

February 11, 1963

G. Shaw Smith

Informal Information about Hotel Arrangements for Odetta, Negro Folk Singer to Perform at Davidson on February 16, 1963

On January 30 I received a call from "Betty," the personal manager of Odetta, who informed me that Odetta and her accompanist, Mr. Bill Lee, bass player, were unable to get accommodations in the Charlotte area. This information was given to her by the tour director of the William Morris agency, as I understand it. Betty said that she did not know whether the Negro hotel in Charlotte (the Alexander) had been tried or not, but that she would appreciate our doing the best we could to secure something other than the Alexander and then report to her.

I explained that the dance weekend at Davidson precluded our having available rooms at this late date, and Mrs. Little, Guest House hostess, verified this when questioned about it.

Miss Betty Hutchison of the Presbyterian Foundation office in Charlotte did not know of a hotel or motel that was integrated in Charlotte.

The Rev. Moses Belton of Johnson C. Smith University said that a new Negro motel, the Lynn Haven, would be a possibility, as well as the Alexander Hotel. He did not know of any integrated accommodations in Charlotte.

Mr. Paul Buck's assistant, Mr. Wilson, of the Auditorium-Coliseum, said that when Mahalia Jackson performed in Charlotte, arrangements in a private home were made for her. Mr. Wilson did not know of any integrated accommodations for performers like Odetta.

Mr. Richard Brooks, manager of the Selwyn Hotel, was most cordial and sympathetic but would suggest only the Alexander or Lynn Haven Motel. He is pleased to have us call him when we are in need, but he did not know of any integrated accommodations in Charlotte.

Mr. Babcock, manager of the Howard Johnson Motel on highway 21, was unable to help and did not know of any integrated accommodations in Charlotte. I chatted with Mr. Babcock about the fact that his motel, then managed by a different person, did help us in our need to house Dave Brubeck and his two musicians (one of whom is a Negro) when they played at Davidson a couple of years ago. It seems that at that time, the manager of the motel tried to reach the motel owners and after several fruitless attempts, decided to take it upon himself to help us in our need. In this case the Brubeck trio, for practical reasons, did not want to be separated, and they stayed at Howard Johnston without incident. They did not use the restaurant, but dined by room service.