

Benton
County



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

VOLUME II, NUMBER 24
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OF BENTON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

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BEULAH MAE AYERS,
EDITOR

"I SURE WISH I
KNEW WHAT HE
HAS IN HIS
OTHER HAND."



W. B. Foster Resigns

On Monday, April 5, 1965, Mr. W. B. Foster announced his resignation from the office of principal at Old Salem Attendance Center.

The announcement came at the meeting between the School Committee of the Citizens Club and the Board of Education at Ashland. A letter was produced from Mr. Foster announcing his resignation. It was then announced by the Board that Mr. W. Lloyd Peterson would be the new principal. The Board was very polite and courteous to the members of the School Committee.

The Committee is now planning to see Mr. Peterson in order to see that the rest of the Citizens Club's demands are carried out, and in order to make requests concerning improving Old Salem. The committee will serve as a permanent group to help the principal, to bring requests from the parents, and to interpret school programs to the parents.

Any parents who have any requests or complaints concerning the school should bring them to any members of the Committee. They will then bring them to Mr. Peterson.

The committee members are: Mr. Walter Reaves (chairman), Mr. Jesse Jones, Mrs. Sarah Robinson, Mrs. Rebecca Dorse, Mr. Odie Rose, Mrs. Gladys Glass, and Mr. Loyal Thompson.

Remember: this is your school. The new principal needs your support, suggestions, and criticism. You must help to make Old Salem a good school. Attend the PTA, talk to members of the School Committee, and take an active interest in your children's work.

Citizens to Elect Bi-Racial Committee

At the last meeting of the Citizens Club, it was decided to elect Negro members to a bi-racial committee.

A bi-racial committee is one which consists of members of both races sitting down together to discuss their problems. It has been reported that the white community has already elected the white members of the bi-racial committee.

The Negro citizens decided to elect their members as an act of good faith. However, they also voted that these members would be just representatives of the Negro people of the county and would carry out decisions made by the whole group. If any member of the committee acts against the decisions of the group, then the group will replace that member with a new one.

Nominations were made last week and elections will be held this coming week by secret ballot at district meetings. Each district (of the first three districts) will elect two people to the committee.

Elections will be held at the following meetings at 7:30 P.M.:

- Tues. April 13: Sand Hill Chapel, second district.
- Wed. April 14: Samuels Chapel, third district.
- Thurs. April 15: Hardaway Chapel, first district.

Nominations are as follows:

Second district:

Jesse Jones
Otho Howery

L. B. Paige (Continued on p.2)

Benton County Freedom Train
(BI-RACIAL COMMITTEE, CONT.)
Spence Richards, Jr.
John Eddie Terry
Onie Lee Williams

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up suggestions for a summer project and any questions they have about it.

Third District:
Teaster Baird
Charlie Reaves
Henry Reaves
L.W. Thompson
Walter Webber

Since each county is responsible for the volunteers, it is expected that members of the community will house the volunteers.

First District:
Willie Hamer
Cater Poplar
Willie Poplar
Odle Rose
Eugene Steward

Among the possibilities for programs, the idea of a kindergarten has already been brought up and will be looked into.

FDP CALLS MEETING IN WASHINGTON

After the six men are elected, they will then elect one or two members from the 4th and 5th districts, and the Citizens Club will approve (or disapprove) the election.

The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party has announced that a national conference of Civil rights, religious, labor and liberal political groups is being called on April 24th in Washington, D.C. to plan a final national effort to ensure the unseating of the Mississippi congressional delegation.

Government money from the anti-poverty program will be given to communities where members from the whole community work together to decide what they need--in the case of Benton County, this would mean a bi-racial committee, since Negroes make up about 50% of the county.

"According to the response and support that this challenge has received across the nation, we should have representation from at least 40 states," a Freedom Party spokesman said. "Unseating the illegally selected Mississippians has become one of the major objectives of the Civil Rights movement, and this conference will lay the ground-plans for a final effort during the month of May and June, to ensure that free elections become a reality in Mississippi."

Future to be Discussed

District meetings this coming week will discuss the future of the movement in Benton County. Where do we go from here will be the main question to be discussed.

Petitions Ready

Plans for the summer will be brought up. A Summer Project with northern and southern volunteers will again take place this summer, but this time it will be directed by each county's FDP. The FDP in Benton will have to decide how many volunteers it wants, and what kinds of programs it want the volunteers to help with. This will be discussed at the district meetings, and all people should bring

School integration petitions, asking for the desegregation of the Benton County schools, are being readied to turn over to the Board of Education. Over 300 Negro parents have signed the petition. It is hoped that at least one school will be partially integrated beginning with the coming term in July.

Cafes Integrated

by Phillip Williams

On Wednesday, April 7, nine students from Old Salem, enjoyed good service and food at the Cotton Patch Cafe. The nine were: Irving Williams, Tommy Williams, Frederic Williams, Lee Jones, Roosevelt Harris, Jr., Dennis Woodard, Jr., his brother, George Washington, and Philip Williams.

We walked into the cafe at 11:30 p.m. A man walked over to us and asked us what we wanted. We said we wanted service. He walked on out. We sat down at a table, and a waitress came over immediately to take our orders. She announced that the cafe would close at 1 a.m. Irving told her that it wasn't even midnight. Then the waitress took our order and brought it to us promptly. She was polite.

We were in the cafe altogether about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. Nobody made any "wisecracks." There were only two other customers in the restaurant.

* * * *

Students in Tippah County integrated Renfrow's cafe on March 24 in Ripley. They were Charleane Hill, Laura Strong, Glinda Thomas, and Roxie Rucker. They were treated courteously and served promptly. Charleane said, "This will definitely not be our last time, and we hope to have more people, young and old, going in the near future. Going into these places does not mean that we are trying to get publicity for ourselves, but we see the job has to be done, and we try to do it."

* * * *

If you are refused service in any cafe, please report it immediately to an officer of the Citizens Club who will, in turn, report it to the Justice Department. What's happening with the Ashland cafes?

Correction

In the March 14th issue of the Benton County Freedom Train, a reference was made to a meeting which took place in Mr. Hamer McKenzie's office between Mr. McKenzie, Mr. Frank Elmore, and Mr. Glabon Jackson.

The article offended Mr. McKenzie, and he understood we referred to his office as a rat hole or a place where rats congregate. Mr. McKenzie felt that in this way, we held him up to public ridicule.

We would like to state here that we had no intention of insulting or degrading Mr. McKenzie's reputation. We have, in our dealings with him, felt him to be a sincere person, concerned perhaps more than many citizens of the community with helping the two races to better understand one another.

We further do not regard Mr. McKenzie's office as a place where rats congregate. One of us (Mrs. Alexander) was, at that time, a client of Mr. McKenzie's and was in his office on that day to consult him about legal matters.

Our "figure of speech" was undoubtedly unfortunate and we sincerely apologize. We had no intention of calling Mr. McKenzie a rat or his office a rat hole. And we certainly had no desire to hold him up to public scorn or ridicule. As we have stated, we regard him as a man truly concerned with trying to understand the racial problems existing in Benton County and in trying to promote this understanding in the community.

Signed:

Mrs. Burne Alexander
Miss Beulah Mae Lyons
Miss Aviva Futorian

ATTEND YOUR DISTRICT MEETINGS
THIS COMING WEEK!