[Coles]

Digital Education Systems
730 17th St. Suite 360
Denver, CO 80202

303-573-1284
fax: 303-573-1285

www.digitaled.com

MEMORANDUM

To: Tim West

Fm: Joe Sinsheimer JAS

Re: Robert Coles/Barney Frank Interviews

Dt: September 23, 1998

Enclosed in this mailing are two interviews:

The first interview is with Dr. Robert Coles, the Pulitizer Prize-winning author of the Children of Crisis series. Dr. Coles served as an advisor to SNCC during 1963-64. This interview focused on Dr. Coles' recollections of the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project. Coles discusses 1) the intense media scrutiny of the project 2) the tensions between the SNCC staff and the student volunteers 3) his recollections of Dennis Sweeney (who later proved to be Al Lowenstein's assassin) and 4) the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party's (MFDP) challenge to the all-white Mississippi delegation at the 1964 National Democratic party convention at Atlantic City.

The second interview is with Barney Frank, who now serves as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Massachusetts. Frank was a student volunteer during the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer Project. Frank discusses 1) how he was recruited to the project by Al Lowenstein 2) his experiences that summer in Jackson, Mississippi and 3) Al Lowenstein's reaction to the MFDP's Atlantic City challenge.

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Interview with Robert Coles
Boston, Massachusetts
November 19, 1983

Joe Sinsheimer: Just real quickly-- could you catch me up on how you got involved in the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project, who first approached you?

Robert Coles: Well, part of this is part of the whole history of my work which, a little bit of it is in the first volume of Children of Crisis . I describe how I got involved with all of this. But I specifically got involved with SNCC through one of the ten students who initiated school desgregation in Atlanta, who was a high school student who worked with SNCC.

And he told me to go down there, and maybe I could get to know some of them and volunteer. In other words he had in mind for me to volunteer and work with them, rather than do any kind of social or psychiatric study. But I at the time-- I think I described this in some of the writing-- Jim Forman put me to work sweeping floors. You have read that (laughter). And so by the time, I had been with SNCC for two years before the Mississippi Summer Project. At a time when SNCC was not in any way as well known as it became by the end of '63 and into '64.

Simply because I knew some of the Atlanta high school kids that had gotten involved, I knew the whole range of them, all of them. That is why I think Bob [Moses] would tell you I was there for two weeks [in Oxford, Ohio] helping them out. And it is hard to talk without sounding self-serving, but I think factually, for a while at least, I was fairly trusted, as much as a white person ever could be. Now you know by the end of '64 no white person-- I mean that split had already taken place.

I was never though as ideological as, totally, with the whole civil rights movement. In some aspects of it as say Howard Zinn or Staughton Lynd could be, my politics are more cranky, difficult. I mean the people I admire ultimately, are people like Dorothy Day, Chavez, and also Robert Kennedy, and more political literature people like Orwell and _____, and Dolche, I mean these are people that Irving Howe called the "homeless left." If you remember the "homeless left" and you start noticing a particular political movement get ideological and why it is turning out whites and all, I was appalled, horrified.

Coles (cont.): And could not defend it. And I could not defend the way ultimately that they turned on one another, and if I have to say so myself, that article "Social Struggle and Weariness," which after all was published in 1963, was a little prophetic about what was happening, the bitterness, the anger, the meanness.

And I know that the political theorists would claim that I am a typical liberal idealogue in my own way because of the way that I react to those things. But I do, and those are my limitations, and that was again what horrified me.

However, we are jumping a bit. In any event I remember Bob Moses and Greene, Charlie Greene was his friend. I remember when they went to McComb in '63 and came back to Atlanta. And I talked to them. Ultimately I think I went myself to McComb, I was in one of the Freedom Houses that was dynamited. I forget whether that was in '64 or '63. It was '64.

Sinsheimer: It was '64. Yeah.

Coles: Yeah. But I remember when they came back and I remember when they began to talk about this '64 project and how much it meant to them. And how they would take on the capitol, like storming the palace.

Sinsheimer: So this would have been in the fall of 1963?

Coles: This would have been in the fall of '63 in Atlanta.

Sinsheimer: At that point, in that sense, did you sense any division in the SNCC staff?

Coles: No at that time I was probably dumb and couldn't pick it up. I know -- there were tensions between people and various intrigues, human intrigues I would call them, rather than political intrigues and that is an important distinction. Human intrigues, for God's sakes, this is a group of people, I mean by this time in the Atlanta office there must have been thirty or forty people parading in and out at various times. Dottie Zellner, do you know the name? Bob Zellner. I was very close to Dottie for awhile. She had come down from the North and her father was a dentist in New York. They would ultimately get married. I mean the first interviews I did were with Bob Zellner who was the most revered of the white people for awhile at least, who is in New Orleans. Have you tried to reach

Coles (cont.): them?

Sinsheimer: No.

Coles: And is a labor organizer. And she with them. But -- I would call them human intrigues, pettiness that we are all capable of. You see these kind of intrigues certainly among psychoanalyzed shrinks. So why shouldn't these kids be entitled to them. And among high-fluented college professors, so again you don't make any special case out of that. Althoug I think social scientists can make a special case out of everything.

Sinsheimer: (laughter) Right.

Coles: Shrinks especially. In any event that is what I would call it. I saw none of that. I saw Forman get pushy and bossy, and I saw Bob's [Moses] almost Gandhi-like qualities from the very beginning. He at the time was married to very difficult woman. I don't know how you can bring this up or even if you can. I would not now want what I am saying now to be repeated. Very difficult woman. I mean those are the kinds of things I was noticing at that time.

Sinsheimer: Okay. Do you remember when the sort of formal planning started. Let's say for the Orientation sessions?

Coles: Winter and Spring of '64. And I very clearly remember that.

Sinsheimer: Were you actually part of the actual planning of the sessions?

Coles: I think so. I have to, I don't think I have any risk of being self-serving here. I noticed in some of the write-ups that they don't mention me which is fine, I mean but I don't care to be. But I think that the record would show that I was part of it, and I was a psychiatrist, and the only one that they knew to trust and that would work with them. And I don't know, you should ask Bob this but as I recall it with all the risks of pride and egotism involved, I think that I was fairly close to them and I do recall them really wanting them to come up there and spend that two weeks, and really feeling that I had something to offer.

Coles (cont.): After all they were suddenly confronted with all these upper-middle class white kids, and let's be blunt about it, I was one of them. I mean, older (laughter).

Sinsheimer: Right.

Coles: And for no other reason, I am being a little shrinky now, for no other reason, I couldn't help them understand what the struggle was in the South because they knew a hell of a lot more about that than I did, but I did know, having gone to Harvard, and being a product of what I am, as you can see coming over here. I think they felt that I could help with that. And there were some kids who were a little shaky psychologically, not that I was ever formally-- although if you read the write-ups at that time I think I was called the SNCC shrink. But that's, yes, I think I very much was involved with that.

I don't know if Bob [Moses] will remember this, but there was a very dramatic moment in Oxford when some people, some social scientists from the University of Wisconsin wanted to do some work.

Sinsheimer: Michael Aicken and ...

Coles Yeah. And they wouldn't let them. And ultimately the decision's was Bob's, and he turned to me and said to me, very direct, "What do you think?" And I at the time felt no, that I don't think that they should be around, doing questionaires.

My purpose--I don't think it was competitive, that I didn't want social scientists-- I felt that to start making the self-consciousness about, among people who were going to be facing danger. I objected to that very much.

Sinsheimer: Were you involved in the actual recruiting at all? Did you interview?

Coles: No.

Sinsheimer: Did you have any discussions about that-- do you think they were happy with the recruiting or ...?

Coles: I remember them being happy with some and unhappy even from Day one at Oxford with others.A few were already-- well there was one girl I remember whose

Coles (cont.): father actually was a psychiatrist in Chicago, she was a difficult person, and I thought somewhat depressed, although not as nearly as depressed as her parents were, who were calling her constantly.

And there were some kids who were frightened. But by and large this was not a group of people who needed a lot of psychiatric nursing. Some of them were arrogant, protected by their ignorance and arrogance to be blunt about it. And some of them were protected in the best sense of the word protection, by a kind of an ernest good will. Some of them were a bit show offy, some of them were naive and presumptous, but so are we all, black and white.

Sinsheimer: So were you there the whole two weeks?

Coles: Oh yeah. And as I told you I knew Mickey Schwerner, I knew Andy Goodman, and Chaney. In fact they joked with me and wanted me to go down with them because Andy's mother is a psychologist in New York still, and Mickey was a psychiatric social worker, and they joked with me that I could make--that we could have a team. The doctor, the social worker, and the psychologist.

I remember as clear as if it were today saying goodbye to them. I also remember what happened when we found out that they were not-- you see they kept very close tabs on all these people, and in that sense they knew the dangers. But I am not sure the students knew the dangers. This is the ethical problem.

Sinsheimer: Well let's talk about the second training period first since we are on that. Do you remember who announced the initial disappearance first to the group?

Coles: I seem to remember Bob [Moses] doing it, but I may be wrong.

Sinsheimer: I have got conflicting reports, whether it was Moses or Rita Schwerner.

Coles: I remember it being Bob.

Sinsheimer: Okay.

Coles: And I remember discussing it with him, and I remember discussing with him what would be done. And I remember all of us around in a big circle holding hands and singing "We Shall Overcome."

Sinsheimer: That would have been the first night that you would have found that out?

Coles: Yes.

Sinsheimer: Okay. At that point do you think-- was it a "disappearance" or was it implied that there was something more.

Coles: I think that they felt that they were killed.

Sinsheimer: The staff people. What about the volunteers?

Coles: Oh no, they didn't. Not at all.In fact frankly, I didn't. Even though by now I had lived in Mississippi for two years after all in the air force. I had been down south by this time for six years, and was not exactly a fool. But I couldn't believe it. Look when I was coming out of that McComb -- do you read the book by Nick Von Hoffman, Mississippi Diary. He describes a little thing of me, where the sheriff had threatened to arrest me, now you see it was inconceivable to me that I would ever be in trouble. And that even if a sheriff threatened to arrest me, that he would never go through with it, or even if he did go through with it, that I would ever be hurt.

And I think that was the way a lot of these kids felt, they had come from very priviledged backgrounds. As soon as that dynamiting occurred [in McComb], I went and phoned my wife who happened to be related to a United States Senator at the time, and I said to her that if you don't here from me immediately -- so there was this kind of arrogance and self-importance that people like me feel. And I think a lot of those kids, from very well established families, and I think that they felt that no one would dare touch them. Now that might be unfair to them but it isn't unfair to at least some of them.

Sinsheimer: Right.

Coles: Then there is the natural denial that we all resort to-- whose is going to think that you are going to die, no one does. The fact is that most of them were sure that somehow they would surface in a day or two. But this is what stunned me. The way Bob and Stokley Carmichael, and Forman, and others there, especially Forman and Bob--I remember them be quite convinced that they might well be dead.

Coles (cont.): Now maybe they don't remember it that way, but I remember noticing the disparity between the way they felt, the ominious, but also of course there was another side to this that I also noticed. In a strange way I think that they may have felt this was going to help them. That also began to dawn on me, for the first time, ony then. Which probaly was a reminder to me that I didn't understand their thinking as well as I thought I did. How could I, being the kind of person that I am and coming from the life that I come from.

I am not a political person in ways, at least in that way ... . Something had failed as far as my awareness of what .... I just remember being stunned that in fact, quickly attention started zereoing in on this, and the more the attention zereoed in, the more of course they were realizing that they had already succeeded, before we even went down south. Because this became cover stories in the news magazines. And the President of the United States was having something to say. So they had won.

And the Governor of Mississippi as much as aknowledged that they had won within a week or two before the-- yet in a strange way their had deaths. They, ... I think, consciously knew. I have no right to speak for other people, but I would be willing again off the record in a way, not off the record for what you are writing, at the risk of arrogance and ignorance on my own part, substantial risks, I would still say that I think that they knew when those three were missing that they may well have been killed and I also think that they consciously at the time realized that this would help this Project immeasurably.

Sinsheimer: Well, I got the feeling-- when people write about it they usually write that the staff knew all week and the clue to them supposedly was the fact they knew that Schwerner and Chaney would never have left a jail at night. This was supposedly standard SNCC practice and this was their insight that something had gone awry with their sort of elaborate security system.

Coles: Right. Right. Which was a fairly elaborate system.

Sinsheimer: Right. So could you then set for me the tone of the second session. After that first night, things get on to normal? What it sort of the same sort of, or was there a different tone now in terms of the training going on?

Coles: They never got back to normal. What happened is that training was done under the shadow of this event, and I might add not only the apprehension and anxiety, but the increasing attention. After all everyone was getting an enormous amount of attention. And here you deal with the phenomon of a collective celebrity of sorts. Namely a Project becoming an object of national attention and fame, bringing them all the human emotions connected to that-- egotism, self-centeredness, pride-- depending on which metaphor you want to use, psychological or theological.

But I thought, I remember more reporters, television cameras, so in sense this became a stage. It wasn't only a training center, it was a stage.

Sinsheimer: People were conscious of that?

Coles: Oh, but you couldn't help but be. The reporters were all over the place. And the television cameras and everything. And a big bulletin board I remember with articles being posted up from the various newspapers and magazines. So they had to have known that they were taking part in what they were taking part in, a moment of history. But there was a sub-consciousness involved, I think accelerated by what had happened there. Not that everyone isn't self- ... you have to have some common sense about this, not that everyone doesn't have self-consciousness anyway, but this was exaggerated. And that was a new element to this, and I suppose a measure of the success of the project since to some extent in American politics any kind of publicity is always an accelerant, you know what I mean, or an aspect which measures the success of something when you are making a political effort to lobby the Congress as they were making.

Sinsheimer: I realize it is difficult to talk about other people but at the same point that the staff might have sensed they had won, do you think that they were angry over the fact that here was the attention, but black people had been dying in Mississippi before.

Coles: Oh definitely. They were angry, I remember them saying so.

Sinshimer: But did that manifest itself at all?

Coles: I think that-- not in any crude or, not in any form that could be called a public scene of any kind. I mean public between the combattents and the participants or whatever you want to call them. No but I knew it was there and I heard it. I heard it, I think I was close enough to them, for them to have said those things because I did hear it. I don't think they went around making public statements to the other students.

Although I remember Bob giving a lecture on the state of Mississippi and reminding in his gentle way, listen-- black people have been dying there for a long, long, time in awful, awful ways. And I remember connecting that to what had just happened, and remarking that no one noticed or cared. Now he might have said that anyway, so you have to be careful, you can't over formulate, you know.

Sinsheimer: Okay.

Coles: But I do remember that because I remember feeling a twinge.

Sinsheimer: Well the first training session seems to have been marked by a couple of sort of staff-volunteer misunderstanding.

Coles: There were a few.

Sinsheimer: Do you remember the documentary movie on a registrar and some people trying to register? There seemed to have been a lot of laughter. Do you remember that?

Coles: I do. But I don't -- there were moments of laughter and there were moments of-- you know some of those kids strutted. I remember hearing Jim (Forman) talk about that. They were cocky kids from Harvard,Yale, whatever. Some of them from very prominent families, and I think there were class as well as racial tensions. I remember even an incident over food. Complaining about food, and I remember one of the people in SNCC and I have forgot who it was saying, "What do these kids want, and what do they think this is," mentioning some fancy restaurant in Atlanta, never mind the fancy ones they might have known in Boston, or New York, or whatever.

Sinsheimer: Right.

Coles: So I do remember some of that. But I don't remember it dominating the whole-- by and large, after all they were there, and they were intent on going south. Even though their clothing too, everything about them. I mean they were well-to-do kids relatively speaking. And they faced the whole world of success. And here were kids, some of them were young kids, who had a different-- so there was definitely that.

But I don't remember a series of grating incidents, just little moments that would come up about the thing I mentioned about food, some of the strutting that some of them noticed.

Sinsheimer: Was there at anytime an argument about nonviolence?

Coles: Not that I remember. The other thing by the way is, underneath a novelist would have noticed is here were some very attractive white women and it was in the days before there was a women's movement. And here were some men, black and white, who were going to be leading them. There was alittle bit of a current about that. Unmentionable subjects.

Sinsheimer: Right. Right.

Coles: But that was not insignificant. You will notice that I had trouble mentioning it in any of my writing. There are certain things that are very hard to write about, especially if you are white.

Sinsheimer: Right. White male.

Coles: White male. But there is a subject too. You probably are not going to get into that but don't think it was insignificant.

Sinsheimer: I am-- Two years ago I took a course called Politics and the Libido.

Coles: Who gave that (laughter)?

Sinsheimer: Dr. Paletz. He has writted a book about the media with Entman in the Public Policy department. Anyway, I actually used the Summer Project as a case study in black-white relations. It was okay for the time, but as I reread it is a hopeless mess of social science, a jumble. Yeah, it is a difficult sort of subject to approach

But I guess what we were talking about gets into the question of motivation. What do you think was the primary motivating force of why those kids were there?

Coles: Complex mixture of sometimes contradictory and inconsistent motivations. That is the trouble with psycho-history, it is too formulated, too neat. I will have to send you-- I wrote a whole blast about psycho-history. I don't know whether you have read it. There is nothing wrong about using obviously, but it depends on how you use it.

Let me just say this. The motives would go as follows: Earnest good will and decency,and thoughtfulness, and sensitivity and compassion; the same kind of motivations that get students to do work off-campus in Durham, or Cambridge, in New Haven, or Princeton, or in Chicago, or in small towns where the colleges aren't these snotty ones. But I mean namely some desire to share one's one's abilities and skills with other people who need them. Why do students do tutoring, why do students work in prisons. I mean this kind of youthful idealism.

And then you get into other motives. A summer, boredom, what to do for the summer. Political things.I am not so sure I agree with Kenniston's analysis that is this. I think you would find a very small group, what he ignores is a lot of these kids that didn't come from these radical families, these liberal families. Some of them very deeply Christian, Catholic, or Lutheran families.

Sinsheimer: What percentage do you think were like that?

Coles: I don't agree-- I don't know whether anyone is ever going to be in a position to give a percentage. But I felt that about a third were from that-- and those are the people that never get written about.

Sinsheimer: Right.

Coles: The ones who get written up are all these talkative, northeastern liberals and their children, and their grandchildren and whatever. Because everything that they do gets written up. If fifty Harvard students decide to do anything it will get written up. Fifty students from a small Catholic school in Minnesota or Nebraska no one pays any attention to it and the social scientists never do studies of it.

Sinsheimer: The SNCC people wanted people with the backgrounds.

Coles: They wanted those people from the northeastern... . And this when I found out about this which I did almost accidently when Dottie told me, I was horrified. That is the perrogative of someone like me I suppose to be horrified. But they very definitely wanted people

Coles (cont.): related to the Bingham family, people related to _____, people who were in a position to move the establishment politically.

Sinsheimer: What about the ...

Coles: Let me finish with the motives.

Sinsheimer: Okay.

Coles: And then vanity and egoism and a trip. Personal trip in that sense of the word. At that time we didn't have that expression (laughter). But you know, all of those motives. And I don't think that we ought to find that peculiar about them, given what motivates people to do anything, especially write books or become college professors or anything. But that's I think the whole range. George Eliot could do a good job describing the complexity of these problems in a novel like Middlemarch. But that is the range.

Sinsheimer: What about how the volunteers interacted with themselves? Was there a lot of good feeling immediately or? I guess what I am asking is when did a collective identity occur, was that quickly or was that ...?

Coles: I think it was hastened by those deaths.

Sinsheimer: But people thought it was a disappearance.

Coles: But I think that people rushed to that because I think that was the one thing that they could find to hold them together. After all they are anxious, they have this great mystery, this enigma facing them, the whole state of Mississippi, etc. etc.

And what better way then to come together as a big, large group of people who were frightened and anxious, and waiting for Godot, or whatever they were waiting for. So I think rather quickly, rather quickly.

Some of that also facilitated by the attention they were getting. I mean it was almost as if they were on stage, kind of huddled. I don't mean this in any prejorative way, the way I am describing it. I am just describing it, rather than criticize it.

Sinsheimer: Right.

Coles: But I think, you know, that self-consciousness and the attention that others visited upon them, facilitated or pushed along that kind of collective response of people.
Plus after all, there were very moving things that were going on. The singing, and the songs, and the whole ..., the hands, the circle ... this is very powerful, emotional stuff. With deaths hovering, anxiety, mystery, confusion. Very dramatic. I don't mean that in the frivolous sense of the matter. Go ahead.

Sinsheimer: Right. Let me ask you about a couple of the people that I have been focusing on. Did you know Paul or Geoffry Cowan?

Coles: Yes.

Sinsheimer: Can you tell me some things about them?

Coles: I have known them for a long time (laughter).

Sinsheimer: Okay.

Coles: Well you know they were both from Harvard. They were newspaper writers already then in the Crimson. Paul keeps on writing, Geoff has become a lawyer. Have you interviewed them by the way?

Sinsheimer: No.

Coles: Are you going to try to.

Sinsheimer: Well, I am running out of time.

Coles: You have enough to do. But if you need help I could try.

Sinsheimer: Well Paul Cowan has written a ....

Coles: A number of books.

Sinsheimer: Right. A number of books that touch on it. A couple of chapters and stuff.

Coles: Right. He is in New York. You know their father, connected with television and radio, married a very rich woman from the Spiegal mail order company in Chicago. She used to lead a group of women to these Weekdays in Mississippi. They would fly down from New York to Jackson. It was

Coles (cont.): something (laughter). And it enraged me, you know, because they would get off the plane and you would think that they were landing in the heart of darkness itself. And I thought of saying, "Listen folks it is safer in this Jackson airport than it it is in New York City . You are behaving as if ... give these people a little credit for being ... " There was kind of an ignorance there.

I felt, of course the whole Project, that some of those students could have done more with the white communities in those towns. But of course one of the ways that they protected themselves was to totally exclude themselves from that.

Anyway, yes I knew them. And it was quite clear why they were valuable to the people that ... . What do you want to know about them? What are they like?

Sinsheimer: Yeah.

Coles: Well they were protegés at the time of David B. Smith, who was very fond of both of them. They were very intelligent and articulate, very well connected and very earnest. Paul I think was in Canton. Isn't that where he was during the Project? I remember visiting him, I was going around from Freedom House to Freedom House. One of my sons was born that summer, August 1964. He was in Canton, he was a very able member of that Freedom House. And I would describe him of the two as most, you know, he was the more emotional of the two brothers. But very idealistic and determined.

Geoff is a very sweet guy two. I think he is a lawyer, I don't know where, but he was ... . They are good solid kids at the time eighteen, nineteen, twenty.

Sinsheimer: Do you think they would be fair examples of sort of a larger set?

Coles: I don't know how to describe this without being crude and sociological. I would say that they were among the more valuable to the SNCC people. They were the richer and better connected than just about anyone there. And so they were especially valuable, they were not typical. They were typical of a small group, very small group. They were the elite to be blunt about it, disgusting as it is. They were the elite.

Sinsheimer: It is wierd to talk about the elite of some of the volunteers.

Coles: Well let's face it though. I think semi--- -- where do you put this consciously, unconsciously-- I will bet in the minds of those organizers they knew who those brothers were and what that meant.

Sinsheimer: I have an interviewer report that says about Geoffry Cowan that the interview went fair, but she noticed a substanial degree of arrogance. But she was willing to overlook that. And she said his father was with CBS Television.

Coles: So they did know.

Sinsheimer: Sure. Let's ...

Coles: You know who were the least arrogant memebers of that Mississippi Summer Project, the people who they had the least need of. Some of these white kids I remembered who had come from the Lutheran Colleges in Minnesota and Catholic colleges in Nebraska and Minnesota. They were sweetheart people, they were wonderful. But they weren't prancing around and they didn't have telephone numbers unlisted in the books.

Sinsheimer: Do you think those kids got along with the ...

Coles: I think there were class divisions within this, both black and white, and I have never seen them remarked upon in the whole literature, historical literature of the civil rights movement. That is always toned down as these racial tensions are discussed. Class within the whites, never mind blacks, poor whites, rich. I mean poor of working class background. Class within even the college backgrounds. Snotty, ivy-league arrogance which after all doesn't always demonstrate itself when you are being interviewed for going to the Mississippi Summer Project, it is part of the carriage of an entire life. It is demonstrated and considered an asset when these same people are applying to law firms, or to get into a graduate school, or whatever. Never mind to get into the colleges they get into.

So you can't just -- that is what I feel is wrong in a lot of these write-ups. A lot of these descriptions, psychological, sociological, whatever, are ripped out of the context of life. This isn't just arrogance in connection with blacks or whatever, this is built-in structual arrogance. And the reports that always emphasize when the split started taking place, you know, black-white, black power, you can't trust whites, whites this, whites that. What about some of the not only whites who were so different from whites-- but this is another

Coles (cont.): thing that I don't see often enough discussed-- the class divisions among the blacks. Those blacks who were savvy and well-connected in one way or the other, maybe not rich but well-connected, money and power and manipulation and so forth, sooner another are all too congenial to the rest of us-- and those who weren't.

And the difference say Stokley Carmichael on the one hand and John Lewis on the other. These are important distinctions, blurred by all that talk at the time of black power, and all those racial fights that became well-publicized, and the more they were publicized again the more it became theater. And people are on stage and they take rhetorical positions. And then it gets a momentum of its own and their can be no healing, because you know, they are standing there and every word is going to be reported in the New York Times and they are beholden now to that posture and there is no pulling back. And then they are screaming at one another, and then they are getting more publicity for screaming, and the ones that are screaming the loudest get the most publicity. And the ones that are most articulate and better able to handle this with the reporters get even more publicity.

And publicity itself becomes an obsession and in fact becomes a whole purpose in living as we well know. Apart from race in this society. For all of us. One speech after another (laughter).

Sinsheimer: Let's then move on to the summer. Did you still have responsibilities or were you ...?

Coles: I was a doctor. I was going around from one Freedom House to the next. In McComb I had to take ... Dennis Sweeney ... I drove him from McComb to Jackson. At 100 miles per hour in a car.

Sinsheimer: Have you ... this is sort of aside from the actual interview. Have you read Dreams Die Hard, Harris' book about ...

Coles: No.

Sinsheimer: Do you know what I am talking about though.

Coles: Yes.

Sinsheimer: Because one of the things that I am very curious about is that Harris gives sort of three strands of argument or motives for the murder. (Dennis Sweeney killed Allard Lowenstein in 1980) I guess the first one

Sinsheimer (cont.): would be the homosexual one, which has been very controversial.

Coles: I don't think that is right, at all.

Sinsheimer: The second one ...

Coles: He would have killed someone else. Did you know he wanted to kill Ed Pincus.

Sinsheimer: Right. Right.

Coles: So it is not the homosexual one. Go on. I am a psychiatrist by the way. Go on. What's the second one?

Sinsheimer: The second one I think was basically just the paranoia he had (developed) about the radio transmitter.

Coles: He had paranoia before that.

Sinsheimer: And that is was connected with Lowenstein. But the third one which interests me, which he (Harris) just kind of leaves on the table, is -- and the reason I wanted to ask you about it is because you right about it too -- the sense of community that Sweeney found in Mississippi. And that Sweeney found again in the sort of communal living in the Resistance movement. And he never had that again after that.

Coles: Right.

Sinsheimer: He sort of was a wayward soul.

Coles: That's right. That is what I would, I agree with that. But I will tell you this. When I met him in the first time in McComb and I drove him back, and tried to figure out whether I needed to get a doctor because he had some ear trouble due to the blast, the dynamite. I heard him say some things and made an immediate diagnosis. I said to my wife on the phone, I said I think he is schizophrenic. And she said what do you mean. I heard, the way he was talking there were some lapses in what we call-- my profession-- there were lapses, a thinking disorder where the thoughts don't follow in some way. And you get a little frightened about some of the things the person says that don't quite make sense. You don't have to be a shrink to notice that.

Coles (cont.): But a little of that came up, perhaps under the stress, and so I thought okay there is some real psychotic stuff in him but it will become, it will recede.

But then of course I noticed that it didn't totally, it never totally receded. And I think that people have the capacity to get along with something like that, provided that-- after all this was a very intelligent, thoughtful, decent, lovely kid.

But boy, later on when we were living in New Mexico I was getting calls every other day from people in Seattle and it was clear then --this was eleven years ago-- that he was crazy as could be. Absolutely.

And then I had to deal with Ed Pincus. I was the one Ed turned to when I said Ed-- he asked me, "Do you ever think he will deliver on these threats?" And I said, "Ed, I do. I think it is quite possible." You know that Ed Pincus moved out of Cambridge to Vermont. He would have been the one, he (Dennis) would have killed him. He was telling him that he was going to kill him. I said you had better get out. He said,"Would you?" I said,"Oh boy would I. Or get him locked up." I think that if I hadn't pulled away-- you know they were going to send him down to Albuquerque to stay with me.

Sinsheimer: I didn't know that.

Coles: Oh yeah. And I couldn't take it, I had a wife and three children. I was doing work with Indians and Spanish speaking people in New Mexico and I said I can't take someone else. My youngest boy was two years old, I said, you know I am not running a ... he has got to get a doctor. And he has got to have a life. We can't just take people in, in a small adobe house in the middle of Albuquerque.

But I will tell you if we had, in other words that is why I absolutely discount the homosexual thing. And the paranoia thing I think paranoia finds objects for itself indiscriminately. But the third one is I think very important. This was a home and he was getting love and support and attention. And the best in him came out. And then it all fell apart and all he was left with was this other stuff. I think if it hadn't been for his involvment in the civil rights movement and in the anti-war movement he would have gotten sicker earlier. Because often schitzophrenia develops very floridly in late adolescence.

Sinsheimer: That is interesting. Can you describe some of the Freedom houses for me?

Coles: Oh boy (laughter).

Sinsheimer: Not the ... just the general feeling you got going into them.

Coles: Well, there was a lot of excitment. Again there were always incidents, the reporters were there all the time. They had people with typewriters and bulletin boards and people going in and out-- a lot of that activity I thought was a little bit pitched and not very ... wasted-- why wouldn't it be. I mean their very presence there was really the point they were making. But there was a lot of that.

And then there were the usual human squabbles and intrigues-- sexual, social, personality clashes-- but also a great deal of positive affectionate stuff going on. And then some of the ironies that I pointed out. The enormous awe and affection that some of the white kids developed. Black people were putting them up which contradicted their whole notion of what they were down there for. You see I would sit there and listen to them describing how wonderful these people were. I said once to myself that if these people are so wonderful than Mississippi can't be so bad (laughter). They kept on saying that these people were the most wonderful people in the world.

Sinsheimer: Are you talking about ... which people?

Coles: The black families that were putting them up.

Sinsheimer: Okay I see.

Coles: These are supposedly the most persecuted people in America and yet they were describing them as the most wonderful people in America. And once -- I brought that up actually with Paul Cowan who I thought could take it and have this kind of discussion-- I said Paul you keep on saying how wonderful these people are and you are supposedly here to liberate them. It sounds like they are liberating you. And he laughed. And, you know, was a little taken back by it, as I was taken aback by the whole damn thing.

You know if I may use this expression it isn't all black and white. Because after all they were very enamored of the dignity, and the courage, friendliness

Coles (cont.): and hospitality, and good will, and affectionate side of supposedly this much persecuted race of people. Which is not said by me in order to justify anything.

But it just brought up, in other words, the kind of ironies and paradoxes and inconsistencies and difficulties that who is best equipped to explain to us-- novelists-- not social scientists. Novelists, people who understand as Faulkner and Eudora Welty and Flannery O'Conner and others have understood, that in the midst of all this sadness and horror are also tremendous aspects of human triumph. And often people who have more, no matter what their skin color is, are black. Color is black.

That was going on. In other words these kids were being educated, they were being surprised, they were being puzzled, they were at times frightened. They had excluded themselves-- I think more than might have been the case necessarily-- they excluded themselves from the white world. Not that the white world wanted to have anything to do with them. They were provocative to the white world in their dress and mannerism. Sometimes I thought overly so in order to show themselves and the whole world these are the people who, you know, we come from, place it up there. Have nothing to do with, we are blacks, you know.

I used to go into the post office from time to time and think that some of this is just a little overdone. But that will just show you that I am basically a frightened member of the American middle class. But anyway that is some of what was going on. They were learning enormous amounts about the state of Mississippi, particular neighborhoods; they were establishing friendships; iniating projects, education projects, health projects, specific political activist projects; toward that original goal of voter registration, not that they were registering people but political education. So that was all going on day after day.

There were repeated incidents. There was this one incident-- andI don't know whether you saw that, it made the front page of the Times-- but some students went to see a doctor because they had been injured by one of these incidents with Klan elements or whatever. And the doctor called the Klan in, and they got hurt more. And it made the front page of the Times and I organized a thing and we wrote to the American Medical Association and the state society and oh what an episode.

Sinsheimer: Do you remember what city that was in?

Coles: I don't. It was one of the smaller towns, it wasn't one of the major cities that I remember. Hmmm. Some place I have that. I don't think it has been sent down. You see I am still holding on to a lot of my stuff because I am writing, I am using some of my earlier stuff. I am writing about the way children acquire their moral values and their political values. So I am going over some of that earlier stuff, black and white children and the civil rights people for evidence.

It was in August of 1964, and was on, it began on the front page of the New York Times. What the devil was his name, it was a Polish name, his father was a doctor in Connecticut, Harvard undergraduate who had been injured by what amounted to a plot between a Mississippi physician and these goddamn hoodlums. They left his office and they beat them up. Anyway.

Sinsheimer: What ... I guess a lot of the volunteers have written about their reaction to the black home.

Coles: Right.

Sinsheimer: I guess it would be hard for me, as it would be for any of us to sort of look at the reciprocal reaction of ... the black people.

Coles: Of the blacks. It was varied. That was what interested me as much as the whole Mississippi Summer Project. I had been going into black homes for years.

I think there was a mixture of awe, admiration, envy, surprise, confusion, and perplexity; annoyance, anger, all the emotions depending on which fit. Which student in which home. Which level of aspiration for the black family. Which willingness to how-tow. Which pride. Which self-confidence that enabled seeing these people accurately and evaluating them for what they are rather than that whole penumbra, that whole mystique. After all some of them had never had white people so close to them.

My wife and I certainly experienced some of those difficulties going into black homes.

Sinsheimer: Was it more difficult for white women?

Coles: Oh, unquestionably so. My wife and I, as a husband and wife, went through a mariage ceremony, the older sister of one of the black kids we had known in Atlanta, and my wife was the center of attention in that entire thing rather than the couple that were getting married. It was horrible. All the kids wanted to touch her hair.

Coles (cont.): I am ashamed to even talk about it. So, you know, for them they had never seen white people before at anything in their lives. Other than working in their homes or seeing them from that distance. Suddenly we were social equals of sorts, however much you really can be in a situation like that.

But a lot of that was going on, after all this was rural Mississippi. It's hard to even talk about with any credibility these days, believe me it was a very, very powerful issue continually at work. Namely these white people staying in these homes. These white people eating with one at the table. These white people supposedly struggling on behalf of matters that you yourself couldn't picture yourself struggling on behalf of. This is loaded with stuff.

Sinsheimer: Right.

Coles: Now how to do the particular white volunteers respond to that? Vanity-- pretty nice being looked up to as God almighty. Humility, shame, embarassment, awkwardness, the whole list.

Sinsheimer: You have a quotation in one of your articles about, I think it is a Harvard undergraduate, talks about feeling like some sort of strange God, both a good one and a bad one. That is a feeling that was ... ?

Coles: Oh I think a lot of them felt that. They had never before been treated quite like that.

Sinsheimer: That was all over the state?

Coles: Well, wherever they were. They were in predominatly the Delta although some of them went down on the coast, and some of them did try that northwestern, northeastern part of Mississippi. But that was a tough area as I well remember. I mean the hill part of Mississippi, they by and large stayed out of that. The toughest part of the state they knew it

They knew, you see, that the Delta -- in Mississippi the safest parts were the Delta, Jackson, and the Gulf Coast. The parts that had traditionally been most liberal on race in Mississippi, and the hills out of which came the whole bilbo, so called red-neck tradition-- I hate to use that word because it is used by a lot of snotty people who are looking

Coles(cont.): down on whites in Mississippi and don't see their arrogance as priviledged whites in the North.
Anyway, the answer is a whole range of emotions.

Sinsheimer: What about the specific projects that you, as you moved from Freedom house to Freedom house, did you get the sense that there was a plan for each project and people knew what they were doing?

Sinsheimer: I felt that that varied from project to project. Some of them were much better organized than others and the whole story, the chemistry, the individual chemistry of the particular volunteers and the black leadership in SNCC, which also varied enormously.
I thought actually that Canton was one of the better-- in large part due actually to Paul [Cowan]. He was really, you know, an extremely able volunteer.

Sinsheimer: He was in Vicksburg for a while too, right?

Coles: He was in Vicksburg. That's right. That's right.

Sinsheimer: He talked about his Project leader being Papa Doc, his name for him. I will have to ask Moses who that was.

Coles: What is the name of the guy who went to the coast, he was rather heavy, overweight. I would know it in a minute if you told me. He went to Hattiesburg and then I think they made forays down to Biloxi. Oh boy. Talk about arrogance. Arrogance was not only confined to whites. Their was responsive arrogance and maybe self-initiated arrogance. Don't think that any of these emotions follow the color line necessarily.

Sinsheimer: Did you-- this is another question I guess-- did you get the sense in the begining that ... what did you get a sense in the begining, in the planning stages, were really the goals of the summer.

Coles: White presence, political presence, social presence, direct assault on the bastion of segregation. National prominence of the whole issue, tragedy and its triumph.

Sinsheimer: So the specific projects ...

Coles: To dare to show up in McComb, Mississippi. To dare. To stay there. To last. Just to last was a triumph. A couple of weeks in McComb and not be killed. Incredible. It's hard to create that for you, now believe me, at that time Jackson -- I mean it was like the capital-- it was like Berlin in 1937 or '38, it was where Hitler lived and you would never get there.

Sinsheimer: The reason I asked that is that it is hard to sort through-- well as Moses says, "Success, I have trouble with the word itself,"-- but it is hard to sort through success in term of ...

Coles: Look, no matter how much trouble he has with the word and I know what he is talking about morally, spiritually, and in the long run, and everything; the fact is that that (the Summer Project) was a success by the criteria that they may not have explicitly spelled out for a newspaper reporter but for themselves. They knew it. It was successful because the whole country was galvanized around that state, and the heat was generated, the Governor himself swerved, the President pushed through a civil rights bill, I mean that was a success. By their fondest dreams a year earlier, and I remember them dreaming.

Now when you get to that, of course you say if you are like Bob Moses, oh but look what did we really accomplish. Let me be the cynic to say that they accomplished plenty.

Sinsheimer: And yet at the same time the (Convention) challenge becomes important then in the various -- the Atlantic City Challenge-- in the various different mind states. Because it seemed like -- well I was sitting in a Congressional office with Barney Frank and he said to me, "The Atlantic City Challenge, the offer of two seats, was a major American political victory." And I don't think that Bob Moses would tell me that.

Coles: No of course not.

Sinsheimer: So to me and you there is a success there. In other words when they started the summer Atlantic City was obviously on their minds but ...

Coles: No I don't think Atlantic City ... I think the major thing on their ... . The fact that Atlantic City came on their minds was a measure of the success.

Sinsheimer: Okay.

Coles: See, you have to have a chronological, psychological sense of this. The year before they weren't thinking of Atlantic City. People like you and I weren't thinking of Atlantic City. They were thinking of would they survive and get through it and even have a Summer Project without all of them being shot down, etc. That is wheretheir trajectory was, not Hubert Humphrey

Coles (cont.): in Atlantic City. But when you become as prominent as they became, and when you become centers of national attention and the whole country is going through the kind of tremendous changes; and the President has been killed, and suddenly legislation is possible, then you start thinking of Atlantic City. After all one of the reasons they were thinking of Atlantic City were all these white politically minded people who had become their buddies, who were thinking of Atlantic City-- like the Cowans, and all the other people who were part of the American mainstream and thinks that way.

So they had become, moved into something that they themselves-- I don't mean, I am sounding like an awful snot for saying these things but this would be in retrospect an even, not even in retrospect, but I think that some people would have felt right at the time about what was happening.

Their were reporters all over the place, they were being quoted left and right, who is used to that, you and I aren't used to it ordinarily in our everyday lives. Suddenly they were becoming, what is the word, figures, including political figures. So indeed they thought of Atlantic City.

But also they were being objects of manipulation by various parts of the Democratic Party because how they were a constituency of sorts. A moral, political, and social constituency within a particular party. Now there are people all over, all the wonderful suburbs of Cleveland, Boston, and New York who read about all this in the New York Times, seen the bereaved parents going into the White House being embraced by the President of the United States, who were very concerned about these people. Knew about them.

But this did not happen, you know, you have to know what is happening, when.

Sinsheimer: Okay. So how long were you down in the state?

Coles: I stayed right through the summer than I came back. I flew back a couple of times, my son was born. And then I got into another thing, if you ahve time and our interested, a year later. The so called so called Child Development Group in the Mississippi struggle. (Inaudible)

Sinsheimer: That brings up another question I wanted to ask you. Did you sit in on any of the Freedom Schools?

Coles: Yes. They varied. Some of them were very good, and some of them were absolutely pitiful.

Sinsheimer: Was that people?

Coles: People.

Sinsheimer: People.

Coles: People. Always. What else is a school. You have been to enough of them that you know that a teacher can make or brake any subject.

Sinsheimer: How were the successful teachers successful?

Coles: I felt that some of the most successful teachers-- again you will probably have to correct for my prejudices and romanticisms-- I thought that some of the quieter people from the Midwest who weren't as talkative and weren't as full as themselves. They were very devoted to the kids in contrast to some of the hot shots.

But you can't make a total case neither, any generalization has to be qualified, and I hasten to qualify the generalization that I just made. But there were individual efforts made with children and health education, political education, literacy that were very good the important beginning of something. And that still lives on-- have you ever been to Mississippi by the way?

Sinsheimer: No. I have been to Alabama ...

Coles: Oh you have got to go. I will send you to people if you want, but I mean that is an important experience now that you are working on this. Where in Alabama did you go?

Sinsheimer: The northern part of the state.

Coles: Driving through? You should go and stop. Let me know I can give you all kinds of contacts. It is an interesting state.

Sinsheimer: I contemplated going down there to write for a year year and a half for a newspaper.

Coles: Did you.Have you?

Sinsheimer: For a newspaper or something.

Coles: Well let me know, I might be able to help you get a job in some of those southern newspapers. That is a good idea.

Sinsheimer: I have one more question. I don't even know how to ask these questions about Bob Moses, But I got the sense in the training sessions and in the summer that he was brokering a lot of these tensions. Is that an accurate feeling?

Coles: Well that is a powerful verb. It has all kinds of implications to it that I do not think one should shirk. In other words I think he was. Have you ever read Erik Erikson's book on Gandhi. Well you know that Erikson was very intrigued with Bob Moses. I don't know whether Bob Moses knows this or not (laughter). Once Bob Moses spoke, rather once I spoke about Bob Moses and Erikson came to hear it because he was very intrigued with him, hearing things about him, I don't think they ever met.

At the time Erikson was interested in Gandhi and in these religious figures, who were just natural political figures. Christ himself tells us that -- uses that serpents and doves imagery and I think that would apply to Bob, along with all the rest of us maybe.

He was brokering, very shrewd, very political savvy. He was also sweet and innocent and lovely. He was calculating and he was kind, he was knowing and again innocent. This is what I mean. Novelists do a much better job of bringing, evoking this than these categorical social scientists who are always trying to label people and call them reductively this or that.

Of course he definitely brokered. He was a figure who could somehow bring together people and work with them, and disarmed the usual hostilities, and self-centered envies and rivalries that all people have.

There was also a certain charasmatic quality about him, and it is an interesting kind: it is low key. The eyes a lot of people focus on, the greenish eyes, (laughter) you know. There is an unusual stare which I think you will still see. But you will have to correct for that, because he is older now and there was a youthful almost cat-like tension in him, bound up energy that never really-- I mean with Stokley it got expressed in those rhetorical postures, and in Jim Forman there was a little craziness, he had been in a mental hospital, he had a psychiatric history before he came to SNCC.

Coles (cont.): But I mean Bob was an exceptionally intriguing and attractive and somewhat mysterious figure. His silences were extremely powerful. His eyes were extremely commanding as well as watchful. He was very shrewd, and I am using the words with all the risks involved.

And he was a leader. And he had imagination, and moral intelligence, as well as some plain old every day intelligence. He was able to work with a range of people from self-important intellectuals to ordinary people in neighborhoods. He was very patient and he was brave.

Sinsheimer: In one of the letters that one of the volunteers wrote it said, "He seems to have the moral perplexity about him that only characters in novels have.

Coles: Yeah, well that's true. And he never got taken up with his own self-importance or even the self-importance that a project can generate. And it is almost as if the very part in him that him saying "What does success mean?" was with him even as he was determining it. That combination of being a capacity for reflection and distance from the thing that you are very much in the midst of and even leading-- this is a very rare quality. He never got carried away with this, and yet managed, yet that did not undermine his every day enthusiasm and initiative. Because you can imagine someone with (this) kind of distance and historical and moral complexity to him being unnerved and undermined. Momentum being undercut by these qualities.

But somehow he both persisted vigorously in the every day requirements of an essentially political and social kind of entrepeneurship, again risks with that word; and yet remained an almost Tolstoyian sense of history about all this. And that is what I think some of the people found amazing. Very rare quality.

All you had to do was to compare him to some of the other people in SNCC. So there was I think, I know the word charisma is much over used, but he had a moral charisma. And he was ... is a very reflective person as you will see.

But no fool, and very precise, and very shrewd, very savvy and sophisticated, with all the risks with those words.

Sinsheimer: You mention in one of your articles about-- you said it, the guilt feeling. Do you think there was guilt after the murders?

Coles: With him?

Sinsheimer: Was he able to abstract it out or was there ... ?

Coles: Guilt, now we have to be careful. Guilt is when you have done something wrong. I don't think he ever felt he did anything wrong. I think sadness as a human being, sadness that this happened. Horror. Sadness. Not guilt. I don't think at any point that he felt personally responsible for this. Sure they organized the Mississippi Summer Project. Sure they knew in their heart of hearts that this kind of incident probably in the long run was going to help them. Although I am not sure that they could sit and formulate it that clearly for themselves, and not spokenly.

But I think that guilt was not one of the major, no, the disgust and the horror and the pain they were in, not guilt. Guilt is the kind of emotion that a lot of us comfortable middle class people like to think is so important in others. They tell me the course I teach to students, they call it Guilt 33. We read Agee and Orwell and these writers, and Ellison and Percy; well they say this makes us feel guilty. And I try to tell the students that I think you are using this word incorrectly. To be morally upset and outraged is not to feel guilty. And the fact that you have been told that is what it is means that you are in a way succumbing to a kind of psychiatric ideology that is distancing you from the older and more moral and philosophical traditions, and tells you that everything is psychiatric. There is no more room for plain old moral outrage, it has to be called guilt. There is no more room for a sense of horror and shame about what is going on in the world, it is called guilt. And the implication is what you should do is to go and see a psychiatrist, rather than take up action against what you find unjust.

And this is you know a very interesting development.

Sinsheimer: I know how my friends disarm me sometimes when I am upset, "You know you are feeling guilty."

Coles: And you have a problem, and go and see a doctor.

Sinsheimer: "Don't be upset about it."

Coles: Because if you are upset about something, you know what that means.

Sinsheimer: Another question I have is how, what did you have a sense about the parents of the volunteers. Were a lot of the kids going against the will ... ?

Coles: Oh this is a very important subject. A lot of these kids-- their parents were frightened out of their minds. I always tell the story of this girl whose father was a psychoanalyst in Chicago.

Sinsheimer: Who was she?

Coles: I forgot her name. But she was depressed and actually some of the people in SNCC, Bob or Jim or one of them, said you had better go talk to her we have heard she is quite depressed. So I went over to the dorm there at the Western College for Women and I looked her up and I talked to her for awhile. And she didn't seem too depressed to me. She said that the only problem I have is that my parents are calling me all the time. So I said do you want me to call them. So she said, "Will you?" So I did. I did call them and the father got on the phone and he told me that he was very worried about his daughter. He wanted me to know that when she was twelve she had had a depressive episode.

I said oh now she is twenty. So I said gee I just talked to her and she seemed fine. So he said well she did have these episodes. And I felt like saying so did I, so did everyone. And then the mother was listening on an extension and she said, "You know, doctor it is my husband who is depressed. He is very worried about ... ." So I said worry is not depression. Worry is worry. And you have every reason to worry. I can't tell you not to worry. You should worry. So should we all.

Sinsheimer: Is sexual fear part of that?

Coles: On the part of the parents? I think they were afraid that they would get killed, but I think that some of them would not care to admit it, including me if I had a daughter. The sexual issue has not been much talked about. I think it would be-- the fears would

Coles (cont.): be, if you know the South, would prove to be exagerated. But they should be aknowledged as there. They were wrong to be so frightened. In that sense everyone had been caught up in the old stereotypes.

Sinsheimer: Right.

Coles: But they were caught up in the stereotypes, and I would imagine more than any of us wanted to talk about. And yet those women went didn't they?

Sinsheimer: Do you think that any of them got caught up in the stereotype when they were there?

Coles: I think some of them were, and some of them handled it as we often do by almost confirming the stereotype and flirting with blacks, so great was their anxiety. You could get into a whole psychiatric spectrum. Others maintained a quiet dignity. And there were a whole range of involvments Emotional, sexual, social between white women and black men. But then you would have to say between white women and white men too. So always hold onto that particularity in people as you think about them. Lecture number 780.

Sinsheimer: Yeah.

Coles: The Agee, when he writes about this in Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, do you know that book? Each person is different, and that was very apparent from Freedom house to Freedom house. The tone varied with some of these people. And with some of the social, and economic and personal backgrounds as they amounted to a particular collectivity. After all what are we talking about. We are talking five or ten people in each of these Freedom houses, fifteen at the most. Twenty. I can't imagine more than twenty.

Sinsheimer: Well this has been enormously helpful, I thank you.

End of interview.