

~~SOUTHEASTERN~~ GEORGIA CRUSADE FOR VOTERS ANNUAL REPORT
FOR
1963 AND 1964

The Southeastern Georgia Crusade for Voters is comprised of the First U.S. Congressional District (15 counties) of Georgia. This organization was organized in April, 1960 and became an affiliate of SCLC in September, 1961. The objective is to coordinate the political abilities of the eighteen counties by organizing a Crusade for Voters in each county for the following purpose:

1. To get every eligible citizen registered.
2. To get all registered voters to vote in every election.
3. To interview all candidates.
4. To keep daily records on all public issues, public officials and make records available to the general public.
5. To operate adult Citizenship Schools for those who want to become First Class Citizens.
6. To foster direct-action programs against segregation.
7. To coordinate the Political abilities of all individuals and organizations.

The types of programs fostered by the respective Crusade for Voters are naturally determined by the needs and resources of the individual counties. In the past year the Southeastern Georgia Crusade for Voters has conducted the following:

voter education programs in seven counties: including the surveying of more than 30,000 Negroes and the registration of 5,000.

Thirty Adult Citizenship Schools in seven counties
organized Crusade for Voters Organizations in nine counties

Developed political awareness programs in five counties

Supported four Negroes for public office in two counties

Negotiated the appointment of more than 20 Negroes to governmental Boards, Commissions and Committees in Two counties

Negotiated the up-grading of many Negroes in governmental positions in our county

Negotiated the hiring of Negroes in positions previously held by white-only in the county

Conducted Get-Out-The-Vote Campaigns in all elections

Conducted a Direct-Action Program in one county

The Chatham County Crusade for Voters has been the most effective county organization in our District. Through its political action program the following facilities have been integrated in the city of Savannah and the county of Chatham, Ga:

1. Municipal Golf Course
2. Municipal Air Port
3. Public Library
4. Savannah's Police Department
5. City & County Water Fountains
6. City & County Rest Rooms
7. Seating in City Police Court Integrated
8. Seating in County Police Court
9. City Auditorium
10. City Civil Service Examinations
11. City Voter Registration Lists
12. County Voter Registration Lists
13. City Voting Polls
14. County Voting Polls

15. County Tax Return Lines
16. Seven City Boards, Commissions & Committees
17. Integration of the Fire Department in Savannah

The Chatham County Crusade for Voters' Political Action program was responsible for the upgrading of Negroes in the following positions:

1. One Detective to sergeant
2. Two patrolmen to corporals
3. One laborer to water meter reader
4. One laborer to waterpump operator
5. Two laborers to foremen

The Crusade for Voters' was not only responsible for Negroes being appointed to the following Governmental Boards, Commissions & Committees but named the appointees:

1. Savannah Public Library Board
2. Bacon Park Commission
3. Civil Defense Commission
4. Savannah Auditorium Committee
5. Savannah Recreation Commission
6. Advisory Committee to the Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

The Crusade for Voters' was also responsible for the hiring of Negroes in the following positions:

1. Additional Negro Policemen (The number of Negro policemen increased from 17 to 30)
2. Negro firemen
3. Negro bus drivers

The Crusade for Voters' conducted its first Direct-Action Program against segregation this summer. This program was under the direct leadership of Hosea L. Williams, president of the Crusade for Voters, who was assisted by Benjamin Van Clark Director of the Crusaders' Youth Program. Activities for the Direct Action Program consisted of daily morning training workshops, noon downtown marches and speeches, nightly mass meetings, nightly mass marches (after nightly meetings), daily sit-in demonstrations and daily picketing to certain segregated establishments.

These protest demonstrations were carried out mainly

against segregated hotels, motels, restaurants, theaters, employment. More than 800 arrests were made undercharges of trespassing, unlawful assembly, disobeying an officer, inciting riots and interfering with an officer in the performance of his duty. Twenty-six demonstrators were arrested under peace warrants: included were President Hosea L. Williams and youth leader Benjamin Van Clark. Williams was lodged in jail for a \$30,000 bond. He was released after 34 days under a \$15,000 bond. Youth leader Clark remains in jail up to this time under a \$15,000 bond. Hosea L. Williams was later returning to jail to pull a 5 day sentence after being charged with contempt of court for giving his personal opinion publicly of a municipal court verdict dealing with the 26 peace warrants. Nineteen of the demonstrators were arrested under the warrants were released from jail after 55 days, after they were given 2 choices of signing statements repudiating demonstrations of return to jail. Out of the eight hundred arrested, 500 have been tried and 300 convicted to pay a fine of \$4,100.00 or serve 6½ years in jail and 12 years (12 years probated).

During the period of demonstrations many Negroes were beaten by police. At least 4 Negroes were shot by whites. Demonstrators were frequently gased by the police department and Georgia state troopers. Demonstrators were housed in disbanded jails without beds or toilet facilities. In some cases juveniles were held in custody for more than 25 days. Many Negroes lost their jobs, cars and in some few cases, their homes.

Although there are many demonstrators yet to come to trail and it is feared they will not be able to be bonded out because the Solicitor will only accept property bonds. Integration of the hotels, motels, theaters and bowling alleys will take place before this SCLC 7th Annual Convention is closed.