

benton
county



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

VOLUME I, NUMBER 18

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE CITIZENS
OF BENTON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

FEBRUARY 21, 1965

BEULAH MAE AYERS,
EDITOR



"Understand?"

Brandon

School boycott considered

The possibility of a school boycott was brought up at the last meeting of the Citizens Club and will be discussed this coming week at the three district meetings of the Citizens Club.

The Board of Education still has not informed the club of any actions it will take concerning the recent petition asking for the removal of Mr. Foster among other demands.

In addition, Mr. Foster has once again refused to allow the school building to be used for a rally to raise money for the community center. He said the superintendent and the Board would have to be consulted.

District meetings to discuss the boycott will be held Tuesday night Feb. 23 at Sims Chapel, Wednesday night Feb. 24 at Mt. Zion, and Thursday night Feb. 25 at Hardaway Chapel.

If a boycott is approved by the citizens, then the School Committee will go to the Board on Mon. March 1 with a set of demands. If these demands are not agreed to by the Board, a boycott will begin on Wednesday, March 3. Two meetings will be held to make final plans for the boycott: an MSU meeting for the students will be held on Monday night March 1 at Palestine, and an all-county meeting of the Citizens Club will be held on Tuesday night at Hardaway.

If a boycott is decided by the citizens to be necessary, Freedom Schools will be held during the boycott. Besides discussions on Southern politics and Negro history, the Freedom Schools will have tape recordings of speeches given by James Baldwin. Demonstrations may also be planned if the boycott isn't settled quickly.

Integration petition

A petition to integrate the white schools of the county is now being passed around to Negro parents of the county. This petition will be turned into the Board of Education on March 1. If the Board turns down the petition, a suit will be filed in federal court by about 20 or 25 parents. It is expected that the white schools will be at least partially integrated by September, 1965.

F. D. P. meeting

Yesterday and today the Freedom Democratic Party is holding meetings in Jackson, Mississippi, concerning the Congressional Challenge hearings.

On Saturday, the county chairmen met to discuss strategy for the final 10 days of the hearings.

Today a convention of the Party will take place to discuss plans for the hearings. Representatives from Benton County are expected to attend.

Notices

*Freedom School classes at Mt. Zion are now being held at 6 p.m. every Wednesday.

*Farmers with any agricultural problems should see their ASC Committeemen--L.B. Paige, Clabon Jackson, or Sarah Robinson--to discuss their problems and find out what programs may be available to help them.

*Anyone who has ideas for cover drawings for the Freedom Train should send their ideas to James Tipler, Rt. 2, box 99, Holly Springs. He will draw them up.

Editorial comments: Think for yourself!

by Beulah Mae Ayers

Old Salem Attendance Center will be boycotted, unless there are some changes made, unless the Negro is given the opportunity to decide for his own child what kind of education he should have and who should teach his child.

We are not giving Uncle Charlie a chance to do it for us. He is giving his child the best of education. He can't run two schools. But if he wants it that way, and won't give us better teachers, then we will help him out--all of the Negro students will enter Ashland High School, and he won't have but one to run.

* * * *

When God made man, I am sure he didn't measure out the brains and give the white man 2/3 and the Negro 1/3. Neither did He tell the Negro, "You must work for the white because he is your boss." The Negroes have just as much sense as the white man has, so you don't need a white man to think for you. What does the white man have that a Negro doesn't have? "White" and that's all. If you look underneath a white man's skin you won't find anything more than you will find under a Negro's skin.

Negroes, wake up! Learn to live your own lives, make your own plans, and stop living under the white man's thumb. Have your brains been deadened by the white man so long that you are afraid to trust yourselves? Are you going to deprive yourselves and your children of your rights by not speaking up for yourselves? Are you going to continue to let the white man speak for you? Or will you be the man that God made you--he gave you a mouth, so speak for yourself.

You have fought and died for your country, you have slaved for the white man and tilled his soil

and made him rich. Now it is time for you to do something for yourself. Above all, learn to think for yourself--don't use the white man's brain when you have your own.

A.S.C. news

by Sarah E. Robinson

I attended the county and community meeting of the ASCS on Friday, February 12, 1965. The meeting was held in the courthouse in Ashland with about 15 or 20 people present. Mr. Stone conducted the meeting, assisted by a Mr. Williams. The meeting was very interesting. Mr. Stone explained to us about how the feed grain program operated. He explained that the 1965 program is basically the same as 1964. At times Mr. Williams would cut in and make it a little plainer, as it was very complicated.

Mr. Stone also advised us to attend meetings and inform the people of the different practices that are being brought about by the government, and if the farmers have problems, they should tell us community committeemen about it, and we can take it to the county committee and get the problem solved.

There were just 4 colored people present. They were we three committeemen (and woman) and one spectator. We were recognized and treated very nicely.

I received an ASCS newsletter from Jackson, Mississippi in the latter part of January. It was a real nice letter of congratulations for a job well done. It was from Mr. Ray Fitzgerald, deputy administrator of the ASCS in Washington, D. C.

Blacks and Whites and Laws and Outlaws

by Burne Alexander

We in Benton County were very happy to see one of our COFO workers who worked so hard last summer. That was Peter Cummings. I met him up town the other Saturday and I was as glad to see him as I would have been to see one of my colored friends from the North.

I am always glad to meet any of the COFO workers, because they are the only white friends that we Negroes in Mississippi ever had, and we have been with white people all our lives.

I cannot understand the white man in Mississippi. It should be that if we disobey the law, they will put him in jail and make us pay a big fine. But now they are putting us in jail for obeying the law of the United States.

The President of the U.S. has passed the law for each person to register and vote--to stand up and be men and women. But the white people in Mississippi want us Negroes to disobey that law. But we are not going to do that--we intend to obey the laws of the United States government.

Sorry

by the Glass Family

We sure were sorry Aviva keeps getting arrested. What is sorry? I guess it is because we all love her so much. We love her because all of the COFO workers love us. They are helping us out of the dark into the light. That's the only way we will get freedom. Let's all fight for our freedom. The train is ready and I am on board, so let's go. Good lord, help us to win.

WELCOME HOME!

Mrs. Reaves returned yesterday from Iowa University. Welcome back! We need you!

My two Schools

by Linda Rutherford

I like to go to freedom school. I like my freedom teacher. He teaches us many things. I like to go to freedom school better than I do Old Salem. Our freedom teacher teaches us to be a citizen, but at Old Salem they don't teach you to be a citizen.

And Mrs. Foster can't teach her students at all because nearly all the time she is walking up the halls and whispering in people's ears. If I were a teacher I wouldn't let her whisper in my ear.

Thoughts about school

BY Sonny Reaves

We can't have a ball game for our kids; we can't raise money at our school. We fill the school up for a sugar lump, and Mr. Foster does nothing that day because the white folks are there. Oh, we have a fine school on that sugar lump day--white and black together. Oh well, if we ain't together down here, we sure won't be together up yonder. We sure don't have a white God and a Black God. There's just one--he loves the white man; he loves the black man.

We do not have to ask the Board of Education to use our school. If so, we'd better stop now. The sun is mighty hot--mighty hot sun. Don't nobody do that but us fools. The white folks laugh at us fools.

My teacher

by Ozell & Cozell Glass

I love my teacher. Her name is Miss Fletcher. She is very nice to us. She does all she can for her children. And I hope she stays with us. We all love her.

Benton County Poetry Section

CLIMBING

by Theris Rutherford

The Negro is climbing the rugged mountain;
 With determined feet he climbs on and on.
 The valley of ignorance he leaves behind,
 His voice now chants, "We shall overcome."

Through the storm of injustice he keeps on climbing.
 He has come from a long, long way,
 To the rhythm of progress he now raises his head,
 His eyes behold a brighter day.

Some have reached the top of the mountain,
 Thousands struggling day by day,
 He paves the road he leaves behind
 For a determined race is on its way.

KEEP IT IN THE AIR

by Lloyd Dorse
 and Katie Reaves

Let's keep freedom ringing
 In love, hate and despair,
 Let's fight for our rights
 And keep freedom in the air.

Let's not be afraid
 Letting "Boss" tell us what he dare,
 Let's fight this hard battle
 And keep freedom in the air.

If this battle is won
 I hope so I declare,
 But till freedom is won
 Let's keep it in the air.

CROSS

by Langston Hughes

My old man's a white old man
 And my old mother's black.
 If ever I cursed my old white man
 I take my curses back.

If ever I cursed my old black mother
 And wished she were in hell,
 I'm sorry for that evil wish
 And now I wish her well.

My old man died in a fine big house
 My ma died in a shack.
 I wonder where I'm gonna die,
 Being neither white nor black?