

**benton  
county**



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

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EDITOR

## Committee to see School Board

On Monday, February 1, the School Committee of the Benton County Citizens Club plans to present a special report to the Board of Education of the county dealing with problems at Old Salem Attendance Center. Attached to the report is a petition containing four points:

- 1) Asking for the removal of Mr. Foster and four teachers.
- 2) Asking that a professional librarian be hired to set up a library in the school.
- 3) Asking that certain teachers who have not finished their teaching requirements be retained because of good service.
- 4) Requesting that the School Committee be consulted in the selection of a new principal.

The petition will be signed by between 300 and 500 Negro citizens of the county.

The report deals with the following problems at Old Salem: pupil-teacher relations; discipline; classrooms; heating; cafeteria; special teacher complaints (Mrs. Foster, Mr. & Mrs. James, Mr. Williams), and complaints concerning the principal.

The report was drawn up by the school committee and was approved at the last meeting of the Citi-

zens Club (January 26) which was attended by over 200 people.

The School Committee will report on what happens at the Board meeting when the Citizens Club holds its next meeting--Tuesday, Feb. 9 at Mt. Zion Chapel.

## March 1: integration deadline

School Boards in Mississippi have until March 1, 1965, to decide whether or not to integrate, or face losing federal funds.

Federal aid to education amounts to almost \$126 million a year in Mississippi. If these funds are cut off in Benton County, it will hurt both the Negro and white schools, and it is possible that both schools will have to close down.

## Lawyers to be here

The Congressional Challenge is proceeding very smoothly, and lawyers are expected in Benton County next week to take depositions from Negroes who have experienced voter discrimination. If you have been a victim of such discrimination but have not as yet been contacted by a COFO worker, please contact your district chairman of the Citizens Club or the COFO office in Holly Springs.

## Students apply for cotton measurers

by Phillip Borse

On January 28, Clay Batts and I went to the ASCS office in Ashland to apply as cotton measurers. When we got to the desk, a man was behind the counter. He didn't ask us what we wanted. But a lady came over and asked, "Can I help you?" We told her that we wanted to fill out applications for cotton measurers.

She gave us the blanks, and we thanked her. As we were leaving the office, she said, "If you can't fill out the blank, come back and I will help you. I thanked her and closed the door."

## Thoughts about Freedom

BY Girtha Mae Mason

The white people think the reason we want our freedom is so that we can go to their house, eat at their table, sleep in their bed, and court their color. But that's not what we want. What we Negroes really want is the opportunity to vote for who we think should be elected. And have qualified jobs. I know that all Negroes are not qualified for high jobs, but some Negroes are just as qualified as whites. The only way they can prove it now is to go to Washington or some place far away and get a job, because they can't get one here.

And that's what we mean by freedom. But one person can't do it alone. We Negroes should get together and work, fight, and die together, if necessary. Some Negroes are afraid to fight for what they know is right. They pay attention to what the white man says, and they care nothing about the Negroes.

When we start to make a crop, we don't have anything, and when the crop is finished, we still don't

have anything. Why? Because the white man takes it, and there is nothing we can do about it. We have to take what they give us, whether we like it or not.

And that's why I'm glad these freedom workers came here. I think if we want our freedom, we should not stay home and let someone else do it for us, but come out and join the freedom movement, because when the battle has been fought and the victory has been won, it will do all just as much good as it will one.

I've got on board that freedom train, and I do mean to get there if it costs my life. And with the help of you and the help of God, I do believe we'll win this freedom fight.

## THANK YOU

Mr. & Mrs. Henry Strickland  
Mary L. Strickland

We would like to thank everyone who made it possible for the Xmas box of food. We enjoyed it very much and it came at a needed time. To Mr. & Mrs. Beard who did a wonderful job in distributing the food and again, thanks to everyone who had a part in this program.

## My trip to the jail

by Naomi Reaves

They put Aviva in jail.

Ain't that bad for Aviva?

I went to the jail and I saw the sheriff.

Aviva was in the jail and she said hello to me.

I was sorry when I heard you got put in jail, Aviva, and you must not get in jail any more.

## I like my teacher

by Mary Jane Reaves

My teacher is very good. I like her because she does not walk the halls and be out of the room, talking to everyone and whispering in everyone's ears.

# Negro Poetry Section

## Notes on the Commercial Theater

by Langston Hughes

You've taken my blues and gone--  
You sing 'em on Broadway  
And you sing 'em in Hollywood Bowl,  
And mixed 'em up with symphonies  
And you fixed 'em  
So they don't sound like me.  
Yep, you done taken my blues and  
gone.

You also took my spirituals and gone  
You put me in Macbeth & Carmen Jones  
And all kinds of Swing Mikados  
And in everything but what's about  
me--

But someday somebody'll  
Stand up and talk about me,  
And write about me--  
Black and beautiful--  
And sing about me,  
And put on plays about me!  
I reckon it'll be  
Me myself!

Yes, it'll be me.

## Old Black Men

Ly Georgia D. Johnson

They have dreamed as young men  
dream  
Of glory, love and power;  
They have hoped as youth will hope  
Of life's sun-tinted hour.

They have seen as others saw  
Their bubbles burst in air,  
And they have learned to live it  
down  
As though they did not care.

## The Test

by George Kuhne

O, the black man is a proud man,  
And proud he ought to be  
For he has felt the pain  
And the torture of the test  
Put to him by white men  
(That proud and noble race),  
Who know no better reason  
Than the color of one's face  
To subject him to all evils,  
To the evils of this place.

But the black man knows no hatred  
Nor any need for hate,  
For he knows there is no value  
In a subjugated race,  
And here we find his value,  
And here we find his worth,  
For in hatred there is weakness,  
In forgiveness there is strength.

O, the black man is a proud man  
And proud he ought to be,  
For there is no room for hatred  
In a heart possessed with strength

... from Mississippi:

## Poor Black Boy

by Ida Ruth Griffin,  
Harmony, Miss. (age 12)

I am Mississippi fed,  
I am Mississippi bred,  
Nothing but a poor, black boy.

I am a Mississippi slave,  
I shall be buried in a  
Mississippi grave,  
Nothing but a poor, dead boy.

# Negro History Section

MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE (1876-1955)

Mary McLeod, the sharecroppers little girl, was playing by herself outside the big house. She heard the voice of Ben Wilson's granddaughter calling, Mary, come into the house and see the beautiful doll Papa brought me.

I am coming, Mary called back excitedly. I am coming right now. I have never seen a new doll. The only doll I ever had was the rag doll Mama made for me!

Mary's eyes almost popped out from her head when she saw the fabulous china headed doll that Mr. Wilson had brought to his granddaughter from the city. Not only were there dolls in the little white child's bedroom, but a doll house, doll dishes, doll furniture, and every other kind of toy.

Mary had never seen such treasures as lay before her. Most fascinating of all was a big picture book lying open on a table. She put out a hand to pick it up, but the other child screamed, "Put that down; it is not for you," and snatched it up before Mary could actually touch it. "Besides," she said scornfully, as she clutched it, "a book would not do you any good to look at, you cannot read!"

Deeply hurt, Mary found herself and turned away, but in that moment was born an intense yearning to learn to read and write. Mary was one of fourteen children, all of whom had to help their parents work the rice and cotton farm on shares with the Wilson's. One of the Wilson's sister's, a member of the family in the big house, opened a school for Negroes in Maysville, South Carolina.

Mary eagerly attended the school even though she had to walk five miles from farm to town to get there, and her work in the fields prevented regular attendance. However, she was such a good student that when she completed elementary school, a church benefactor in Denver, Colorado, made it possible for her to enroll in Scotia Seminary in Concord, North Carolina. Here she studied diligently and did domestic work to help pay her expenses.

Upon graduation, Mary received a scholarship to the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. She had planned to become a missionary in Africa but when she graduated, she found no openings for a Negro woman missionary in Africa. So she turned to teaching.

She was offered her first appointment as a teacher in Haines Normal and Industrial Institute, Augusta, Georgia. She felt she could be a missionary here just as well as in Africa, and she set to work with enthusiasm to teach, not only the people at the Institute, but also a large group of children she gathered from the streets of Augusta. She conducted a mission school on Sunday afternoons for these children.

Here she was inspired by Lucy Craft Laney, the founder of Haines Institute, to start a school of her own for poor Negro girls.

Her next position was in Sumter, South Carolina, and it was here that she met and married Albert Bethune, a fellow teacher. They moved to Georgia and spent two happy years together there where their son, Albert, was born. From Georgia, they went to Florida, and her husband died there.

She went to Daytona Beach, Florida, where many wealthy families had vacation homes. She hoped she might interest them in her idea. She found an old empty shack, she persuaded five little ragged girls to accept her as their teacher. She went to merchants, ministers, and other leaders, and persuaded them to help her.

By faith and zeal, she succeeded in building a school which was dedicated on October 4, 1904. In 1922, the Methodist Episcopal Church decided to merge their boys' school with Mrs. Bethune's girls' school. The two schools merged under the name Bethune-Cookman College.

This human dynamo not only ran a college, but dedicated her life to improving the lot of Negro women throughout the United States. She was called to Washington in 1934 to head the Office of Minority Affairs of the National Youth Administration, the first such post ever created for a Negro woman. Here she met President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his wife, Eleanor, who became her close friend. They were both impressed with her deep sincerity and her dedication to the welfare of her people.

She was selected in 1931 as one of the fifty women who have "contributed most to the enrichment of American life." In 1949 she went to Winter Park, Florida, to receive an honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities from Rollins College. This was her 9th honorary degree. In 1949, she journeyed to Haiti and was given the Order of Honor and Merit, Haiti's highest decoration. It was the first time in history the award was given to a woman.

She received the African Star from the Government of Liberia; she was given an audience with Pope Pius XII, as well as with the Lord Mayor of London. Perhaps the assignment which gave her the greatest personal satisfaction was her work at the San Francisco Conference for the Organization of the United Nations. She was sent as a consultant to help frame the Charter for the Declaration of Human Rights.

By the time of her death, on May 18, 1955, Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach had become one of the foremost colleges in America. It is one of the few places in the South where interfaith and interracial meetings can be held in safety.

It is there that Mary McLeod Bethune is buried. Her name has been given to hundreds of Negro schools and Negro women's clubs not only in the United States but in Haiti, the Virgin Islands, and Africa.

(The above story was taken from Charlemae Hill Rollins, They Showed The Way, published by Thomas Y. Crowell Company of New York, 1964.)