

JUNEMEET,  
JUNE 17, 1964 PRECINCT MEETINGS: MISSISSIPPI

BATESVILLE:

West Precinct: 12 Negroes attended, 3 whites. The meeting was stalled for 20 minutes while the whites got 12 more people so they would have a majority. The Negroes were allowed to vote, but not to nominate the chairman or delegates.

East Batesville: 1 Negro attended and allowed to vote.

Courtland Precinct: 8 Negroes arrived before 10am where the voting is usually held and could find no meeting.

CANTON

8 Negroes went to the Old Veterans Home where meetings are normally held. They arrived before 10am but found the doors locked. While waiting in front of the building the chairman of the Citizens Council, Gus Noble, and City Detective, John Shirk Chance arrived and went inside. Two people from the governor's staff, Herman Jones and Bob Yandell arrived in a staff car and were admitted to the building. Shortly after, at about 10:30am, Mrs. Robinson, one of the Negro delegates, knocked on the door. Chance came out and said that the meeting was over. The Negroes held their own meeting on the sidewalk, electing chairman and delegates. Afterwards they went to the courthouse to look for another precinct meeting, and were ordered out by Sheriff Jack Caughen. Outside of the courthouse one of the law students with the group handed an affidavit to Mr. Ward, one of the Negro delegates. The student, Ben Pearlman, Columbia Law School, was arrested by Mr. Chance of officer Cooks for distributing leaflets. Pearlman was held in jail for about an hour and released with no charges. While he was in jail he was threatened about the danger of staying in town.  
Later in the evening when Mrs. Robinson returned from Jackson to Canton, a white man came to her house claiming to be an assistant to the registrar, saying he had a paper which he would not let her see, and asking her personal questions (e.g. if she had any family in town, the length of time she had been registered, etc.). Mrs. Robinson was one of those elected delegate to the county convention by the representatives of the Freedom Dem. Party.

CLARK COUNTY:

Several Negroes went to the polling place, but found no one there.

CLARKSDALE:

15 Negroes, including Aaron Henry went to the precinct meeting and were allowed to vote, but were defeated 49-15.

COLUMBUS:

Northside: Three Negroes attended. Votes were held by nomination and second. There were about 6 police and 25-30 young whites at the meeting and the Negroes felt too intimidated to present the loyalty resolution (for text of resolution see final page).

Southside: One Negro got there at 10:15am and was told that the books were closed.

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GREENVILLE (report from George Oros, law student, Orora, Illinois)

Precinct 3: Mr. Williams was the only Negro attending the meeting with four whites. He nominated someone who was not elected and introduced the loyalty resolution which PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Precinct 5: 1 Negro attended the meeting, 10 whites. The Negro delegate nominated Rev. Royal for alternate, but was defeated 10-1. He also introduced the loyalty resolution, but it was defeated.

Precinct 6: 1 Negro got to the meeting place at 9:50am and looked for the meeting. At 10:05am he was told by Mr. Ward, who was in charge of the community center where the meeting was to be held, that he was late.

Precinct 9: 2 Negroes and 13 whites attended. The Negroes nominated 1 delegate who was defeated, but did not introduce the loyalty resolution.

GREENWOOD:

12 Negroes, four of whom were registered voters, went to the regular polling place but could not find the meeting. A few of the 12 went in and were told by a policeman that there was no precinct meeting. A second group went in after they had come back out and were told by the same policeman that the meeting was over and they were too late. At the time, however, they could see whites passing in and out of a room on the side where a meeting was apparently being held. The Greenwood Commonwealth had an article stating that about 12 Negroes arrived after the delegates had been elected and the meeting adjourned. In fact, they arrived at the city hall before 10am. They held their own meeting in front of the building, electing their own representatives when they were unable to 'find' the other meeting.

HATTIESBURG:

Five precinct meetings were attended: Library, Walthall, Eton, Central and Dixie Pines

Library: 7 Negroes and 3 whites attended the meeting, but 6 of the Negroes were not allowed to participate because they had not paid their poll tax. All seven of the Negroes were questioned about whether they were registered, but the whites were not. The voting was not by secret ballot in the meeting.

At the other four meetings, police were at two, and at two they were not allowed to vote on the loyalty resolution.

HOLLY SPRINGS:

Four Negroes went to look for the precinct meeting, but could not find it.

JACKSON:

Precinct 5: 3 Negroes attended at the fire house. There were two whites inside the fire house and firemen sitting outside. Otis Woodard, Jr., one of the Negroes, went up and asked the firemen about the meeting. The whites acted as though they knew nothing about a precinct meetings so the three held their own meeting, electing delegates. One Negro stayed behind after they had concluded and reported that a group of whites came to the fire house and met with the two already there.

Precinct 23: 3 Negroes attended the meeting with 30 whites and were allowed to vote.

Precinct 24: 10 Negroes attended the meeting with 4 white women. The women had a list of instructions from the party as to procedure and were amazed when the group of Negroes showed up. The latter elected their own chairman, Mr. J.B. Harrington, and Secretary, Miss Ineva May. Because there are 299 registered voters who voted in the last election in the precinct they were one short of having two delegates to the county convention. A Negro man, Mr. J.B. Harrington, and a white woman, Mrs. J.C. Black, were elected by the group of Negroes as delegates to the Hinds county convention. Each will have  $\frac{1}{2}$  vote. They did not bring up the loyalty resolution. Felt it would be impolite.

Precinct 44: 1 Negro black, Charles Hopkins, went to the bakery where the precinct meeting was to be held. There were about 20 whites there. Hopkins asked where the meeting was and was told that they didn't know anything about it. He hung around, however and when one man and one woman conferred they group had a quick meeting, allowing him to vote. He did not bring up the resolution, however.

Precinct 43: 5 Negroes and 1 white COFO worker, Lois Chaffe, attended the meeting and were allowed to vote. They brought up the loyalty resolution and the group voted to table it for four years.

MERIDIAN:

Precinct 7: 2 Negroes looked for the meeting but it was not at the regular polling place (the city hall). The two, Rev. Glen E. Turnipseed and Margie Naylor, held their own meeting outside the hall and went to the office of the secretary of the Democratic Party, J. Pat Wiley, to file the minutes of the meeting. His partner told them that there were already certified returns from that precinct and therefore he would not accept their minutes.

Precinct 6: 1 Negro went to the polling place at 9:35am. He left for a few minutes and at about 10:15 and went over to the firehouse. He did not find anyone there, and when he returned to the original place, a school building, he was told by the janitor that the meeting was over.

Precinct 8: 2 Negroes, Robert Linier and Leona Higgs went to the school house where a white woman called to them through locked doors that "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." Until 10:15am other whites congregated outside the school. A non-uniformed man in the sheriff's car drove up and called for a Bill Smith. They

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conversed, and shortly after, another man drove up and announced he was the precinct vice chairman and stated that the meeting would be held inside. He motioned the group to come over under a tree on the lawn. The two Negroes started to follow and when they got there they heard him say that he had appointed a secretary and a slate of delegates and say, "That's all folks, see you in four years."

Precinct 9: Mrs. Jeanette Conly followed a group of whites into a school and they disappeared. She asked the female principal where the meeting was and told that she didn't know anything about it. She asked where it was normally held and told in the auditorium. Mrs. Conly looked in the auditorium and found someone peaking at her around the corner. No one was in the auditorium when she opened the door so she left.

NESHOBIA COUNTY:

Three Negroes met the night before the meetings and felt that the word had leaked out that they were planning on attending and that the reprisals would be so great that they should not go. They therefore did not attempt to attend any precinct meetings. (note: the Mount Zion Methodist Church in Neshoba County was burned on Tuesday evening, and three people there beaten and hospitalized). *The same night as the pet news*

BULSVILLE:

8 Negroes went to the polling place and found it locked. They went ahead and held their own meeting, electing delegates and passing the loyalty resolution. Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer was among the eight.

THORNTON:

Precinct B-4: A group of Negroes went to the polling place and found it locked/

Precinct B-5: (two different reports from this precinct)

- a) a local banker got up and said that he would not stay where there were Negroes. They were asked to leave, and did.
- b)The Negroes were unable to give adequate proof that they were registered voters.

VICKSBURG:

Jonestown precinct: Negroes attended and were allowed to participate. There was a nominating committee, but no nominations were allowed from the floor and no Negroes were nominated.

Another precinct: Negroes were allowed full participation, but they were outnumbered in all votes.

In Vicksburg Neil Hindman, 21, Laverne, Iowa, who was accompanying the Negro delegates to the precinct meetings, was arrested for drunk driving. He had been to the police station and to see the mayor of Vicksburg and was followed to the restaurant where he was eating and was arrested. He was acquitted at 1:10pm by the city judge.

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WARREN COUNTY:

2 Negroes and 3 whites attended the meeting.

LOYALTY RESOLUTION:

Whereas we as democrats believe that strong political parties are in a necessary part of American democracy; and

Whereas we herein believe that herein the national Democratic Party represents the best interests of the majority of the people of Mississippi,

We therefore resolve that the delegates from this precinct are instructed to go on record, if they are ultimately selected as delegates at 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 a resolution stating that the county Democratic Party will support the national Democratic Party's nominees and their pledged electors.