

Wednesdays in Mississippi: Women Building Bridges of Understanding,
Summer 1964
by Debbie Harwell

Coming together in the center of racial unrest at the peak of the civil rights movement, the women of Wednesdays in Mississippi, or WIMS, were a study in diversity: black and white; from the North and the South, the largest cities and smallest towns; privileged and disadvantaged; Protestant, Jewish, and Catholic; Ph.D.'s and those who were denied a formal education. Despite such divergent backgrounds, they shared a common bond as women and a desire to bridge the widening racial divide.

These women knew something that many of the civil rights leaders of the day had not yet recognized: *women* had an important role to play. Operating with quiet resolve and at great risk to themselves, northern women went to Jackson, Mississippi during the summer of 1964, conducting weekly visits to their southern counterparts, to act as a calming influence in this otherwise volatile time.¹

What made this program unique is that they worked woman to woman in hopes of getting black and white women to communicate their concerns to one another, and by so doing, to realize that they actually shared common goals for their families and their communities. This type of understanding would, in turn, ultimately lead to achieving an integrated society. No other national group of men or women appeared to be working with the specific goal in mind of opening lines of communication between black and white middle-class women to facilitate the transition from a Jim Crow world to a community in which people of all races could live together as one.²

Created by the National Council of Negro Women or NCNW, WIMS was the only civil rights program organized for women, by women, as part of a national women's organization. My purpose here is to examine how *these* women were able to open lines of communication and lay a foundation for community building where the larger movement had failed.

Specifically, I will examine: how Wednesdays in Mississippi was conceived and implemented, the peaceful strategies employed by these women to change racist attitudes, and the effectiveness of their efforts in building a beloved community

Data and Methodology

I was first introduced to Wednesdays in Mississippi when I read the autobiography of NCNW president Dorothy Height. The courage of these women impressed me. But mostly I was intrigued by the fact that, even in such a hostile political climate, they were able to create a groundswell of change by simply working woman to woman outside conventional power structures.

To learn more, I began by researching women's roles in the civil rights movement, but found WIMS was absent from the historical literature. Fortunately, I located Dr. Holly Shulman who is a historian at UVA and the daughter of the WIMS' project director, Polly Cowan. Shulman shared the transcripts of several interviews she had done with the WIMS participants, and directed me to the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House in Washington D.C. which houses the archives of the NCNW & WIMS. Some of the documents I have examined there include drafts of the original mission statement, reports of meetings, personal and official correspondence, organizational reports, and the team debriefing transcripts.

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I will begin here by summarizing the history of the program and follow with an analysis of the strategies used by WIMS to successfully build bridges of understanding in the Jackson community.

Summary of the Program

In 1963, Dorothy Height, an African-American woman deeply rooted in her Christian faith, was the only woman representing a national black woman's organization among the established male-dominated leadership in the civil rights movement. Polly Cowan, a white Jewish woman, was an impassioned, liberal community activist writing position papers on the injustice of segregation and disenfranchisement.

When the various civil rights organization leaders were asked if they could use a volunteer, all the men--including Martin Luther King Jr., A Philip Randolph, Whitney Young, and James Farmer-- said no. But Height jumped at the chance, *IF* she could have the woman who had been writing those papers. This forged a working relationship and friendship between two kindred spirits that lasted until Cowan's death in 1976.³

Both Height and Cowan were intent on finding a way to reach out to the South in hopes of uniting the communities that were becoming progressively more divided. In the spring of 1964, they organized an off-the-record meeting in Atlanta to bring together the leadership of national women's organizations from the hottest trouble spots in the South. At their final meeting, Height asked the women to sit together by city and consider what role the organizations could play in helping their communities.

A prominent African American woman from Jackson, Mississippi, and founder of WomanPower Unlimited, Clarie Collins Harvey, stood up and gestured to the four white women seated at her table, stating:

We have never met before, we have never sat together before, and we have decided today that we will never be separated again. We have too much work to do! . . . You can be like a long-handled spoon, reaching down and stirring us up, *bringing us together* in ways that we could never do by ourselves. (italics added)⁴

Harvey further expressed her concerns about the potential for violence in reaction to COFO's Freedom Summer Project. Saying Jackson was a "bastion of segregation," she nevertheless believed it would help if the northern women would visit their community to act as a "ministry of presence."⁵

Cowan conceived the idea to make Harvey's request a reality. She suggested bringing women of stature, black and white, of various faiths and interests, from the "Cadillac Crowd" whose prominence would be a "quieting influence."⁶ These women would bring their skills as observers and report to their communities on what they had seen; they would bring resources to the Freedom Schools and community centers and thus appear to be doing women's work; they would "*build bridges*" between the black and white women of Jackson.

Acknowledging that these were women with a limited amount of time available, Cowan suggested they fly into Jackson on Tuesday, fan out to surrounding areas on Wednesday, and return home on Thursday. They would call the project "Wednesdays in Mississippi." Cowan wrote that the reason "for these women being in troubled spots should be . . . because they care, they want to know the truth, they want to help." She insisted, "We don't want them to go as sightseers. *They have to be willing to do something that furthers the movement*" (italics added).⁷

They set out their mission statement:

We believe it is important that private citizens of stature and influence make it known that they support the aspirations of the citizens of Mississippi for full citizenship, that they deplore violence, and that they will place themselves in tension-filled situations to try to initiate both understanding and reconciliation.

The specific goals were: to establish lines of communication among women of goodwill across regional and racial lines, to observe the COFO student projects and discuss what they had seen with local Mississippi women.⁸

To put their plan into action, they would need a staff and base of operations. In 1964, in Mississippi, this required separation and deception. For the black staffer, Height selected Doris Wilson, an acquaintance from the YWCA, with two master's degrees who had experience working with women, particularly in interracial groups.⁹ Susan Goodwillie was chosen to be the white staff member. A recent Stanford graduate, she had come to work for the NCNW in October 1963, after becoming interested in civil rights struggle.¹⁰ The women were at the COFO training in Ohio when volunteers Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and James Chaney were reported missing. The fact made them all the more determined to go to Mississippi.

Today, it's difficult for us to conceive of how Southern society operated at that time. Wilson and Goodwillie could not acknowledge knowing one another, let alone stay or meet in the same facilities. Wilson stayed in the home of an African-American woman. Goodwillie came under the guise of writing a Southern cookbook and stayed at an apartment paid for with laundered money so as not to be traced to the NCNW.¹¹

The head of the black YWCA reluctantly agreed to let them meet in her back room, provided they were careful and did not stay long. To get there, Goodwillie had to take a cab to a motel near the black side of town. There she walked through the grounds, past the pool, through a crepe myrtle hedge, then 6 blocks to the black YW.¹²

Height and Cowan assembled 7 teams of 48 Northern women to go to Mississippi. Of those women, 32 were white, 16 black; 32 were Protestant, 8 Jewish, 6 Catholic, and 2 undesignated. They were members of the NCNW, YWCA, National Council of Catholic Women, National Council of Jewish Women, Church Women United, League of Women Voters and American Association of University Women. They all had something to contribute through their education, their resources, their positions, or the positions of their husbands. They were women who were open to seeing exactly what the situation was and taking the message home.¹³

To maximize their opportunities for success, Height and Cowan insisted that the women follow certain rules of Southern protocol, including traveling by race. Some team members, Ruth Batson for one, balked at this, given it was exactly the kind of behavior they were hoping to stop. But Height explained the importance of living within the pattern. She said, "There was no way we could bring about change if we went down there and tried to upset it."¹⁴

A typical itinerary involved the women acting like strangers, and separating by race when the staff picked them up at the airport. The black women went to the homes of their hosts, and attended an NAACP rally. The white women checked into the hotel and went to a meeting with Goodwillie. On Wednesday, all the women traveled to a nearby town where they visited a Freedom School, community center, and listened to a report on voter registration. On their return to Jackson, they met for coffee with Jackson women, attended an inter-faith prayer meeting, or meeting of WomanPower Unlimited. On Thursday, they returned home.¹⁵

In order for the teams to accomplish their goals of allaying the Mississippians' fears about the college students and the work they were doing for civil rights, the WIMS teams first had to find Jackson women willing to meet with them--something that was no easy task. While African American women were welcomed in African American homes, the southern white women were fearful of meeting with the WIMS teams, even in all white groups.¹⁶

When white women did agree to meet, it was a clandestine affair. Goodwillie recalled what transpired at one of their first get-togethers:

We finally organized a coffee at the home of a prominent white Jackson woman, . . . one woman walked in and immediately went over to all the windows and drew the curtains, just drew them. It was ten o'clock in the morning on a pretty, sunny day. . . the hostess said, "Mary, what are you doing?" She said, "If anybody sees me here, if my husband sees me here, it'll be the end of our marriage."¹⁷

This scenario was repeated throughout the summer. At the debriefing for Team 5, Cowan estimated they had seen 150 women who expressed similar sentiments about their husbands.¹⁸ For some husbands this was a reflection of racist attitudes, but for many others, it had more to do with a fear of reprisals, both physical and economic.

Loss of employment was a frequent non-violent threat against both blacks and whites. Team 2 member Laya Weisner reported that the husbands of women who belonged to the League of Women Voters received letters saying their wives should withdraw from the "subversive organization" or their jobs would be in jeopardy. Marian Logan, a member of Team 1, told how a boycott of downtown businesses by predominately African American teachers was cut short when the superintendent of schools let them know that if they were making their money in town, they had better be spending it there, and he went so far as to compare past and with present charge purchases to effectively halt the boycott.¹⁹

In the Jewish community, women were willing to prepare and send food to the COFO workers, but delivered it through Freedom Houses rather than taking it directly to the black parts of town. Again, fear was a factor. Pearl Willen, President of the National Council of Jewish Women, explained that the Jewish women in Mississippi were concerned that identifying with civil rights "would bring increased anti-Semitism, which [was] already fanned by the racists" who blamed the Jews for the civil rights movement. Despite that, many southern Jews continued to speak out for social justice.²⁰

No support came from the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. In fact, Mississippi's Catholic bishop refused to allow a nun on the Boston team to meet with any Catholics in the state. Cowan had hoped Sister Catherine John would be able to meet with Father Bernard Law who edited the Mississippi *Catholic Register*, but the meeting was forbidden.²¹ However, it should be noted that individual priests, and groups of nuns, particularly those at parochial schools, were active in the civil rights effort.

Of the white women who came to meet the WIMS teams, not all sympathized with their cause. A member of Team 6, Jean Davis, President of the Girl Scout Council from Chicago, described what happened at a coffee given by a widow [Mrs. Ezell] who announced to the gathering that she had taken an interest in civil rights. The news shocked and dismayed Ezell's daughter and several friends who were there. One of the adversaries confronted Davis about why Davis and her sister-in-law Miriam had come to Mississippi. Davis explained that her own daughter was there with COFO. From that point, the conversation only deteriorated. Davis said:

They could not understand how we as mothers have possibly allowed our children to come down. We tried all kinds of different tacks. . . . Miriam chimed in...with a Biblical reference. . . . [Mrs. Ezell]'s daughter . . . feels violently about this, and she cannot understand her mother. I was trying desperately to get them to see . . . there was room in this movement for the people like us and those of them there that morning. . . . My question was “Is there something we can do?” At this point, Mrs. [Ezell’s] daughter said yes, you can go home and take your daughter with you.²²

Despite these set backs, the WIMS teams were encouraged whenever they had a victory, and those were certainly part of their experience as well. As an example of the way in which this type of interaction opened doors of understanding, Gerry Kohlberg, a member of the Boston team, summarized what transpired at another coffee:

After listening for half an hour to her fellow Southerners telling us how fine everything was, an older woman spoke up in her soft, broadly accented voice: “Girls, I just have to tell you, you are all so wrong!... You all know that I was on the State Advisory Committee of the Civil Rights Commission for two years, and I didn't ask to be on it, but I was, and I sat and listened to the people come in and tell of their abuses, and jobs lost, and beatings...there were lots of injustices, terrible ones.”...for three quarters of an hour this sincere, gentle woman educated her neighbors to the real facts of life in Jackson, Mississippi, and other Mississippi cities, too. When she was through, it was as if the dam had broken. The others talked, exchanged stories and experiences. These women were speaking up, and to each other, about the one subject they have been too frightened to mention at all.²³

These women had, at last, opened a dialog on race, but others went even further. In another incident, Helen Meyner, a member of Team 7, had worked with the National Red Cross and was the wife of the former governor of New Jersey. A Presbyterian, she was slated to stay at the home of a Jackson Presbyterian minister and his wife, a breakthrough for WIMS. However, at the last minute, the couple sent word that they must withdraw their invitation for fear it would jeopardize the outcome of a close vote on a controversial church issue. The wife called Goodwillie later to express her regrets and embarrassment. She added, “You know we’re not free, are we?” Goodwillie replied, “you’re not any freer than the blackest man in this town.” Several months later, that same woman became a leader for change, and organized WIMS’ first integrated lunch at the Sun-n-Sands Motel.²⁴

Strategies & Success

Height and Cowan believed that women were the key to change in the South. For that reason, Wednesdays in Mississippi was always a woman to woman initiative—conceived by women, organized by women, reaching out to women—working outside the traditional power structures of the broader civil rights movement and Mississippi society. However, the heart of their strategy went beyond simply being women. Both black and white team members used the

intersecting identities of gender and class to open doors that otherwise would have been closed to them. In this way, following southern protocol for gender, race, and class served as both their vehicle and their protection—an approach that was simultaneously unique and quintessentially female.

The attributes that had kept women off the platform in rallies were the very attributes Height and Cowan sought to exploit as a source of power for WIMS. Cowan wrote:

High level women have unique abilities to offer people in troubled places. Initially, they have access to people -- it is hard to turn away or ignore a “tidy, smiling lady with white gloves and high heels.” When you combine experience, determination, knowledge, understanding and a desire to help -- with femininity, you have a force to reckon with.²⁵

Wearing white gloves and dresses as was customary in the early 1960s, they “sent out signals” appropriate to their mostly middle-aged, middle-class, and in some cases, upper-class standing. Shulman explained, “The way in which they went about establishing their presence bespoke of their own sense of entitlement; they came from power and they could speak to power.”²⁶

Adopting expected behaviors of gender, race, and class, can serve to reinforce existing power structures, however, behavior patterns used by WIMS were consciously chosen as a method to infiltrate rather than sustain the hierarchies of southern society. In fact, their purpose was to tear down those hierarchies with regard to race specifically.

While admittedly not all of the Southerners were receptive to the WIMS visits, nonetheless, the aura of respectability served as an entrée to many white women who might otherwise have refused to meet with the Wednesdays women, categorizing them as another group of northern trouble-makers.²⁷

A second element that WIMS used to foster success was their quiet approach in the community. This was in stark contrast to other civil rights organizations operating in the state. Ed King, chaplain at Tougaloo and one of the founders of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party stressed how important their approach was in the movement:

The program was extremely important. . . . The whole thrust of what we were doing was not just the dramatic things, like going to jail or marching. We were trying to deal with every level of change that was needed, and Dorothy Height understood that.²⁸

Over the course of the summer, The WIMS teams met with over 300 Mississippi women. Slowly but surely, they chipped away at the barriers to interracial communication and added women to their cause one, two, and three at a time, (impressing upon the southern white women that they had nothing to fear by moving forward towards an integrated community.)²⁹ They did this by sharing their thoughts as parents of COFO workers, by reporting the reality of what they had seen while visiting the Freedom Schools and community centers, and by giving progressive thinking white Mississippians the opportunity and courage to speak out in support of the changes taking place.

Many of the white women had turned a “blind eye” to the effects of segregation and denial of basic civil rights. Height theorized, they knew what was happening, but perhaps felt no

sense of “personal identification” with it. WIMS brought it to the forefront and made people aware and interested in what was happening “on the other side of town.”³⁰

African American women were also impacted by a change of attitude. For those women, WIMS was a source of encouragement and support that gave them hope that change might truly be coming. Hope came from knowing that black and white women in the North cared and were working on their behalf, and from discovering that women across town, in their own community, were willing to help as well. Activist Unita Blackwell said, “When Black and white women came together, it was, for us, strength. It was a feeling of we weren’t alone.”³¹ For African American women, this sense that others were concerned for their well being was immeasurable.

For the northern women, they were shocked at what they had seen behind the cotton curtain. What they were able to see first hand had a far greater impact than anything they had seen on television or read about in the newspaper, and they went home with a renewed commitment to fight for civil rights.³²

Wednesdays in Mississippi was intended to be a one-summer project, but the women from Mississippi “literally begged the NCNW to continue the program.” They felt that WIMS had “started something invaluable, something which possessed a great potential for wide and significant expansion.” By the end of the second summer, a leading Mississippi woman who later served as Carter's Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Patt Derian, wrote: “if you look back over the last two years and *mark every forward step in Jackson community relations, you will find that a ‘Wednesday’ lady has somehow been involved*” (italics added).³³

At the Interfaith Prayer Fellowship attended by Team 6, Quaker activist Fay Honey Knopf stated “The beloved community begins with you.”³⁴ Cowan described the significance of that beginning, the significance of what Wednesdays in Mississippi and other civil rights projects were fighting for when she said:

The 1960s gave many of us an opportunity to fight injustice and to work for freedom. Freedom for black people is a step toward freedom for all people...this effort for national liberation encouraged many white people to join the battle knowing that no one of us can be free until all of us are free.³⁵

WIMS operated on the premise that the cornerstone for building a beloved community was for people of extreme difference to accept and respect each other as equals. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a step toward protecting legal rights, but it did nothing for changing attitudes. Knowing this type of change could not take place in an environment where hostility prevented normal human interaction, Height and Cowan devised a plan to address that. A plan for which their own friendship might well have been a model. A plan which deserves closer examination for use in today's troubled world.

In a time when our country was deeply divided, this group of women interceded quietly, yet resolutely, to work for peace and transform a community. In so doing, they served as catalysts for change, and they created a legacy of community building activism for future generations, the ripple effects of which continue in countless undocumented ways today through those whose lives were touched either directly or indirectly by this program. Of that ripple effect, Cowan said: “Each woman serves as a catalyst. . . . Each will put a different set of wheels in motion. This has tremendous implications.”³⁶

¹ Dorothy Height, *Open Wide the Freedom Gates* (New York: Public Affairs, 2003), 165. The author would like to thank the following people for their encouragement and assistance in the completion of her master's thesis from which this article is derived: Margaret Caffrey, Kenneth Chandler, Margaret Coleman, Leigh Anne Duck, Joseph Hawes, Dorothy Height, Cynthia Fabrizio Pelak, Janann Sherman, and Holly Cowan Shulman.

² Pauline Cowan, interview by John Britton, 8 March 1968, The Civil Rights Documentation Project, Moorland Springarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C., 20, 27; Susan Goodwillie Stedman, interview by Holly Cowan Shulman, 20 October 2002, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 43,44. Susan Goodwillie Stedman married after her involvement with WIMS and will be referred to in this text as Susan Goodwillie.

³ Dorothy Height, interviewed by Holly Cowan Shulman, 16 October 2002, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 13; Height, *Freedom Gates*, 139-140; Holly C. Shulman, "Recollections of Polly Spiegel Cowan," *Jewish Women's Archive*, 2003, <http://www.jwa.org/cgibin/printpage.cgi?uri=/discover/recollections/cowan.html> (accessed February 21, 2006); Holly Cowan Shulman, "Wednesdays in Mississippi: The National Council of Negro Women and the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi During Freedom Summer, 1964," 2005, unpublished manuscript, 7.

⁴ Height, *Freedom Gates*, 162, 164, 165; Polly Cowan, "Women in the Civil Rights Movement: Variations on a Theme," n.d., Cowan, Series 1, Box 1, File 2, 1; "Inter Organization Women's Committee," NCNW Papers Series 19, Box 8, File 2, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Archives for Black Women's History, Washington, D.C.; Stedman, 20. In 1961, Harvey founded WomanPower Unlimited to support the Freedom Riders on trial in Jackson. The organization grew to an interracial network of over 300 women who supported voter registration, school desegregation, and other civil rights projects. The group's being "independent of any male-dominated civil rights group," enabled them to act quickly, "free from bureaucratic inefficiency and territorial infighting." Dittmer, 98-99.

⁵ "Consultation Program of Inter-Organization Women's Committee," NCNW Series 19, Box 8, File 2, 17; Height, *Freedom Gates*, 165; Stedman, 20, 22.

⁶ Holly Cowan Shulman, "Wednesdays in Mississippi: Civil Rights as Women's Work," (paper presented as part of a panel "Voices of Moderation: Jewish Women and the Civil Rights Movement," for the Southern Jewish Historical Society 31st Annual Conference, Little Rock, Arkansas, November 10, 2006), digital recording.

⁷ Polly Cowan, autobiography fragments, Polly Cowan Papers, Series 1, Box 1, File 7, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Archives for Black Women's History, Washington, D.C., 24; Height, *Freedom Gates*, 168; Height, interview, 2002, 15; Cowan, "Women in the Civil Rights Movement."

⁸ Height, *Freedom Gates*, 169.

⁹ Doris Wilson, interviewed by Mary Ann Lawlor, 9 March 2003, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 7, 9, 13-17; Kojo Nnamdi, "Wednesdays in Mississippi: An Interview with Guests Susan Goodwillie, Priscilla Hunt, Mildred Pitt Goodman, Doris V. Wilson, and Russlyn Ali," *Public Interest*, WAMU, American University Radio, Washington, D.C., 20 April 2001, cassette.

¹⁰ Stedman, 5-6, 12, 33-34; Susan Goodwillie, interview with William Chafe, 22 January 1989, "The Reminiscences of Susan Goodwillie," Lowenstein Oral History Project, Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, New York, 3, 4, 18-19, 21.

¹¹ Stedman, 33; Height, *Freedom Gates*, 170; Height, interview, 2002, 20. Later, much to the staff's amusement, a minister from Boston who was trying to operate an integrated church brought it to their attention that if you were writing a southern cookbook you would not be getting your recipes in the white community; you would be talking to the African American women. Stedman, 35.

¹² Height, *Freedom Gates*, 170; Goodwillie, "Reminiscences," 20; Stedman, 35, 36.

¹³ Polly Cowan and Dorothy Height, "Wednesdays in Mississippi" 1964, Education Foundation of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc., February 1965, NCNW Papers, Series 19, Box 12, File 8, 10.

¹⁴ Lottie Joiner, "Down in the Delta," *Crisis*, March/April 2002, 33.

¹⁵ "Wednesdays in Mississippi-Team #1," 13 July 1964, NCNW Series 19, Box 14, File 7.

¹⁶ Height, *Freedom Gates*, 177; "Wednesdays in Mississippi – Team #1," 14.

¹⁷ Stedman, 44.

¹⁸ "Wednesdays in Mississippi – New York Team No. 5 to Ruleville," 1964, NCNW Series 19, Box 15, File 1, 19; "Wednesdays in Mississippi – Team #1," 13.

¹⁹ "Wednesdays in Mississippi – Team #1", 14; Polly Cowan, "Women in Mississippi (WIMS) Preliminary Report," 1964, NCNW Papers Series 19, Box 13, File 2, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Archives for Black Women's History, Washington, D.C.26-27; Nnamdi.

²⁰ Jean Benjamin, "Mississippi – July 1964," 1964., NCNW Papers Series 19, Box 12, File 7, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Archives for Black Women's History, Washington, D.C., 1; NCJW News for Publicity Chairman, "NCJW Head Takes Part in Wednesdays in Mississippi," 4 September 1964, NCNW Papers Series 19, Box 14, File 8, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Archives for Black Women's History, Washington, D.C., 2.

²¹ Shulman, [WIMS]: The National Council of Negro Women," 20-21; "Wednesdays in Mississippi – Team #1," 13.

²² "Wednesdays in Mississippi – Chicago Team," 11-13 August 1964, NCNW Papers Series 19, Box 15, File 2, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Archives for Black Women's History, Washington, D.C.,12-13.

²³ "Women in Mississippi," 20-21. This quote most likely belongs to Jane Schutt, who served as chairman of the Mississippi Advisory Committee to the United States Civil Rights Commission. After having crosses burned in her yard, and her husband's job repeatedly threatened, she withdrew from high-profile involvement on the Commission, but continued working behind the scenes. Jenny Irons, "The Shaping of Activist Recruitment and Participation: A Study of Women in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement," *Gender and Society*, 12.n6, Special Issue: Gender and Social Movements, Part 1, 699.

²⁴ Goodwillie, "Reminiscences," 18-19.

²⁵ "Wednesdays in Mississippi – Fact Sheet." NCNW Papers Series 19, Box 2, File 2, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Archives for Black Women's History, Washington, D.C. n.d., 2.

²⁶ Shulman “[WIMS]: Civil Rights;” Shulman, “[WIMS]: The National Council of Negro Women,” 16; Stedman, 45.

²⁷ Polly Cowan, “Wednesdays in Mississippi – Report From Polly Cowan Project Coordinator,” 1964, NCNW Papers Series 19, Box 12, File 15, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Archives for Black Women’s History, Washington, D.C., 4.

²⁸ Joiner, 37.

²⁹ Shulman, “[WIMS]: The National Council of Negro Women,” 2; Height, *Freedom Gates*, 177-178.

³⁰ Cowan, “Wednesdays in Mississippi Report,” 4; Stedman, 48; Height, *Black Women Oral History Project*, 240.

³¹ Trude W. Lash, Memo to Polly Cowan, 8 September 1964, NCNW Papers Series 19, Box 15, File 1, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Archives for Black Women’s History, Washington D.C., 3; Height, interview, 2003, 6; Stedman, 49; Joiner, 37.

³² Height, *Freedom Gates*, 176; Shulman, “[WIMS]: The National Council of Negro Women,” 25; “Wednesdays in Mississippi – Team #1,” 8.

³³ Height, *Freedom Gates*, 178-179, 184-185; Stedman, 51; “Wednesdays in Mississippi – Fact Sheet,” 1.

³⁴ “Wednesdays in Mississippi - Chicago Team August 11-13,” 1964, NCNW Papers Series 19, Box 15, File 3, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Archives for Black Women’s History, Washington, D.C., 10.

³⁵ Polly Cowan, “Why Me?” autobiographical essay, Polly Cowan Papers, Series 1, Box 1, File 10, Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Archives for Black Women’s History, Washington, D.C., 1.

³⁶ Shulman, “[WIMS]: The National Council of Negro Women,” 17; Cowan, “Report,” 2.