



Freedom Summer

By Doug McAdam

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In June 1964, over one thousand volunteers--most of them white, northern college students--arrived in Mississippi to register black voters and staff "freedom schools" as part of the Freedom Summer campaign organized by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. Within ten days, three of them were murdered; by the summer's end, another had died and hundreds more had endured bombings, beatings, and arrests. Less dramatically, but no less significantly, the volunteers encountered a "liberating" exposure to new lifestyles, new political ideologies, and a radically new perspective on America and on themselves.

Films such as *Mississippi Burning* have attempted to document this episode in the civil rights era, but Doug McAdam offers the first book to gauge the impact of Freedom Summer on the project volunteers and the period we now call "the turbulent sixties." Tracking down hundreds of the original project applicants, and combining hard data with a wealth of personal recollections, he has produced a riveting portrait of the people, the events, and the era. McAdam discovered that during Freedom Summer, the volunteers' encounters with white supremacist violence and their experiences with interracial relationships, communal living, and a more open sexuality led many of them to "climb aboard a political and cultural wave just as it was forming and beginning to wash forward." Many became activists in subsequent protests--including the antiwar movement and the feminist movement--and, most significantly, many of them have *remained* activists to this day.

Brimming with the reminiscences of the Freedom Summer veterans, the book captures the varied motives that compelled them to make the journey south, the terror that came with the explosions of violence, the camaraderie and conflicts they experienced among themselves, and their assorted feelings about the lessons they learned.

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Freedom Summer By Doug McAdam Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"A fascinating blend of theory, biography, and history that gives a sociological account of an era with real people rather than abstractions. With solid research, he shows that one summer for 1,000 people has had a national, if not international, impact in ways obscured before this research. A first class work that not only informs, but moves."--Donald A. Maxam, Central College

"A first-rate, in-depth study of the young men and women who risked their lives for freedom in Mississippi in 1964."--Tom Hayden, State Assembly, Sacramento, California

"The heart of Freedom Summer is...McAdam's account of what happened to the volunteers after the Summer Project ended. We have, McAdam argues, been seduced by the media into seeing the activists of the 1960s as men and women who rebelled in their youth and then turned around and became yuppies. McAdam's great contribution is to show that no such generational selling-out occurred."--The Nation

"[McAdam] does not lose sight of black leadership and conveys an honest--not romanticized or patronizing--respect for it....The heart of McAdam's contribution lies in his uncommon sense of interdependence and linkage....In the struggle to shine light on this nation's racial history, Doug McAdam has illuminated a piece of the picture with unusual scope and sharpness."--San Francisco Review of Books

"An original work on an important topic."--Matthew Schneirov, Duquesne University

"This book is a real eye opener for students who need to learn about the Civil Rights Movement."--Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, Colby College

"What distinguishes this book is the voices of the volunteers which speak from the pages....An extremely interesting, readable account of the summer of 1964. It is clearly written, detailed, and well documented; enlivened by the words of those who experienced that summer."--The Tampa Tribune-Times

"McAdam captures what it was like to be on the front lines of the civil rights struggle in Mississippi....Basic reading for those interested in social movements and protest politics."--Contemporary Sociology

"An astonishing piece of research....A marvelous narrative of the Freedom Summer experience."--The Progressive

"In Freedom Summer, Doug McAdam illustrates the radical education experienced by the volunteers and the tremendous impact that Freedom Summer had, and still has, on our lives. McAdam interviewed 348 of the 566 volunteers, often traveling around the country to meet with them personally, and he compiled fascinating data on what inspired the volunteers to participate in the project, what it was like once they arrived and how their participation influenced the direction of their lives."--San Francisco Chronicle

About the Author

Doug McAdam is Professor of Sociology at the University of Arizona and author of *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*.

Users Review

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Shameka Nye:

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