

Alabama SNCC

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
31½ Franklin St. Selma, Alabama
Phone: 872-1426 872-4801

Silas Norman,
State Project Director

August 20, 1965

Dear Mr. Warren,

I hope you are fine. Please excuse this note. I just got out of jail in Fort Deposit a little town in Lowndes County, Alabama, this is the county where Mrs. Luizzo was shot. I would like to describe some of the scenery. The entire white populace (at least it appeared that way) was armed as students began to picket. When a group was arrested they would surround the group holding loaded shot-guns in their stomachs, yelling and screaming. I did not demonstrate. The "officials" of the county know who I am. Since they could not arrest me for demonstrating they arrested me for reckless driving and leaving the scene of an accident. I wasn't driving.

I have been arrested about 25 times. Jails are bad places. You may get along better in some. Sometimes you can read most of the time you can't. They won't let you read. There were about thirty of us in jail. Someone smuggled in two paperbacks.

Whenever I can afford the luxury of reading while in jail, I always think about the author. Most of the time I say if I knew him I would write and say I read your book while in jail. You read books very slowly in jail because there are never enough and when you finish a book there is nothing to do. So you are like a kid with an ice-cream cone, you don't want to finish your cone. Since there were only two books and thirty people, after you read five pages you tore them from the book and passed it on to the next person. The book is usually torn to pieces.

One of the books was Black Boy, I have already read that, so I was out of the fight for that one. The other book was Wilderness, I was in the fight for that one.

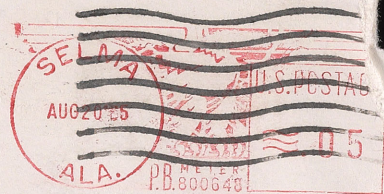
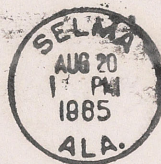
Books become more real in jail. Characters become cell-mates, and the novel takes place within the confines of the steel bars.

I just wanted to say I read your book while I was in jail.

Yours for Freedom

Stokely Carmichael
Stokely Carmichael

Carmichael
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Mr. Robert Penn Warren
2495 Reeding Road
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