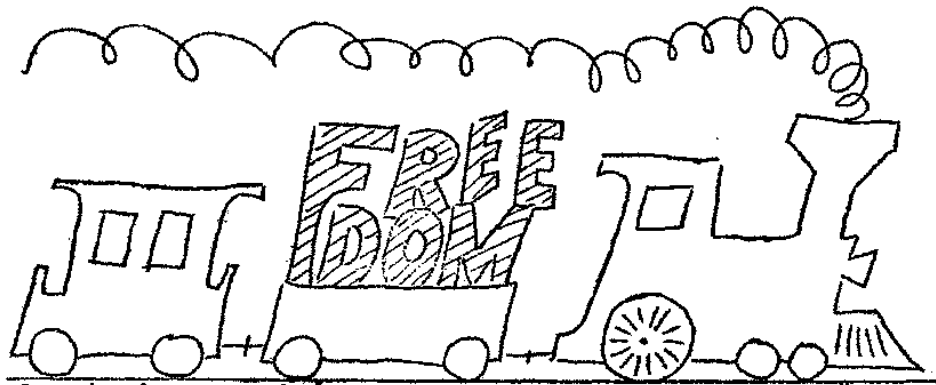


Benton
County



"It's that freedom train a comin'; get on board, get on board."

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VOTER REGISTRATION: GOOD AND BAD

After a week of the new voter registration in Benton county, we have come to one conclusion: its a lot easier than it used to be for a Negro to become a registered voter, but it's not nearly as easy--or fair--as we and Mr. Flannery think it should be.

Since last Saturday, at least 36 Negroes have become registered voters, while at least 17 failed to qualify. More than that number went down to the courthouse, but we don't know how many, since they have not as yet reported to the Freedom Train.

We expected that at least 100 would go down to register each week. And Mr. Flannery expected that at least 90% of those who filled out the application would qualify. As it is, only 68% of those who took the test passed.

While many who went down said that Mr. Mathis was very friendly and helpful (after all, he may go to jail if he doesn't obey the court order), others have complained that they have been treated unfairly by both Mr. Mathis and Mr. McKenzie.

One man took the test on May 31 and passed, according to Mr. Mathis. He signed the books and became a registered voter--for two days. Then on June 1, he

received a letter from Mr. McKenzie stating that he failed to qualify because his writing was not readable.

Another woman printed her test, and Mr. McKenzie said she could not pass unless she wrote it.

Others were told that printing would not be accepted.

Some people reported that Mr. Mathis didn't tell them which question they got wrong. He is supposed to do this.

Others reported that instead of letting them correct their mistakes right then, he told them to come back. Mr. Mathis is supposed to give everyone a chance to correct their mistakes as soon as they fill out the applications.

Some people reported that they failed because Mr. Mathis said he couldn't read their writing. Others said he was too picky about leaving out words such as "and" when they copied the constitution section.

These complaints were reported to Mr. Flannery by telephone. He was very disturbed about it and said he will try to come down next week to straighten things out.

(continued on next page)

Meanwhile, people are urged to keep going down and filling out the applications. Our goal is still 100 registered voters a week. You can get practice applications from your section captains who will show you how to fill out the form.

Instructions to those who go down: you do not have to answer questions 4, 5, 6, 11, and 14. If you are told that your test is wrong, find out what number you missed and ask Mr. Mathis to let you correct it right then. YOU SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PRINT IF YOU WANT TO.

If you fail, report it to your section captain along with the reasons Mr. Mathis gave you for failing. Section captains should then report this in writing to the Freedom Train.

All who pass should be sure to notify the Freedom Train, Rt. 2, Box 100, Holly Springs.

★ CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
NEWLY REGISTERED VOTERS: ★

Ellie and Eugene Steward
Cater and Dolly Mae Poplar
Ethelene Hamer
Dessie Bell White
Annie B. and Willie Hamer
Lillian and Spence Richard, Jr.
Clabron Terry
Grady and Jesse Jones
Houston Evans
Jessie Epps
Mollie Jeffers
Annie Mae Webber
Thelma Thompson
Ruby Johnson
Clee Anna Tipler
Jennie Lee Crawford
Allie Jane Beck
Margie Frances Thompson
Grady and Joe John Thompson
Theris Rutherford
Burne L. Alexander
Sallie Kimbrough
James Ross
Mamie Jeffries Ben Boga
Aubery Bean Pearly Bostick

KINDERGARTEN LETTERS BRING RESULTS!

Just as we were about to give to give up hope, an inspector from the federal government came to Benton county to investigate the Board of Education's kindergarten.

He had with him 20 letters that Benton county citizens had written to Mrs. Lyndon Johnson complaining about the kindergarten. On Friday he spoke with several people from Benton, receiving their complaints.

It is too soon to know what the outcome of this will be. It may mean that the government will close down the Board of Educations kindergarten. It may not.

Meanwhile, there is a possibility that the Citizens Club will get its own kindergarten after all. We will find out some time today. If we do, it will begin on Monday, June.14.

It is possible that both the Board of Education and the Citizens Club will have a kindergarten. In that case parents can choose which kindergarten to send their children to.

It is also possible that neither group will have a kindergarten. And it is possible that only one of the two groups will have a kindergarten.

People who have been offered jobs at the Board of Education's kindergarten should accept the job if they want to. Parents will have to decide for themselves whether or not to send their children to that kindergarten. The more children that go, the more money the Board gets from the federal government.

Citizens will be informed today or tomorrow as to whether or not we will have our own kindergarten.

A Get-together

by Loyal Thompson Sr.

I went to see Mr. L. Hamer McKenzie last Monday. We talked for about 20 minutes. Our discussion was very brief and to the point.

We discussed two of the problems we have here in Benton county: why weren't those 7 teachers rehired was one of the problems. He said some didn't have a degree, and that others were dropped because we had lost two teacher units.

I said there are others teaching at Old Salem that should have been dropped instead of the Benton county teachers.

Mr. McKenzie said that in three years Old Salem must be an accredited school and that's why they are beginning to correct that little by little instead of interrupting the entire system.

I said it would be very human if we (bi-racial committee) could sit and have a counsel between the two groups. We owe it to ourselves to at least talk even if we can't agree. Mr. McKenzie said he would see what he could do about a meeting.

Mr. McKenzie is a very wonderful man and I did appreciate him taking time out from a busy day and discussing parts of the problem with me.

NOTICES:

Because of lack of space, we will report on Mr. Shields' and Mr. Miskelly's talk to the Citizens Club in next week's paper.

Our first summer volunteer will be coming down about June 12. He is Bob Feinglass from Chicago. Last summer he worked in De Soto county. This summer he has chosen to work in Benton county.

Cotton-choppers strike

by Earnestyne Evans

Several years ago they said it couldn't be done.

But it was.

Some cotton choppers in the Delta went on strike last week for more money for their long hours in the cotton fields working from sun-up to sun-down.

The condition for their returning to work was the raising of their present wages of \$2 a day to \$1.25 an hour. The strikers belong to the newly formed Mississippi Freedom Labor Union (MFLU).

The strike was so effective that the plantation owners had to go to adjoining counties to get people to chop cotton. The strikers had set up a picket line and convinced the new workers to return home.

Can the people of Benton county program the same thing as the Delta cotton choppers? Can we form a branch of the MFLU?

Petitions prepared

It seems so very unfair to the people of Benton county to have people, born, living, and teaching in our county to have to go elsewhere to find jobs.

The citizens are preparing a petition to present at the next district meetings: Tuesday night at Sims, Wednesday at Mt. Zion, and Thursday at Hardaway.

When people are not pleased with conditions, they try to change them. No one is happy with the firing of our teachers. The petition will show this.

REGISTER and VOTE!