

Benton
County

Freedom

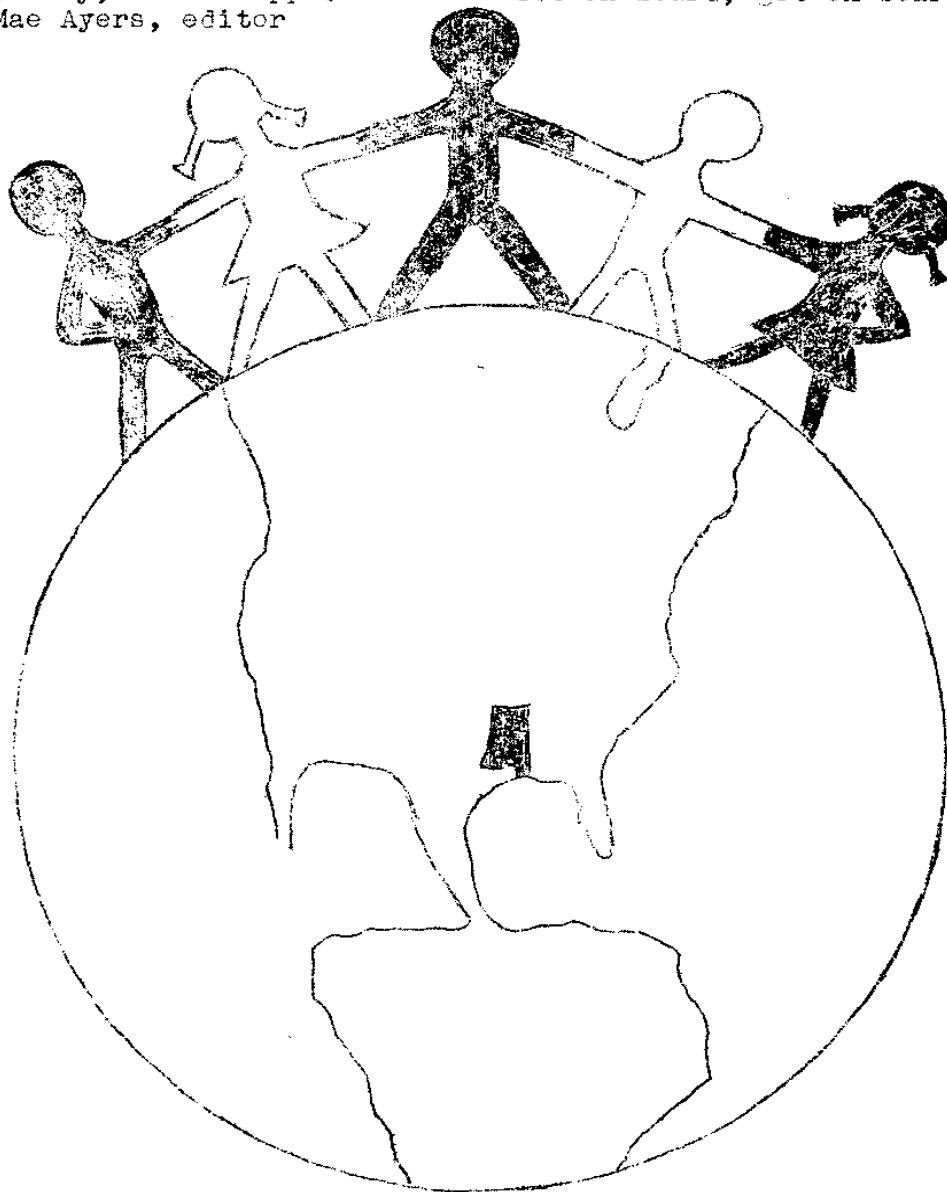


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Published by the citizens of
Benton County, Mississippi.
Beulah Mae Ayers, editor

"It's that Freedom Train a'comin'
Get on board, get on board."



COME, LET US BUILD A NEW WORLD TOGETHER

The Benton County Freedom Train will be published once a week. You can get copies of it from your local FDP representative or from your district chairman of the new Benton County Citizens Club.

Everyone of all ages is invited to write articles for the newspaper. You may write news stories, essays, poems, or anything that you want to. Articles can be turned into the editor, to an FDP representative, or to your district chairman of the Citizens Club. All those interested in working on the paper, contact the editor, Beulah Mae Ayers.

The Benton County Freedom Train was originally published by the students of the Mt. Zion Freedom School. We are now inviting all citizens of Benton County to contribute to it. All articles are welcome. If you disagree with an article, write a letter to the editor, and we will publish it. This paper is dedicated to free speech and the belief that all men are created equal and that, in the words of the Declaration of Independence, "that they are endowed with certain inalienable rights; that among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Group Formed to Help Negro Farmers

Last Tuesday, September 29, at Simms chapel, the Negro citizens of Benton County established an organization to promote the equal rights of all Benton County Citizens. It is called the Citizens Club of Benton County. Henry Reaves was elected president; Jesse Jones, vice-president; Ella B. Steward, secretary; Rebecca Dorse, assistant secretary; Arny L. Williams treasurer; Eugene Steward, chairman of the first district; L.B. Page, chairman of the Second District; Rev. John Beard, chairman of the Third District.

The club will undertake many activities, chief among them being to help Negro farmers. The first project will be to get Negroes elected to the A.S.C. community and county committees which determine cotton allotments. We all know that Negro farmers in the county have been cheated in their cotton allotments, and we intend to correct this discrimination, by putting Negroes on the A.S.C. committees. All farmers except for day laborers are eligible to vote in these election which will be held in December.

Discrimination against Negroes on FHA loans, welfare, and surplus food distribution will also be investigated. Mr. James Mays of the National Sharecroppers Fund has been invited to help the Citizens Club in getting these programs under way. He has been at all of our meetings and will continue to help us.

The Negro farmers of Madison County, Mississippi, have already organized and have now established the first Negro-owned cotton gin in Mississippi. Let's make Benton County the second one to have a Negro-owned cotton gin! Everyone must support the club!

Additional activities of the club will include setting up home libraries all over the county with books donated by the Council of Federated Organizations, helping improve the school, organizing to prevent Negroes from being fired from their jobs for participating in civil rights activities, and all other projects that will help further equal rights in Benton County.

LET'S ALL WORK TOGETHER,
CHILDREN

On August 1, 1964, one of our workers was killed in a head-on collision near Red Bank. This was considered by the people here in Mississippi that knew him a loss beyond any gain.

Looking back at all the good which was done by this young man, thinking back of him going from state to state to find freedom from discrimination but not finding it, thus he set about to help change the condition of the North as well as the South, with this hope coming to an end much too soon.

It is the hope here in Benton County to build a community center, a place to meet and enjoy friends, to enjoy sports, to read, to study, and to learn, a place to hold meetings, and a place to discuss problems. With the help of the workers both who remained and left after the summer session, we have already raised over \$1,000.00.

by Earnestine Evans

WAYNE YANCEY COMMUNITY CENTER

With looking ahead, we first look back--back at someone who if possible would still be in the struggle fighting just as hard as you and I.

Who is he? You know him. It is someone who in the future you and I can look back and say, "It was he who helped to lead us to the path, guiding us like a captain." Like that great captain of Bible days who led his people safe and unharmed across the bottom of the Red Sea, we followed this man across the sea of prejudice, through the storms of fear and anger, shouting, "LET MY PEOPLE GO."

Let's work together, children, to build this community center for Benton County in memory of Wayne Yancey. Let's build the Wayne Yancey Community Center.

We shall overcome!

THREE KINDS OF NEGROES

There are three kinds of Negroes; one scratches his head when he talks to the white man, so we call him "scratchy," there is one that stretches and can't stand still, so we call him "stretchy", and there is another who laughs when he is not tickled, so we call him "tickle box."

All of these men give the white man the idea that the Negroes are afraid of him, he feels that we are cowards.

But on the other hand, we have some Negroes that will hold their heads up, and will speak up. But they cannot do this successfully alone. Now is the time for "scratchy", "stretchy", and "tickle box" to realize that they haven't accomplished anything by walking around with their heads down and mouths closed. It is time to speak up and to look up, then you will be able to live.

by Beulah Mae Ayers

NEWS OF THE FDP

Do you remember those freedom registration forms that you signed this summer? Benton County can be proud that over 3/4 of its eligible Negroes signed these papers and thus became members of the Freedom Democratic Party. That is the highest amount in the state! We have thus shown the sheriff and the rest of the crowd at the court house that we are not afraid and that we will not tolerate any more discrimination.

Because so many of you signed these forms, 68 delegates went to the Democratic Convention at Atlantic City as YOUR representatives, to tell all Americans that Negroes in Mississippi do not have a voice in their government. Those of you who saw it on TV know what a stir they caused.

At the end of October the FDP will conduct a freedom vote for all Negroes who are not allowed to vote in the regular election. Let's all turn out and show once again that Benton County Negroes want their freedom!

by Mary Francie Harris

On September 30, 1964, T. C. Tipler, 38, was killed instantly when the tractor he was driving overturned in a ditch here in Benton near Walter Reaves' house. It happened at about 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. Beulah and I were on our way to T.C.'s house to get her children. I said, "Beulah, I see T. C. on the tractor," and Beulah Mae said yes.

When we got there, mother Bettie asked Annie May where was T. C. She said he was up at Mr. Reaves. As we were getting ready to leave, Mrs. Earlean came up there and said the tractor had turned over with T. C. on it. When we got there, the tractor was still on T. C.

I was so sad, I can't tell you how it was. When we left I got Aviva to take me to T. C.'s mother-in-law's house to tell her what had happened. Then she carried me back home. We sat up there for a while, then we came home.

What I can say to T. C: he is gone but not forgotten. We all love him, but God loves him best.

* * * *

T. C. Tipler was one of the first men in Benton County to sign up with the Freedom Democratic Party, at a time when many were still afraid. He had been planning to go down to the courthouse to register to vote and had been studying the constitution for it.

We would like to dedicate the following poem to T. C., written by a Negro poet. We would also like to dedicate the poem to T.C.'s mother, Mrs. Bettie Harris who went down to the courthouse to register on the day her son was killed: MIDWAY

by Naomi Long Madgett

I've come this far to freedom
 And I won't turn back.
 I'm climbing to the highway
 From my old dirt track.
 I'm coming and I'm going
 And I'm stretching and I'm growing
 And I'll reap what I've been sowing
 Or my skin's not black.
 I've prayed and slaved and waited
 And I've sung my song.
 You've bled me and you've starved me
 But I've still grown strong.
 You've lashed me and you've treed me
 And you've everything but freed me,
 But in time you'll know you need me
 And it won't be long.
 I've seen daylight breaking
 High above the bough.
 I've found my destination and I've made my vow;
 So whether you abhor me
 Or deride me or ignore me
 Mighty mountains loom before me
 And I won't stop now.

NEW HISTORY SECTION (continued):

Colonists became enraged at the sight of a British soldier in his red coat as a bull does at the sight of a red kerchief.

Early in the year 1770 some British soldiers got into a misunderstanding with some of the colonists. Rumor that the soldiers recently had attacked colonists in New York only served to make the situation more serious.

Just at this time along came Crispus Attucks from somewhere, eager to offer his aid in the cause of Liberty which was so dear to him. People were attracted by his ardor, and gathered about to listen to him as he stood in the open places of Boston speaking for freedom and decrying the tyranny of the British King.

From time to time Crispus Attucks would question the people who thronged about him, asking them what they thought of the manner in which the king's soldiers were treating the colonists, and whether they should stand for such conduct. Of course the colonists would cry out in anger against the unjust English ruler, and they even went so far as to make threats against the soldiers.

"We'll make them pay if they don't watch out," they cried.

As the days passed by, conditions grew steadily worse. The British soldiers and the American colonists began hurling bitter remarks at each other, and calling each other by spiteful names. Crispus Attucks and other leading spirits became more and more outspoken in expressing their feelings.

One Friday in March a very serious street fight took place. A number of persons on both sides were injured. Now both colonists and soldiers were aroused. Conditions were becoming unbearable.

Over Saturday and Sunday the bad feeling grew worse and worse. People shook their heads and whispered, "This is the end. Blood will surely flow from now on."

The soldiers made a show by coming out from their barracks and threatening the people, rushing at them with swords, bayonets, clubs, and whatever else they could put their hands on. They may not have meant to do more than frighten the patriots, but the result of their parades was only to enrage the colonists the more. These last also walked the streets armed with clubs and cutlasses, and at a distance from the soldiers groups of them would listen to fiery speeches by Crispus Attucks and others.

On Monday night, not long after nine o'clock, fire bells commenced ringing. People said, "Where's the fire?"

Others replied, "There isn't any fire; don't you know what those bells are ringing for? They are ringing to call out the patriots to protect the people from the redcoats."

Just at that time one of the soldiers got into an argument with a young boy. The crowds which had been drawn out into the streets by the ringing of the bells rallied around the boy. The soldier left his post and sought aid from his captain. Soon Captain Preston arrived with eight men.

The noise was terrific. Howls from the crowd. Bells, bells, church bells, cow bells, all the bells the colonists could get hold of. page 6

Yelling soldiers menacing with their bayonets; screaming patriots returning the threats with their fists and clubs.

The soldiers formed a semicircle and, pointing their bayonets at the crowd, commanded the people to move on. A number did move. Perhaps a hundred remained.

Crispus Attucks was one of the number who remained. With about a dozen others he stood in the middle of the street. Suddenly, all of them moved straight up to the soldiers. Giving three lusty cheers, they marched forward, just as if they never saw the British bayonets. They even shook their clubs in the faces of the red-coated soldiers.

"You are cowardly rascals," they said, "for bringing arms against unarmed men. Lay aside your guns, and we are ready for you. Come on, you scoundrels; fire if you dare; we know you dare not."

Perhaps the British became enraged at the threats. Some say that members of the crowd threw snowballs and ice at the soldiers; others claim that the patriots struck at the guns of the soldiers with their sticks. At any rate a shot rang out in the icy cold night. Someone fell.

It was Crispus Attucks.

The Boston Massacre had become history.

Four patriots fell mortally wounded and the first to fall was the Negro slave for whose return William Brown had offered a reward of Ten Pounds silver just twenty years before.

Boston prepared last honors for the fallen patriots. Two of them were taken to their Boston homes. Attucks and another named Caldwell lay in state at Faneuil Hall, for they were strangers in the city.

On Wednesday, March 7, 1770, funerals were held for all the men who fell at the massacre. Shops were closed and bells tolled mournfully. Dense crowds of people formed in the streets, rich and poor, their heads bowed and uncovered, their eyes dimmed with tears. At King Street the four hearses met, then the procession marched in a column six abreast. The procession halted at the Middle Burying Ground. Here the four of them--Caldwell, Maverick, Gray, and Crispus Attucks--were laid side by side in the same grave.

Thus a Negro slave sleeps in the resting place where lie the four men whose daring sacrifice became a rallying cry for American Freedom.

More than a century later, the city of Boston erected a monument in their honor. These words are carved in the stone that men may always remember what they did in the early days of the struggle for independence:

Long as in Freedom's cause the wise contend,
Dear to your Country shall your fame extend;
While to the world the lettered stone shall tell,
Where Caldwell, Attucks, Gray, and Maverick fell.

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