

Some Glory In Their Spunk

White Citizens See "New" Negro Coming Into Being

SNOW HILL, NC — "Never thought I'd live to see the day when the colored folk would do anything like that."

Making this statement was a middle-aged white man, a life-long resident of Snow Hill and a man who made no secret of the fact that he admired the "New Negro" that was rising in his midst.

HE ASKED THAT his identity be kept secret but said that "the whole world" should know that colored citizens—at least those in Snow Hill—had at long last realized that they were being deprived of something.

He described the 32 boys and 2 girls who had driven there buses, empty, to Greene County Training school at Snow Hill Tuesday morning as "new" Negroes.

THE drivers, urged on by the student body at the school, had refused to make their regular pick ups enroute to the school Tuesday. A plan, made by the student body kept secret from teachers, parents and other adults in the community,

set Tuesday as "P" (Protest) day.

By note and by word-of-mouth, the students had unanimously agreed to bring their protest against conditions at the school into the open.

THE FIRST time that teachers, headed by Greene county TS principal, H. Y. Smith, knew that something was amiss was when the drivers steered their empty vehicles into the school yard and left them there.

Despite reports that the drivers had deported themselves as "hoodlums" there was no commotion, no violence, no anything except the sound of brakes, the closing of doors, and the sounds of teen-aged youths leaving the school premises.

AMONG THE "new Negroes" in Greene County is Jasper Williams, a bus driver. At the first meeting called by school officials in an attempt to iron out the difficulties in the matter, Williams said: "We have but one school life to live and we want some of the things other children have...." George Grant, also a driver and student said: "We regret to have to take the steps our parents should have taken. ...Somebody needs to tell of our needs....we want all of these problems corrected very soon, please."

A statement from the entire student body of the Greene County training school says:

"WE AS STUDENTS of Green County training school may be looked upon as doing wrong, but we feel that we have been treated wrongly. Our last activity has been taken from us. We had been waiting and looking eagerly for some place to play basketball and have other extra-curricular activities. We thought that we would get a gymnasium, cafeteria, library more rooms and more to work with. But what did we get? They only cut out basketball. We cannot have any kind of indoor activities...."

Mrs. Dora Mae Farmer, president of the county-wide Parent-Teacher association is also typical of the "new Negro" in this Black Belt county where 54 per cent of the population is colored.

MRS. FARMER was graduated from Green County Training school in 1932 and shortly afterward married Aaron Farmer of nearby Statonsburg. Through the years, the Farmers have been able to build their farm out on Route 1, Stantonsburg, into a paying one. This year Mr. Farmer has already planted 4 and a half acres of his 103 in tobacco. Eighteen acres of corn have been planted and 5.2 acres of cotton.

In her school career, Mrs. Farmer went to the Invitation elementary school which was a typical backwoods one back in the late 1920's and early 1930's with a pot-bellied stove, ivy-covered courthouse and other trappings.

SOME OF THE books she used as a student at Greene county training school are still in use there. She says: "It took me 11 years to get what is equivalent to a sixth-grade education. The children today are getting the same thing, only it takes them 12 years."

Back in 1954, Mrs. Farmer was with a committee of colored citizens who met with school officials on the Green County situation. The result of that meeting was that the 18 elementary schools of the county were consolidated into three.

Ironically, the Green County school board in 1950 launched a long-range building program. They say lack of funds, however, has kept this program at a stand-still. Yet the county is making plans to build a new \$450,000 school for white students. There are already four white high schools in the county, all of them modern. Greene County TS is the only secondary school in the county for colored students. — Holloway.