bring in guest speakers based on the needs of the group.

The Power of Shared Experience

One of the most important aspects of the Citizenship Education Program was the power of shared experience. Septima Clark said that the very first day it was important to get the students talking about the situations that they faced at home (Brown, 1990, p. 64). This activity served many purposes. First, Clark notes that the people who came to the Dorchester Center did not trust blacks from the city and the teacher training program was made up of a staff from Atlanta. Allowing the students to talk about their situations created a level of trust. Clark was careful to note that even when teaching, the staff did not come right out and lecture the students. All instruction was done through conversation, real life examples, and a “non-directive approach” (Brown, 1990, p. 64).

Second, specific community needs were integrated into the workshop curriculum. Sometimes the staff would know ahead of time if there was a specific issue that needed to be addressed if they were bringing in a group from one area, but most of the time the students were from a variety of areas with different issues. After listening to the group share and discuss some of the issues facing their communities, the staff would pick a few topics that applied to all participants and would use those situations as examples throughout the workshop.

Finally, sharing experiences and community issues allowed the students to interact with one another and offer suggestions for solving problems. Similar to the practice the Highlander staff used with their workshop groups, the Citizenship School staff found that allowing the

students to discuss and come up with answers to issues as a group built confidence in their abilities to solve their own problems.

In addition to encouraging students to share about their experiences back at home, there was time set aside for recreation. Students were encouraged to bring their swimming suits for trips to the beach and basketball and baseball were regular forms of entertainment for staff and students. These activities also provided an opportunity for the students to get to know one another outside of the sessions. Forming a sense of community among the group, or that feeling that they were not alone once they returned back home, was important. As these students returned home to become the teacher, they would do so with a network of other teachers and staff members to go to with questions and concerns.

The Most Important Lesson

Typically, the second day at Dorchester, which was the first full day of the workshop, would begin with a session on Citizenship. The session would begin with a single question “What’s a citizen?” (Cotton, 2012, p. 132) The students would offer suggestions and the class would discuss each one. Eventually, a list of potential characteristics that make a citizen would be listed on the chalk board. This discussion would lead into a discussion on the Constitution. The instructor would take the time to carefully describe the structure of the Constitution, explaining the purpose of an amendment and then copies of the Constitution would be distributed throughout the classroom for the students to look at and read. This was one of the primary documents used for reading practice, but more importantly, it was studied so the students could understand how the document applied to their life and be able to explain it to others.

The group would read over and study the Fourteenth Amendment which states that “all persons born or naturalized in the United States...are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside” and that no state shall “deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law, or deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” Cotton said that while the amendment did not specifically mention blacks, the purpose of the Citizenship Education Program was to get the people to understand that certain states were violating the Constitution by denying their rights and that it was up to them to make sure that the law was applied to blacks as well as whites (Cotton, 2012, p. 133).

After a discussion of the Fourteenth Amendment, the instructor would lead the students back to the First Amendment which states that citizens have the right to “peaceably assemble and to petition the government for redress of grievances.” In the discussion that followed, the staff would guide the students to understand that it was legal to protest segregation and other unfair practices, to realize that the only way those practices were going to change was if they did something about it. Dorothy Cotton said that at the close of this session, the students had a “consciousness of a firm philosophical as well as legal basis for challenging oppressive systems” (Cotton, 2012, p. 135). The instructors were also quick to point at that simply knowing the law was not enough – it was every citizen’s duty to be informed on the issues and vote in accordance with their beliefs. The instructors also encouraged the students to consider running for elected positions in their local communities.

This was the most important session in that it laid the foundation for the rest of the sessions in the workshop. Similar to the recruitment strategy of first mentioning that expenses were paid and compensation was provided so that the audience is able to listen better, getting the students to truly understand citizenship was foundational to their understanding of why they

were teaching literacy and why they were encouraging direct action. Dorothy Cotton said, “they arrived feeling like victims but went home having shed every vestige or sense of the victimhood that was clearly programmed into Black people through our American-style apartheid” (Cotton, 2012, p. 117). The students, who for the most part did not have an understanding of how the government worked prior to the session, left understanding the structure and nature of the government and how they could participate and make change by helping others register to vote and going to the polls on Election Day. This session was really the essence of the entire Citizenship Education Program. The sessions that followed helped the students learn to teach the importance of citizenship to their students and to give them the tools needed to become actively involved in making change.

Other Important Elements

As with the Danish Folk Schools and the Highlander Folk School, singing was a staple of the Citizenship Education Program. Each day would begin and end with singing. Sometimes in the middle of a session, a student would break out into song. Dorothy Cotton said, “Music opened us. It allowed us to feel alive. We learned that when you feel alive, you can act” (Cotton, 2012, p. 154). They sang to express their fears and sorrows, but also sang to express their excitement and joy. Using existing song tunes, lyrics were often changed to reflect the situation or sentiment at the time. New verses were added to songs in jail, while marching, or while protesting. Singing created a sense of common purpose and could often break through the toughest student at the workshop, when speeches and discussions could not.

During the teacher training workshops at Highlander and later at Dorchester, the use of dramas or skits provided the students a chance to practice recruiting new students or teaching

students how to read and write. Later, as the focus of the training workshops changed to include strategies for non-violent protest, skits would be used to prepare students to face opposition and physical abuse without a violent reaction. There was always a skit presented at the commencement banquet.

Films were used frequently during the CEP workshops to illustrate the severity of poverty and the impact that community organization could make. Citizenship School teachers were also encouraged to use movies and at the suggestion of Citizenship School Field Supervisors, instruction on how to use the audio/visual equipment was added to the weeklong workshops and refresher courses. Citizenship Education Program staff compiled and published a list of movies available for Citizenship classes upon request (SCLC, Box 544, 2). These movies ranged in topic from voter education on representation, gerrymandering, and the electoral college to a movie on the “Nashville Sit-In Story.” Citizenship Schools were primarily focused on registering people in the community to vote, but each teacher was encouraged to address specific community issues and films were often used as teaching aids.

Banking and Consumer Education was later added to the lesson plans for the CEP workshops due to numerous requests. Banking lessons ranged from instruction on how to deposit money in the bank, to filling out a check, but lessons also included reading and writing practice. Prior to the banking lesson, students were asked to write out banking questions on little slips of paper. The banking lesson would always begin with a discussion on experiences with banking, positive and negative, and why they needed a lesson on banking (CEP Proposal, 1964). Some of the key learning targets in the banking curriculum was to promote proper and safe handling of money, to build credit ratings and become familiar with banking practices, and finally to promote good financial practices like increased savings and decreased debt. In one

particular banking lesson, students practiced reading thirteen statements about depositing money and then to practice writing, would answer nine fill in the blank questions on the written statements (SCLC, Box 544, 4). Students read short stories on “Depositing Money in the Bank” and “Writing a Check” for class discussion and would close the lesson by filling out actual deposit slips and checks and create skits using those skills in a real-life banking situation. To close the lesson, the individual student questions gathered prior to the session were read and answered by the class as a way to summarize the lesson and any questions that remained unanswered were addressed by the session leader.

Another area added to the curriculum due to student request was Consumer Education. As stated in the lesson plan, the purpose of the Consumer Education lesson was to “...develop attitudes and habits which will insure that they will spend their money in the most beneficial and economical manner” (CEP Proposal, 1964). As with the banking lesson, prior to the beginning of this lesson, students were asked to write out questions on a slip of paper. To begin the lesson, students were guided through group discussion to define the terms consumer, income, overspending, budget, credit, and compensation. Target learning for this lesson included how to prepare a budget, good spending habits, state and federal resources available to provide economic assistance, purchasing tips, family planning, and factors that affect income levels. Students are provided with a sample family budget and ideas for skits concerning consumer decisions.

Participatory Learning

The Citizenship Education Program was successful for many reasons, but one of the key instructional practices that ensured workshop success was involving the students in every aspect

of the learning process. Dealing exclusively with adults of all ages who often lacked any formal education, the “stand and deliver” method of teaching would not have been effective. Dorothy Cotton said that, “any good teacher knows that just “telling” something is not as effective as when students struggle to understand a concept through serious dialogue” (Cotton, 2012, p. 130). In order for the students to truly grasp the meaning of citizenship and how it could transform their current way of thinking, the students had to internalize their new identity as contributing citizens of the United States with rights that must be upheld.

Each training session at the Dorchester Center was taught exactly how the students were expected to go back home and teach their own Citizenship Schools. Dorothy Cotton said, “the teacher’s job is to create a climate – a learning environment” (Cotton, 2012, p. 139) so that the concepts could be internalized by the student. That was when true learning happened. At the close of each workshop, the staff and students would share a parting meal and students would be awarded their certificates of attendance. Often, Martin Luther King, Jr. would drive down to Dorchester to deliver the closing remarks to the group and urge them to recruit others and continue the movement at home. King often referred to the everyday people that helped the momentum of the movement as the “ground crew.” This ground crew, which would go home to teach literacy and citizenship and encourage people to vote, was just as important as the leaders who made the headlines. He said that he may be the pilot, but “we couldn’t have a movement if you do not do what you are called to do” (Cotton, 2012, p. 114).

The Evolving Curriculum

The Citizenship Education Program began primarily as a literacy and citizenship campaign to increase the number of black voters across the South. As workshops began to fill

and word of the Citizenship Education Program spread across the South, the staff became aware of the needs of the people in the community and modified workshop sessions to fit their needs. In a report written by Septima Clark in 1965 seeking to renew the Marshall Field Foundation grant through 1970, Clark wrote that:

Our curriculum has changed from the basic reading and writing program to one including simple banking, consumer economics, the importance of the precinct meeting, implementation of the Civil Rights Bill, Negro history, Planned Parenthood, and federally assisted programs. (CEP Proposal 1965)

At the height of planned protests and marches the Citizenship Education Program curriculum evolved to include some of Ghandi's teachings on non-violence. Workshops included skits and dramas on how to respond to threats of violence and arrest. The students listened to stories from those who had been arrested and beaten. Dorothy Cotton noted that they began to realize that those who had been through the training were better equipped to handle violent situations without striking back.

Measuring Success

Success for the Citizenship Education Program was measured in the number of teachers trained, students taught, and voters registered. In the September 1963 Southern Christian Leadership Conference Newsletter, Septima Clark wrote, "the achievements of the Citizenship Education Program have been numerically measured by the number of men and women from Eastern Texas to Northern Virginia who have registered to vote in the past two years" (Clark, 1963, p. 11). By September of 1963, the Citizenship Education Program in South Carolina alone had sixty-three schools in operation. The state's number of registered black voters had more

than doubled from 57,000 to 150,000. Comments from students completing the Citizenship School classes included, “I learned to read in three months,” and “Our class helped our community to unify.”

In another Southern Christian Leadership Conference publication title “Refinement by Fire,” Citizenship Education Program statistics were reported for an eighteen month period between July 1962 and February 1964. In addition to the total number of teachers trained and classes held, the publication broke down the number of Citizenship Schools by the eleven Southern states. Georgia led the list with 171 schools, followed by South Carolina with 147 schools. At the bottom of the list were Florida and Arkansas with one school each. The total number of schools in February 1964 was 596 schools (Refinement by Fire by R. Elizabeth Johns).

In a 1965 report written by Septima Clark to the Field Foundation, Clark asked for an extension of the grant funds through 1970 and gave a recap of the program’s success from 1961 through February of 1965. Clark stated that 1,413 teachers had been trained at the Dorchester Center. Based on the records from those teachers, she estimated that 23,829 students had completed the twelve week Citizenship School program and 95,000 had been registered to vote by teachers and students (CEP Proposal 1965).

The program was not without its struggles. The rapid growth of the program and reliance on grant funds often led to a budget deficit prior to the end of the fiscal year. On October 12, 1964, correspondence went out to all Citizenship School teachers to let them know that funds were going to run out before the end of the year. In the letter, the Citizenship School Staff asked that between October 12th and election day on November 3rd that every effort is made to

encourage people to vote (SCLC, 1964). Behind closed doors, CEP staff met to make decisions on where to make cuts so the program could make it through until new grant funds were deposited.

The minutes of a meeting held on September 16, 1964 (SCLC, Box 544, 21) record that this meeting was held in the home of Andrew Young, in Atlanta. These minutes offer a glimpse into the issues the staff faced with funding the growing program. The primary issue discussed at this meeting was the budget. “We were reminded by Rev. Young that in three years approximately 1,400 people have been trained in the Citizenship Education Program.” While this number represented great progress in spreading the program, it exceeded the number estimated on the grant application leading to an impending deficit of funds before new grant monies would be received.

In a summary of discussion on how to best address the deficit, suggestions were made to “keep the best teachers and officially stop the others,” “do more thorough recruiting,” and “cut the number of workshops.” It was also suggested that the number of people attending the workshops be cut to thirty participants. The minutes also reported discussion on additional fund-raising projects and additional grant opportunities, although none were specifically mentioned in the report.

Unfortunately, a shortage of funds also plagued other programs and departments with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference as a whole, meaning the budget deficit could not be supplemented by SCLC general funds. In the minutes of a May 4, 1964 Southern Christian Leadership Conference Executive Staff meeting (SCLC, Box 544, 21), the main item for discussion was the budget. Referencing \$50,000 in unpaid bills with little money in the general

fund to pay them, "...Dr. King proposed the possibility of postponing any action planned in order to spend time fund raising." Areas where funds were to be cut immediately were telephone calls, travel, and printing.

CEP Proposal for 1965-1970

In the spring of 1964, CEP staff members met and drew up a proposal for the next five years for the program (CEP Proposal, 1964). The staff included Andrew Young, Administrator, Septima Clark, Supervisor of Teacher Training, Dorothy Cotton, Educational Consultant, Delores Hall, Secretary, and Field Supervisors Bernice Robinson, Annelle Ponder, and Benjamin Mack. In the detailed report, written by Septima Clark (SCLC, Box 545, 1), she quickly states that over 1,413 people have already attended workshops at Dorchester to receive training as Citizenship School teachers. Those teachers had already held 947 Citizenship Education classes reaching 23,829 citizens. Together, those students and teachers were responsible for registering approximately 95,000 Negroes to vote in the Southern states. Those numbers were not just an estimate. Careful records were kept of each person who attended workshops at Dorchester and Citizenship School teachers and Field Supervisors also kept detailed records.

Clark stated that as a result of their efforts more people were voting in South Carolina and Georgia which led to "...marked improvement in both the political and racial climate." She said their focus for the period of the proposal (1965-1970) would be on Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana where annual family incomes were around \$550 and "education was inadequate." The proposal highlighted some of the changes to the program since its first workshops during the summer of 1961. Namely, the Citizenship Education Program had evolved from basic reading and writing to include Negro History, Consumer Economics,

Understanding the Civil Rights Act, and Consumer Education. Planned Parenthood and information on other federally assisted programs were also regular parts of the curriculum. Clark stated that “ridding the state of illiterates” was still a big focus so that citizens could register to vote and exercise their political power.

This proposal sought additional funds to assist in retaining current Citizenship School teachers and also to provide more staff to train new Citizenship School teachers. Funds were also requested for travel reimbursement and to purchase new equipment including clerical equipment and audio/visual equipment as the use of the films was becoming more prevalent in workshops. Finally, the CEP staff proposed a five year commitment to funding the program for planning purposes. The complete proposal package included a history of the program, data proving its impact, lesson plans, pictures from training sessions and local Citizenship Schools, the current brochures used in recruiting Citizenship School teachers, and the questionnaire used to assess local community needs.

CEP Proposal for 1969

In a 1969 proposal to the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries for grant funds for the CEP, there was a noted focus change from reaching the illiterate black population to the “...ten million functionally illiterate adults” (CEP Proposal, 1969) across the United States, regardless of race. Citing the correlation between socioeconomic status and education attainment and “hope-aspiration level” the report indicates that without knowledge of basic rights and access to federally provided services, there would be no lasting change. The premise behind the Citizenship Education Program was that “...deprived people have within themselves, though often dormant, the stuff it takes to begin basic improvements in their lives and full development

of themselves” to make change happen. Through dialogic methods, those who attended workshops learned how to be an active part of developing their community. As far as numbers go, the report states that 3,500 people had completed the CEP workshop and two-thirds of those people opened their own Citizenship Schools recruiting community members to register and vote, but also taking part in community activities and projects.

In trying to persuade the Board to continue funding the CEP, the writers stated that “self-discovery” or the “...enlightenment, motivation, and know-how come upon by the workshop experience has resulted in “revolutionary” changes across the South” (CEP Proposal, 1969). The report claimed that the CEP workshops were directly linked to the passage of the Civil Rights Act and other legislation regarding voting rights passed in recent years. CEPs were also responsible for increased political knowledge, an increase in the number of blacks registered and voting, the organization of credit unions and co-operatives, and community improvements like paving projects, recreational facilities, and improved school buildings.

The CEP proposal explained the need for more funds to expand the program to address the needs of all poor and illiterate, regardless of race. The requested funds would be used to hire more full-time staff to train Citizenship School teachers and make more field visits to Citizenship Schools to address specific community needs. The proposal specifically requested enough funds for twelve new full-time field staff members and a field staff director. In the closing paragraphs of the proposal, the writers implored the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries to provide assistance as the Field Foundation was cutting their annual grant amount by half and only pledging those funds if the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was able to match that amount in other funding.

Annual Reports

As mentioned before, because the funds for the program were provided through a grant, detailed records were kept. Citizenship Education Program staff compiled data and issued semi-annual, annual, and bi-annual reports describing the program's success and use of funding. Prior to the SCLC overseeing the Citizenship School project, from 1957 to 1961 there were 58 Citizenship Schools operating in five different southern states. Twelve of those schools operated in Georgia in eight different counties (undated report "Places Where Citizenship Schools Have Been Operated"). The following paragraphs highlight the program's success as written in the many reports issued by the Citizenship Education Program staff.

In an annual report for July 1962 - June 1963, CEP staff reported that 395 people were trained at Dorchester representing ten different states. At the time of the report, there were 366 Citizenship Schools in operation that served 5,623 students. As a result of the CEP workshops and Citizenship School classes 17,575 were registered to vote. Weeklong workshops were held monthly at Dorchester during this time period and three weekend refresher courses were held serving 80 Citizenship School teachers. Of the 366 Citizenship Schools, 102 were conducted in Georgia, 89 were held in South Carolina, and 60 held in Alabama. Citizenship School students were also reported to be involved in a number of community activities including NAACP voter registration campaigns, Parent Teacher Associations, involvement with civic groups, and community improvement projects.

In a semi-annual report by CEP staff dated July 1962 - January 1963, the staff reported that after a slow start and difficulty recruiting for the first several workshops they now had to turn people away because workshops were filling up months in advance. Through word of

mouth and the efforts of the Citizenship School teachers who complete the program, start their own schools, and recruit workshop participants, their work at Dorchester was becoming known across the South. After two years of conducting workshops, the staff reported that some changes to the program were necessary to address the needs of the participants. Notably, the session on government and civics had been expanded along with the session on teaching methods. It was reported that the biggest obstacle that Citizenship School teachers faced was student motivation. The CEP staff reported that they were working to address this through extra preparation on the importance of participating in the political process.

The staff members were also attempting to conduct Saturday Citizenship Clinics across the state of Georgia. Another strategy used was to invite ministers to a conference on “The Bible and the Ballot” to encourage mention of participation in the political process from the pulpit. The report commends two effective field supervisors, Mr. Benjamin Mack and Miss Annelle Ponder. Ponder was initially hired as clerical staff, but upon learning of her qualifications placed her over two special projects in Albany, Georgia and Regional Supervisor over the “...First Congressional District in Georgia where some thirty schools are being operated in connection with the Southeast Georgia Crusade for Voters.”

The staff also reported that adjustments to the workshops were needed as changes to voter registration procedures changed throughout the South. For example, at the time of the report, Louisiana had added a new literacy test and forty-three questions that had to be answered to the satisfaction of the registrar. It was the consensus of the staff that Citizenship School teachers would be in higher demand in the future to help teach literacy. In an addendum to the semi-annual report, it was noted that 127 people were trained during the six month period of time

over three workshops. The Field Foundation renewed the grant for a period of two years for a total of \$250,000.

An annual statistical report for June 1963 - June 1964 reported that 502 people were trained representing twelve different states. There were 413 Citizenship Schools in operation that taught 6,581 students. As a result of the CEP workshops and CS classes, 25,962 people were registered to vote. Workshops were held monthly at Dorchester and two special workshops were held at Penn Center in South Carolina that year. A total of 87 Citizenship School teachers attended refresher training workshops and South Carolina led the twelve states with 132 people attending the weeklong workshops at Dorchester. In Georgia, 71 students traveled to Dorchester for workshops representing ten different counties. Included in the report were two full pages of community activities that workshop goers participated in including voter registration drives and demonstrations.

From July 1964 to June 1965, Annelle Ponder reported that 471 people were trained from sixteen different states. Alabama had the most people trained with 127 participants. Five day training workshops were held in August, February, March, April, and June. Thirty-four people were trained from Georgia and a page of the report showed the names, counties, and cities of the Georgia workshop participants (CEP Annual Statistical Report, June 1964 - June 1965). One refresher course was offered and was attended by 108 CS teachers from eight different states. Ponder reports that due to the passage of Civil Rights legislation and recommendations of teachers from the refresher course held in January of 1965, Negro history, consumer education, and federal program sessions were added to the weeklong CEP workshop. Ponder also reports that the Field Foundation confirmed funding for the next year.

In a quarterly report submitted by then CEP director, Dr. Robert L. Green dated November 8, 1965, he stated that, “....a major objective of this program has been to provide southern communities with a cadre of well-trained citizens who could serve as community organizers and leaders determined to remove bigotry and discrimination from their local areas” (Quarterly Report, November 8, 1965). In the report, the Green states that, “a systematic approach is being used to gather demographic, educational, and economic data on the students who attend each monthly workshop.” The CEP staff, at the suggestion of Mr. Hosea Williams, was working to assist black maids who had lost their employment due to protest activities in and around the Crawfordsville, Georgia area. The report also detailed the efforts of Septima Clark to work with youth from Natchez, Mississippi over a series of weekend workshops. As of the date of the report, Clark had met with 200 youths to discuss citizenship and the ballot.

Other activities reported included the addition of a federal programs session during the weeklong workshops to inform students of assistance available, a planned staff retreat for planning upcoming workshops, the desire to bring in more professional consultants to teach during the workshops on various topics, and possibly setting up permanent learning centers in cities across the South if funding was provided. The report concludes with a brief updated description of staff job duties. Dorothy Cotton was primarily in responsible for revising and gathering materials for the Citizenship School teachers and evaluating reports from the field staff. Septima Clark was primarily responsible for organizing CEPs in Natchez, Mississippi. Bernice Robinson was primarily responsible for supervising teachers and teacher recruitment. Benjamin Mack was part of the paid staff and served as an instructor for the political education sessions and assisted with voter registration in South Carolina. Annelle Ponder was primarily responsible for conducting the consumer education portion of the

workshop and also helped with curriculum development. Mrs. Willie Maxwell and Mrs. Delores Hall were listed as support staff and the CEP director was Dr. Robert L. Green. His primary focus was expanding the program and securing funds.

Students attending a Citizenship Education Program workshop at Dorchester in October 1965 were given a pilot questionnaire and their answers along with general demographics data of the group were compiled into a Descriptive Report (1965). In a brief statement prior to the presentation of the data, the reader was reminded that the objective of the training was "...the training of adult Negroes in the area of literacy, handwriting, consumer education, political education, and in techniques of group organization designed to facilitate massive social change." At this particular workshop there were fifty-four participants - twenty-four male and thirty female. Of those students, only 34% had completed high school. Only one participant could not read and two could not write. Thirty-nine were registered to vote but only twenty-one had actually voted at the time of the workshop. Sixty percent of the participants indicated that they had employment. The majority of the participants were not married. An overwhelming majority of those attending this workshop felt that a "guaranteed minimum wage by the government" was the best way to help improve their circumstances. Respondents were asked to identify who the strong leaders were in their community and the majority identified "local people" as the leaders. Ministers were also indicated as strong leaders but by a smaller margin.

Question twenty on the questionnaire asked, "What conditions seem to bother you the most?" Most considered violence against blacks to be the most important condition followed by limited economic choices and poverty. The last couple of questions dealt specifically with the workshop. "Has the workshop been helpful to you?" and "How can the workshop be improved?" Respondents felt the workshop was helpful in that they learned about Negro history,

how to help others, banking, and how to write their name. When asked how the workshop could be improved, the answers were mostly about the other people at the workshop - separating the younger people from the older, more serious adults and more careful screening of who attended the workshops.

In an annual report of workshops for 1966, the staff reported that 159 Citizenship School teachers attended a refresher workshop and 256 potential teachers attended the weeklong workshops representing nine different Southern states. The largest weeklong workshop had ninety participants and the lowest had twenty.

The Citizenship Education Program Bi-Annual Report covering October 1966 through February 1968 opened with the reminder that the weeklong workshops were the “nucleus” of the Citizenship Education Program. The report notes that 402 people were trained in those workshops between the Dorchester and Penn Centers. It was estimated that 7,280 Citizenship School classes were taught by teachers trained during the time. The estimated number of students taught in Citizenship Schools totaled 26,686. In attending the workshops, the participants learned how to initiate change in their communities through the Citizenship School concept. In addition to teaching literacy, consumer, and political education, the classes helped students realize that they have been “...systematically shut out of basic institutions...” and how to organize and actively seek change. Citizenship Education Staff also reported the notion of taking the Citizenship School concept to poor white communities. The report closed with a statement about funding received from the Field Foundation. For 1968, they received \$150,000 but for 1969 they would only receive \$75,000 and only if they were able to raise \$75,000 independently.

It is not clear from Citizenship Education Program records why the Field Foundation reduced the grant funding for 1969. Prior to 1969, requests for maintained or increased funding were granted. In looking at the number of students who attended workshops offered at the Dorchester Center, from 1962 to 1966, there were anywhere from 396 to 502 students per year in training. Whereas, in 1967 and 1968, there were only 402 students total for both years – which is a significant decrease from the previous years. It is possible that the decrease in enrollment for 1967 and 1968 were contributing factors to the decline in funding dollars allowed by the Field Foundation. The number of CEP workshops at Dorchester decreased again in 1969 and ceased at some point during 1970. Again, it is unclear from records as to the reason for this decrease in enrollment but it could reasonably be linked to the decrease in funding dollars.

Decreased enrollment could also have been attributed to a lack of recruitment or even a saturation of the areas where Citizenship Schools were held. As newly trained teachers returned home to recruit and train their neighbors and friends, teachers may have simply run out of students to recruit as black voter registration numbers continued to increase. Interestingly, while CEP workshops at Dorchester ceased to operate in 1969, records indicate that Citizenship School teachers were still conducting classes, filing monthly reports, and receiving monthly compensation from the Atlanta office as late as winter of 1971.

Citizenship Education Program Information Newsletters

In addition to annual reports, Citizenship Education Program staff published an informational newsletter that was sent out to the Citizenship School teachers and field supervisors containing updates on legislation and program highlights.

In a CEP Information Newsletter dated November 1967, several positions were listed for the Wilcox County Anti-poverty Program including Educational Director, Adult Education Supervisor, Vocational Supervisor, and Secretary. The newsletter also mentioned that the United States House of Representatives passed an amendment to the Civil Rights Act Title V making it illegal to "...injure, intimidate, or interfere with persons exercising specific rights: voting, attending public school, using federal transportation, participating in federally-assisted programs, and visiting hotels or restaurants, or any places of public accommodation." In other news, the publication highlighted community projects like a community owned grocery store in Gilbert Creek, West Virginia and the latest developments from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The newsletter also reported the statistics for black students entering desegregated schools in the eleven Southern states for 1967. With a slight increase over 1966, approximately 16-18% of Black students enrolled in schools that are at least 5% white. The newsletter credits the "freedom of choice" plan, intimidation, and harassment as reasons for such low numbers.

In the December 1967 installment of the CEP Informational Newsletter, four teachers from Savannah Citizenship Schools are highlighted for their community service activities including paving and street light improvements. In a plug for credit unions, the newsletter states that "...next to the church, the credit union accomplishes more good for the community than any other institution." In other news, there were highlights from a Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF) report on the number of homes and churches burned recently in Hayward County, Tennessee believed to be the result of protests following a U. S. court order to place black teachers in white schools and white teachers in Black schools in the area.

Citizenship Education Program Staff Meetings

CEP staff met regularly to discuss workshops, reports from the field, and changes to the program. On June 5, 1967, the staff met to discuss “programming for the coming year and hear reports from various staff members” (SCLC, Box 556, 3). Reporting for the state of Mississippi, Mrs. Victoria Gray briefed those gathered on increased intimidation at the polls in Sunflower County. Gray reported that voters received threatening letters in the mail and that political candidates were not revealed until the night before the election. Mr. Benjamin Mack reported for South Carolina and his primary concern was that voter registration records were going to be wiped clean in just a few months meaning that all citizens must re-register. He requested additional assistance statewide to get folks re-registered. Mr. Mack also suggested that parliamentary procedure be added to the Citizenship School curriculum so people would know the proper etiquette in a town meeting. Reporting for Alabama, Reverend B.J. Johnson reported that black citizens of one Alabama County had no idea that a new industry was coming and missed out on the initial hiring phase.

The upcoming June workshop was discussed and the suggestion was made to allow for more time to teach the students how to fill out applications and other forms properly. A suggestion was also made to allow for more time on the Political Education session. The meeting closed with each member being assigned a portion of the Citizenship Education Program workshop to review and suggest changes.

In an undated proposal, the CEP staff considered holding workshops on college campuses (CEP Proposal, undated). This strategic move would allow the staff to reach concerned students and educate them on current political trends and be the bridge between students and community organizations. The weeklong workshop would be held on college campuses and would include lessons on non-violence, community needs, and how college students could become involved. It

does not appear that this proposal ever reached the implementation phase. There are reports from Field Worker, Annelle Ponder that initially in Albany, college-aged students were recruited to be Citizenship School teachers, but these teachers were also involved in local protest activities and were often jailed for extended periods of time, which disrupted the Citizenship School class completion (Citizenship Education Program, Albany, Georgia, 1962). Thereafter, Citizenship School teachers were encouraged to consider teaching their act of service in the cause and make every effort to avoid incarceration so that classes could be held.

Analyzing the Citizenship Education Program

Dorothy Cotton estimates that more than eight thousand people came through the Citizenship Education Program (Cotton, 2012, p. 112). Eventually given the title of Director of Education with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Cotton's primary duty was to oversee the Citizenship Education Program and to provide a place where blacks could come together and unlearn the lessons taught by a white society. They learned to "...redefine themselves" (Cotton, 2012, p. 117). Those attending the workshops were asked to go back home and share what they had learned with others and to explain the idea behind the movement for change. Workshop participants were not only taught what was wrong with the current way society viewed race relations, but why it was wrong. Dorothy Cotton stressed the importance of defining the problem and its source. In fact, she felt that "to target the whole segregation system there had to be a target, a focus, and we had to start somewhere" (Cotton, 2012, p. 81).

The Citizenship Education Program held at the Dorchester Center had several of the key components that Myles Horton found important in the Danish Folk Schools and implemented at the Highlander Folk School. First, workshops held at Dorchester were residential in nature. The

students were bused in from all over the South for a week of sessions. While at Dorchester, they learned, slept, and shared meals with the staff members. Second, singing and the use of drama were important components for what they brought to the sessions. Songs were used to build momentum and solidarity of purpose. They were also used to bring people together and provide an outlet for how the people were feeling. Used primarily on the picket lines during the labor movement to keep spirits up and build unity, songs were sung for the very same reason during the Civil Rights Movement at meetings, marches, and other protest activities. Finally, having a clear purpose for organizing was key to guiding people to act. Without a clear purpose, goal, and target for protest, efforts would have been unorganized and ineffective.

One of key differences in the programs held at Highlander and Dorchester was the focus on religion. Once the Southern Christian Leadership Conference took over the Citizenship School program, there was a deliberate focus on religion and the church. The founding SCLC board was primarily Southern Baptist ministers and initially, the primary mode of communication was through church. Being tied to the church helped to ensure the spread of the movement through black communities all over the South. Most black churches were funded and governed by the black community and therefore free from white influence. Citizenship School booklets were changed to include a clear tie to Biblical passages which reaffirmed the purpose of teaching literacy and encouraging blacks to vote. Communication from the SCLC Atlanta office encouraged ministers to get out into their communities and help with registration efforts. Later, recruitment information sessions for the Citizenship Education Program would often take place on Sunday mornings during the service or weekly evening mass meetings at different churches in the community. This approach served the SCLC well since its spokesman was a prominent

Southern Baptist preacher and the black church was such an influential and powerful institution within black communities.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference was initially created to organize groups protesting segregation on public transportation. Little more than a year later, the organization would change its mission and focus on voter registration believing that “the right to vote was connected to all other rights” (King memo, Feb. 2, 1959). The SCLC launched the Crusade for Citizenship in 1958 with the goal of doubling the black vote before the 1960 election. Despite mass meetings and much correspondence with affiliates, the Crusade fell woefully short in meeting its target. From pulpits across the South it was impossible for ministers to see that in addition to fear, illiteracy prevented their voter registration goals from being met. Ella Baker, who traveled extensively throughout the South on behalf of the SCLC, observed and listened to the people and she recognized that deficiencies in literacy had to be addressed to fully realize the goals of the Crusade. While her initial attempts to advise the SCLC executive board of the correlation between illiteracy and low voter registration were ignored, eventually Martin Luther King, Jr. began talking with Myles Horton at the Highlander Folk School to come up with a solution to the problem. With Dorothy Cotton and former Highlander staff members Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Andrew Young on board, the Citizenship Education Program was officially launched. The CEP’s goal was to reach two million registered black voters before the next election. Through literacy and civic education, CEP staff equipped everyday citizens who would return home and teach others to read and write so they could register to vote.

When looking back at the milestones and major events of the Civil Rights Movements, one will likely remember protests, marches, speeches, and ultimately the assassination of its most visible leader. Behind the protests, marches, speeches, and leaders were a network of

communities and organizations which made up the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The SCLC, while facing its' own challenges and organizational struggles, oversaw several programs that reached into communities to provide support and served to organize those who dreamt of a better place for their children to grow up. While the Citizenship Education Program did not receive a lot of publicity, it served to train and mobilize hundreds of home grown teachers across the Southern states. Those teachers, many of whom had no formal training or college education, went back into their communities and canvased neighborhoods to recruit students willing to learn to read, write, and register to vote. Through their efforts, thousands of blacks were successfully registered to vote.

Voter registration might have been the defined mission or stated goal of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference but it was certainly not the culmination of the Citizenship Education Program. Once students completed Citizenship School classes and registered to vote, they were expected to recruit others, keep abreast of the current political situation and vote, and become actively involved in community action. As Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote in his letter to Vice President Richard Nixon, it would take more than legislation for blacks to fully realize their citizenship – it would also take mass action. Through the work of the Citizenship Education Program, the foundation for that mass action was possible. As participants of the program returned home and led others to realize the potential for change, communities came together and a Movement was born.

CHAPTER 4

“YEASTY” CONCEPT

While the stated or official goal of the Citizenship Education Program was to increase voter registration, the CEP staff worked toward several other unstated goals which may have been just as, if not more important, than voter registration numbers. Dorothy Cotton stated that the goal of every workshop was to help those attending to “discover their own power” (Cotton, 2012, p. 104). Students were encouraged and equipped to advocate for themselves and join with others to achieve community goals. While these unstated goals were difficult to measure and even harder to put on paper for the Field Foundation when justifying the program or the need for funds, CEP staff never lost sight of the people who came to the training sessions – their experiences and needs in their community. Over the eight-year period of operation of the Citizenship Education Program, the curriculum was tweaked and changed not only to meet the voter registration goals, but also to meet the needs of the people attending the workshops. Sessions were added that equipped teachers to educate their students on Negro History and Consumer Education. Neither having a measurable impact on voter registration numbers, but both having an impact on the quality of life of the students. The workshops held at Dorchester were only a portion of the success of the Citizenship Education Program. What happened in front rooms and community gathering places was the real success of the program.

To fully understand the impact of the Citizenship Education Program, it is important to look at the work of Citizenship School teachers, field supervisors, and community leadership. Citizenship Schools were where the training received at Dorchester was put into action. Teachers canvassed their neighborhoods recruiting students, many risking their safety by opening their homes for classes twice a week. They organized community-wide voter

registration drives, accompanied their students to the voter registration office, and organized projects that improved their neighborhoods. Teachers even recommended their best students to attend the Citizenship Education Program workshops at Dorchester to start Citizenship Schools of their own.

Field supervisors helped recruit students, secured resources and speakers for class, and provided supplemental training for teachers where needed. In the Savannah area, one supervisor took his voter registration organization and partnered with the Citizenship Education Program to send over thirty people to Dorchester to be trained as Citizenship School teachers. Hosea L. Williams, president of the Chatham County Crusade for Voters (Southeast Georgia Crusade for Voters), eventually became the regional supervisor over the First Congressional District. His wife would serve as the field supervisor for the teachers in and around Savannah. Williams' organization would oversee several voter registration drives in Savannah and would host the 8th Annual Southern Christian Leadership Conference in September of 1964. Through his work with the Chatham County Crusade for Voters, he was able to identify and recommend illiterate blacks for classes that would help them achieve their goals of being "first class citizens."

Annelle Ponder, Citizenship Education Program staff member and field supervisor, detailed her efforts to oversee the growth of Citizenship Schools in Albany, Georgia and in the First District. In detailed reports, she documents the struggle to keep classes going in the face of intimidation and attempts to get new teachers trained and recruit students.

Both teachers and field supervisors were required to keep detailed records to submit to the Citizenship Education Program staff and analyzing these documents along with lesson plans and personal correspondence provides a glimpse into the classes and activities carried out in

many Southern communities. Newspaper articles in the *Savannah* Herald chronicle the Chatham County Crusade for Voters registration drives and efforts to unify the black leadership in Chatham County. While this chapter highlights just two cities, these activities took place in hundreds of towns all over the South to form the backbone of the Civil Right Movement.

Before taking a look at the Citizenship Schools, it is important to understand the obstacles that blacks faced when registering to vote. A brief comparison of the voter registration requirements for several Southern states provides an idea of what Citizenship School teachers were preparing their students to accomplish.

Voter Registration Requirements

A Guide for Georgia Voters published by the League of Women Voters Education Fund detailed the requirements for voter registration in the state of Georgia (SCLC, Box 544, 5). Applicants had to be at least eighteen years old, a United States citizen, a resident of Georgia for one year, and of the county registering in for six months. Applicants were required to be of good moral character, not a convicted felon, and mentally sound. They would have to choose which qualification for voting they met - "literacy" or "good character and understanding the obligations of citizenship." If selecting literacy as the basis for qualification, applicants had to read a portion of the state constitution aloud and submit a writing sample. If done "intelligibly" and "legibly" the applicant would be approved. If choosing good character, the applicant would be asked a series of thirty questions in which twenty had to be answered correctly.

The guide also included information on when to vote, where to vote, and how to work the balloting machine to select candidates and answer questions. The purpose of the absentee ballot was also explained and as was the process for applying to be an absentee voter. A portion of the

pamphlet was dedicated to explaining political parties and the process used by each for nominating candidates for the election. A brief description of each election (primary, general, referendum) was included along with a list of term limits for elected officials and information on how to address letters to these officials.

In an undated South Carolina Application for Voter Registration (SCLC, Box 563, 3), the applicant had to supply basic demographic information, including race, and then qualify to be a registered voter based on several statements. First, there was a South Carolina residency requirement of two years and at least one year for the specific county. Two exceptions were granted, one for clergy and their spouses, and the other for teachers with at least six months of residency. Applicants had to attest that they were not, "...an idiot, or insane, a pauper supported at public expense or confined in any public prison" or ever been convicted of crimes that included "...adultery, bigamy, wife beating, and fornication." Finally, the applicant had to *demonstrate* that they could "...both read and write a section of the Constitution of South Carolina; or own and have paid all taxes due last year on property in this State assessed at \$300.00 or more." The South Carolina Constitution also stipulated that every few years the voter registration list be purged and all citizens re-register to vote. This additional hurdle was particularly frustrating considering the effort it took to get blacks to register initially.

The Louisiana voter registration application (SCLC, Box 544, 5) featured a fill in the blank paragraph asking for demographic information and a series of "I have/have not" statements that applicants were required to read and mark through either "have" or "have not" to make the statement true. In Louisiana, applicants would not be approved for voting if they had been convicted of more than one misdemeanor, convicted of any felony, lived with another in common law marriage, or given birth to an illegitimate child within the past five years.

Voter registration guidelines for the state of Virginia were quite rigorous. The applicant would be given a paragraph from the Virginia Constitution and based on the paragraph and its content, handwrite the application on a blank sheet of paper providing all of the information needed for registration, without assistance, in the presence of the registrar who would then decide if the application was sufficient to allow registration (SCLC, Box 544, 5). Citizenship Education Program staff copied the paragraph from the Virginia Constitution and create a fill in the blank form that could be used to gather the data needed to make the handwritten application so that it could be memorized. In addition to the handwritten application, each applicant had to be at least twenty-one years old, prove one year of residency in Virginia and six months in the county where registering. Finally, applicants were required to successfully answer ten questions without assistance and pay a mandatory poll tax.

Most blacks lacked the reading and writing skills necessary to successfully register to vote. Citizenship Schools were designed to bridge the gap between a person's abilities and the requirements necessary to register. Every Citizenship School student came to the first night of class with different skill levels. Every teacher's job was to teach basic voter education and literacy skills so they could register to vote, get them actively participating in bettering their communities, and get them recruiting their friends and neighbors for future classes.

Citizenship Schools

The Citizenship School program under the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was very similar to the first Citizenship Schools held on Johns Island. Through the years, the lesson plans were refined and written out by Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson. With new funding came the resources to produce workbooks for students and materials for teachers. The

primary aim was still to teach literacy and encourage students to register and vote, but additional lessons were added to the original curriculum and community involvement was emphasized.

According to an undated publication from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Citizenship Schools were “an adult school for people who need to learn the basic skills and information which will help them in registering and voting” (Citizenship School Training Program). Citizenship Schools were open to “...all people of a community who face problems related to first-class citizenship and who want to do something about it.” A “school” consisted of ten to fifteen students that attended class twice a week for two hours for a twelve week period of time. There were three major components to every twelve week session - voter registration, community organization, and recruitment for future classes. There were usually several Citizenship Schools in some of the larger counties and classes would be held in homes, churches, or community facilities.

Each class was led by a teacher who had completed the Citizenship Education Program workshop at Dorchester. Each teacher was taught how to assess his or her local community needs and how to teach the Citizenship School material. Specific duties involved teaching classes, record keeping, recruiting, and guiding students to participate in community activities. Each teacher reported to a field supervisor, who in turn reported to the Citizenship Education Program staff. Both the teacher and supervisor were required to attend an annual weekend refresher course at Dorchester that included classes on teaching, recruiting, changes in voting law, and changes to the Citizenship School curriculum (CEP correspondence, January 28, 1964). For example, after the Civil Rights Act was passed, teachers received new course material and lessons on how to teach the sections of the legislation to students.

While the refresher course at Dorchester was highly recommended, sometimes Citizenship School teachers were unable to attend due to family or work schedules. Harnitha Smith, a new Citizenship School teacher, wrote to Septima Clark and explained that she was not able to attend the refresher course in March of 1963 because her supervisor would not release her from work (Smith, correspondence, March 27, 1963). For many teachers, this was the only income that they earned, but for others, teaching classes was something they did in the evenings after working a full day.

Supervisors were also trained at Dorchester. Each supervisor learned how to recruit students through contacts with local churches and civic organizations, how to discern the different needs of the region he or she was in charge of, and how to coordinate and support the teachers within that region. Field Supervisors managing five or more schools were to receive \$50 per month for expenses related to visiting schools and meeting with teachers. Specific duties involved recruiting, record keeping, assisting in requisitioning materials and equipment for each Citizenship School, assisting the teacher in determining a location and recruiting students, organizing new schools within their territory, and advising teachers on community activities. Field supervisors visited teachers to determine needs, collect documentation, and offer support. Depending on the needs of the group, field supervisors would arrange speakers from around the area to address specific issues like creating co-ops, credit unions, banking, Planned Parenthood, federal programs, and housing issues.

Prior to training at Dorchester, Citizenship Education Program staff sent questionnaires to participants to determine the needs of their community to better train the Citizenship School teachers to address those issues. During the workshops, participants would be grouped to address common community needs. For example, if several participants came from communities

with aggressive law enforcement or inadequate school facilities, small groups would discuss those issues and come up with specific actions to take to address those issues. If further assistance was needed, speakers could be brought in for special training sessions. Information from the “Questionnaire about Community Background” was ultimately shared with the field supervisor.

The questionnaire also asked the participants questions specifically about hosting a Citizenship School in their community. First, they were asked to consider when the best time would be to hold the classes. They were asked to consider seasonal employment issues and which hours would be best for classes so that people could attend and it not interfere with job obligations. They were asked if there were issues in that community with meeting in a public place due to disapproval by the black or white community. Participants were asked to list the specific voting requirements their students would have to meet to become a registered voter. Was a literacy test required? Was illiteracy a problem in that community? Was voting made difficult because of harassment or intimidation? Was there an organization already at work in the community to increase voter registration and participation? Was there any help from the white community with voter registration? Answers to these questions helped Citizenship Education Program staff, field supervisors, and teachers prepare to be as effective as possible in their community.

All Citizenship School teachers were required to attend the Citizenship Education Program five-day workshop at Dorchester prior to teaching classes but not all workshop graduates became Citizenship School teachers. Many of them did, many of those that attended the workshops were community organizers, religious leaders, and just ordinary citizens fed up with unequal treatment. They may have never coordinated their own Citizenship School, but

they often went back into their communities and recruited others to attend the workshops at Dorchester. Ministers were encouraged to attend the workshops at Dorchester to learn more about the idea behind the Citizenship Schools and the push for voter registration so they could recruit from the pulpit (Workshop Roster, 1967) (SCLC, Box 564, 4).

Teacher Qualifications

The Curriculum Guide for Adult Education (SCLC, Box 551, 18) published in 1966 contained many useful pieces of information including the minimum requirements for Citizenship School teachers and their responsibilities. The candidate had to be twenty-one years old with some high school education. More importantly, the candidate had to be able to read well aloud and write legibly on a blackboard. The age and schooling requirement could be waived though if the candidate met the other conditions (Teacher Application) (SCLC, Box 544, 3). Selection of teachers for Citizenship Schools was based on the potential teacher's skill level and enthusiasm for being a teacher. Initially, college students were recruited but the staff found that while the college students were zealous to be part of the Movement, they were unable to work around their academic courses to attend the Citizenship Education Program workshops. According to a memo, the staff considered hosting teacher training workshops on college campuses but there was no other mention of this proposal or evidence to support that this actually happened. Anelle Ponder, in a field report from the Albany Citizenship Schools, reported that she supervised a few younger teachers that were college students, but these teachers were also involved in protests and were often jailed, which disrupted the Citizenship School classes (Citizenship Education Program, Albany, Georgia, 1962). Ponder recommended that they cease trying to recruit college students and focus more on middle-aged men and women within the community.

In addition to these requirements, Citizenship School teachers had to know or be able to find out information related to voter registration. Teachers had to know or be able to find out where the voter registration office was located, when the office was open, and the requirements for voter registration. Teachers also had to be aware of the different phases of the election - primaries, general elections, and party conventions. Ideally, the teacher would already be registered to vote therefore having first-hand knowledge of the registration process to teach their students. It was also important to know the names and a little about the elected officials in the community. Students were encouraged to write to their elected officials about community concerns. Teachers also had to know where the closest social security and welfare offices were located and local options for healthcare services (Selection of Teachers) (SCLC, Box 551, 18). The priority for Citizenship School was always to register and get people out to vote, but teachers also helped with increasing the student's quality of life.

Teachers also had to be in the community enough to recruit students. Ideally, teachers would recruit in their neighborhoods or through church and other civic organizations. In the back of each Citizenship Education Program workbook was a survey and chart to be used to canvas the neighborhood to find out if the residents were registered to vote. Teachers were encouraged to host block parties and create conversations about voting.

Recruitment Meetings

One of the primary ways that students were recruited for Citizenship Schools was through informal home meetings arranged by the field supervisor and hosted by a Citizenship School teacher. Field supervisors often traveled throughout an area visiting churches, businesses, and local organizations in search of students for Citizenship School classes. Upon

finding someone who was not registered to vote, they would be invited to an informational meeting hosted by a Citizenship School teacher. Because many did not own vehicles, classes had to be within walking distance of the potential student.

A Field Report submitted by Citizenship Education Program staff members Septima Clark, Dorothy Cotton, and Mary Todd, offers an inside glimpse at the format of the meeting (SCLC, Box 545, 3). The meeting hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Keith, lived in Atlanta and were interested in conducting Citizenship School classes out of their home. After canvassing the neighborhood to find out who was not registered to vote, nine people were invited to the Keith's home to read over and discuss the purpose of the Citizenship Schools, the history of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and to look over the workbook provided for the class. Two films were also shown, "Public Opinion in our Democracy" and "A Citizen Makes a Decision." The field report doesn't indicate if the nine students were enrolled in classes, but there is a note stating that the Keith's were scheduled to attend a Citizenship Education Program workshop at Dorchester later that month and then classes would begin in their home shortly afterward.

Record Keeping

During the five-day workshops at Dorchester, teachers were taught the relevance of census data for the purpose of the political process. Explaining that the number of Representatives and electoral votes for each state were based on census data, every ten years the government employed thousands of people to conduct the census to get the most accurate population data possible. Likewise, teachers were taught the importance of recording and submitting data in the form of monthly reports. They were told that the data from the monthly

reports would be compiled and reported back to the Field Foundation, but also used to make program decisions back at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference office in Atlanta. Each teacher was given several blank monthly report sheets to complete and mail in to qualify for their \$30 check. Teachers were given specific instructions on how to tally nightly and monthly attendance numbers for the report.

On the monthly report the teacher would list the names, addresses, and ages of each student who attended class that month. The report included the name and address of the teacher, the location of the Citizenship School class, and which nights the classes were held. Teachers were to track the student's attendance and whether they were able to register to vote at the conclusion of the classes. There was also section for the teacher to request materials and write a brief description of the community activities in which the students were involved (Blank Monthly Report) (SCLC, Box 551, 18).

Citizenship School teachers who were submitting their first monthly report were also given an expense voucher to complete for expenses incurred in setting up the classes. Teachers could submit purchase receipts for up to \$40 for supplies including pencils, paper, chalkboard, chalk, and erasers (Expense Voucher) (SCLC, Box 551, 18). Each teacher earned \$30 a month conducting classes and that money was meant as compensation for the teacher, but also to cover facility expenses, if applicable. Many teachers conducted classes out of their homes but a few held classes in churches or paid a small fee to hold classes in community buildings.

Learning to Read & Other Lesson Plans

During training, Citizenship School teachers were given a suggested class schedule for each two hour class (SCLC, Box 551, 18). Teachers were instructed to group students according

to reading and writing ability. The teacher would visit with each of the groups who were completing various activities and provide direct instruction as needed. Advanced students could be paired with struggling students during some of the more difficult reading assignments. The last thirty minutes of class would be a common activity like watching a film, listening to a speaker, or guiding a group discussion on a community issue.

The first night of class always started with a song, prayer, and scripture (First Night Lessons) (SCLC, Box 551, 18). The teacher and students would spend time doing introductions and then the teacher would describe the purpose of the Citizenship Schools and desired outcomes. A brief history of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference would be included and an emphasis placed on voting by reading “The Bible and the Ballot” written by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The teacher would then explain the requirements for voter registration to the class. Students interested in working toward voter registration would be added to the official roll for the classes at the end of the night. The first night of class would always close with a group singing of “We Shall Overcome.”

Citizenship School teachers were instructed to remember that the “best teacher does not tell - but asks” and to “ask questions of the class, even though you may have the answer already” because students would be “...more interested if they are helped to think through a situation.” Teacher training highlighted how to phrase questions depending on the response desired and instructed on how to lead a discussion. Because students were learning from each other’s situations and experiences, it was important that the teacher be able to lead a productive discussion. According to the “Helpful Hints in Teaching Citizenship Class” (SCLC, Box 544, 18), there were five steps for leading a discussion. First, the leader had to motivate the group to discussion by pictures or a known situation, possibly suggested by the group. For example, a

topic for discussion might be how to canvas the neighborhood to determine how many residents were registered to vote. Next, the teacher would clarify the problem and define key words to be used during the discussion. The teacher would then break the whole group down into smaller groups to discuss options. Each small group would then be allowed to share the highlights of their discussion while the teacher wrote an outline on the board and the group would come to a consensus or measure of steps to address the situation. Follow up on the situation would be addressed during a future class (SCLC, Box 544, 3).

Citizenship School teachers were instructed on how to teach vocabulary. There were several different approaches depending on the situation. When teaching the Constitution, teachers started out by asking the group to define key words prior to the reading of the actual document like “citizen” and “legislature.” In other cases, words were defined as the students read passages. Regardless of the method used, students were taught to read it, pronounce it, write it, and define it. The Citizenship School workbook contained several pages of key vocabulary necessary for understanding Consumer Education, Politics, and Voting Rights (SCLC, Box 544, 3).

Much time was spent at Dorchester training the Citizenship School teachers on how to teach reading. Learning to read, along with writing, would be integrated into all Citizenship School lessons because it was the key in most states to being eligible to register to vote and they believed, also the key to being a first-class citizen and fully participating in society. In a document titled, “Reading for a Purpose,” teachers were given instructions on how to build reading lessons (SCLC, Box 551, 18). The teacher was reminded that reading was a communication skill and all reading lessons should incorporate speaking skills. Not only was it important for students to learn to read to themselves, but they had to be able to read aloud and

enunciate words clearly to pass the voter registration exam. Students were always encouraged to read aloud in class to practice their speaking skills

Teachers were instructed to go over the basics of learning to read because many of their older students were completely illiterate. Students had to be shown how to read from left to right, just as many would have to be shown how to hold a pencil without breaking the lead in order to learn to write. Teachers would ask students to tell stories so that the teacher could pick out key words that would be written on the chalkboard so students could begin to visually identify common words. Teachers were also encouraged to use pictures in class, have the student identify objects in the pictures, and then the teacher would write them on the board. Basically, teachers were building a collection of sight words. Letter sounds would be practiced with the introduction of each new word. Because classes were only twelve weeks long, teachers had to accelerate the learning process by using sight words and documents used in everyday life. Also, teachers did not want to belittle their adult students by using grade school reading and writing materials. Students were encouraged to bring books, newspapers, letters, and other documents to read in class.

As mentioned before, reading and writing were integrated into every lesson. During Negro History lessons, student were given short biographies of black leaders like W. E. B. DuBois and Mary McLeod Bethune to read and then questions to answer in writing. A lesson on employment rights included an excerpt from Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that was used for reading practice. Prior to reading the excerpts the teacher would go over a list of sight words like “discriminate” and “negotiate” explaining their meaning and how to pronounce each one. Students were given a blank form letter addressed to the Attorney General of the United States to report equal employment violations and were then guided on how to read the document

and fill it out. Passages in the workbook covered topics like Social Security and would be used to lead discussion and discovery of where the local Social Security office was located and how the program works. Citizenship School teachers were encouraged to ask a representative from the local office to speak to the class. Even Consumer Education and Banking lessons included short stories about every day banking and shopping experiences which students were taught to read and then answer questions about in writing (Citizenship School Workbook, undated) (SCLC, Box 544, 3).

Students were taught the proper formatting and procedure for writing letters to “take care of business matters or stay in touch with friends” (SCLC, Box 544, 3). Students were told that letter writing was “...more effective if your letter says exactly what you mean and if it looks good.” Students learned the five parts of a letter and were encouraged to bring letters to class for discussion, dissection, and response. All students were required to write a letter to complete the lesson. Some students wrote letters to elected officials, but many chose to write letters to family members.

Voter education was a primary focus for the first four weeks of classes. Instructional materials ranged from copies of the voter registration application and questions asked, to copies of the state’s constitution, which was often used to demonstrate the ability to read and write. A Guide for Georgia Voters published by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (SCLC, Box 544, 3) out of Washington, D. C. included everything a citizen needed to know about the political process of elections and voting. Lesson plans also included several fill in the blank worksheets used to assess student’s understanding of the lesson and to provide reading and writing practice.

Community organization was the focus for the second four weeks of classes. Students were encouraged to identify community issues during guided discussions and those issues were often the reason behind community action. One Citizenship School group, led by Mrs. Charlotte Dawson in Savannah, wrote letters and attended city meetings to request repairs to the neighborhood sewer. Another group, out of Augusta, Georgia, was working on a small business loan to start up a neighborhood supermarket (SCLC, Box 566, 20). In an undated document sent to Citizenship School teachers, the Citizenship Education Program staff encouraged the teachers to consider forming a Citizenship Education Club for those that have graduated from Citizenship School and to become Southern Christian Leadership Conference affiliates so they could receive continued support. The purpose of the club was to organize the graduates around community service projects like voter registration drives or setting up cooperatives and credit unions. These groups were instrumental in improving the condition of several communities throughout the South.

The final four weeks of class focused on recruiting students for future Citizenship School classes and getting registered to vote. The “Helpful Hints in Teaching Citizenship Class” (SCLC, Box 544, 18) suggested that students invite people in the community to a class social, hear a guest speaker, or watch a film. These gatherings would often be used to share testimonies about students learning to read and write and pass the voter registration test.

While the lesson plans were fairly standard across all Citizenship Schools, the materials used to teach the lessons were at the discretion of the teacher. The home office in Atlanta had a book and film library available for teachers and field supervisors to check out resources for classes. Audio-visual equipment was also available for use. Teachers were also given a list of materials to have on hand at all times to use for reading lessons (Suggestions for Teachers)

(SCLC, Box 551, 18). Materials on the list included a copy of the voter registration form, the Citizenship School workbook which was furnished by the Citizenship Education Program, a copy of the "Why Vote" pamphlet, local newspaper and magazine articles, a copy of the state and United States Constitutions, and pamphlets from local government agencies like the Social Security Administration.

Because the classes were only twelve weeks long, Citizenship School teachers could teach between three and four cohorts each year. Teachers kept in contact with their students at the completion of the classes to document if and when students were able to register to vote. Teachers also relied on former students for community projects and voter registration drives.

Citizenship School Teachers

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference archive collection held at Emory University contains several files containing Citizenship School teacher reports and correspondence. Unfortunately, the records were only from 1968 to 1970. There is no indication in the collection as to the status of records prior to 1968 or after 1970. The majority of the records consisted of attendance reports and copies of paystubs and the majority of the records were from teachers who taught in Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi. Teachers were required to mail in monthly reports in order to receive compensation and these files appear to be the documentation of classes held and paychecks written and mailed to the teacher.

The following paragraphs contain information on Citizenship School teachers from Georgia who had several pieces of documentation including monthly reports, paystubs, and personal correspondence with Citizenship Education Program staff members.

According to teacher records (SCLC, Box 566,18), Mrs. Rosa Lee Clark taught Citizenship School classes from her home at 326 Price Street in Savannah, Georgia in 1969 every Monday and Wednesday. Rosa Lee Clark was a member of the Chatham County Crusade for Voters. She attached a newspaper clip to one of her July monthly reports where she was mentioned as the Assistant Coordinator for a voter registration drive being held from July 21 - 25, 1969. In earlier correspondence from Dorothy Cotton (Cotton correspondence, February 18, 1969) to Rosa Lee Clark, Cotton inquired as to whether Clark was "...helping your students and others you contact to register to vote" and asked her not to forget to teach "consumer education." Cotton closed by also encouraging Clark to "...get people doing things in the community and not just talking in the classes..." Rosa Lee Clark responded back in a letter stating that "my first concern is helping voter registration and secondary in Consumer and budg[et]ing, more of my student[s] are on welfare, so therefore it is necessary to teach them the important of money" (Clark correspondence, February 19, 1969) (SCLC, Box 566, 18).

Miss Blondell Corley taught Citizenship School classes at her home at 1005 7th Avenue, Augusta, Georgia. Teacher records for the months September, October, and November 1969 (SCLC, Box 566, 20) indicate that she had nine students enrolled in class - five women and four men. In a letter to Dorothy Cotton (Corley correspondence, January 23, 1969), Corley described two community projects her class was helping to organize, a supermarket and a sewing center. She reported that she was working with a group of ministers to open the supermarket and that she assisted with an application for a small business loan for \$1,500 to help with startup costs.

Mrs. Mazie V. Davis held Citizenship School classes at her home in the Jackson Park area of Savannah (SCLC, Box 566, 25). The address on the monthly report is 1025 Amaranth

Avenue which is now called Arlington Avenue. Mrs. Davis' records indicate that she had full classes, or 14 students, every month from 1969 to 1972. The majority of her students were in their 50s, 60s, and 70s and were not registered to vote. She also reported several community projects including cleaning up the neighborhood. She requested instructional materials on Negro History be sent to her home and upon receiving the resources reported, "The class is so excited over Negro History and to learn what our Black men have done." Her April 1970 monthly report mentioned that her class was busy in the community getting ready for the Savannah primary for city mayor and Negro alderman. Many of the Citizenship classes helped with voter registration drives and also helped on Election Day by monitoring the polling sites for violations and transporting voters without vehicles to and from the polls. In her July 1970 monthly report, she noted that her class attended an "excellent" speech by Mr. Hosea Williams.

Mrs. Charlotte Dawson held Citizenship Education classes every Monday and Wednesday in Savannah, Georgia between 1969-1970 (SCLC, Box 566, 26). Her class sizes were anywhere between nine to twelve students and their ages ranged from the early twenties to mid-sixties. According to records, her classes formed a Community Club and they were quite active in the area petitioning the City Council for paved streets and repairs to the sewer. Mrs. Dawson reported that they also met with an Economic Opportunity Act lawyer regarding the sewer issues at one point because their requests to the city were being ignored. Records show that Mrs. Dawson's Community Club worked for a year to finally get attention from the city on the matter of the sewer. In her November 1969 monthly report, Mrs. Dawson included a clip of the newspaper article mentioning that the sewer proposal had finally passed City Council.

Again, there were no records of Citizenship School teachers prior to 1968 in the archives, however, correspondence and annual reports confirm that there were Citizenship Schools in each

of the Southern States. While the majority of the teachers were women, there were a few men who also taught classes. Many of the available records had little more than a monthly report or letter from the Atlanta office regarding compensation. I purposely chose the records of Citizenship School teachers close to the Savannah area and with multiple documents supporting the teacher's activities.

Reports from the Field

Citizenship School teacher records are few and consist mainly of attendance sheets but much can be learned from the field reports submitted by the field supervisors and Citizenship Education Program staff who visited different areas and teachers during the three weeks a month that they were not hosting a workshop at Dorchester. Even before the Southern Christian Leadership Conference took over the Citizenship Education Project from Highlander, following up with the teachers who had attended training was an important practice. In a September 1960 field report, Septima Clark reported that the Chatham County Crusade for Voters organization was created in April (SCLC, Box 545, 3). The group had already organized a voter registration campaign and was taking an active part in the boycott of the downtown Savannah department stores. Their purpose in contacting Clark and the Highlander Folk School was to get assistance with training grassroots leaders. Clark reported that she and Bernice Robinson were scheduled to meet with this group and the president of the Savannah NAACP in October to get an idea of which courses they would like offered for their members. The leader of the Chatham County Crusade for Voters, Mr. Hosea Williams, would be one of the more successful regional organizers for the Citizenship Education Program over the First Congressional District of Georgia.

Hosea Williams, originally from Attapulcus, Georgia, settled in the Savannah area after serving in World War II. Williams was an early supporter of the NAACP and the Citizenship Schools program at Highlander. Believing in the power of the ballot, Williams organized the Chatham County Crusade for Voters program and served as a Citizenship Education Program regional supervisor for the First Congressional District which included Chatham County (Cotton, correspondence, April 5, 1962). Williams requested and received funds to establish several Citizenship Schools throughout the First District and used these schools to bolster the Chatham County Crusade for Voters program. By the early 1970s, Citizenship Schools under his supervision had registered hundreds of new voters and completed numerous community improvement projects. In a letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. dated December of 1963, Septima Clark stated that, "Southeastern and Southwestern, Georgia under Mr. Hosea Williams show great promise" (Clark, Report, December 1963).

By the fall of 1964, Hosea Williams would become the Director of Direct Action with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and his organization, the Chatham County Crusade for Voters, would host the SCLC 8th Annual Convention in Savannah (Adams, Sept. 12, 1964). A Savannah Herald newspaper article on the event stated that the convention's theme was "New Directions" with a focus on poverty and unemployment, direct action, nonviolent principles, and building alliances with other organizations (Adams, Sept. 19, 1964). More than five hundred delegates and one thousand representatives from SCLC's two hundred and ten affiliates attended the conference. While Butler Presbyterian was the headquarters for the event, two mass rallies were held at Greyson Stadium and the highlight of the conference, the Freedom Banquet, was held at the DeSoto Hilton with keynote speakers A. Phillip Randolph, James Farmer, and Jackie Robinson (Adams, Sept. 12, 1964).

In October of the same year, Williams also organized and launched a “Get Out the Vote Drive” (Adams, Oct. 24, 1964) with the help of volunteers from the Chatham County Crusade for Voters and the First District Citizenship Schools. The goal of the program was to get ninety percent of registered black voters to the polls for the 1964 presidential elections. The article stated that currently there were three hundred thousand black voters in Georgia and two hundred thousand in South Carolina. Floyd Adams, editor for the Savannah Herald, noted in his editorial that, “without a concentrated effort on the part of the Negro voter there is a risk of grave consequences in both local and national elections this year” (Adams, Oct. 10, 1964).

The 1964 presidential election was also a turning point for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, who for the first time in its ten years of commitment to being a non-partisan organization, endorsed a presidential candidate. Stating that, “this is the most critical and crucial election in the history of the nation,” Martin L. King, Jr. and the SCLC endorsed incumbent President Lyndon B. Johnson over Republican nominee, Senator Barry Goldwater (Adams, Oct. 31, 1964). King went on to say that Senator Goldwater, “...has endorsed a philosophy that could destroy the nation” and that in the states of Mississippi and Alabama, “even the good Lord could not win there.” Therefore, it was critical for every black voter to go to the polls on Election Day. Citizenship School teachers and students, along with other community organizations, canvassed neighborhoods and encouraged voters to get out and vote.

President Johnson was re-elected in 1964 thanks in part to black voters. Using this political victory to create momentum, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference renewed their drive to increase voter registration. During the summer of 1965, Hosea Williams, in conjunction with the SCLC and the Citizenship Education Program, launched the Summer Community Organization and Political Education Program (SCOPE). The program’s purpose

was, “to help citizens in their war against discrimination” (Adams, Jul. 3, 1965) with a three-prong method of attack: voter registration, political education, and community organization. The program relied heavily on community volunteers and many former Citizenship School students participated along with college students. As volunteers canvassed neighborhoods and businesses, individuals who were unable to register to vote because they were unable to read and write were referred to nearby Citizenship Schools.

According to front page headlines from the Savannah Herald in September of 1965, the SCOPE program accomplished, “...a sizeable number of newly registered voters, and, it is hoped, an increased interest in political rights and education on the part of the negro community” (Adams, Sept. 4, 1965). SCOPE leaders boasted that through the program fifteen hundred blacks were registered to vote in the Savannah area alone. The SCOPE program did not end with the passing of summer, it was renamed the Voter Education Project and would continue to work in conjunction with Citizenship Schools. During the summer of 1966, SCOPE and NAACP would unite to encourage voter registration. Representatives from both organizations met and agreed to join forces to, “present the Negro community with a unified Negro leadership on matters involving politics, and to achieve maximum effectiveness of the Negro vote” (Adams, Jul. 30, 1966).

Citizenship Education Program staff member and field supervisor Ms. Annelle Ponder, traveled throughout Georgia visiting regional supervisors and meeting with individual Citizenship School teachers. Her reports shed light on training and Citizenship School activities in the First Congressional District and Albany area. In an undated field report for Savannah, Ponder described the First Congressional District (SCLC, Box 545, 2). Eighteen counties made up this district - Bryan, Burke, Bulloch, Candler, Chatham, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Jenkins,

Liberty, Long, McIntosh, Montgomery, Tattnall, Toombs, Treutlen, and Wheeler. Mr. Hosea Williams, president of Chatham County Crusade for Voters (later called Southeast Georgia Crusade for Voters) was considered the regional supervisor for this district. His wife, Mrs. Juanita T. Williams, supervised nineteen Citizenship School teachers in and around the Chatham County area.

In a field report filed for November 1962, Ponder reported attending a Citizenship Education Program kick-off meeting with Hosea Williams and the Chatham County Crusade for Voters (SCLC, Box 545, 3). The meeting was held at Butler Presbyterian Church in Savannah with thirty-one potential teachers from Chatham, Emanuel, Evans, Tattnall, and Wheeler counties attending the meeting. Ponder stated that Williams led the meeting and, "...charged the group with the responsibility of making every effort to prepare the people of the district to become active participants in the social and political life of their communities through community education and the use of the ballot." She also reported that several of those in attendance had already attended workshops at Highlander or Dorchester. Also in attendance at the meeting were five of the area supervisors, where "each one introduced the teachers from his area with great pride and high expectations."

Williams and Ponder arranged to provide a four-day training session for his teachers in Savannah on a Monday through Thursday and then arranged for them to travel to Dorchester for a weekend of training with the Citizenship Education Program staff. The goal was to have all Citizenship Schools in the district operational beginning in January of 1963. Of particular concern to this group of potential teachers were the ongoing boycott of downtown businesses and the recent beating death of a black man visiting Savannah. Ponder had high praise for Mr. Williams and the people he recruited. After meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Williams and several of

the teachers, Ponder noted that “the teachers have the enthusiasm, the spirit of active community participation, and are well prepared as far as political functioning...” During this particular field visit, Ponder also attended one of the NAACP’s mass meetings held weekly throughout the city.

Recruitment for the new Citizenship Schools was also discussed at the meeting. Ponder pointed out that there were three types of people being recruited for classes within this district. Citizens who could not read or write, citizens who could read and write with some help, and citizens who had no trouble reading and writing but were “inactive in civic and political affairs.” Statistics included in the report for the First Congressional District claimed that 40% were illiterate and the other 60% were a mixture of the last two categories.

The field report included a special section on Liberty County, apparently there was some strife between Hosea Williams and local leadership in the county. Ponder reported that in speaking with Mr. Ralph Quarterman, who was the Liberty County NAACP representative, she understood that there were no Citizenship Schools currently operating or teachers from that county who had completed the Citizenship Education Program workshops. There seemed to be a plan in place to start four schools in January, but no other details were given in this report as to their location and how they were being coordinated. Ponder said, “The local people have some reservations about working with the Southeastern Georgia Crusade for Voters” and Hosea Williams, citing a misunderstanding regarding funding that had happened previously. Because of this incident, the people in the county preferred to work directly with the Citizenship Education Program staff from Atlanta. Ponder recommended in her report that a conference be arranged with Andrew Young, Hosea Williams, and Mr. Ralph Quarterman to “clarify misunderstandings and settle differences.” In summary, Ponder noted that the First Congressional District had “thirty teachers, five county supervisors, and one area supervisor.”

Annelle Ponder also spent considerable time in Albany, Georgia where she worked on the Albany Project. In a report detailing her work in Albany for the Summer and Fall of 1962, she described her efforts to increase the number of registered voters in the area by establishing several Citizenship Schools (Citizenship Education Program, Albany, Georgia, October 1962). Ponder reports that this visit was a second effort. The first effort to establish Citizenship Schools and increase voter registration relied on high school and college students as teachers and upon making field visits, Ponder was discouraged to find that five of the six Citizenship Schools were no longer in operation. According to the report, teachers for these schools were heavily involved in resistance efforts - sit-ins, picketing, and marching. Those efforts often led to arrests and lengthy jail times which resulted in a disruption of the classes. During this second effort, Citizenship School teachers selected were not actively involved in protest activities. The Citizenship School Project in Albany was established to address the critical needs for this specific community - illiteracy and lack of knowledge of the voting registration process.

Ponder reports that recruitment of the Citizenship School teachers and students was accomplished through mass meetings that were held almost every night in different places throughout Dougherty County during the summer months. Local voter registration staff helped Ponder with securing places to hold the mass meetings and getting the word out to the community of meeting locations and times. Voter registration workers also referred those that were unable to pass the literacy tests to Ponder to contact regarding the Citizenship Schools. Mass meeting advertising was also done through the local black newspaper, handbills, church pulpits, and other social and civic organizations.

Ponder met weekly with the Citizenship School teachers to discuss progress and issues. She also assisted with record keeping, providing materials, and updating lesson

plans. She reported that the teaching staff consisted of a balance between “mature adults” and younger teachers, all of whom had completed the Citizenship Education Workshop at Dorchester or were scheduled to attend a future workshop. Ponder also held individual meetings with teachers as needed and helped to arrange speakers and coordinate community activities and educational trips. At the time of the report, Ponder stated that there were ten schools operating in Albany area churches and four school meeting in teacher’s homes. Maximum enrollment for each school was capped off at fourteen students.

Ponder spent considerable time in the report detailing the content of the lessons taught in each of the schools. While the Citizenship Workbook was the primary instructional material used, as a group the schools were focused on three main learning targets - Voter Registration Preparation, Government and Legislation, and Religion and Community Life. Four weeks of lessons focused on preparing for voter registration. Lesson plans included readings from the workbook, films, and literacy test practice. Sample ballots were used and instructions on how to operate a voting machine were included. For homework, students were asked to canvass their neighborhoods, friends, and family members on their voter registration status. The second four weeks of lessons focused on the structure and function of the different levels of government and legislation. Once again the workbook was used for relevant readings, but copies of local laws and the constitution were also used as instructional materials. Ponder arranged for Attorney C. B. King to serve as a speaker for many of the classes and used other speakers to address specific issues related to the law. The final month of class focused on religion and life within their community. Classes visited various churches and heard speakers from different religious backgrounds.

Several of the schools also held a variety of other activities including socials, panel discussions, and lessons on being a good homemaker. Community service projects included helping with voter registration drives and volunteering with the Red Cross and other health organizations. Black history and culture were studied and celebrated and students were also kept abreast of local job opportunities. Ponder closed the report by stating that she enjoyed working with this group of teachers in Albany and hoped to be able to check back in with them in the future. A list of teacher names and contact information were included in the report along with a list of volunteers.

In a field report filed for October 1962, Ponder recounted a different visit to Albany where she made site visits to several established Citizenship Schools and also met with the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority to discuss coordinating several new Citizenship Schools that the sorority would sponsor (SCLC, Box 545, 3). She agreed to make arrangements for a special training session specifically for those teachers on a Monday through Thursday evening in Albany, with the weekend spent at Dorchester to accommodate the teacher's work schedules.

While in Albany, Ponder reported that she attended the trial of a few Albany area ministers who were arrested following a demonstration in the city. Ponder stated that, "despite overwhelming evidence to dispute the charges," the ministers were found guilty of creating a disturbance and blocking the sidewalk during the demonstration. She closed with a report that one of the local ministers was having a hard time getting the other ministers in the area to support the Citizenship School idea, but that he had not given up.

Field supervisors were also required to file annual reports detailing their work in the field. In an annual report filed for 1965-1966, Ponder noted that she completed field work in

Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Georgia (Yearly Report of Activities, 1966). Special projects included the Alabama Primary, Grenada Movement, and SCLC Annual Convention. Ponder noted that planning for a summer cooperative program on school integration with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) took place, but due to a lack of SNCC funds and Ponder's schedule, the program did not happen. Summarizing her work in the office, Ponder noted that she spent the year working on Citizenship Education Program publications and researching information for lesson plans on political and consumer education. She also spent time training new clerical and office staff. Ponder taught several sessions on banking, consumer education, and federal programs during the year and created a "Freedom Library" at Dorchester. Ponder ended her report with recommendations to focus more on Atlanta and coordinate several refresher courses to "re-activate" Citizenship Schools across the South. She also recommended more research for the consumer education lesson plans, to allow a time for small group discussion after impactful films during training, add back into the Citizenship Education Program workshops the portion of training where the students practice teaching, and finally, to include a training session showing teachers how to use the audio visual machines.

Field supervisors were an important part of the Citizenship Education Program offering support after the initial week of training. They also attended community meetings and churches to recruit students for the Citizenship Schools. According to a Citizenship Education Program proposal for 1965 written by Septima Clark (SCLC, Box 559, 3), field supervisors like Annelle Ponder were only paid \$7,200 to \$8,400 annually plus reimbursement of traveling expenses. These supervisors often spent half of the month on the road visiting Citizenship School teachers from different parts of the state. When they were not on the road, they were in the Atlanta office

answering correspondence, filing reports, analyzing data, and gathering resources for Citizenship School lessons.

Community Activities

From the very first workshops held at the Highlander Folk School until the last workshops held at Dorchester, participants were encouraged to act on what they learned. “What are you going to do back home?” (Brown, 1990, p. 30) They were expected to take action. Students were taught how to gather together and discuss their issues and possible solutions. They were taught to write letters, make phone calls, and take direct action to get their concerns addressed. Four of the twelve weeks spent in the Citizenship School classes were dedicated to community organization and activities because Citizenship Education Program staff knew that was where the difference was made. Simply knowing how the government was structured and how the election process worked wasn’t the same as registering to vote and becoming part of that process. Because registering to vote was the primary focus of the Citizenship School classes, many of the students and teachers became actively involved in voter registration drives and other Election Day activities.

In an undated memorandum for Savannah Citizenship School students, duties for an upcoming Election Day were listed and described (SCLC, Box 551, 18). After an intense focus on teaching students to read, write, and successfully register to vote, volunteers staffed the precincts to ensure that those registered actually voted. Jobs listed on the document included Precinct Chairman, Poll Checkers, Transportation Committee, and Telephone Committee. Election Day activities appeared to be very organized and each person’s duties focused on getting those registered to the polling sites where they could vote. The Precinct

Chairman was in charge of coordinating the other volunteers for that particular location. Poll Checkers were supposed to check off each voter's name as they voted and then give a list of those who had not voted to the Telephone Committee by 2 p.m. The Telephone Committee would then contact the registered voter to determine why they had not been by to vote. Those on the Telephone Committee would then dispatch a volunteer with the Transportation Committee if a ride was needed.

Citizenship School teachers and graduates were critical to the success of voter registration drives and turnout on Election Day. Many of the Citizenship Schools focused on these drives as part of their community activities. One of the most successful voter registration programs, the Voter Education Project, relied heavily on the Citizenship Schools. Teachers and students volunteered to canvas neighborhoods and encouraged people to vote. If the volunteers came across people in the community who were not registered to vote because of illiteracy, they would recommend signing up for the Citizenship School classes.

The Impact of the Citizenship Schools

The impact of the Citizenship Schools can only be estimated. Fortunately, accurate and detailed record keeping was an important part of the work of the Citizenship Education Program staff and Citizenship School teachers. Using Citizenship Education Program proposals and Voter Education Project reports, an estimate of the number of students attending Citizenship Education classes and the number of blacks registering to vote is possible. Unfortunately, estimated registered voters for the latter half of the Citizenship Education Program from approximately 1966 to 1971 are not available.

Septima Clark compiled program data and composed a proposal for funding for the Citizenship Education Program for 1965 – 1970 (SCLC, Box 559, 3). At the time of the report, 1,413 people had completed the Citizenship Education Program workshop at Dorchester. There were 947 Citizenship School classes taught by teachers and 23, 829 students attended those classes. The report estimates that 95,000 people were registered to vote by teachers and students from the program's beginning in 1961 to the date of the report in February 1965.

According to a 1969 budget proposal for the Citizenship Education Program (SCLC, Box 559, 3), it was estimated that 3,500 people had completed the weeklong Citizenship Education Program workshop held at Dorchester and Penn Centers. Of that number, approximately “two-thirds of these persons became Citizenship School teachers...” It is possible to estimate that easily over 125,000 people were registered to vote from 1961 – 1971 through the efforts of Citizenship School teachers and students.

For a period of roughly seven years, Hosea Williams coordinated the Voter Education Project. Initially, Williams began working as a regional supervisor for the Citizenship Education Program but in 1965, Martin Luther King, Jr. appointed him to lead the Summer Community Organization and Political Education (SCOPE) program. This program was eventually renamed the Voter Education Project and was coordinated in conjunction with the Citizenship Education Program. The Voter Education Project and Citizenship Education Program staff compiled census and voter registration data and prepared reports and published pamphlets and promotional materials. With the help of other organizations aimed at increasing the black vote, staff members created a comprehensive guide for black voters. Included in this comprehensive guide were basic instructions on how to cast a vote (SCLC, Box 563, 3). Citizenship Education Program staff even had polling machines that were used for demonstrations during voter registration

drives. It was important to prepare the new voters in every way prior to Election Day so they could go to the polls with confidence.

Additionally, extensive research was conducted and compiled on black voters in the South and published for use by SCLC staff. One such report from 1967 included the counties across the Southern states where 45-75% of the total population was black (SCLC, Box 563, 3). This information was used by Voter Education Project and Citizenship Education Program staff when planning mass meetings and workshops. Counties where at least half of the population was black were prime targets for voter registration campaigns. The staff also compiled data on the number of black elected officials throughout the South and created a booklet describing the procedure for selecting delegates for the 1972 National Presidential Conventions.

The Voter Education Project published annual reports on voter data which provided some insight into the increase in black voter registration for the latter half of period that Citizenship Education Program was in operation. While it is not possible to say with certainty whether the increase in black voters indicated in the reports were due specifically to Citizenship Schools, the reports still given an accurate picture of the changes in the electorate between 1966 and 1968.

In a comparison of the Voter Registration in the South, Summer 1966 and Voter Registration in the South, Summer 1968 annual reports (SCLC, Box 563, 3), there is some evidence that voter education and registration efforts were making a positive impact. In Chatham County, from 1966 to 1968, the number of black and white citizens *able* to vote did not change but the number of registered black and white voters increased by approximately 4% for each group. According to the data, from 1966 to 1968 white voter registration increased by

3,669 votes and black voter registration increased by 1,352 votes. By 1968, 74.6% of whites were registered to vote (58,345 people) and 59.9% of Blacks were registered to vote (22,526 people). Contrast this with data for Liberty County where the Dorchester Center was located. The number of black and white registered voters did not change at all between 1966 and 1968, only 55.6% of whites were registered to vote (2,950 people), but 81.7% of Blacks were registered (2,594 people). Interestingly, according to the Citizenship Education Program records, there were few Citizenship Schools in Liberty County. The lack of Citizenship Schools could have been due to tensions between Hosea Williams and Ralph Quarterman, as Annelle Ponder's field report suggests (SCLC, Box 545, 3), or it could have been because of the already high percentage of black voters in Liberty County.

In a comparison of the number of registered white and black voters in the First Congressional District between 1966 and 1968, the number of white registered voters increased by 6,838 voters and the number of black registered voters increased by 3,872 voters. In the Albany area, comprised of Dougherty and Lee Counties, the number of white voters increased by 2,678 votes and the number of black votes increased by 3,371 votes. Overall, for the state of Georgia, the number of white voters increased by 150,172 voters and the number of black voters increased by 63,483 voters during the two year period.

In a one page report issued by the Voter Education Project in 1971 (SCLC, Box 563, 4), each state's overall voting data was listed. For Georgia, there were 2,325,304 whites of voting age. Approximately 68.76% of those whites were registered to vote for a total of 1,598,268 people. In contrast, there were only 700,519 Blacks of voting age. Approximately 64.2% of those blacks were registered to vote, which is only a 4% difference, but the total population of blacks registered to vote was only 450,000 people. That is a difference of over 1,000,000 people

going to the polls. The total for all eleven Southern states was even more revealing. In 1971 there were 17,378,394 whites registered to vote (65% of total white population in the South) and only 3,448,565 blacks (58% of total black population in the South).

As these numbers suggest, it was critical for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and other organizations to help blacks register to vote and do everything in their power to get voters to the polls on Election Day. After the 1964 presidential election, headlines in the Savannah Herald boasted of the Negro voter turn out and impact on the defeat of Senator Barry Goldwater:

“Civil rights leaders think that Negroes can take some credit for the landslide victory of President Johnson. This will according to many leaders teach Negroes that their votes do count” (Adams, Nov. 14, 1964).

“The strength at the polls is what will eventually control legislation that will establish freedom. The vote is the one weapon that will establish national truth. It is what we need to put the official lie out of business” (Adams, Mar. 27, 1965).

“One factor that figured very high in the resounding defeat of Senator Goldwater was the emerging Negro vote in the South” (Adams, Apr. 10, 1965).

Bolstered by this victory, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference used this momentum to launch more voter registration drives, train more Citizenship School teachers, and recruit more students for Citizenship School classes because ultimately, one major obstacle still prevented blacks from registering to vote – their ability to read and write (Adams, Jul. 3, 1965).

Even after the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, states were permitted to use literacy tests as a qualifier for voter registration. The act did not outlaw literacy tests, but did set forth requirements for states to follow. For example, all tests had to be administered in writing and the same test had to be given to any individual seeking to register to vote (H.R. 7152, 88th Cong. 1964). “The major goal remained helping people register to vote and realize the connection of voting to political power and how having such power – or not – impacted every aspect of their lives” (Cotton, 2012, p. 101). While the Citizenship Education Program’s aim was to train Citizenship School teachers who would teach others how to read and write and register to vote, ultimately the goal was to abolish literacy tests and that could only be accomplished through the polls.

The work of the Citizenship School teachers and field supervisors was instrumental in reaching voter registration numbers; however, one-third of the Citizenship School curriculum focused on community activity. It was always about action, even from the very first classes held at the Highlander Folk School. Being able to register to vote was just the beginning of the new opportunities that first-class citizens were afforded. Equipped with information on how to manage financial resources, the importance of banking and building credit, understanding in parliamentary procedure, and how to write letters of concern to elected officials, blacks across the South began to take the appropriate actions to better themselves and their communities.

CHAPTER 5

“NOW WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?”

In the front room of Mrs. Charlotte Dawson’s Savannah home, nine students, ages twenty-four to fifty-eight, worked together to practice sight words and read passages on Negro history. It was late March in 1969 and the parks around Savannah would have been filled with blooming azaleas and the Live Oaks bright green with the tiny leaves of spring time. We don’t know if Mrs. Clark had children or if she worked during the day but we do know that she, like many other women in Savannah, dedicated two evenings a week teaching her neighbors and friends how to read and write so they could register to vote. Records do not indicate how many years Mrs. Dawson taught class or when she initially traveled to Dorchester to receive her training. We don’t know the exact number of students who successfully registered to vote or how many started their own Citizenship Schools. We do know from monthly teacher records that she and her students started a community club that was instrumental in getting the sewer repaired in her neighborhood (Dawson Teacher Records, 1969) (SCLC, Box 566, 26). Mrs. Dawson noted that her club met with city officials and even met with an attorney until the city addressed their concerns. Also, by organizing voter registration drives, the club was able to successfully register others to vote. What happened in the front room of Charlotte Dawson’s home was the culmination of the Citizenship Education Program. The Citizenship Education Program was designed to take ordinary people and transform them into teachers and leaders within their community. Septima Clark estimates that approximately two-thirds of the students who attended workshops at Dorchester taught at least one group of students in their own Citizenship School (CEP Proposal, 1965) (SCLC, Box 559, 3).

This study began by looking at the roots of the Citizenship Education Program. Myles Horton's desire to create a place where ordinary citizens could come together and solve their community problems led to an educational journey of several different colleges and ultimately a trip to Denmark to study folk schools. With funding secured, Horton opened the Highlander Folk School and began leading workshops. The poor in Appalachia struggled with scarcity due to poor educational opportunities, inadequate wages, and unhealthy working conditions. Seeking to help them define and solve their problems, Horton brought in people who could teach workshops on collective bargaining and workers' rights. In addition to teaching them how to write letters and other actions to demand better working conditions, many of the staff members at Highlander stood shoulder to shoulder with the workers as they picketed the textile mills and farms that dotted the Appalachian mountainside. Eventually, the CIO would begin hosting conferences and workshops at Highlander, drawing union organizations from all over the region to learn about the power of collective bargaining.

In the late 1940s, Highlander and the CIO parted ways over the CIO's discriminatory practices. As the Supreme Court tackled tough decisions regarding segregation in schools and other public places, Horton began to position the school to be an active part of the desegregation process. Initially, the workshops were only attended by whites who supported desegregated schools. The students wrote letters and created maps and other resources to assist in the implementation of the Supreme Courts' *Brown vs. Board of the Education* decision. In the mid-1950s, for the first time, blacks began to travel to Highlander for workshops. This was the first time that many of the students had ever been in a desegregated setting. Highlander would grow in popularity and become known as a place where blacks and whites could come together to

solve problems. At the close of one summer workshop, a man from Johns Island would share his vision for a place where black adults could learn to read and write so they could register to vote.

In working with the poor in Appalachia for fair working conditions, Horton learned valuable lessons which would be used during into the workshops on integration held at Highlander and later at the Dorchester Center. First and foremost, you have to listen to people. You have to get people talking and discussing their problems so that you can understand how they perceive their problems (Horton, 1998, p. 70).

Ms. Ella Mae Morton traveled roughly seven hours by bus from Selma, Alabama to the Dorchester Center in late August of 1965 (Morton Telegram, 1965). She would have arrived late Monday afternoon and had enough time to place her personal belongings by her bunk in one of the women's rooms upstairs and freshen up before dinner. We do not know if she traveled alone or with others from the Selma area but there would have been people from several different states attending this workshop. The first dinner, served in the large banquet room downstairs beside the kitchen, would be her first chance to see the group that she would spend the next five days getting to know. After dinner, the first session would begin with staff introductions, prayer, and a few songs. One by one, each person would share a little about themselves – their situation back home and why they were attending the workshop. She likely had experiences back home similar to others in the group. As each person shared, nods and murmurs of agreement were likely expressed. Did she wonder what they could possibly accomplish in five days to change their circumstances back home? Did she know someone that came back from a workshop on fire and ready to do something about it?

For the Citizenship Education Program staff, it was important to get the people talking as soon as possible about their problems back home. First, those conversations guided the course

the workshop. Situations were used as examples to make the lesson relevant. Common community problems they wanted help with were denial of the right to vote, being shut out of public places and jobs, and mistreatment in the criminal justice system (Cotton, 2012, p. 116). Second, sharing those experiences created a level of trust and bonding between the students and staff. Cotton stated, “with these experiences of pain and hope and even celebration of coming together, we, the staff, started to share our intentions, the goals for this five-day experience, how we were all going to learn together and how we would work from the real-life experiences they brought with them – that we all brought together” (Cotton, 2012, p. 129).

One of the second things Horton and the staff at Highlander learned was that telling people what to do didn’t fix problems. The people had to be led to identify their problems and work out their own solutions. Horton stated that, “you don’t have to know the answers. The answers come from the people, and when they don’t have any answers, then you have another roll, and you find resources...” (Horton, 1998, p. 23). Often, through group discussion, shared experiences, and guest speakers, solutions emerged.

On the first full day of sessions, Mrs. Dorothy Cotton stood in front of the group and asked the question, “What is a citizen?” (Cotton, 2012, p. 131). One by one, students began to offer suggestions as to what a citizen looked like. Mrs. Cotton was careful not to discourage any answers. In fact, several suggestions were discussed with the class. She asked questions to help the students come up with more suggestions until the black board was full. She chose several of the suggestions and as the class watched, she pieced together a list of characteristics that described a citizen. Every session that week would be conducted in a similar fashion, not at all how Ella Mae Morton imagined the sessions would be taught. Questions would be posed, discussions would be held, and a consensus reached. By the middle of the week, when

discussing how to show someone how to hold a pencil or how to help someone sound out a word, two or three students would be asked to act out the scenario for the whole class. If there was a flaw in their method, it came out in the skit. The teachers and students would make suggestions and afterwards students would have a chance to plan out exactly how they would handle the scenario. Did Ella Mae Morton enjoy the skits? Did she participate in one of the skits? Was she formulating a plan for how she would teach her students when she returned back home?

A similar approach was also used during the session on recruiting students. Mrs. Cotton would pick one of the jokesters in the group and have them act as the “reluctant recruit.” Several volunteers would give their best recruiting lines and come-backs for every excuse the reluctant recruit offered. Again, the students would begin to formulate how they would handle recruiting in their neighborhoods when they returned home. The workshop staff could have just given them a list of recruiting strategies, maybe something to write down in their notebook, but by reasoning and acting out the situation and listening to each other, they took ownership of the problem and the solution.

Finally, Horton learned that all the sharing and problem solving didn’t amount to anything if the people didn’t go back home and do something with what they had learned. People learned best when working to solve problems. Horton always asked the question, “Now what are you going to do?” (Brown, 1990, p. 30) Follow through was expected of Highlander students just as it was expected with Dorchester students. “Without the activism of local people and their decisions to tackle structures of oppression,” the movement would not have been successful (Cotton, 2012, p. 114).

On the last morning of the workshop, Ella Mae Morton marveled at how quickly the week had passed and as she enjoyed her breakfast she reflected on the many things she had learned. As she and the rest of the students gathered for the last session, Mrs. Septima Clark looked out over the group and asked, “Now what are you going to do when you get back home?” One by one, each student shared important lessons they had learned and their plans for solving their problems back home. One gentleman, a minister, planned to recruit a few women from church to come to the next workshop. He felt they would both be excellent Citizenship School teachers. Several of the women from South Carolina planned to organize a voter registration drive in their neighborhood. They decided if they came across anyone who couldn’t register to vote because they couldn’t read or write, they would give the person’s name to the Citizenship School teacher that recruited them for the workshop. Mrs. Ella Mae Morton, when it came time for her to share, stated quite resolutely that she was going to start her own Citizenship School. Through the training, she already knew how to canvas her neighborhood and how to recruit people for her first class. She wasn’t entirely sure she knew exactly how each night of class would go, but she felt certain that she and her students would figure it out together. Regardless of which action they took, “participants...were charged with a responsibility when they returned to their homes. They were to help others understand the goals of this movement...” (Cotton, 2012, p. 3).

While the first Citizenship School on Johns Island looked quite different from the Citizenship School in Mrs. Dawson’s front room or the Citizenship School that Ella Mae Morton would start, the goal was always the same – get the people registered to vote. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the other leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference understood the power of the ballot in changing the destiny of blacks across the nation. The right to vote was

considered the ultimate privilege of first class citizenship and it was systematically denied to blacks throughout the South. King believed that once blacks secured the right to vote that many of the problems that plagued black communities would disappear (King correspondence, Feb. 12, 1958).

Launching the Crusade for Citizenship, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference assumed that the black community just needed some encouragement and basic instruction on how to cast a vote. Relying on the network of churches throughout the South, the plan was implemented to preach first class citizenship from the pulpit. With little funding and a lot of coordinating, the Crusade was launched across the South. Unfortunately, the results were disappointing. While the attendance for the mass meetings were as anticipated, the “offering” received to fund the program fell short of expectations. With some money from philanthropy organizations in the North and affiliate dues funding the Crusade, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference set out to travel throughout the South preaching the gospel of the ballot.

Hiring Ella Baker from the NAACP to help establish the Atlanta office and coordinate the Crusade most likely added to the longevity of the program and laid the foundation for the SCLC’s later work. Baker worked tirelessly to establish, organize, and coordinate the people and events that made up the Crusade (Fairclough, 1987, p. 48). Through her extensive travels and contacts, Baker realized the flaw in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference’s plan. As opposed to the ministers giving “problem and solution” sermons, Baker talked with and listened to the people as she traveled throughout the South. She understood that it was more than overcoming the fear and ignorance of voting, it was about being unprepared to meet the requirements for voter registration. Baker stated in a report to members of the SCLC’s executive board that approximately two-thirds of blacks in the South were illiterate. Without some kind of

literacy program put in place, it would be difficult to pass the tests required to register to vote and to meet the organization's goal to double the black vote (Baker report, 1959).

It would take several more months of lackluster Crusade results and failing financial backing to bring about reorganization and refocus within the leadership of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Baker, for all of her efforts, would continue to be pushed to the side as one minister after another was put in the director position. Bringing Wyatt T. Walker in as director would be a step in the right direction, but primarily because of the Administrative Assistant he insisted come with – Mrs. Dorothy Cotton. Soon after Wyatt's move to Atlanta, talks with Myles Horton on transferring the Citizenship School program became more frequent. Realizing the value of Cotton's experience and level of dedication, Martin Luther King, Jr. asked her to visit the Highlander Folk School to learn as much about the program as possible.

After the transfer of the Citizenship School program to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, important changes were made to the basic curriculum that reflected the goals of the organization (Cotton, 2012, p. 104). Perhaps wanting to distinguish itself from the slandered reputation of the Highlander Folk School, a deliberate focus on the Biblical basis for citizenship and voting were added to the Citizenship Education Program. Andrew Young, Septima Clark, and Bernice Robinson were transferred along with the program to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and along with Dorothy Cotton would be charged with modifying the program to fit the goals of the organization and reach the population Ella Baker identified as ready to vote, just not equipped to register.

Over an eight-year period, the Citizenship Education Program hosted monthly workshops at the Dorchester Center training ordinary citizens with leadership potential to teach others to read and write and register to vote. Not every student would become a Citizenship School

teacher, some would go back into their communities and organize voter registration drives or recruit other students to send to Dorchester. The result was thousands of blacks across the South overcoming illiteracy and seizing the promise of first class citizenship by exercising their right to vote. This program, together with the leadership and direction of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, assisted in the movement that eventually led to the physical desegregation of public schools, transportation, and other public places. Bringing to light the oppression and racism in the South, thousands would march for equal rights under the law and receive it in the form of the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act.

The accomplishments of the Civil Rights Movement were not the result of great leadership alone, nor were they the result of an educational program alone, both worked in concert with one another. The Citizenship Education Program was pivotal in mobilizing ordinary citizens in their communities and is worthy of recognition and study.

Citizenship Education Program Principles

Three basic principles guided the Citizenship Education Program. Originally initiated at Highlander, these principles were brought to Dorchester by the staff that had been trained at Highlander. First, the students determined the content of the curriculum based on their experiences and needs. There was always the confidence and belief that the people the program was designed to reach had the ability to solve their own problems. Horton believed in investing in the working class, the people at the bottom, as opposed to the people in power at the top. He knew that the people's experiences made them experts in finding solutions to their problems; they just had to be shown how to value their experience. Initially, the working class in Appalachia looked to Horton to solve their problems, but he knew that wasn't a real solution. If he didn't teach them to solve their own problems, they would always rely on someone else. By

learning communication and negotiation skills, Horton guided the working class in Appalachia to demand fair wages and safe working conditions. This same principle was foundational for the Citizenship Education Program. The staff believed that the power and momentum to demand equal rights and integrated facilities was within the black community, they just lacked the skills needed to fully realize their potential as citizens.

Second, the lessons focused on real problems within their community that needed solving. By teaching literacy, staff members not only equipped the students to pass the voter registration test, but with their reading and writing skills they learned about black history, consumer education, and the political process. They learned how to bank and start their own co-ops. They learned how to write to their local elected officials to address community problems. Improved literacy skills also helped blacks economically by increasing their employability. The power to solve their problem was within themselves.

Finally, the students were inspired to action to solve their community problems. The Citizenship Education Program was so much more than an adult literacy program – it also created community leaders. Simply knowing how to read and write allowed black citizens to register to vote but by developing community leaders who mobilized their neighbors and friends to take action, progress happened. They insisted that their roads be paved. They insisted that buses stop in their neighborhoods. They insisted that their children receive the same quality education as white children. Knowing how to read and write didn't do that – community leaders did that. They organized, wrote letters, boycotted, and voiced their opinions until city officials addressed their concerns. They solved their own problems by taking action. Horton stated, "...if you're going to work with small groups and our aim is to change society, and you know that you need masses of people to accomplish that, you have to work with those people who can multiply

what you do. It isn't a matter of having each one teach one. It's a matter of having a concept of education that is yeasty, one that will multiply itself" (Horton, 1998, p. 57). The Citizenship Education Program was "yeasty." Yes, it equipped ordinary people to become teachers and leaders and then sent them back into their communities to teach others to teach and lead but it also taught people that, "if things were going to change, they themselves had to change them" (Cotton, 2012, p. 134).

Analysis

Having spent countless hour researching Dorchester and the Citizenship Education Program, a couple of themes stood out to me and bear mentioning.

The Role of Women

Women were instrumental to the success of the Citizenship Education Program, first as organizers and second as teachers. Beginning at Highlander and continuing with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, men were always in a leadership position where this program was concerned. Even at Highlander, where discriminatory practices were supposedly fought against, the Citizenship School program was always led by Myles Horton. Certainly he sought the advice and assistance from the women on staff in running the program, but Horton remained the central leadership figure until the program's transfer to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. As tensions with Tennessee state officials increased, Horton sought a black leader to take the program to the people it was meant to help and he chose Andrew Young instead of Septima Clark, who ran the Citizenship Schools training program. It is possible that Horton felt that having a woman lead the organization in a time when men dominated most businesses and

organizations would detract from the goals of the program, but there was no evidence to support that view.

After the program's transfer to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, men continued to be named as director of the Citizenship Education Program. This practice was typical for the SCLC though, which began as a male dominated organization and continues to be so today. Perhaps this is due to the organization's religious roots. The conference was created by a group of ministers and as is still true today in many churches, especially in the South, men dominate the leadership positions. This male-centered leadership was the primary factor in Ella Baker leaving the organization. Dorothy Cotton and Septima Clark both wrote of the irony of the male domination in a movement that sought freedom from oppression, but both also maintained that they endured this behavior because of the bigger goals of the movement.

Needless to say, Ella Baker's observation that the black masses needed literacy training before they could be led to the ballot was critical to the events that ultimately brought Myles Horton and Martin Luther King, Jr. to the negotiating table for the program. Overall, women were instrumental to the success of the Citizenship Education Program as a whole. The majority of the weeklong workshops were led by women, all correspondence with the Field Foundation, Dorchester, and potential recruits were handled by women. While the men in the organization were free to travel, speak, and teach, the women traveled, spoke, recruited, and taught and then took care of all of the documentation which was essential for grant funding.

Women were also crucial to the spread of Citizenship Schools across the South. Black women, who were often employed in positions not tied to the white community, were specifically sought after to teach Citizenship School classes. The relative safety of teaching from

home and the monthly expense checks were likely contributing factors to the favorable reception by the women. Being a Citizenship School teacher allowed women to contribute to the movement without the danger of violence and imprisonment. While the men in leadership positions in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference - Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy, Andrew Young - were the face of the Movement, it was the dedication and countless hours of hard work by women that ensured the voter registration goals were kept at the forefront of the program.

Program Goals

The stated goal of the Citizenship Education Program was to double the black vote in the South. Program documents and reports state that thousands were registered to vote through Citizenship Schools and the United States Census Bureau does confirm that there was an increase in black voter registration and Election Day voting. Unfortunately, prior to 1964, voter registration and voter participation statistics by race were not recorded at the national level. Without definitive numbers, it is hard to gauge the program's impact on black voter registration and participation between the 1960 and 1964 presidential elections. A comparison of the US Census Bureau data for the 1964 and 1968 presidential elections does show an increase of approximately 300,000 black registered voters in the four year period of time. Likewise, data shows that approximately 300,000 more blacks voted on Election Day in 1968 than in 1964 (US Census Bureau, 1965 & 1969).

To estimate whether the black vote was indeed doubled, I used an undated pamphlet issued by the SCLC for the Crusade for Citizenship. Since the Crusade ran from 1958 to 1959, the data mentioned could reasonably be used as an estimate for black voter registration data for

1960. The pamphlet states that, “there are 4,980,000 Negroes of voting age in the South” and that “only 25% of adult Negroes vote” (SCLC Crusade Pamphlet, undated). Unfortunately, the source of the data is not cited in the pamphlet, but if those numbers were accurate for 1958, that would mean that there were approximately 1,245,000 black voters. The US Census Bureau’s 1968 Election data by region reports that there were 5,991,000 blacks of voting age in the South and 3,094,000 reported that they voted (US Census Bureau, 1969). If the Crusade pamphlet numbers are reliable then the number of black voters in the South more than doubled in the ten year period of time from 1958 to 1968. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference was by no means the only organization trying to increase the number of black voters during the 1960s, therefore, it is not possible to attribute the increase to this organization alone.

It is important to consider the achievements of this program that were not easily measured with statistics reported by the US Census Bureau. When the Southern Christian Leadership Conference first formed, their stated goal was to promote “...full citizenship rights, equality, and the integration of the Negro in all aspects of American life” (SCLC brochure, undated). The very first Citizenship School at Johns Island began to teach reading and writing skills to adults, long past school age, so they could register to vote. By the end of the 1960s, Citizenship Schools taught literacy, Black history, personal finance, civic responsibility, self-advocacy, and community activism. As people’s needs evolved, the curriculum evolved. First class citizenship or full citizenship was so much more than exercising the right to vote. It was being able to write letters to family, fill out money orders or open checking accounts, petition local officials for equal services, and run for public office. These changes to the curriculum added enrichment and value to everyday life. While they were largely unmeasurable and

therefore difficult to report for grant funding, they were no less important than actual voter registration numbers.

Now what am I going to do?

As was asked of the students who attended workshops at the Highlander Folk School and Dorchester Center, I now have to ask myself, “Now what am I going to do?” What am I going to do with the knowledge and insight I have gained through my research? Yes, my research completes the requirements for the degree I have been pursuing, but do I just walk away from everything that I have learned because I have completed my degree? I don’t think so and I believe this is the true lesson learned from the Citizenship Education Program. To walk away and not use the information that I have learned to be a better leader or enrich the business education curriculum I currently teach would be wasteful. To walk away and not share my research with the Dorchester Center to bring recognition to the program once held there or to inspire future generations of community leaders would be shameful. Only through action can I impact my local community and my practice.

Revealing Liberty’s Hidden Legacy

Being a resident of Liberty County, I see this historic treasure sitting in Midway and want to find a way to bring recognition to the important events that have happened on that school campus. To do this, I would need to work alongside the Dorchester Improvement Association.

The Dorchester Improvement Association (DIA) was established in 1948 after the American Missionary Association withdrew from the Dorchester Academy and turned the use of the facility over to the Dorchester community. Its first director was Mr. Claudius A. Turner (White, 2002, pg. 5). Mr. Turner lived in a small cottage on the campus and also served as the

groundskeeper. Today, its current director is the City of Riceboro Mayor, Mr. William Austin. The Dorchester Improvement Association's mission is to "...preserve the African American culture, its collection of historical artifacts and physical structures in its original location, and continue the rich heritage of informing and enlightening the public about the educational, social, cultural, and religious heritage of Dorchester Academy." According to the Dorchester Improvement Association website, they are also committed to "...providing community services geared to improving the economic, social and cultural conditions of the community" (dorchesteracademyia.org 1.24.17). The Dorchester Improvement Association operates a small museum in the former home of Claudius Turner. The association is also responsible for securing the funds for the ongoing restoration of the Dorchester Academy.

William Austin and I first spoke by telephone in October 2013 and have talked several times in person or by telephone throughout the course of my research. On one occasion, Mr. Austin walked me through the museum and explained the current collection of artifacts and documents. Most of the artifacts were from the late 1800s to 1940 when the site was managed by the American Missionary Association and served as Liberty County's black school. The artifacts in the museum consisted mainly of items that were taken out of the buildings on the campus prior to the Academy's closing in the early 40s. There is a desk and chair from the school, pictures of the classrooms, students, and campus grounds. The museum has some archival documents including the enrollment cards from the students who attended the Dorchester Academy along with some of the instructional materials. There were only a few pictures from the 1960s during the time that the Citizenship Education Program was held on site.

After the tour of the museum, we settled into Mr. Austin's office to talk about the Academy and my research. At that time, I had no idea that the site was used during the 1960s for

the Citizenship Education Program - my focus was completely on the Dorchester Academy from the 1860s to 1940. Mr. Austin gave me a brief history of the school during that time period and recommended that I read a dissertation by Dr. Dawn J. Herd-Clark from Florida State University. Dr. Clark's research included the establishment of the Dorchester Academy and the American Missionary Association's partnership with black leadership in Liberty County. He said that he felt the study was very comprehensive but did not cover the history of the site after 1940 and that this was the period that the museum had little to share with the community.

Mr. Austin told me that Martin Luther King, Jr. and his advisors with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference met at Dorchester to plan protests and marches during the Civil Rights Movement. He gave me a brief description of the Citizenship Education Program and the names of people that related to the program and where I could get more information. He recommended that I find and read the autobiographies of Andrew Young and Dorothy Cotton and he also recommended finding a book on the Highlander Folk School by John M. Glenn. At the close of our meeting, Mr. Austin was encouraged and excited about the prospect of research focusing on this period of time. We both agreed to keep in touch by email and do some digging and researching and meet again in the Spring.

I would spend the next five months reading Andrew Young's *An Easy Burden* (2008), Dorothy Cotton's *If Your Back's Not Bent* (2012), and Cynthia Stokes Brown's biography of Septima Clark *Ready from Within* (1990). Through these books I learned about the Citizenship Education Program and discovered that the Highlander Folk School, as opposed to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, was the originator of the program. I located and read numerous books on Myles Horton and the Highlander Folk School. I discovered that the archives for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference were located at Emory University in

Atlanta, Georgia and the archives for the Highlander Folk School were located at the Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market, Tennessee.

On the evening of April 14, 2014, Mr. Austin and I met at the Dorchester Academy. He took me on a tour of the boy's dormitory building which is where the Citizenship Education Program workshops were held and gave me a tour. As we explored the various rooms and their uses, both historical and current, Mr. Austin and I discussed what I found during my initial research. We also talked about sources of funding for Dorchester's restoration and the administration and operation of the museum. Parts of the building can be rented out by community members for events like weddings, baby showers, or family reunions. There are also a couple of organizations that meet monthly at the facility that pay a small use fee. Renovations to the boy's dormitory have been ongoing for many years completed a little at a time according to the funds available. Most of the renovations have been completed by volunteers.

Mr. Austin explained that the museum and facility rental fees were not revenue generators so the majority of the money used to run the museum and complete the renovations came from the annual Walk to Dorchester event that was first held in June of 2000. The nine mile walk commemorates the journey Dorchester students made to attend school on a daily basis and is a big revenue generator for the Dorchester Improvement Association. He explained the refreshments, workers, and police escorts are all donated so the event costs the association very little. The revenue for this annual event and some private endowments and donations are what pay the majority of the museum's expenses and fund the ongoing renovations.

Despite the lack of air conditioning, which would cost an estimated \$60,000 to install, the building is in good condition. Some of the wood flooring has been replaced over the years and there are sections of the flooring that are currently under repair. There are several cracks in the

plaster walls and water damage in places along the walls and ceilings. As much as possible, the renovations have been true to the original construction of the building. In the rooms where Martin Luther King, Jr. slept and studied when visiting Dorchester, the majority of the furnishings are original. At the conclusion of the tour, Mr. Williams invited me to attend one of the monthly community meetings to see first-hand the current community work being conducted through Dorchester.

First Saturday Community Meetings

On the first Saturday of each month, members of the community come together to address issues within the community and collectively discuss possible solutions. These meetings are organized by Georgia State Representative Al Williams, who actively participated in workshops conducted at the Dorchester Center during the 1960s.

On Saturday, August 6, 2016 I drove to the Dorchester Academy to sit in on a monthly community meeting. It was already hot that morning when I arrived around 9 a.m. The air was thick and the limbs of the trees drooped, the leaves curled inward. There were several cars parked all around the school. The parking lot is fairly small so cars were parked on the lawn wherever shade was available. I pulled up under a Live Oak tree and parked. Even though the school building is just 200 yards off the main highway through Liberty County, at that time of the morning there was little traffic. The front and side doors of the school were propped open and as I drew near to the building I could hear muffled voices coming from inside.

There were approximately 40 people in the meeting room of varying ages. Six teenage boys all wearing the same style t-shirt sat on chairs around the periphery of the room. There were only a couple of elementary school aged children present that morning and they appeared to be there with their parents. The rest of the people at the forum were a variety of ages from

young adult to the elderly. Some were dressed in suits, some were dressed casually, and a few wore work uniforms. Being one of two white people at the forum, I was noticed as I took my seat on the steps.

The topic for this Saturday forum was mental health issues in the black community. Over the next 30 minutes, people from different agencies in and around the community spoke to the group about the challenges of mental health issues and resources that were available. One gentleman, a reverend who served in a local church, spoke to how mental health issues have become more prevalent in the past 20 years and some of the resources available through the Church. A woman from Fort Stewart spoke on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in service men and women and discussed the resources available on the Army base. A man and woman representing an educational tutoring business in Liberty County spoke about the high number of black students who are identified as having special needs in the public schools and the services offered through their organization. The last group to speak was a mentoring group in Liberty County specifically for black, male youth. The coach/mentor spoke about the group's efforts to match black men in the community with the youth to form relationships aimed at preventing drug abuse and gang violence.

Representative Williams closed the forum by expressing the need for another Saturday forum dedicated to this same topic. Speaking and thanking many who spoke at the forum, he stopped to pose for pictures with the mentoring group and made his way over to talk with me. We talked for just a moment, but he said that he had been hosting the First Saturday meetings for over ten years to address issues within the black community.

After leaving the community meeting, I went home to make a few notes and was struck by the heart of the purpose for the community meetings. Just like those initial community

meetings that Myles Horton organized in the Appalachian Mountains, people from the community were gathering to discuss their issues and discover ways to solve their own problems. No one claimed to have all the answers, but as the meeting progressed, people shared their experiences and guests were called on to inform the group of available resources. Again, I believe this is the heart of the program that Horton initiated and the legacy that Dorchester gives to the surrounding community. Dorchester is still known as a gathering place and a place where people can come together to solve their own problems.

Where do I see my role in bringing recognition to Dorchester and the Citizenship Education Program? There are several different options for accomplishing this goal. First, I think it is important for the work at Dorchester to be taught in Georgia classrooms. The standards for Georgia Studies and U.S. History are lacking in black history. It is possible that many of Liberty County's teachers are not aware of the work that happened at Dorchester, we do have a large transient population due the army base. One way to change this would be to host a professional development workshop, preferably at the Dorchester Center, for the Social Studies teachers in the county. The workshop could give a brief overview of the history of Dorchester and its importance to black history and the history of the county and even include lesson plans, activities, and projects that teachers could implement in the classroom. A future goal would be for teachers to bring their students on field trips to the Dorchester Center to learn about its history and involvement in the Civil Rights Movement.

Another way to communicate the history and importance of the Dorchester Center would be to work with the local newspaper to write a series of articles highlighting the work at Dorchester during the 1960s. Each summer, the Dorchester Improvement Association hosts the "Walk to Dorchester" that serves as their main source of funding for the year's activities and

renovations. A few newspaper articles leading up to the walk would target the newspaper reading adults in the community.

Finally, when I initially toured the museum at Dorchester, it was suggested that with my research, I could help curate a display covering the Civil Rights Movement period. Sharing my research with the Dorchester Improvement Association is a priority. With permission, copies of the Citizenship School workbook and teacher records could be displayed. As many historical organizations often do, a re-enactment of a Citizenship Education Program class could be organized. Community members could be invited to spend the day at Dorchester and take part in the “What is a Citizen?” session, select a community problem to solve and even put on a skit at the traditional closing banquet. The menu for the banquet a copy of an actual meal shared at the close of a weeklong workshop.

I would like to continue my research on the Citizenship Schools in Liberty and surrounding counties. I believe that there are still people out there that either taught classes in their homes or attended classes in someone else’s home and I would love to hear their stories. Using copies of the CEP workshop and Citizenship School rosters, I would like to work with the Dorchester Improvement Association to see if these people can be located. Because the Citizenship Education Program was a piece of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, it gets lost in the personalities that led the organization and the events that dominated the newspapers. While the program was not deliberately kept a secret, there was never an effort by CEP to publicize their important work. Perhaps, considering the fate of the Highlander Folk School, organizers realized the value of remaining in the background. It is my hope that the contributions of the Citizenship Education Program and the importance of the Dorchester Center can be brought to the forefront so that both receive the recognition that they deserve.

The Citizenship Education Program & Business Education

When I tell people what I've been working on for the past few years, I think they struggle to find the connection between what happened in a Citizenship Education Program during the 1950s and 1960s and what I do today in a business education classroom. Throughout my doctoral coursework, I have researched and written papers on two broad topics – the history of black education in the South and vocational education. As I began to draw near to the end of my doctoral courses, I knew my study would not be about vocational education directly. The technical skills that students learn in a vocational classroom today are important but are often job specific. One of the most important lessons that I can teach my students is how to be active in solving their own problems.

So how do I do this in a business classroom and still teach the standards? Is this something that can be duplicated in any classroom? I believe the answer is yes. Course content or standards are often determined with little regard to what students want to learn. By integrating the three primary principles of the Citizenship Education Program, teachers can breathe life into stale classrooms while still teaching their content. Learning new skills is essential for students, but why not focus on learning those skills while guiding students to identify and solve problems that are relevant to their situations.

The same principles that guided the Citizenship Education Program can be applied to business education to enhance the curriculum. First, you have to listen to people. What are the skills and knowledge that students perceive to be important for their future success outside of high school? Is teenage under-employment an issue? Are students entering the workforce without the skills they feel are necessary to be successful? One of the most common comments I hear from students after they have graduated from high school is about their lack of knowledge

about personal finance. I've got to do a better job of listening to those students and asking questions. Personal finance could easily be integrated into my course content.

Second, let the students be part of the solution. Once students have identified topics that they feel are important, guide them to find solutions to their problems through dialogue, skits, research, and bringing in experts, if necessary. Integrate their concerns into lesson plans, use actual scenarios as projects. Allow the students to lead the process of finding solutions to their problems.

Finally, always end with reflection and action. Reflecting on the process of finding solutions to problems is as important as acting on those solutions. The goal is to inspire students to include those in their community in the process of solving their problems - to create a network of people who are willing to listen to each other and seek solutions together. Action is required though. Identifying and discussing solutions to problems without acting on them is a terrible waste. "Now what are you going to do?"

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