

benton  
county



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

## INTEGRATION BEGINS IN ASHLAND !!

### SPECIAL REPORT

by Beulah Mae Ayers

On February 22, 1965, a group of women went to Ashland's shirt factory to fill out applications for a job and then on to the cafe for some food.

Mrs. Lorsie Jones, Mrs. Onie Leo Williams, Miss Calburdia Tipler, and I went to the factory at 8 a.m. We walked over to the information window and asked for an application for a job. The lady behind the window said, "I am sorry but the manager isn't here now. He should be here soon."

We left the office and went back to our cars. Soon the manager drove up. We went back into the factory. The lady brought applications out into the hall to a table and two chairs. She was very friendly and told us what part of the application to fill out. By the time we had almost finished our applications, four more ladies came in: Mrs. Callie Harris, Mrs. Izola Hoyle, Miss Gennie Mae Hoyle, and Miss Alberda Hoyle. When we finished, the lady gave them applications. I then asked them if they were going to the cafe. They said no.

We left the factory and drove to Ashland where we parked across from the new Ashland cafe. We

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### *What can you do?*

What can the Negro citizens of Benton County do about their children's education? According to the "laws" of the county, nothing. The school board hires and fires the teachers, and the school board has chosen not to listen to the reports and petitions of the Negro parents.

Why won't the Board listen to us? Because they don't have to--we didn't elect them! And why didn't we elect them? Because the "lawmakers" of this county discriminate against Negro voters. So we are not given a chance to vote and we are not given a chance to elect who we want to the Board of Education. So, according to the U.S. government which says all citizens have the right to vote, Benton County is breaking the law. And while the county lawmakers are breaking the law, they are telling us we must keep the law--we must not do anything when the Board of Education chooses not to listen to us!

Are you satisfied? Attend the all-county meeting of the Citizens Club on Tuesday at Hardaway. WE ARE GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT OUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION, EVEN IF IT MEANS KEEPING THEM OUT OF SCHOOL!

## Special report: integration in Ashland

walked into the cafe--there were about six white men inside. We went over to the counter and I asked if I could have a cheeseburger and coffee. The waitress said "yes."

We sat down at the counter. One of the ladies that works there got her coat and went out in a hurry (I found out later that she went to the telephone booth at the corner to call someone). All of the men but one left the cafe. We were served and enjoyed the food very much.

When we finished eating, we paid for our food and left. We went back to the car--the white people were still staring at us. Then Tony Farese came over to the car. He introduced himself and asked us for our names. I said, "Why do you want to know our names?"

He said, "In case you want to make a complaint against us, we would like to know who is making the complaint."

"We don't have anything to complain about," I said.

"Were you served at the cafe" he asked.

"Yes, and the food was fine."

"You did what you said you were going to do in the paper."

"We sure did. Anything wrong with us eating hot food when we come up here? We are tired of bringing cold lunches."

"No, you are right, as long as you act like you did today, I don't think there will be any trouble. Now I have told you my name, will you tell me yours?"

"Sure I will tell you my name--Beulah Ayers."

He seemed very surprised, and said, "So you are the one whose been giving me heck in the paper."

"Not exactly."

He seemed very nervous while he was writing our names, having to erase several times. Then he went back across the street to join his friends, one of whom was dressed like a highway patrolman and was taking down my tag number. Then they went into the cafe.

Mr. Oliver Crumpton kept a close eye on us. He followed us when we left Ashland.

On February 23, the next day, I went back to the shirt factory with Mrs. Jones, Miss Betty Jordan, and Miss Mattie Mae Washington. When we arrived at the factory, Mrs. Thelma Thompson and Mrs. Francis Thompson were waiting for us. We parked our cars between the factory and the old garage. Mr. Crumpton soon joined us and asked us what we wanted. Mrs. Thelma Thompson said, "Nothing," and Mr. Crumpton told us harshly to move our cars. We did, and the other ladies went into the factory and filled out applications.

We then drove over to J.K. Percell's cafe and went inside. There were six of us. A white girl was standing by the counter, and I asked her if we could have a cup of coffee. She said, "Yes, ask the lady back there." There were two ladies in the back--we ordered coffee and sandwiches, and they started to fix them for us. While we were sitting at the table, a man I presume to have been Mr. Percell came in and said to us, "Just what are you all trying to prove?" We didn't answer. Then he said, "What do you want?" Mrs. Thelma Thompson said, "Food."

Then the man said, "Suppose I don't have any."  
 The white girl said, "You have some. She is fixing their order now."  
 He said, "I don't have a waitress to wait on you."  
 Mrs. Jones answered, "Just fix the food and we will wait on ourselves." When the coffee was ready, we went to the window and got the cups. When the first two sandwiches were ready, the man went up and got them and brought them to the table. He stood off from us and said, "Which one of you does this belong to?" I said, "One of them is mine." He kind of shoved it over in my direction being careful not to get too close to the table. He served all the sandwiches in this gracious manner.

When we had almost finished our food, the man said to us, "You all were over at the other cafe yesterday, weren't you?"  
 I said, "Yes we were."  
 He said, "Did you eat over there?"  
 "Yes and the food was delicious." (I didn't want to hurt his feelings by telling him that it was a lot better than his food.)  
 Then the man said, "Why don't you all try the other cafe next door?"  
 I said, "I will try it sometime."  
 The man said, "I don't want you to miss that one."  
 "We won't," I said.

When we left the cafe, there weren't many white people in Ashland, but Mr. Crumpton was still watching us. He trailed us until we left.

I later learned that Mr. Crumpton went over to Rev. Beard and asked him to ask his people to "go slow" with the cafes. Rev. Beard said, "Well, isn't that the law now?" Mr. Crumpton said yes it was. Rev. Beard said, "Well, then I can't tell them not to do it. The only thing I can do is tell them to be neat and clean when they go into the cafes!"

## F.D.P. news

by Walter E. Reaves

I attended a meeting of the Freedom Democratic Party in Jackson last Saturday. The meeting opened at 3 p.m. A film was shown of the freedom movement from its beginning throughout the state to the state FDP convention and the trip to Atlantic City.

People spoke of their trip to Washington and what it meant to them. Mrs. Annie Devine made a nice talk about the FDP. Mr. Lawrence Guyot, state chairman of the FDP spoke--he said he didn't want anyone to pull out of the church, but he wants to pull the church into what we are doing. The meeting closed about 9:30 p.m. and opened again on Sunday at 1 p.m. The Sunday meeting was attended by Mr. Henry Reaves and others. It was great.

## Red Cross

by Sarah E. Robinson

On Tuesday, Feb. 23, I attended a Red Cross meeting at Old Salem. Mr. Walter Webber served as our financial chairman.

Mr. James Miskelley and Mr. Cyrus Conn conducted the meeting. They outlined the importance of Red Cross, sketching the tragic earthquake of Alaska as an example of Red Cross aid. They said that when 5 or more homes are totally destroyed by wind or water, it is a disaster area and the Red Cross will respond whole heartedly. When the disaster involved one or 2 individuals, the Red Cross will give them \$25.00.

About 16 of us accepted the responsibility of being Red Cross volunteers. Each of us will try to /raise \$15.00--more if possible.

## Statement of the F.Y.M.:

We believe that if the demands of the parents and taxpayers are not met, we should boycott the school, because Old Salem is supported by our parents--the Negro taxpayers of Benton County.

Old Salem is a Negro school. Yet whites run it. There is not a single white child there. We do not believe that the white man should be able to run our school. Even the most qualified Negro will never be allowed to run a white school. We demand the right to run our own school!

We must speak out and let them know that the people of this county want to be recognized and if they won't recognize us willingly, we'll force them. In fact, maybe it would be better to force them so that they may learn that long past due lesson that they so badly need to learn: that we will not let them dominate us and we will not let them "give" us anything.

We must force them to erase that image which they cling to so desperately: the image of the Negro as a large bulk of physical strength with no head--thereford, brainless--for this is not so, and we will not conduct ourselves in this manner.

We are going to speak out. We are going to have what we want, because we are not going to stand silently by while someone else thinks for us. We are going to let our voices ring out loud and clear because if we stand by silently while the wrong is going on, we're helping to promote wrongdoings, regardless of whether we mean to or not.

A boycott is our only way of speaking out. Our parents are not allowed to elect the school board. The school board has refused to take action on a petition signed by over 300 Negro taxpayers of the county. We have no other choice. If a boycott is staged here, it means, "We mean business and we're not letting anybody turn us around."

We have been under slavery long enough. And we are under slavery when we have teachers who tell us that we have to have an education in order to be freed. If they're the ones that we will have to depend on for an education, then we will never be freed.

Some may say that we don't want to go too fast. If over one hundred years is too fast, then our generation will never see the light of freedom. One hundred years has come and gone with more people than you can count. That is the way it will continue unless we stand up and demand our rights, one of the most important of which is the right to a decent education--"decent" as determined not by the white man but by ourselves.

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A special meeting of the Mississippi Student Union will be held Monday (tomorrow) night at 7:30 p.m. at Palestine Chapel. All students are invited to discuss action to be taken concerning our school.

ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE  
WITH GOD IF WE ONLY  
BELIEVE

By Elder Roy Williamson

There were 12 tribes. They had 12 leaders, and they were sent to spy out their father's land, that they were to possess. So they went into the land of Canaan, and 10 of the spies returned and reported and said: "The land could not be taken," and they said, "There are giants in the land, and it cannot be taken. We look like grasshoppers in their sight, and the land cannot be taken."

And the Lord said, "Say unto them, as truly as I live, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I to you: your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from 20 years old and upward, which have murmured against me."

But the other two spies, Calbe and Joshua, brought back a true report and some of the fruit of the land; and said, it is a rich land and a fertile land. Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

Those that say we cannot get freedom WON'T SEE THE LAND OF THE FREE!! So let us say like Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty or give me death!!"

WHAT DO WHITES HAVE  
AGAINST NEGROES?

by Glossie Clardy

This is a question I have been asking myself over and over. What do whites have against Negroes?

1. We wash the clothes.
2. We wash the dishes.
3. We scrub their floors.
4. We attend to their babies.

And they don't even want us to come in the front door. So what do whites have against Negroes?

Take for instance your boss. He says, "Nigger, go get that sack of feed off the truck." And the Negro says, "Yes sir." We do their work for them. So they should like us. So what do whites have against Negroes?

Maybe it's our color. But that shouldn't matter. We can be friends and neighbors and live together in this big, wide world. So what do whites have against Negroes?

NEGRO TROUBLE

by Mary D. Patterson

If some of us Negroes would do as much for our own color as we do for the white man, we would get much more done, but some of us just sit around waiting for the white man to give the orders. We should show the white man we are not their slaves--that every man is his own boss.

I AM HAPPY WITH MY SCHOOL--COLOR ME CRAZY by Earnestyne Evans

I set and let the white man tak over my school,

Color me useless;

I let him think that I am a fool,

Color me his friend;

My chance has come, but it came too fast,

Color me slow;

But to be free? You do it, I'll come later,

Color me cautious;

Freedom is knocking at my door,

Color me mute;

Things are happening every day before my eyes,

Color me blind;

Well, the Negro will soon win,

Color me wishful.