

March 14, 1964
Saturday

Dear Family –

Wow, what an exhausting day: Georgette and I went down to an all day meeting for NSM [National Student Movement] tutors. There were two sort of lecture sessions and two discussion group sessions. The big question seems to be in whether NSM's aim is primarily tutorial (in an academic sense) or whether it does not actually aim to go much deeper and further as a civil rights organ than mere book-learning for one 1 ½ hour impersonal session a week. The thing that was perhaps most encouraging was the fact that there were two adults from the suburbs there who have themselves just started tutoring students down at Mission Hill with the rest of us. Just think of the resources out in the suburbs: money, political influence and most important, thousands of people with a college education, some of whom might conceivably be interested in helping America's kids – if only they realized just how bad conditions are and how much they could do in so many ways. If this sounds a bit pointed, I'm afraid that perhaps it is – none of us are, you and me alike are doing anywhere near what we could. – I know you've always been a bit concerned about my "liberal but foolish slightly irrational ideas". I used to laugh, too, (mainly at myself) – until I discovered that the situation in this great democracy (I don't say it snidely at all) is no laughing matter. It is tragic and appalling. It's frightening. Not only the Negroes, but poor whites, the innumerable minority groups – we aren't giving them a fair deal – they don't have democracy – most of them aren't in a position to help themselves with the Anglo-saxons, etc., knocking them down – or worse – helping with one hand yet holding them down with the other. Please don't feel that I'm criticizing you personally, just one worn-out society. Our generation is gradually becoming reluctant to accept your world, just because it is the most familiar and "safe". We may lose our precious possessions – or seemingly, for a whole – but in the end, we all gain; I personally can't take any more of living in a lie-world. Maybe it's my immature attitude – but I don't think so – not this time. There is a new society in the offing for the United States – since it will be my society as much as anyone else's, I want to have a hand in shaping it – the 100 year moratorium is over – and I for one refuse to be a party to any attempt to draw it out still longer.)

This was supposed to be a preliminary statement of a mild nature – forgive me if it isn't – to announce my plans for the near future. First, I am hoping to work for SNCC (Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee) in Mississippi this summer. The principal project this year I presume will be voter registration. The only particulars are that we will live with Negro families and that hopefully we will receive as much as \$9 (nine) a week upon which to subsist (at least maybe I'll be thin!) (thank heaven the mode of living in Miss. is so low). Knew I had started a savings account for some reason. A propos, SNCC is just about broke at the moment – what with bombings and ransacking of their offices by white racists who resent letting Negroes vote – and donations to them are always welcome. (Who knows, maybe it will get me out of jail some day). I hope you will read well the article I enclosed – though very understated and calm in style – I find it quite revealing. Isn't it time that we all do something?

We are all fine. Judy and I really splurged Thursday – I spent almost \$50 on three summer outfits (skirts and jackets – can't wait for the nice weather – though the heat in Miss. will make me regret the snow for sure. What fun chatting with Mr. Grenfill – hope his interviewing went well at MIT. Hope you are all well.

Much love, Pat