

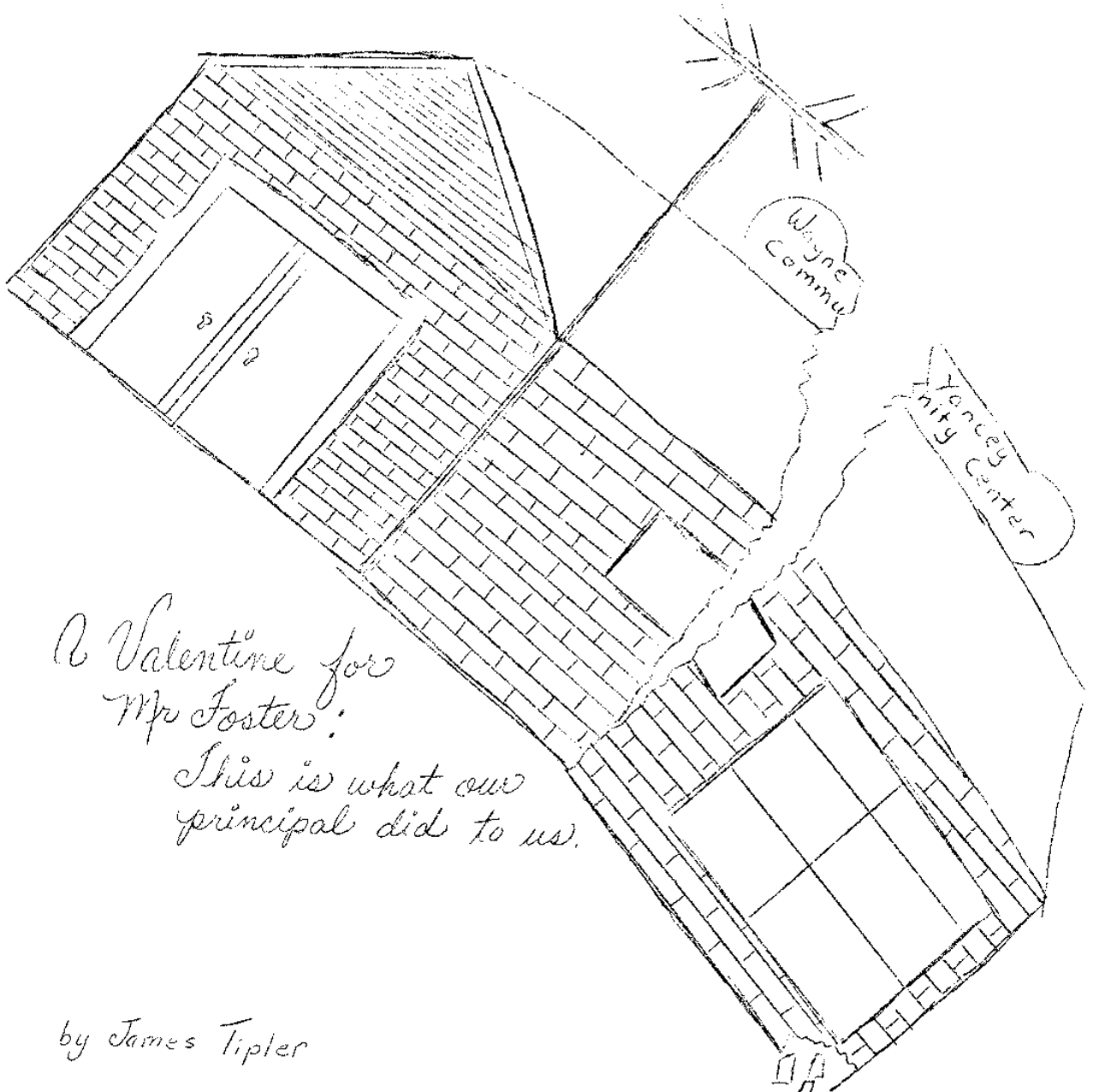
benton  
county



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

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BEULAH MAE AYERS,  
EDITOR



A Valentine for  
Mr Foster:  
This is what our  
principal did to us.

by James Tipler

## Citizens Club to discuss Schools

A special all-county meeting of the Citizens Club will be held this coming Tuesday, Feb. 16, at Samuels Chapel at 7:30 p.m. to discuss problems relating to the schools in Benton County.

The School Committee still has not heard from the Board of Education regarding the report and petition given to the Board by the Citizens Club on February 1. It may be recalled that when the parents of Ashland High School students wanted to have their principal fired, it took about one day to have the matter taken care of.

Petitions for integrating the Benton County schools have been prepared by the Citizens Club and will be discussed at the meeting.

It was decided at the last meeting that in the future, county meetings of the Citizens Club will be held once a month, and the rest of the time district meetings will be held. In that way, more people will be able to attend meetings.

### Circuit Court Held

Circuit court was held last week in Ashland. The cases against Aviva Futorian for illegal trespass (attending basketball game at Old Salem) and against Robert Smith for reckless driving, were thrown out.

In addition a case against Rev. Beard brought for the second time against him by Wil Davis was also thrown out.

The big trials of the year involved a man accused of carrying a can of beer into Mississippi and a man accused of hunting deer by headlight. Both men were found not guilty.

The courtroom was integrated by COFO workers and Rust Collegeians.

### Foster cancels rally!

The rally and talent show which was to be held last Sunday in order to raise money for the Community Center was suddenly called off when Mr. W.B. Foster refused to allow the building of Old Salem to be used for the occasion.

Previously, Mr. Foster had given permission to Mrs. G.N. Reaves to use the building for the event. But the Friday before the event, when Mrs. Reaves was out of town, Mr. Foster told Earnestynne Evans that they would be unable to use the building. He told her that the Board of Education would have to be consulted first. Of course, by Friday, it was too late to ask the Board for the use of the building.

### Aviva arrested again!

Last Sunday Aviva was arrested by Gene Salts for crossing the yellow line on Highway 72. She was put in jail for one hour until \$200 bond was raised by Mr. Roy Williamson and Rev. John Beard.

Her trial was held last Wednesday before J.P. Johnny Duncan. At first she pleaded guilty, then Duncan told her that if she pleaded guilty, he would not charge her a high fine. So she pleaded guilty, and he charged her \$43 including court costs. She asked if she could appeal her case to circuit court, but Duncan refused to tell her what her bond would be. She asked him a few more questions concerning bond, and he threatened to send her to jail. Rather than tying up more bond money, Aviva paid the fine. Present at the "trial" were Marjorie Merrill, Salts, and two highway patrolmen.

## *Officials testify at FDP hearings*

Over 200 people attended hearings at Rust College last Thursday and Friday at which some officials from Marshall County testified.

This was part of the challenge being conducted by the FDP to unseat the five US Congressmen from Mississippi on the grounds that they were not legally elected by ALL the citizens of Mississippi.

Mayor Sam Coopwood of Holly Springs testified that, "I told them (Negroes) they could go over and register to vote any time... they don't need any demonstrations about it." Mayor Coopwood also declared that the white and Negro schools in Marshall County were equal in every way, even though he later said that he hadn't been in any of the schools in over 30 years.

Police Chief Harry Bryant discussed the Holly Springs theater, admitting to the segregated seating and saying that since it was made into a private club, he didn't think there were any Negro members.

Bryant also stated that the reason he had so many police during freedom days was in order to protect both Negroes and whites--he didn't explain what he was trying to protect them from.

Sheriff Ash of Marshall County also testified. He denied that he had added 50 additional men to his force because of the COFO "invasion", claiming that he hired them for such emergencies as floods and tornadoes. Sheriff Ash also said that the reason one of his deputies was taking pictures of people entering the courthouse on freedom day was because "I thought it would be a good time for him to get practice picture-taking."

All witnesses testified to the good relationships that have always existed between Negroes and whites in Marshall County. The audience, consisting mostly of Benton and Marshall County residents and Rust College students, seemed to find these statements amusing.

During these next 40 days, attorneys for the Congressmen will now have the right to subpoena witnesses for their side and then to have their own hearings (which will also be open to the public). It is expected that they will subpoena many Negroes in an attempt to have them testify how wonderful life is for Negroes in Mississippi.

## *Pete back for a visit*

Pete Cummings, summer COFO worker, returned for a week to visit old friends in Benton County and Marshall County. With him, he brought \$400 for the Wayne Yancey Community Center.

Pete said he was glad to be back and see so many good friends. He was sorry he did not have a chance to see everyone, but he had to return to school today.

## *Cafe not quite integrated*

Last Wednesday, Aviva and Marjorie Merrill had lunch at the Ashland Cafe, in the same room with the Circuit Court judge, some lawyers, the jury, and various white folks of Benton County.

While this wasn't exactly what you'd call integrating the cafe, nevertheless it caused many of the good citizens of the county to stop eating and start staring. Aviva and Marjorie were treated quite courteously and had a delicious meal. They highly recommend the cafe to all citizens.

*Editorial: Mr. F. & our center*

by Earnestyne Evans

To say that Mr. Foster pushed the community center down the hill would be to say the least. He pushed himself back further in the darkness of manhood. It has been a long time since I considered Mr. Foster a man.

I asked Mr. Foster about the day for the program we were having. At first he said, "Yes, I wonder how long this 'mess' will go on." Then, days later he said, "I'll tell you what we will do. We're going to let her (Mrs. Reaves) come back and go to the Board and ask them, since she's always running to them for something.

Now I ask you, is this a fit man? That community center will be for the welfare of all the people of this county.

In the meantime, the youth of Benton County has another project to make more money for the center. We have about 200 boxes of napkins we plan to sell at 20¢ a box. The napkins have a design of Bible verses. Contact Mary Peterson or me for them or any member of the Freedom Youth Movement.

So, even though Mr. Foster hates to think of it, nevertheless WE SHALL OVERCOME!

*God and Freedom*

by Rev. John H. Beard

I do not understand why all men do not understand God's will. God created all men upon the face of the earth equally and free (Acts, 17-26). I do not understand why the white men of this state want the Negroes to be deprived of their freedom.

We as Negroes want our freedom-- full freedom, equal opportunity-- full opportunity, equal privileges and full privileges. We are not

asking for any more than God gave us from the creation by one blood.

*Our Poor Teachers*

BY Rosie E. Mulden

We have some poor teachers at Old Salem that don't know when you are trying to help them. Any time they run people from up there when they are trying to help them to get freedom, you know they don't want freedom.

Well, I want freedom, and I will stand up and fight for it. The people at Old Salem are making the school look very bad. It seems like the Negroes can't run their own school without the white people's help.

*My Teacher*

by Naomi Normene Reaves

I love my teacher.  
Her name is Mary Milan.  
She works at Old Salem.  
She is very kind to us.  
She teach us to count,  
She teach us to read.  
We love her very much.  
We wish all of the teachers  
could be as friendly as my teacher.

*Only, one thing missing*

by Linda Washington

We had a party Friday. We had a good time. My teacher is Mrs. Ada Mathis. She is very nice to us.

We had some records at our party. We had a very good time but I wish Aviva and all the SNCC workers from Holly Springs could have been with us.

*Our school and their school*

BY Murray Reaves

Our school is no good. The heat is even bad, and so is the school bus. I think the white school is a lot better than our school. I think we ought to have a better school--like the white school.

*Some comments & a question*

BY Annie B. Evans

The people of Benton County have started a fight for freedom. Some of us want freedom, but "under their sleeves"--if you know what I mean. I would like to say to those persons: Stop and think; you are afraid to help, so be afraid to hinder. Your talk hurts no one except you, because we are still going to the courthouse and to our meetings. If you can't do anything to help, at least be quiet.

Have you ever stopped to think that the whites have two schools ("ours" and theirs) and the Negroes don't have one. The whites can invite other white people to their black school, but they won't send their children there. They invite everyone to their white school, but they won't let the little black children go there.

We have begun to fight for the Negro to have his rights. We parents love our children as much as the whites love theirs. They want the best for their children. Well, can't we want the same things for our children too?

*More about teachers...*

BY Imogene Reaves

My freedom school teacher's name was Gloria Xifaras. I really like her because she had a pretty smile and she was pretty and she had long hair. She had pretty hair. She was a very good freedom school teacher. She had us reading out of books, she had us playing games and she took our pictures.

*A letter to Frank*

Dear Frank,

Thank you for the book. I like it very much. I like where the robbers ran. I hope you like your new wife.

Andre Evans

*Benton County Poetry*

TO BE A NEGRO MEANS...

by Alberta Tipler

The fact that I am a Negro  
Means all in itself  
That I have no way already paved,  
No silver or gold on a closet shelf.

It means:

I'll have no easy road to glories,  
No cheerful and rosy road to fame;  
That I must rise by my beliefs  
Above the sorrow, abuse, and shame.

It means:

That early I must realize  
The disturbing fear of a Negro  
Where each mother and father  
silently thinks:  
"My child must never know."

But above all of this

It can have other meanings too,  
But the whole and useful meaning  
Depends completely on you.

It can mean:

I am--know--I am a man.  
And with work, faith, and grit  
I shall get what I was promised  
Bit by little bit.

When the times get rough

I must be able to say,  
"No matter what the price,  
I'm determined to be  
Somebody, someday."

...AMERICAN NEGRO POETRY:

The Black Finger

by Angeline Grimke

I have just seen a beautiful thing  
Slim and still,  
Against a gold, gold sky,  
A straight cypress,  
Sensitive,  
Exquisite,  
A black finger  
Pointing upwards.  
Why, beautiful, still finger are  
you black?  
And why are you pointing upwards?