

Benton
County

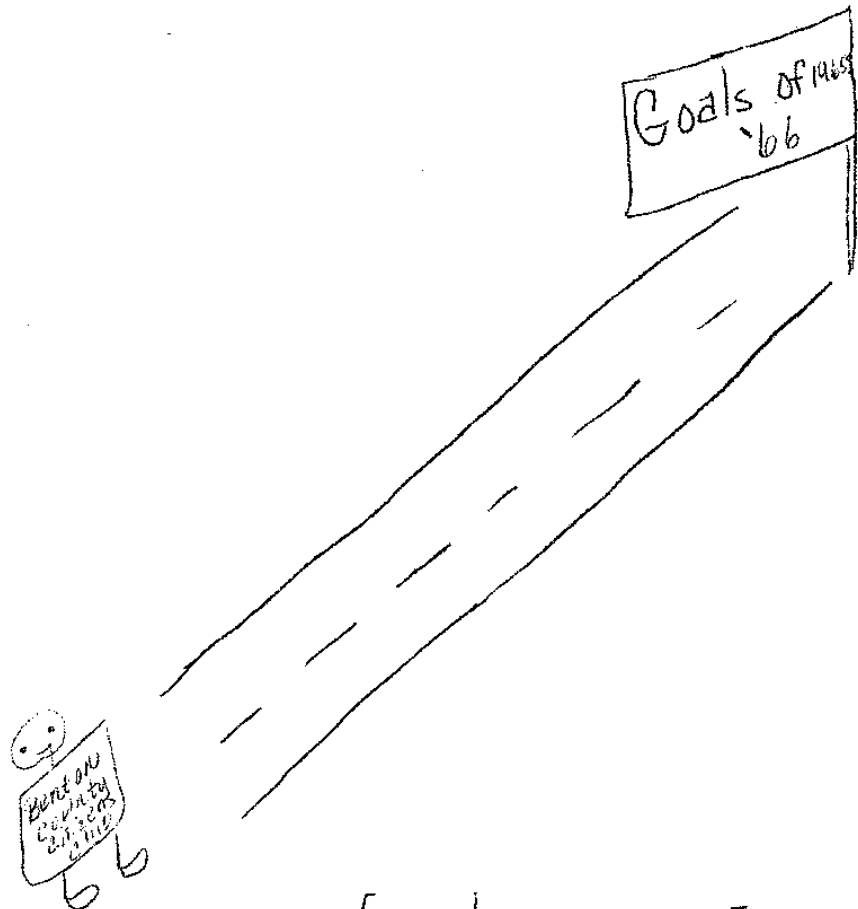


It's that Freedom Train a comin';
Get on board!! Get on board!!

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Will we strive harder to reach our goals
in 66?

Do you need a home?

The money is for our children too

Do you need a house to live in? If you do don't look for one outside the county. We have a plan for building homes in the county for people who need homes.

A new project has been started here in the county. Its purpose is to supply people here in the county with a home. Since there are people who have been forced off the white man's land and is only allowed to live on his land we are trying to furnish land to buy but only for housing purposes.

The sellers in the Martin Dixon have the following aims in mind:

1. To provide land for houses.
2. To provide cooperative living.
3. To have Urban living in the rural
4. To get information about loans to be obtained through the FHA

Anyone who is interested in this project may contact the Benton County Citizens Club office, Route 2, Box 99, Holly Springs, Mississippi.

Someone Cares

There are still some people interested in the cooperative for Benton County. On Mr. Loyal Thompson, Mr. Sam White and Mr. Howard Evans went to Batesville to see about a cooperative. They didn't get to see the man who they wanted to see and were told that they would hear from him later.

A committee to meet the welfare department had been chosen. They are Rev. John Beard, Mr. Earl Price and Mr. Loyal Thompson.

On April, 1965 the Congress passed a new Education Act. This new law does many things. Most important it helps children who come from low income families.

Under Title I of the Act, Benton County is entitled to more than \$140,000. This money is to be used on poor children in the county in school. Almost everyone in Benton County is poor.

Before the school board get this money they must send a plan to the state board of education to be approved or rejected.

This money can be used for anything to help the children.

Since you know about this money and this money is yours too, you have a right to know how this money is spent and you should know.

You have a right to talk about how it should be spent and to share in the planning in what you want the money spent for.

Since you are to help plan and should know what has been planned already, a committee has been asked to go to the board on January 3, 1966. This is the same committee that you elected as your school committee.

So, all school committeemen should be ready on Monday morning to go to the court house to see the board and let them know that you are ready to help with the plans and want to know about their plans.

"Looking Back on '65"

As we look forward to 1966, we can't help but remember the many things that made 1965 so meaningful to us. Let's look at the past year and remember what happened:

The year began with 10 Benton Countians joining hundreds of other Mississippians in Washington, D.C. for the FDP challenge. The U.S. Congress agreed to put off deciding on whether or not to unseat the Mississippi Congressman. And so our 10 delegates returned home, and we began to prepare testimony for the hearings.

But before the hearings came about the famous basketball game at Old Salem, attended by 1200 students, Aviva, Tony Farese and sheriff Ward. Will we ever forget the sheriff marching Aviva out of the gym against the background of 1200 students screaming "WE WANT FREEDOM"? Or Earnestyne getting the door slammed in her face when she tried to get into the sheriff's car with Aviva?

February was a lively month with our school report and petition to remove the principal and 4 teachers and our meetings with the Board of Education. In that month Benton County had its first integrated SCS committee meeting, as our newly elected committeemen took their seats together with the other committeemen.

February was also the month in which Mr. Foster canceled our community center rally. And finally February was the month in which Beulah Mae led a group of women into Ashland for hot meals, beginning the integration of the Benton County cafes.

March of course, was the month of the Old Salem Boycott and the Freedom schools run by Benton County students. Everyone could see how important the freedom schools were when Walter Lee Poplar wrote: "I love freedom school. It makes me feel like a new boy. I feel like I can speak for my rights." Remember how close we felt, gathered around the wood stoves, students and teachers sharing the lunches which the mothers had prepared?

March was also the month of speeches of Hamer's McKenzie's speech at Samuel, in which he stated that he wanted to break down the iron curtain that existed between the races and of Mr Peterson's speech at Sims in which he said he'd stick by his people-----right or wrong.

April saw the long-awaited resignation of Mr. Foster. It was also the month in which we elected out bi-racial committee as Mr. McKenzie had urged us to do only to discover that the white folks wouldn't meet with us. Finally, April was the month in which we sat the Board of Education petitions asking to integrate the schools. We weren't surprised that we never received an answer.

May was the month in which Judge Clayton ordered Mr. Mathis not to discriminate against Negro voters and knocked out the constitution question on the voter application.

Looking back on '65 (continued)

May also saw 6 of our best teachers dismissed from Old Salem because they were "unqualified". Or was it really paying us back for the boycott?

That month Fred Richard Jr. Was arrested at the Cotton Patch, and the Citizens Club paid his fine, since we felt that he was arrested for trying to help all of us.

June was the month of voter Registration and Headstart. By June 16, there were 150 new voters on the books. But there would have been many more if Mr. Mathis had been as fair as he should have been.

We didn't get our headstart program, but we kept on pushing until we integrated Ashland's kindergarten and made sure the program was run more fairly.

June was also the month in which new jobs opened up. The ASCS began hiring Negroes. Of course they didn't hire any from the Citizens Club, but we felt good anyway, knowing it was our efforts that made them any Negroes at all. And our young people began making extra money in the Youth Corps.

At the end of the month, our 4 volunteers came down to help with our summer programs. Was it because of their arrival that the sheriff stopped us in that road block after our Mt. Bethel meeting?

July began with Odie Rose and Clay Batts bringing a load of food from Benton to the cotton strikers in Shaw. It was also the month in which 5 busdrivers who were in the integration suit were not rehired, so we wrote up another petition--and we weren't surprised when it wasn't answered. July also gave us a Benton County first--our first church was destroyed as the Davis Temple went up in flames.

But mainly July was the month of our new office, freedom schools, and the school integration trial.

Mr. Tipler deeded us an acre of land, and the men of the County supervised by Mr. Poplar, Mr. Charlie Reaves, and Mr. Evans, put up an office. It was a nice way to celebrate the first birthday of the Freedom Train.

Freedom schools kept everyone busy -- even in the Royston area where the 4th district began to organize itself.

On July 20, we all went to Oxford for the school integration trial. With Mr. Flannery's and Mr. Aronson's legal skills, we got the 1st, 10th, 11th and 12th grades integrated, even though Mr. Farese claimed that the land for the elementary school had been deeded by Mr. McDonald for a White school only.

At the end of the month the United Brotherhood Baptist Association endorsed the Civil Rights movement and the Freedom Train.

August was the month of picnics to raise money for the office, of Feinglass arrest, of 5 (or 6?) burning crosses, of registration at Ashland school, and (of the kindness of the people of York who gave our young people a trip to York in a station wagon which they bought for the Citizens Club.

And mainly August was the month of the trial with Foster. How can we ever forget Mr. Saltonstall's questioning of Mr. Foster and Mr. McKenzie? or Professor Howe's eloquent defense of free speech?

September was the peaceful integration of Ashland school as 46 students began on the road to a better education.

Looking back on '65 (continued)

September was also the month of the KKK ., as shots were fired at the Beard's home and the Price's home, and parades came through Martin Flat distributing leaflets.

By September 12 there were 300 newly registered voters but we still weren't satisfied with Mr. Mathis , and so we began complaining to Washington.

our 5 women who went to Washington for the final vote on the challenge returned with the news that we had lost , and that the 5 Mississippi Congressmen would remain in Washington as our "representatives" --until enough of us could vote to put them out of office.

In the same month our trucks and cars were hauled away, only to be returned a week later when we raised the bond to appeal our case against Foster. We felt sorry that the sheriff had to go to all that trouble for nothing.

Our complaints to Washington brought results , and October opened with a new office in Ashland , as the federal registrar opened for business. Rev. and Mrs. Beard were the first to do business with him and by the end of the first week, 200 more people has become registered voters.

The Klan continued its parades, and Rev. Beard continued patiently to replace his mercury light, and the Negroes continued to go miles to catch busses to Ashland School.

The folks in Ashland elected their own Negroes to a bi-racial committee: Henry Jackson, Frank Elmore, and Henry Reaves. But Mr. Reaves and the Citizens Club said no---and Washington agreed.

November was probably our worst month . We got a new federal registrar , who seemed less cooperative than the first one. We found that Old Salem had not improved as the judge had ordered, but has gone backward with three grades in one room, and with children being put out of school for 31 days of absence. Ashland school began to moved backward as one student was expelled and the word "nigger" began to be heard more often. And Rev. Beard again had to replaced his mercury light.

And finally november was the month in which we lost the ASCS elections. And we had nobody to blame but ourselves. Our leaders didn't do their jobs, and our people didn't cooperate.

December was the month in which we elected our own C.A.P. committee, thus making sure that either the white people met with us or nobody would get anti-poverty money from Washington.

As the price of cotton went down, people began turning their acres into the soil bank, and sharecroppers had to leave the land, whether or not they had been with the movement.

But at the same time , new jobs began to open up in factories, and many of those people who had jobs at Old Salem were thankful as they got better jobs and felt freer to participate in the movement.

And our friends in York and Boulder helped us to have a Merry Christmas. And Aviva came down to spend the best Christmas of her life.

And we began to get new ideas for the new year: cooperative home building, box suppers, to pay our debts, an oratorical contest, developing a new community in the Martin Flat-Dixon area, and determining to push harder for the new year.

Looking back on '65 (continued)

By the end of 1965 there were 1,000 Negro voters--about 72% of all eligible Negroes in the county. Will 1966 see the other 400 registered? What will 1966 bring us? Will it make up for our poor showing in the 1965 A SCS elections? Will we send hundreds of students to Ashland and Hickory Flat schools so that white students will have to be sent to Old Salem? Will we help to clean up Old Salem? What will we do in the November 1966 elections? Will we build the new homes to keep Negroes from leaving the county? Will we get the Ashland busses to pick up our children at home? Will we establish cooperatives?

What will you do in 1966 to help the movement and help yourself?

Notices:

Read before you write

All section captains are asked to meet at the Citizens Club office Monday night, January 3. We would like to have all section captains present. There is business of importance to be discussed.

All persons interested in getting houses in the county should contact anyone in the office or Mr. Shelby Gipson, Mr. Loyal Thompson, or Mr. Henry Reeves. Other than those people you may contact your section captain and let them contact us.

The oratorical contest is drawing near. Please get ready for your speaking and get your supporters together.

A program is being sponsored at the Macedonia Methodist Church on January 9, 1966 at 3:00 P.M. by Mrs. Loris Jones for the Benton County Citizens Club. Tickets are being sold and the person selling the highest number of tickets will receive a transistor radio. (The four knights will be singing along with any other groups that we can get to help us out.)

The PTA meetings will be held at Ashland high on the third Monday. The Old Salem PTA meets every Friday before the second Sunday.

There have been rumors that a white man who says that he is from Holmes County is carrying around a petition to people saying that if they sign the petition they will stop these husbands from walking off from their wives.

We know that this may sound good to some of you but please be careful. Before you sign anything read it.

Anyway it will take more than a petition to stop this. So read before you write.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Tuesday night (Jan, 4) 2nd Dist. will meet at Sims Chapel

Wed.-3rd dist.-Mount Zion

Thursday-1st-Hardaway Chapel

All districts meetings will be held at 7:30 P.M.

The All county meeting will be at Sims Chapel on January 11, 1966. Please be present. Lets come to the meetings in greater numbers than we have in past months.