

REPORT AND OBSERVATION OF THE PERRY ASCS ELECTION

On September 20, 1966 I had one of my greatest experiences of my life. It was very educational and I feel more of us so-called leaders should strive for this type of educational experience.

As I sat watching the farmers ballots being read many things went through my mind. I found that as near as I could determine, 100% of all the white farmers voted only for white candidates and about 25% to 50% of the Negro farmers voted for at least one white candidate. There must be an educational program somewhere to really inform the Negro of this situation. I am not suggesting that Negroes be taught to be racists, but they can see that Negroes are elected. In every county there are communities where Negroes outnumber whites and whites outnumber Negroes, so Negroes must understand that where they have a majority of the votes, this is the time to integrate these committees.

I think emphasis must be put on the fact that until there is a majority of Negroes elected to those community committees there won't ever be a Negro elected to that all-important County committee. Based on the 100% racist vote by the white votes Negroes must be taught to vote only for each other in order to ever participate in the ASCS program from the governing level.

These Negro farmers were not together in the white candidate they wanted to support and as a result they elected all whites by splitting on the white and also Negro candidates. More emphasis should be placed on the first three spots in the communities because Negroes feel that the fourth and fifth spots on the community committee are as important as one, two and three.

There were a very high vote cast in my county: 1228 out of 1432, about 82% but 92 votes were disqualified out of 1228 to further complicate things. About 98% of these votes were unsigned ballots by Negroes.

The percentage of disqualifying went down in areas where there were extensive work done and up where there was less work and early voting. Uniontown community, for example: Total votes cast 312, number disqualified 32 (about 10%). This community was very highly Negro populated and very poorly worked. If the proper instruction had been given to the voters of this community, there could have easily been all Negroes elected in this community.

The vice chairman was a Negro (158 votes, chairman white (183 votes) and the second alternate a Negro (32 votes). The chairman drew about 75 or more Negro votes and the other two whites drew very well from the Negroes also.

This community also seems to have felt that they were to vote only for people that live in their neighborhood. This was illustrated by the large number of votes received by almost everyone who ran:
Negroes: 158, 132, 115, 99, 65, 59, 55, 38, 38
Whites: 183, 146, 141

These figures also call attention to another very important fact. The fact that there were never more than five white candidates and always from five to fifteen Negroes on the ballot. This made it very easy for the Negro to split and almost impossible for the whites to split.

In another community, Scotts, the disqualifying of ballots was very crucial. There were 199 total votes and twenty-three disqualified (about 12%). This was a Negro majority community where the voters voted before we were able to receive the extension of time from Washington. The number three man received only 98 votes, and quite a few of these were Negroes. Whereas our top vote-getter got 81 a difference of 17 votes. If those 23 ballots had not been disqualified, this man would have out-pollled the third place white candidate. This is assuming that 95% of the disqualifying ballots were Negro and that they would have voted for the Negro.

There were many white women voting in Perry County also; but Negro women were not informed that they could vote provided their names appeared on the farm deeds as did these white womens' names.

There are some that might feel that my estimating of the Negro perscentage of disqualifications was a bit high, but look back at the results of predominantly white communities (Oak Community, for instance). Total votes-105, number disqualified two (about 2%). Compare this to the predominantly Negro community of Uniontown whose total vote was 312 out of which 32 were disqualified (about 10%). Or the white community of Oldtown: Toal vote 145 and 7 disqualified constituting about 5% compared to mostly Negro Scotts where a total vote was 199 and 23 were disqualified (about 12%).

There were also strong evidence that the Negro community repudiated the Negroes that were nominated by the county committee. Evidenc of this can be seen in this example:

County Committee Nominees:

Boyd 2
Brand 0
Carlise 0
Foweks 0
Bailey 4
Harber 19
Wright 2

Negro petitioned nominees:

Scott 15
Stewart 15
Osburn 20
Carty 80
Kinard 99
Avery 81

I could continue, but I think the picture is clear. The Negro that the County Committee appointed was not representative of the Negro community.

I conclude that in order for Negroes to be elected in Perry County, and maybe in many others, the following things must be done:

1. More Negroes must be qualified to vote. There were Negroes who were qialified but didn't know that they could declare themselves so because they were not actually farming.
2. Teach Negroes to vote for only Negro Candidates in those areas where they have a clear majority because whites will vote for themselves.
3. As soon as the Negro receives his ballot, begin to have him fill it out (about two or three days after roccives it, they should all be filled out). This cuts down loss. I feel that a team should go from door to door to see that the ballots are filled out and properly signed, dated and returned. This is to be done only where there is a great chance of winning (Uniontown, Marion and Scotts. Pinetuckey is also a possibility.)
4. Demand that we not have Negroes nominated who do not represent the Negroes and that there not be as many Negro names on the ballot.

If this procedure is followed we could win in at least three out of six communities, and possibly a fourth one.

Submitted by,

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