

benton
county



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

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JUNE 20, 1965

Kindergarten still segregated

In what seems to be an effort to keep the government from closing down its kindergarten, the county board of education has reopened registration for its kindergarten. The announcement in Thursday's Southern Advocate stated that children could attend the center of their choice and that all children would be welcomed, regardless of race.

But unfortunately, everything is not as rosy as it sounds. On Friday, about 12 Negro mothers attempted to register their children at the Ashland clinic. Many were accepted. But those who had already enrolled their children at Old Salem were not allowed to transfer their children. These mothers explained that they had never intended their children to go to Old Salem when they had enrolled them, but the bus had taken them there anyway. Mr. Bennett still refused to allow these children to enroll at Ashland.

And those children who were accepted at the clinic were put in a separate classroom, similar to a storage closet, at the other end of the building. So, they are still in segregated classes. In addition, during recess, they played separately from the other children.

Only Naomi Roaves is in an integrated class. She has recov-

ered from the mumps and is happily back at school. But we wonder how she feels during recess, watching the other Negro children playing under a different shade tree.

So it appears that the board is trying to get around the federal government's demands rather than go along with them. But the only way this can be proven is if more Negro parents attempt to register their children at Ashland clinic--both the children who were never enrolled as well as those who enrolled mistakenly at Old Salem. If too many of these children are turned away, it would seem that the federal government might step in with some action.

Meanwhile, back at Old Salem--parents of the first district have for the most part decided to go along with keeping their children out of Old Salem kindergarten. The chief reason is because most of the people working there are either from another county or have an income of over \$3000. The parents do not want to see these people, who for the most part, are not interested in the community's welfare, make money off of their children.

DISTRICT MEETINGS:

Tues., June 22, Sims Chapel
Wed., June 23, Mt. Zion
Thurs., June 24, Hardaway.

Justice Department investigates Mathis

Mr. Flannery couldn't make it, but one of his assistants from the Justice Department came to Benton county on Thursday to photograph voter registration applications and to talk to some Negro applicants who failed the test.

The attorney, Mr. Fleisher, said that as of Wednesday, June 18, 150 Negroes had become newly registered, and 90 had failed. (Of those 90, some had later passed.) He seemed concerned at the large number of failures, and it is presumed that the Justice Department may have a talk with Mr. Mathis and his attorney.

NEWLY REGISTERED VOTERS

O.V. Davis	Bessie Webber
Matilda Conley	Alma Ruth Hoyle
Marie William	Velma Dorse
Andrew Harris	Lucille McNamee
Lula M. Woodard	Gracie Williams
Fred Richard	Elnora Richard
Effie Peterson	Marie Terry
John Eddy Terry	Otho Howery
Earlene Howery	I.V. Jimmerson
Avis Jimmerson	Arvess Ross
Annie Hoyle	Almarie Strickland
Mattie Jean Strickland	
Felix Strickland	Arzella Strickland
Gladis Glass	Henry Strickland
Lilly Turner	Ethalone Jackson
Nizell Poplar	Frances Baird
Earlene Batts	C.L. Hoyle, Jr.
Fannie Epps	Era Mae Spann
Lucille Duncan	Mary Lou Davis
I.V. Davis	Sarah Burns
Modena Ayers	Ellean Nun lly
Laura Foster	Rebecca Dorse
Joe Dorse	Tommy E. Williams
Onie L. Williams	Rosie Lee Jones
Velmon Everett	Tom Foster, Jr.
Thomas Jones	Lue Bertha Foster
Fannie Smith	Zollie B. Smith
Dellar Smith	Effie Mae Hamer
Maso Gibson	Sallie B. Hoyle
Richard Donnie	Bernice Rose
James Tipler	Willie Mae Buggs
W.F. Girley	Raymond Strickland
Marie Strickland	
Alice Boga	Mary Beatrice Bean → Alvrna Crawford Gennie Mae Hoyle

Benton aids strikers

Earnestyne Evans

Last week cotton choppers were offered a raise from \$2 to \$4 and \$5 a day. But the cotton was still not chopped. The Calta MFLU strikers are still holding out.

Last Tuesday night, the Citizens Club raised \$31.00 to buy food for the strikers. Anyone who cares to donate food should bring it to their section captain.

School suit filed

The Memphis Press-Scimitar announced last week that a suit was filed in federal court in Oxford asking for the total desegregation of Benton county schools.

The suit is being brought by 44 parents and 107 students on behalf of all Negroes in Benton county. The hearing at Oxford will probably be some time in July. And when Ashland school opens in September, it will have many new students.

newsbriefs:

*Sidney Sugarman, the first summer volunteer arrived in Benton county at 2 a.m. Friday morning. She is staying at the Tiplers for the present and will meet the citizens at the district meetings this week. Three other volunteers are expected next week.

*Petitions asking for the re-hiring of the 6 dismissed teachers were approved at the last all-county meeting and are now being signed throughout the community. See your section captain if you want to sign.

Jackson: another Montgomery?

Into Jackson they marched--from all walks of life they came, leaving behind them grassy cotton, family, a roof over their heads, home cooking, and friends.

From the fields they came, leaving plows behind, riding mules, on the back of trucks.

Negroes from all over Mississippi went to Jackson to protest Paul Johnson's calling a special session of the legislature to get around the President's voting rights bill. And to protest the fact that these law makers are making laws for the Negroes of Mississippi who never elected them and never would have elected them if given a chance.

Over 700 demonstrators have been arrested so far, including a handful from Benton county. Many of those arrested don't want to leave jail until Negroes have won the right to peacefully demonstrate.

Demonstrations are expected to continue indefinitely. Who from Benton county will be going to help their brothers and sisters in Jackson? We all know that we are needed!

First-hand account

by Loyal Thompson Jr., Roy Nunnally, Henry Reaves Jr.

(Written Wednesday, June 16)

Today, Beulah Mae Ayers, Mary Frances Harris, Jo Ann and Lloyd Dorso, Mrs. Lorisie Jones, Sonny Reaves, Loyal Thompson Jr. and Roy Nunnally went to participate in the demonstrations in Jackson. Mr. Henry Reaves drove us down, and we arrived in Jackson about 1:30 p.m.

No sooner did we arrive in Jackson than we were stopped by a state patrolman who said Mr.

Reaves didn't make a turn that he should have made. (None of the other cars in front of us made the turn, but they weren't stopped.)

The policeman had Mr. Reaves follow him to the courthouse and instructed him to park in a no parking area. In a few minutes a motorcycle cop drove up and asked us did we see those paper sacks which were placed over the tops of the meters. We said yes. Then he asked Mary Francis, "Can't you drive, gal?" (Mary F. was sitting behind the steering wheel). She didn't answer, then finally she said, "No, I can't drive."

Inside the courthouse, it sounded like there were some students locked up, and they were yelling to the police, "I want my freedom," and "You can't turn us around." It sounded so pitiful to us that it built up our determination.

When we got to the church we were too late for the demonstrations. Jo Ann Dorso and Sonny Reaves were assigned to canvas homes in Jackson to get support for the demonstrations. Their job was to inform the people about the meeting Wed. night

The people reacted very much like the people here. Some were afraid, and some were downright scared. Some explained that they worked for white people, therefore they could not attend the meeting, but they were willing to give us something.

We told them that we represented COFO, SNCC, and FDP. We also asked if we might come in. If they allowed us in, we presented our information, got their names, addresses, and telephone numbers.

Meanwhile, Loyal and Roy came back to Holly Springs with Bob

Benton County Freedom Train
Smith to bring more people to
Jackson. We are going back to
Jackson in the morning and we will
probably be arrested.

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Tonight, a white boy called the
COFO office to make fun of us. A
Negro COFO worker talked to him
and they ended up in a two hour
conversation. The discussion was
very interesting. I wish all
white people would do that--get
together and talk things over, and
then perhaps understanding and
knowledge will prevail between the
two races.

(Editor's note: Roy and Loyal
returned to Hackson on Thursday.
Most of the Benton countians who
went were arrested and some of
them are still in jail. James
Batts spent his 20th birthday in
jail.)

What I believe

by Bobie Louise Harris
I am working for dignity and a
better way of life. To be able to
live and manage my own affairs.

We have tried to get jobs--but
could not. We have tried to buy
land--but could not. We have
tried to talk to the white people--
but could not. Our children will
have to go North to get jobs.

They are being driven North by
people who are doing wrong. If
those people would do right, our
children would not have to leave
home to find work.

I am not working for color out
for the advancement of both races,
for one cannot advance without the
other.

I think it's time for everyone
to show what side he's on. I am
not doing anything for a dollar. I
believe what I am doing is right
and I shall continue to do so.

I can't understand our Christian
people going to church every Sun-

day and then hating their brothers
and sisters. Well, I love them
all--white and balck.

It is time for us as people to
do better, and we can--if we try.

The board & headstart: two opinions

1. BY Mrs. Mattie Smith:

I was invited to attend a meet-
ing at Old Salem on June 4 for the
purpose of getting a job at the
kindergarten on June 4. After
working a day and a half, I was
dismissed, but out of being there
I really learned a great deal.
Some of us are still in a pitiful
condition--can't see our own nose,
even though it's just beneath our
eyes.

One of the sorriest things hap-
pened when one woman told us they
couldn't use us. She told Mrs.
Jones that there was a kindergar-
ten set up by the freedom movement
at Rust college and maybe she
could get a job down there.

2. by Mrs. G.N. Reaves:

When I think of our board of
education, a wave of pity, not
hate, creeps over me. I think,
here we have men, made in the
image of God, and yet they are so
diseased with race pride and hate
that they are all rotten and hol-
low inside.

But man can't hurt man without
hurting himself. If all the Neg-
roes of Benton go on relief, it
won't be long before our white
brothers join us there. For they
can't feed themselves very long
when the county's payroll is going
into other counties. It will just
be a matter of time before Ashland
becomes a ghost town.

What a pity that men with minds
allow them to be reduced to the
thinking of little children--will-
ing to forfeit the day for the
hour. Dear God, help them that
they may overcome.

a letter:

In white America

(The following letter was written by a former Benton county resident, now a soldier stationed in West Germany, Ben Boga, in response to an editorial which appeared in the Freedom Train a few issues back.)

There are a lot of jokes told on the Negro. Here are a few of my own and they are sidebusters: the white power structure donated money to the wife of J.D. Tippit who was killed in Dallas; but not one penny to the parents whose children were killed in Birmingham.

The black man is sent to Vietnam in the name of freedom, while our good white Christian brothers do not allow us in their restaurants.

While our nation was attempting to "free" Cuba from Communism, our American students got out their guns because a fellow black American wanted to go to school.

Ha! Ha! The joke has been on the black man for 300 years. Forgive me that I am insulted when someone insults me. Overlook the "boy"-- he is only trying to grasp some dignity. The Negro has been loyal to America ever since the beginning of this nation. We worked as slaves for 300 years without pay, were beaten, raped, murdered for pleasure. Fought and died in the Boston Massacre, the battlefields of Europe and Korea, and now in the jungles of Vietnam. Yet time after time our rights have been abused. Let an earthquake strike some far off land-- U.S. aid. Let a refugee come from another place--U.S. aid. Let hunger strike--U.S. aid. But Jesus forbid, let us poor Negroes try to get something--and we are made to feel inhuman.

Every now and then I read where some very nonprejudiced, loving white person says, "I want to see Negroes get ahead, but they need to earn the right to be allowed to be a part of America." I have often wondered if the American Indians ever said that to the white man.

I think a few of these "loving" people had better take a good, honest look at themselves and face the reality that every person born in the U.S. has a jump on the Negro. Even the immigrants are accepted for better jobs and housing. Why? As far back as I have any knowledge, my family on both sides was born in the U.S. So why should I have to hire a lawyer and sign petitions and demonstrate before I can earn my rights to enter places which are open to the public, when all "Miss Ann" has to do is show her face and be accepted from Maine to Georgia?

I don't want to bulldoze anyone. All I want is anything and everything that is accorded any American citizen without having to go to the courts for it.

Last but not least, I would like to compliment the students of Old Salem school for the wonderful job that you are undertaking. I haven't the words to express the work that you are doing. The talent that you are exemplifying will enlighten others to take part. The only thing that I hate is that I'm not there to take part, but my prayers are with you always.

Sincerely,
Ben T. Boga, Jr.