

MISSISSIPPI:
HOW NEGRO
DEMOCRATS
FARED

" . . . We are not allowed to function effectively in Mississippi's Traditional Democratic Party; therefore we must find another way to align ourselves with the National Democratic Party."

This report is a record of events that occurred on June 16, 1964. It is an account of what took place when Negroes for the first time since Reconstruction attempted to participate in the process of selecting the delegation which will represent Mississippi at the Democratic National Convention in August, 1964.

The story is told through their own sworn affidavits.

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... More than this, however, this report unequivocally substantiates what Negroes have been saying to officials of the National Democratic Party for years:

1. Mississippi's Traditional Democratic Party is controlled by an unbelievably small number of people. In addition to practically all of the Negro population, an exceedingly large number of whites do not participate in the basic operations of the party.
2. Negroes are discriminated against by Mississippi's Traditional Democratic Party and are not wanted as members of Mississippi's Traditional Democratic Party and are not permitted to function in the party's operations.
3. Mississippi's Traditional Democratic Party is opposed to the programs and policies of the National Democratic Party and will not state committedly that they will support the National Party's programs, policies, or more important, presidential and vicepresidential candidates.
4. Officials of Mississippi's Traditional Democratic Party have been very lax in attempting to create a widely based party and in attempting to actively involve as many people in the party's machinery as possible.

On August 24, 1964 the Democratic National Convention will convene in the state of New Jersey. The state of Mississippi will send 68 persons to that convention as the delegation for Mississippi's Democratic Party. Those 68 persons are to be selected, according to law, in the following manner: The Chairman of the State Democratic Executive Committee names a date for the holding of "precinct meetings". At these precinct meetings, all qualified electors in the precinct may assemble and elect delegates to the county convention. At the county convention - one week later - delegates are elected to attend the state convention. The delegates elected in the 82 county Democratic conventions throughout the state then assemble a week or more later in separate caucuses held in each of the state's five congressional districts. These caucuses then proceed to elect, subject to the approval of the upcoming state convention: four regular delegates and four alternate delegates (representing a total of two votes) to the National Democratic Convention. A week or more after the last congressional district caucus is held, the State Democratic Convention is convened in Jackson, the state convention. The convention ratifies the earlier election by congressional district caucuses of the 40 delegates to the national convention. The convention also elects delegates to the Democratic National Convention having a total remainder of the votes to which the state of Mississippi is entitled.

It becomes readily clear that what takes place at the precinct level is basic to the entire process of selecting delegates to the Democratic Party's National Convention. It is at the precinct meetings where persons are chosen to go to the county convention. It is at the precinct meetings where all registered voters who live in a particular precinct may participate in the initial steps of the process that will ultimately select a group of persons who will assist in the selection of persons who will run as Democrats for the offices of President of the United States and Vice President of the United States. Further, it is at the

1. What is a precinct meeting?
2. When is your precinct meeting?
3. What happens at a precinct meeting?

How much lack of information the people have about precinct meetings is due to a deliberate attempt by officials of Mississippi's Traditional Democratic Party to keep them uninformed can only be speculated on. It can be stated, however, that the means which are used by Mississippi's Traditional Democratic Party to inform the party's members of the party's operations leave much to be desired.

On June 16, 1964, in response to the request of Negroes to go to the precinct meetings, Negroes did attempt to go. Negroes did not attempt to go to precinct meetings in every community, or city, or even every county. For the most part they went in places where people are located who are interested in replacing Mississippi's Traditional Democratic Party with a Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. It was these people who are attempting to form Mississippi's Freedom Democratic Party who explained to the Negro people their rights to participate in precinct meetings if they were registered and were Democrats. That which follows serves as one of the reasons Negroes in the state are beginning to associate themselves with the Freedom Democratic Party. Every where Negroes went to a precinct meeting they took with them a resolution calling for party loyalty. It reads as follows:

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR PARTY LOYALTY*

Whereas we as Democrats believe that strong political parties are a necessary part of American democracy, and

Whereas we believe that the National Democratic Party represents the best interests of the majority of the people in Mississippi,

We therefore resolve that the delegate(s) from this precinct be instructed to go on record, if they are ultimately selected as delegates to the Democratic National Convention, as supporting the party platform and the persons selected to be the party's candidates.

We further resolve that the delegates from this precinct be instructed to bring before the County Democratic Convention a resolution stating that the County Democratic Party will support the National Democratic Party's nominees and their pledged electors.

The resolution was read in the precinct meetings where Negroes attended and the people attending the meetings were asked to vote on it.

*See appendix for national resolution.

Ruleville, Mississippi

Ruleville, Mississippi is in Sunflower County, the county in which Mississippi's Senator Eastland has his plantation. Ruleville is also the home of Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, the 46 year old housewife who ran for Congress in the Democratic primary last June. In Ruleville 8 Negroes went to the place where the precinct meeting should have been held - the regular polling place. They tried to open the door of the building - the Community House - but was locked. Next they knocked on the door. No one responded to their knocking. At 10:05p.m. these persons who had gone to their polling place for a precinct meeting called their own meeting on the lawn in front of the Community House. They elected two delegates to the Democratic County Convention and passed the resolution supporting party loyalty. Cameramen from the Columbia Broadcasting System's CBS News were present and filmed the group's activities. A report of this meeting has been filed with the County Democratic Executive Committee. The eight persons have all signed sworn statements as to what occurred.

Greenwood, Mississippi

In Greenwood one sees an example of deceitfulness manifested by public officials. In Greenwood 11 Negroes asked city officials where the precinct meetings would be held. The city officials told them that they (the city officials) did not know where they would be held. Eleven Negro registered voters went to the City Hall - their proper voting place. They all arrived before 10:00a.m. - the time designated by law for precinct meetings to start. Some members of the group were told by a policeman that there was no precinct meeting, while others were told that the precinct meeting was already over. The group then returned to a site where they held their own meeting. They elected a chairman, secretary, and a delegate to the Leflore County Convention. They also adopted a resolution calling for Democratic Party loyalty. The voters were members of the Southeast Ward. One receives a better indication of what took place on reading the signed statements of two of the persons who went to the precinct meeting.

On Tuesday, June 16, 1964 I arrived in Greenwood, Mississippi to attend and observe a democratic precinct meeting for the Southeast Precinct. It was 8:15a.m. Later, at approximately 9:05, I called the fire house where the people of the area normally vote, to ask as to the location of the meeting. I was told that no such meeting was planned for the fire house, and that I should call City Hall, which I did. They informed me that precinct meetings were scheduled for June 16, but the voice said that the Southeast Precinct had not informed them where their meeting would be. After another inquiry at the fire house, I questioned the voters as to where they had last voted. I was told that in the primary election they voted at City Hall. It was our understanding that the precinct meeting would take place at the normal polling place. At 25 minutes of ten we loaded the cars and left for City Hall. Two blocks before the City Hall I got out, and began to walk toward city hall. I did not enter the building but stood on the sidewalk about $\frac{1}{2}$ block away. I watched the people enter, and when they had all entered I walked once around the block, just in time to see everyone leave. The people arrived at the City Hall at 9:47 and it was a little after ten when they came out. I met them down the street, about 1 block from the City Hall. They told me that at first the policeman standing inside said there was no meeting. Later a second group was told that the meeting was over. We then returned to the office at 708 Avenue N. I immediately had the people fill out affidavits and then left for the Mayor's office. His secretary told me that there had been a precinct meeting and that it took place at 10:00 O'clock. I received similar information at the newspaper office of the Commonwealth.

- Michael F. Starr

I, Mary Lane, along with 11 other citizens of Greenwood who all seemed to have lived in the Southeast precinct, went to the City Hall this morning (June 16) for the purpose of attending the precinct meeting to elect delegates to the county convention. We walked into the City Hall about 9:50 around to the watch that Gwendlyn Gillon had on her arm. We walked up to a city officer that was standing in the hallway and asked him if he knew where the precinct meeting was being held. He replied he didn't know. Then we told him we had called earlier, and the meeting was supposed to have been held there at the City Hall, but we didn't know what room. There were 2 local citizens standing to the side talking, and one of them replied the meeting was over with. Glenn said the meeting wasn't suppose to start until 10:00. The officer then said "He said the meeting was over.."

-Mary Lane

I went to the City Hall in Greenwood, Mississippi along with a group of registered voters and a few citizens who had attempted to register but hadn't succeeded heretofore. We arrived at City Hall and went in. On the inside I asked a policeman where was the precinct meeting to be held at, (meaning what part of the building). He told me there wasn't a precinct meeting. I told him the precinct was suppose to be held here today. He again said there wasn't a precinct meeting being held there. Later after I asked him again a white man was standing in front of the coke machine heard me ask again about the meeting and he said the meeting just adjourned. I said the meeting was suppose to start at 10:00 so he and the policeman answered and said, "He said that the meeting is adjourned." The group that was in with me and I left. As we were leaving the second group went in to inquire about the meeting. My watch had 5 minutes after 10 when we left. I observed about 6 white people in the building and after I came out some of these six came out too.

- Gwendolyn Gillon

Greenville, Mississippi

In Greenville, Mississippi, Negroes went to four precinct meetings. In one precinct the resolution pledging the precinct delegates to support the platform and the party's nominees at the National Convention was unanimously approved by the white and Negro people present. In precinct 5 only 11 whites were present; in precinct 9, thirteen; in precinct 3, only four (the precinct where the resolution passed). Greenville is considered to be a moderate city in regard to race relations. It was felt that Negroes would be allowed to participate. Negroes were asked to go to the Greenville meetings not so much to point out that discrimination existed but to show the National Democratic Party that where Negroes are allowed to participate, they will participate. It is significant to add that the resolution adopted in precinct 3 was introduced by a Negro and supported by the four whites at the meeting. Lastly, it must be remembered that Greenville is about as representative of Mississippi in regard to race relations as a rose in a weed patch.

Meridian, Mississippi

It was felt that Negroes would be allowed to participate in the precinct meetings in Meridian, but such was not the case. Notarized affidavits were signed by the following people. They are adequate to report the story.

I am a resident of the 8th Precinct of the City of Meridian, State of Mississippi. At about 9:30 a.m. I and Mrs. Leona Griggs, also a resident of Precinct 8, went to Chalk School, at 39th Ave. and 7th St., in Meridian, which was the place at which the 8th Precinct meeting was scheduled. As we approached the school a white lady inside the school shouted through the closed door: "We can't open the door. They called down and told us not to open the door. There are no precinct meetings here. We don't know anything about any precinct meetings." We thanked her and said we would wait for a while. Just after this, a man who identified himself as Mr. Simms, a white man, told us that there would be a meeting somewhere in the building that day. We then waited for about half an hour. During that time, other white men came and waited outside the building. At about 10:15 an un-uniformed man drove up on Sherriff's car No. 2, blew the horn and called for Bill Smith, one of the white men waiting outside the building. Mr. Smith went over to the Sherriff's car, talked for awhile, and then then both got out and waited with the other group of whites. Then a man drove up, got out of the car, announced to the group that he was Precinct Vice Chariman, pointed to the door and said "The meeting will be held inside." Mrs. Griggs and I started toward the door. As we were walking toward the

Meridian, continued

door, the Precinct Vice Chairman motioned with his hand for the white group to come over under one of the trees on the lawn. We also started for the tree. As we approached, I heard the Precinct Vice Chairman say that he already had appointed a secretary and a state of delegates. Then he said, "That's all folks. See you in four years." Mrs. Griggs and I felt that we couldn't do anything else, so we left.

Robert Lanier

From Rev. Clemmie Turnipseed:

Being a registered voter in the 7th Precinct of Meridian, I arrived at City Hall with Miss Margie Ann Hubbard, also a registered voter in the 7th Precinct, for the lawfully-designated Democratic Precinct meeting. There was no one at the polling place, which is the hall on the first floor. There was no one there. A policeman whom we asked told us the meeting would be held in either the Courtroom or the City Auditorium on the third floor. I looked a second time into the Courtroom after the policeman told us this. Then we went up to the third floor--Miss Hubbard and I--and took seats. We waited a while. At about 10 a.m. I was designated permanent chairman by the meeting, which consisted of the two of us. There was no one else present at this time and no one had stopped in. But since the law requires that the meeting be held at this time and place, we held the meeting ourselves. We passed the attached resolution pledging loyalty to the nominees and platform of the national Democratic Party. Then we elected ourselves, Miss Hubbard and myself, precinct delegates to the county convention of the Democratic Party for Lauderdale County. We will attend the official county convention if permitted in the meeting place. To the best of my knowledge this is the first time Negroes have ever attended a precinct meeting of the Democratic Party in the City of Meridian. I believe the officials of the Democratic Party in Lauderdale County never intended to hold a duly constituted precinct meeting. One white man entered just after we finished the meeting. He looked around, then left immediately.

Clemmie Turnipseed

From Mrs. Jeannette Conley:

I am a registered voter, residing in Precinct 9. In Precinct 9, precinct meetings are held at Oakland Heights School. I arrived at Oakland Heights School at 9:35 a.m., with the intention of attending the precinct meeting scheduled to be held there. I waited in my car. During that time several people arrived and went into the building. At 10:00 a.m. several men had gathered at the edge of the sidewalk about fifth feet from my car. They talked among themselves and often glanced in my direction. When this group started into the school I followed them at a distance of approximately forty or fifty feet. When I got inside the door, the group of men had disappeared and I couldn't find them. I didn't see anyone but one white lady. I asked, "Where's the precinct meeting being held?" She said she was the principal of the school and she didn't know anything about the meeting. She said the people who usually came to precinct meetings weren't there today. I asked "Where do they usually hold the meeting?" She said in the auditorium. She opened the door to a large room, which was empty. There were four fold-up wooden chairs stacked on the stage. She said four or five times that she didn't know anything about the meeting, that she had not heard anything about it and was not involved. I saw someone peep around a corner at me. Since I was the Only Negro there, I felt that it was best that I leave. I thanked the lady and left without having attended the meeting or having been able to find where the people were.

Jeannette Conley

Meridian, continued

From Ernest S. Johnson:

At about 9:35 p.m. the undersigned did appear at Witherspoon School at Meridian, Miss., Precinct 6. The visit was made for the purpose of attending a meeting of the 6th precinct of the Democratic Party of Meridian. Although the law requires that precinct meetings be held in polling places throughout the state and such was published in the paper, when the scheduled time of 10 a.m. arrived, there was no one but myself and one white man who did not respond to my efforts at communication. At 10:15, after waiting 15 minutes after the appointed hour for the meeting to start, I left the spot outside the polling place where we had been waiting, as the doors to the polling place were locked (it was a classroom). I checked the firehouse, thinking it might be there. Then I returned to the cafeteria and the janitor told me that the white man left word for me that they had held a meeting before we arrived. By "they" I thought he meant members of the precinct, but I don't believe any meeting was held there before we arrived, and anyway I was there at the appointed time and no one else was. I believe the white man was there as a decoy. In the cafeteria I, as a registered voter in the precinct, held a meeting. I elected myself permanent chairman, then I presented the resolution pledging loyalty to the national Democratic Party nominees and platform (the janitor was witness), then I elected myself delegate from the 6th precinct to the Lauderdale County Democratic convention.

Ernest S. Johnson

Philadelphia, Mississippi

There was an attempt made to get Negroes to attend a precinct meeting in Neshoba County, Mississippi. Some said they would. However, they didn't. Why they did not is explained in a notarized affidavit signed by three of the twelve registered Negro voters in the county.

Ernest Kirkland:

I am a resident of Precinct 4 in Neshoba County, Mississippi. I have attended COFO workshops in voter registration and precinct challenge. Three of us were going to make the precinct challenge. After the precinct challenge workshop, held that night (June 15, 1964), a group of us discussed our plans for attending the precinct meeting today, June 16, 1964. At that meeting my uncle stated that to his knowledge news had leaked out that members of the Negro community were planning to attend the precinct meeting in Neshoba for the first time. He stated his opinion that reprisals from the white community would be so severe that it was best not to go. He said that to his knowledge members of the white community were preparing to forestall any attempts by Negroes to attend Precinct Meetings, and that it was his opinion that conditions in Neshoba County were such that it was impossible for Negroes to make the attempt to attend precinct meetings without suffering great economic and physical harm in attending. For the above reasons, I decided that I could not take the risk of attending.

Ernest Kirkland

Canton, Mississippi

activities in Canton surprised no one. Canton has been the focal point in the last few months of much racial unrest, as Negroes are beginning to demand their rights and better treatment.

The Canton story can also be told through two notarized affidavits.

By Mrs. Marion Robinson:

Mr. Henry Turner and I went to the Old Veterans Home to attend the precinct meeting and when we arrived there, we walked up to the door and tried to enter, but the door was locked. We then returned to the sidewalk and stood there waiting to see if there was going to be a precinct meeting held in the Old Veterans Home. We then left and stood on the corner from the Old Veterans Home. I personally went across the street and asked Dan Thompson (Chief of Police), did he know where the precinct meeting was being held. He answered, "No". I then walked back to the Old Veterans Home. Gus Noble and John Chance were going to the Old Veterans Home, and I asked Gus Noble if there was going to be a precinct meeting held, and he said "Yes". I asked him the time; he told me about 10:00. I then walked up to the door and talked with Mr. John Chance. I asked him when was the meeting going to be and he said it was over. At that time I went to the Courthouse because someone said the meeting was going to be held at the Courthouse. When we got inside we looked in every room in the Courthouse to see where the meeting was going to be held. I then talked with Mr. Foote Campbell and showed him some newspaper clippings. He said he had also seen the clippings, but didn't know anything about it. We were then told to wait outside. We went back to the Old Veterans Home and held our own precinct meeting.

Mrs. Marion Robinson

By David Welsh:

I was in Canton as a reporter for the Civil Rights Information Service, Chicago; Jet Magazine, Chicago; and Washington Star, DC. I was in front of the old Veterans Home on Union Street, polling place for the West precinct, and designated place for the meeting of the Democratic party for that precinct, from 9:30 a.m. until after 11 a.m. on June 16. Precinct meetings throughout the state were scheduled for 10 a.m. on that date. The West precinct, predominantly Negro, is one of three precincts in Canton.

The building was locked at 9:30 a.m. and remained so until I left after 11 a.m., except for two times. The first time, a black Cadillac sedan pulled up carrying five men. Two of them in black suits, one of whom was identified by four bystanders as Earl Evans, Jr., of Canton, state senator from Madison County. The two men identified themselves as members of the governor's staff. They unlocked the door of the Veterans Home, went in, and came out not more than five minutes later, climbing back in the car and driving off. After they had left, two men, identified by four bystanders as Gus Noble, either president or immediate past president of the local Citizens' Council, and John Chance, a plainclothes policeman, entered the building, stayed not more than five minutes and left. Evans and his companion entered between 10 and 10:30; Noble and Chance entered at 10:30 a.m.

Canton, continued

At 9:50 a.m., eight Negroes who showed me their credentials as registered voters in that precinct, arrived at the meeting place to take part in the meeting. They were W.J. Ward, a retired interior decorator; J.T. Wilson, JR., unemployed; Charlie Purnell, a student at Jackson State College; Ira Garrett, a self-employed carpenter; W.M. McCloud, a minister; Mrs. Marion Robinson, housewife; Henry Turner, an employe in a casket factory; and James Sanders, a factory worker. They attempted to gain admittance to the meeting place, but it was locked. I heard Mrs. Robinson ask Gus Noble if this were the right place. Noble replied that it was. A few minutes later, she asked John Chance the same question, who told her the meeting was all over. Mrs. Robinson drew blank stares when she produced newspaper clippings saying that the precinct meetings were to be held at 10 a.m. Tuesday at the regular polling place for each precinct.

After Chance and Noble left, the eight Negroes held their own precinct meeting on the sidewalk, and elected the Rev. McCloud as delegate to the county convention of the Democratic Party, and elected Henry Turner as alternate. The vote in both cases was 8-0.

The temporary chairman of the North precinct of Canton, Nelson Cauthen, an attorney (white), said he thought the mayor of Canton, L. Stanley Matthews, was temporary chairman of the West precinct, where the above incidents took place. Mayor Matthews lives at 467 North Liberty St. Cauthen said the mayor was also the chairman of the Madison County Democratic Executive Committee. The mayor refused to talk with me.

David P. Welsh

JACKSON

The story in Jackson is pretty clear as seen in the affidavits.

Mrs. Naomi Terrell Hendrex and Miss Lois Chaffee reported on the meeting in Precinct 43:

We arrived at the Continental Trailways Garage on Highway 80, polling place for Precinct 43, shortly before 10:00. The meeting had not yet begun. We were greeted without any particular reaction from the white people already there. There were about 25 white people present. The man at the door (a Mr. Howell) inspected our receipts. He told Mrs. Carrie Benson, who came in our car, that she could not come in because she is registered in Precinct 47. There was another Negro man who was refused, but we did not hear them explain the reason. The rest of us were admitted if our receipts were proper. When the meeting began there were 29 people in the room, five of them Negroes.

Mr. Ford introduced himself as the temporary chairman. Somebody moved that we elect a permanent chairman, and he was elected without opposition. Then Mr. Ford suggested a secretary, and someone nominated a Mr. Carpenter, who was elected without opposition. Mr. Ford explained that, to save time, he had asked three people (the precinct has three votes) if they could serve

Jackson, continued

as delegates. He said that the precinct had a shortage of delegates, and that it would be better to send three delegates with whole votes and three alternates than to split the votes into half-votes. The meeting voted to send three delegates with whole votes and three alternates. Then Mr. Ford read off the names of three people whom he recommended and who had agreed to serve. Rev. Smith, one of the Negroes present, asked about other nominations. From this point on the meeting was noisy and the chairman was usually talking to somebody privately; therefore it was hard to get his attention. Mr. Ford said that other nominations weren't necessary, and suggested that the matter of further nominations be put to a vote. Several people at the meeting (white), however, said that anybody could be nominated from the floor, so the chairman didn't bring it to a vote. Rev. Smith nominated Mrs. Mary Thomas, 1429 Jones St., Jackson. Mr. Ford began tearing up pieces of paper for ballots and appeared not hear much of what was addressed to him consequently. He announced that the people should vote by writing the names of the three people they wanted as delegates. We tried to protest, saying that the people should vote for one, and the three with the most votes would be the delegates, but he did not listen, insisting that "this is the way we're going to do it" and never allowed the body to vote on how they wanted to vote. He was arbitrary in this respect. Furthermore, in the exchanges about nominees and how to vote, he was decidedly patronizing in his conversation with Negroes ("What's on your mind, R.L.?" was one thing he said to Rev. Smith.), in contrast to everyone's earlier cordiality. The three white nominees were elected: Mr. Howell, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Daniels.

Then the alternates were elected by the same procedure. Mr. Ford recommended three people: Mr. Carroll, Mr. Riffey and Mr. Matthews. Rev. Smith nominated Mrs. Naomi Terrell (person making this report), without opposition this time. The three recommended by the chairman were elected.

During the time the ballots for alternate delegate were being counted (by two white ladies, with Mr. Carpenter, the secretary, looking on), Miss Lois Chaffee (also making the report) asked the chairman, after several attempts to get his attention, if it would be in order to introduce a resolution. Mr. Ford said no, that the only business he would permit at the meeting was the election of delegates. However, after the alternates were announced, Rev. Smith, simply by talking louder than everybody else (the meeting was at all times noisy), asked about the resolution and several of the white people at the meeting insisted that he be allowed to read it. He did, and as soon as he was finished, someone moved to adjourn. We all objected, and some white people did, too, although Mr. Ford declared the motion to adjourn in order and asked for a second. When the people objected, however, he allowed the resolution (dealing with the support of pledged Democratic electors) to be moved and seconded. Then Mr. Howell, one of the delegates just elected, moved that the resolution be tabled, and Mr. Ford did not allow any appeal from this. We started to leave, and he called us back and said he had decided to have a vote on the motion to table. It

Jackson, continued

passed, 24-6 (I suppose; they all voted for it and we all voted against it); then he insisted on calling a vote on the motion to adjourn, which also passed. Rev. Smith was irate about the resolution not being brought to a vote, and Mrs. Thomas was irate about the general brushing aside the Negro participants. We all went home in three groups. The secretary never recorded the resolution.

Lois Chaffee
Mrs. Naomi Terrell Hendrex

An unsigned report from Mr. J.D. Harrington:

We went to a precinct meeting in a plumbing shop on Delta Drive-- the polling place for Precinct 24. There were about 10 Negroes in our group. We arrived ten minutes early, and found four white ladies. At ten the lady in charge said, "Come on, girls, let's get started", and went into another room. We Negroes followed, though not invited. The ladies seemed to be following a memorandum from the County Democratic Executive Committee rather closely, but they did not seem to be very familiar with the procedure they were supposed to follow. The Negro participants insisted on an election of a permanent chairman, and the Negro candidate, Mr. J.D. Harrington was elected 10-4. Mrs. J.C. Black, the temporary chairman, then surrendered the meeting to Mr. Harrington. At the beginning of the meeting, and throughout, however, the ladies asked for recesses so that they could make telephone calls. We decided that this was not proper after the meeting had begun.

Mr. Harrington (myself) conducted the election of delegates: the precinct has 299 voters who voted in the last federal election, one short of the quota which would allow for two delegates. So the precinct was allowed only one voting delegate, but we decided to split the vote and we elected two delegates, each with a half-vote and two alternates. The Negro majority and the white minority elected one Negro and one white delegate.

The delegates elected are: Mrs. J.C. Black and Mr. J.D. Harrington.

The alternates were similarly elected. Those elected were Mrs. James W.H. Sutton and Mr. Percy Chapman.

The Chairman, Mr. Harrington, and the Secretary, Miss Ineve May, filled out the affidavit form prescribed by the CDED, informing the County Democratic Executive Committee of the selection of delegates and they mailed it to the Chairman of the CDEC.

There was no action taken on the loyalty resolution because everybody forgot.

Jackson, continued

From Mrs. Hazel T. Palmer

Mrs. Navy Tyler, Mrs. Ninnie Benson and I, Mrs. Palmer, arrived at the precinct meeting for precinct 23 approximately at 9:55 a.m. The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Smith was elected permanent chairman and Mrs. B.R. Norman was elected permanent secretary. Precinct 23 has only one vote which is split in half. Therefore 2 delegates were to be elected having a half vote each, with two alternates. Mrs. Benson nominated Mrs. Palmer as a delegate to the county convention. The other nominees were Mr. L.L. Polly, Mr. Smith and Mr. Sullivan. We had secret ballots. The results were Mr. Polly-26, Mrs. Palmer-4, Mr. Smith- 25, Mr. Sullivan-11. Mr. Polly and Mr. Smith were elected the delegates to the county convention. People were then nominated as alternates. Mrs. Ninnie Benson, Mr. McCorry, Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Hill were nominated. The results were Mrs. Benson-3, Mr. McCorry-24, Mr. Sullivan-15 and Mr. Hill-22. Mr. McCorry and Mr. Hill were elected as alternates to the county convention.

/Mrs. Palmer read a resolution calling for party loyalty from precinct /23 to the National Democratic Convention. She made a motion that /this resolution be adopted. Mrs. Tyler seconded the motion. The /house was opened for discussion. One white man made the statement /thet precinct 23 could not afford to accept this resolution because /it would mean that the precinct would have to support the Democratic /Party no matter how it goes. With the situation as it is now, he /stated, the precinct should vote no on this resolution. Another /man said "amen". Mrs. Palmer asked the chairman to call for a vote. /The vote was called for. The results were 3 for the resolution and /28 against.

Someone moved that the precinct meeting be adjourned and the chairman adjourned the meeting.

Hazel T. Palmer

Negroes also went to meetings in precincts 22, 4, and 41.

Vicksburg

In Jonestown precinct three Negroes, Mr. and Mrs. Pink Taylor and Mr. Frank Crumm were allowed to participate but were not allowed to bring nominations from the floor.

Columbus

Negroes attended two precinct meetings, but were prevented from nominating delegates or proposing the resolution.

Hattiesburg

From Mrs. Peggy Jean Connor:

I, Mrs. Peggy Jean Gould Connor, do swear and depose and say that on June 16, 1964, I went to the Library for the precinct convention with seven other Negro registered voters. When we arrived at ten o'clock, there were three whites there.

At about five minutes after ten, the acting chairman of the convention