

BENTON  
COUNTY



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"It's that Freedom Train a'comin'; get on board, get on board."  
VOLUME II, NUMBER 7 NOVEMBER 22, 1964

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Published by the citizens of  
Benton County, Mississippi

Beulah Mae Ayers,  
Editor



Thanksgiving  
*America's first interracial dinner*

## ASC ballots to be mailed tomorrow!

Ballots for the ASC community elections will be mailed out to farmers on Monday, November 23, and district meetings of the Citizens Club will be held during the week to mark ballots and to make sure that everyone has received a ballot.

All candidates nominated by the Citizens Club have been approved by the ASC committee and their names will appear on the ballot.

The purpose of the district meetings is to make sure that everyone marks their ballots correctly so that the ASC office will not disqualify them. Also it is important to make sure that everyone receives ballots. Everyone should come to their meeting with their ballot. If you don't receive a ballot, go to the ASC office, and they must give you one. All farmers should see their section captains (the people who came to your houses to find out whether or not you had received a letter from the ASCS) and let them know whether or not they received ballots.

The schedule of meetings is as follows:

First District: Friday, Nov. 27, Hardaway Chapel, 7:30 pm. Candidates are: A.Z. Smith, Willie Poplar, Cater Poplar.

Second District: Thursday, Nov. 26, Sims Chapel, 7:30 pm. Candidates: L.B. Paige, Clabon Jackson, Sarah Robinson.

Third District: Wednesday, Nov. 25, Mt. Zion, 7:30 pm. Candidates: Walter Weber, Loyal Thompson.

Remember: any farmer who makes a crop is eligible to vote in these elections. If you don't get a ballot in the mail by Wednesday, GO DOWN TO THE OFFICE AND DEMAND ONE!

## Freedom week planned

A Freedom Week is being planned beginning December 7 in an attempt to get at least 100 Negroes to go to the courthouse in Ashland and take the voter registration test.

Each day 20 people will meet at a different church where they will go over the test and then go down to the courthouse.

The schedule of churches and the people in charge of preparing the voters are:

Monday, December 7: Mt. Zion Chapel, Earl Price and Beulah Mae Ayers.

Tuesday, December 8: Greenwood Chapel, Mrs. Howard Evans and Nelma Tipler.

Wednesday, December 9: Samuels Chapel, Lora Batts, Maxine Jackson and Teaster Beard.

Thursday, December 10: Sims Chapel, Sarah Robinson and Jesse Jones.

Friday December 11: Hardaway Chapel, Ellie B. Steward and Gladys Glass.

All people interested in participating should contact one of the above people and get from them a copy of the voter registration test and the constitution sections. Also, if you have taken the test once before, you should ask the registrar immediately for a copy of your test so that you can study it and see what you did wrong. Remember: he is obligated to give you a copy of your test under the new civil rights act.

People will begin preparing for Freedom Week beforehand, so that when December 7 comes, everyone will be ready to go down to the courthouse--and really give the folks there something to look at!

## Editorial Comment:

by Beulah Mae Ayers  
Old Salem High School opened  
November 16th. How do the stud-  
ents feel about it?

Some feel happy about going back  
to school. But what are they  
going to learn?

Nothing unless they get teachers  
with adequate learning and the a-  
bility to teach children. We are  
sadly lacking in both qualities.

The teacher should have a bach-  
elor's degree and should be a reg-  
istered voter, for how can he  
teach a child to be a good citizen  
unless he himself sets an example.  
Not only are our teachers poorly  
trained, but many of them set very  
poor examples in their daily be-  
havior. To many of our students,  
the word "teacher" is a joke.

The parents of Benton County feel  
that if the teacher won't godown  
to register, he or she shouldn't be  
allowed to teacher our children.

## We want freedom

by Mattie Lou Smith  
People, please come out and join  
hands with the freedom movement.  
The white man says we are already  
free, but we all know we are a long  
way from free.

If there is to be a trial, the  
white man can tell you what is  
going to happen and who is going  
to win long before the trial be-  
gins. Yet some of us stay home and  
say we are already free!

We do not have qualified books  
in our library to read, movies in  
our school, or chemistry set up  
like its supposed to be.

Colored children just beginning  
school cannot take a medical  
checkup--yet all white children  
do. Yet the white man says the

Negroes are free.

Negroes, join hands with the  
freedom movement and help fight  
for your rights.

We want freedom!

## Flash!

Word has just been received that  
Peter Cummings, COFO summer volun-  
teer in Benton County, has sent  
\$650.00 for the Wayne Yancey Com@  
munity Center.

In addition, Wayne Yancey's sis-  
ters are continuing work to help  
raise funds for the center.

At present, the total funds col-  
lected for the center is almost  
\$3,000.00.

## Joke of the week

In answer to a letter written  
complaining about the fact that  
over 100 eligible Negro farmers  
were left off the ASCS voters  
list, Mr. Sullivan of the state  
ASCS wrote back denying the charge  
of negligence, saying: "We have  
found no indication of any dis-  
criminatory action against Negro  
farmers or other farmers in the  
administration of ASCS programs in  
Benton County."

The Citizens Club and COFO is  
presently documenting evidence  
showing discrimination in the  
administration of APCS programs  
here. Has your cotton been plowed  
up lately? How many Negroes do  
you know that have been hired by  
the ASCS to measure cotton? Have  
you been able to find Negro commit-  
teemen in the ASCS?

Mr. Sullivan, please take your  
head out of the sand? Oops, we  
forgot--perhaps you are a native  
Mississippian.

ONE MAN--ONE VOTE

# From the Negro Poets...

## INCIDENT

by Countee Cullen  
Once riding in old Baltimore,  
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,  
I saw a Baltimorean  
Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small,  
And he was no whit bigger,  
And so I smiled, but he poked out  
His tongue, and called me, "Nigger."

I saw the whole of Baltimore  
From May until December;  
Of all the things that happened there  
That's all that I remember.

## MERRY-GO-ROUND

(Colored Child at Carnival)  
by Langston Hughes

Where is the Jim Crow section  
On this merry-go-round,  
Mister, cause I want to ride?  
Down South where I come from  
White and colored  
Can't sit side by side.  
Down South on the train  
There's a Jim Crow car.  
On the bus we're put in back--  
But there ain't no back  
To a merry-go-round!  
Where's the horse  
For a kid that's black?

# ...in Benton County

## A PRAYER FOR FREEDOM By Maxine Jackson

Dear God, who art the maker,  
And doer of all things good;  
Lead us in our search for freedom,  
Let our cause be understood.

O God, who art most merciful,  
Let down your radiant beams,  
Inject the hearts of all mankind  
So that your glories may be seen.

Show us the way to freedom,  
Guide us with your hand.  
Let America be what it was meant to be:  
To all, a Freedom Land.

My God, who art the Father,  
Maker of black and white,  
Alleviate our miseries of bondage  
Make all of us do what's right.

We know that if Thou art with us,  
Good will come of this toil,  
And when our cups runneth over  
Refill them with "freedom oil."

And last, O Heavenly Father,  
When equality is first rate,  
Then let your light so shine,  
And eradicate all hate.

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# NEGRO HISTORY SECTION

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## FREEDOM IS A POWERFUL WORD (continued from last week)

Eight years later, still another startling attempt at rebellion was made by American slaves. Again the scene was Virginia, but this time the leader was a kind of plantation prophet, a man who fasted and prayed, preached and baptized, read the Bible, heard voices as he walked behind his plough, and saw visions in the sky. His name was Nat Turner.

All his life this thirty-one year old slave had believed that he was born for something special. He claimed to have seen drops of blood on the corn in the field, and, on the leaves in the woods, letters and numbers and the shapes of men. He said the spirit had told him that he must fight against the serpent but that he should first wait for the sign. When an eclipse of the sun occurred in February of 1831, Nat Turner took this for the sign that had been promised to him and rose up to prepare himself to slay his enemies with their own weapons. At this time, he later confessed, a seal was removed from his lips. That is, he became free to talk about a matter which had until then been a secret of his own heart.

Part of the reason for the seal on his lips, no doubt, was that Prophet Nat remembered how Denmark Vesey's plans had been betrayed. Perhaps the old folks of Virginia had also told him that young Gabriel failed because somebody talked. Gabriel's attempt had occurred the very year in which Nat Turner was born, and people had never stopped discussing it. Naturally, in any new plan to win freedom by rebellion the danger of betrayal had to be considered.

Nat Turner decided to confide in no one till he was ready to act. There would not be time for informing them. In the meantime, he found other ways of testing the men he expected to use and of finding out how much they wanted to be free and how far they could be trusted, and when he had singled out six on whom he could depend, he arranged a Sunday afternoon picnic in the woods, with a roasted pig and some brandy to be shared.

The barbecue lasted eleven hours, and when the group left the woods, it was after midnight, and they were ready to strike. The plan was to begin by hitting a near-by plantation, destroying the big house and its occupants, liberating the slaves and appealing to the strong ones to join the band. With the horses and weapons they hoped to capture and with the slaves they hoped to add to the attacking force, they would march on to the next plantation. By daybreak, Nat calculated, they would have strength enough to take the town of Jerusalem, the county seat.

Upon the occasion of the solar eclipse in February, 1831, Turner decided that the time had come for him to lead his people out of bondage. He selected the Fourth of July as the day, but when he became ill he postponed the revolt until he saw another sign. On August 13, when the sun turned a "peculiar greenish blue" he called the revolt for August 21. He and his followers began by killing Turner's master, Joseph Travis, and his family. In rapid succession other families fell before the blows of the Negroes. Within 24 hours sixty whites had been killed,

and the revolt was spreading rapidly. But the militia was aroused and began to comb the countryside. Volunteer companies were sent out from Richmond, Petersburg, Norfolk, and other cities. Soon the odds against Nat Turner and his broken ranks were overwhelming. They did not meet again that night nor on any night that followed until they were reunited on the gallows.

Nat himself was the last to be captured. It took more than two months to root him out, and even then there was a gleam in his eye. His strange half-Biblical confession shows that his longing for freedom was still as strong as ever. That was a thing that wouldn't die, no matter how many rebellions were crushed or how many slaves perished.

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(The following passage was written by Nat Turner while he was in prison awaiting the gallows. It describes his going into hiding and his capture).

On Thursday night, after having supplied myself with provisions from Mr. Travis', I scratched a hole under a pile of fence-rails in a field, where I concealed myself for six weeks, never leaving my hiding-place but for a few minutes in the dead of the night to get water, which was very near. Thinking by this time I could venture out, I began to go about in the night, and eavesdrop the houses in the neighborhood; pursuing this course for about a fortnight, and gathering little or no intelligence, afraid of speaking to any human being, and returning every morning to my cave before the dawn of day.

I know not how long I might have led this life, if accident had not betrayed me. A dog in the neighborhood passing by my hiding-place one night while I was out, was attracted by some meat I had in my cave, and crawled in and stole it, and was coming out just as I returned. A few nights after, two Negroes having started to go hunting with the same dog, and passed that way, the dog came again to the place, and having just gone out to walk about, discovered me and barked; on which, thinking myself discovered, I spoke to them to beg concealment. On making myself known, they fled from me. Knowing then they would betray me, I immediately left my hiding-place, and was pursued almost constantly until I was taken; a fortnight afterwards, by Mr. Benjamin Phipps, in a little hole I had dug with my sword, for the purpose of concealment, under the top of a fallen tree. During the time I was pursued, I had many hair-breadth escapes, which your time will not permit you to relate. I am here loaded with chains, and willing to suffer the fate that awaits me.

THE END

(Reminder: all contributions are welcomed-give stories, poems, letters to an officer of the Citizens Club, to the editor, Beulah Mae Ayers, to a COFO worker, or mail them to Benton County Freedom Train, 100 Rust Avenue, Holly Springs, Miss.)

I know not how long I might have led this life, if accident had not betrayed me. A dog in the neighborhood passing by my hiding-place one night while I was out, was attracted by some meat I had in my cave, and crawled in and stole it, and was coming out just as I returned. A few nights after, two Negroes having started to go hunting with the same dog, and passed that way, the dog came again to the place, and having just gone out to walk about, discovered me and barked; on which, thinking myself discovered, I spoke to them to beg concealment. On making myself known, they fled from me. Knowing then they would betray me, I immediately left my hiding-place, and was pursued almost constantly until I was taken; a fortnight afterwards, by Mr. Benjamin Phipps, in a little hole I had dug with my sword, for the purpose of concealment, under the top of a fallen tree.