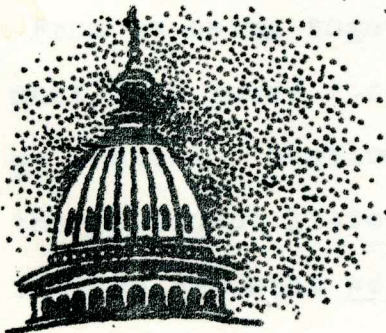


# SUNFLOWER

# County

# Political

# Handbook



Produced by:

Freedom Information Service

P.O. Box 120

Tougaloo, Mississippi 39174

## WHAT POLITICS IS ALL ABOUT

Politics is about our lives.

It is about whether the roads are any good.

It is about what our kids learn in school.

It is about what the sheriff does.

It is about whether we have work to do.

Politics is about who has power.

The President listens to people who have power.

So does the Sheriff.

Power is votes to elect people, or not elect them.

Power is money to pay for election ads.

The people with power get what they want.

Now just a few people have power.

They get control of government money.

They get government contracts for their factories.

They get the tax assessor to list their land at a low value.

We do not have money.

Our power must come from ourselves. From our numbers.

From us being together.

We must have power for us.

So we control Sunflower County.

So the President listens to us.

So that we get what we need.

This is a book about how things work. It is a book about

how power is used to keep us down.

And how we can use power to lift ourselves up.



### SUNFLOWER COUNTY

There are 45,750 people in Sunflower County. 30,885 of them are Negroes, 14,730 are whites. Two out of three people in the county are black.

By beats, the population breaks down like this:

<u>Beat</u>	<u>Whites</u>	<u>Negroes</u>	
1	1050	3404	(Inverness)
2	1592	4650	(Moorhead)
3	4289	7152	(Indianola)
4	1887	5794	(Sunflower, Doddsville)
5	5881	9855	(Rome, Drew, Ruleville)

The most important factories in Sunflower County are:

#### Indianola

Ludlow Textile Products: 400 employees. Cyrus E. Kirk,  
Plant Manager. (Home office - Massachusetts).

Modern Line Products: 325 employees. Norman Henke, manager.  
(makes lawnmowers). (Home office - Ohio).

#### Ruleville

Charm Originals, Inc.: 75 employees. Stuffed toys.  
(Home office - Missouri).

Ruleville Manufacturing Co.: 80 employees. Jackets.  
(Home office - New York).

#### Drew

Drusteel Corporation: 100 employees. W. N. Wilkerson,  
President. D. M. Gallop, manager. (Home office -Memphis,  
Tennessee). Steel doors.

I. Taitell & Sons: 150 employees. I. Taitel, President.  
Curtis Sumner, manager. Garments. (Home office -Indiana).

But cotton is still important in Sunflower County. Over 10% of all the cotton in the state is grown in Sunflower County. Almost all the land is owned by whites. Of 295,000 acres of crops harvested in 1959, only 5800 acres were owned by black farmers.

Most black people work on the land. Of 7412 Negroes with jobs in 1960, 4626 worked in farming and 1003 were maids. Only 205 had factory jobs. For this reason, most people were poor.

Half the black families in the county made less than \$1100 dollars a year. And half had less than 4.7 years of education.





### The County Government of Sunflower County

The county government is elected every four years. The next general election for county officers will be on November 7, 1967.

At this election, Sunflower County will elect a sheriff, five supervisors, the tax assessor, the circuit clerk, the chancery clerk, the superintendent of education, constables and justices of the peace, a state Senator, and two state representatives.

The Sheriff enforces the law and collects the taxes. W. I. (Bill) Hollowell, Jr. is Sheriff of Sunflower County. He is not allowed to succeed himself. Being Sheriff pays a lot of money, because the Sheriff gets a percentage of the taxes he collects.

The Board of Supervisors consists of five members, one from each beat. Each supervisor must own \$300 dollars worth of property. The supervisors set the property tax for the county. They decide how much money will be collected for roads, schools, and running the county government. The board of supervisors sets election precinct boundaries.

Each supervisor has charge of keeping up the county roads in his district.

The Tax Assessor lists a value for each piece of real estate in the county, except for railroad and power company properties, which the state assesses. The plantation owners want their land assessed very low so that they won't have to pay high taxes on it. Since they run the county, cultivatable farm land with improvements is listed at an average value of \$40.65! (In Jackson County the average value is listed at \$1150.00 and acre!).

If we would elect a tax assessor, he could list the land closer to its sale value. Then we could use the money to pay for good school, roads and bridges.

The Circuit Clerk keeps county records and also is appointed by the Governor to register voters. The Circuit Clerk, according to a new state law, is supposed to spend one day a month registering voters in each precinct.

The Superintendent of Education must be a licensed teacher with four years' experience. He sets policy for the county schools.

The Constable is elected by the voters of each beat. He is a law officer. He also serves legal papers for the Justice of the Peace. There are no special qualifications for being Constable. The Constable is paid \$4.00 for each case he handles.

The Justice of the Peace handles small lawsuits, and criminal cases where the penalty is only to the county farm, or a fine. He does not have to be a lawyer or have any special qualification. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd beats each elect one J. P.; the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> beats elect two J. P.'s each.

The names of the county officers who are serving now are:

Sheriff - W. I. (Bill) Hollowell, Jr.	Indianola
Chancery Clerk - Jack E. Harper, Jr.	Indianola
Circuit Clerk - Cecil C. Campbell	Indianola
Superintendent of Education - C. J. (Lum) Edwards	Indianola
Tax Assessor - Mrs. Betty Fraiser	Indianola
County Attorney - Edward L. Cook, Jr.	Indianola
Coroner - James C. Coleman	Indianola

#### Supervisors

Beat 1 - Noel K. Toler, Se.	Inverness
Beat 2 - W. L. (Bubber) Jackson, Jr.	Moorhead
Beat 3 - James W. Corder	Indianola
Beat 4 - Charles Hughes - RFD	Doddsville
Beat 5 - G. W. Manning, Jr. - RFD	Drew



Justices of the Peace

- Beat 1 - M. N. Lanwirth - Inverness
- Beat 2 - Charlie Robb - Indianola
- Beat 3 - D. C. (Dewey) Wiggins - Indianola
- Beat 4 - J. E. Hughes - RFD, Shaw  
J. B. Murphy - Doddsville
- Beat 5 - W. S. Carrothers - Ruleville  
D. O. Owen - Drew

Constables

- Beat 1 - Otis C. Evans - RFD, Isola
- Beat 2 - Albert Blackwell - Moorhead
- Beat 3 - S. B. Bradley - Indianola
- Beat 4 - C. T. Ellis - RFD, Indianola
- Beat 5 - T. A. Fleming - Ruleville

COUNTY ELECTIONS

There are two ways to get your name on the ballot on November 7, 1967. You can run in the Democratic or the Republican Party primary on August 8, or you can run as an independent.

If you run as an independent, you must give the county election commission a petition by June 9<sup>th</sup>. This petition must be signed by 10% of the registered voters in the election district you are running from. If you run for a county-wide office, like sheriff or assessor, you need only 500 signatures at the most. Each person must sign his name, address, county, and voting precinct, and the date he signs the petition. All petitions must be taken to the circuit clerk, who "certifies" the number of registered voters listed on each petition. This must be done before you turn the petition in to the election commission.

The Sunflower County election commissioners are:

- Mrs. Oscar B. Townsend - Ballot Commissioner
- Mrs. Earl Shurden
- Mrs. W. T. Heslep

## CITY AND TOWN GOVERNMENT

The City governments are elected every four years. The current governments were elected in June, 1965, so new officers will not be elected until 1969'.

Most town governments consist of a mayor and five aldermen. The town may elect a clerk and a town marshal, or the board of aldermen may choose them.

The board of aldermen meets with the mayor on the first Tuesday of each month. They are elected by all the voters of the town so that Negroes won't be able to elect an alderman unless they take all the city offices. In city elections, if there are five aldermen positions up, you must vote for five men or none of your votes count.

The board of aldermen make laws for the town, called ordinances. Ordinances cover building, plumbing, electrical codes for public safety; contracts made by the city; the tax rate of the city; and minor laws.

The mayor can vote to break a tie in meetings of the board of aldermen. He can veto measures the board passes. He also acts as judge in most small towns.

There are many small towns in Sunflower County. Here are the officers for each town.

### Doddsville

A. E. Staggs, Jr. - Mayor  
N. E. Pentecost - Alderman  
Maury McIntyre - Alderman  
Harry I. Clark - Alderman  
Charles Dodd - Alderman  
Murry McDaniel - Alderman

### Inverness

J. R. Bradley - Mayor  
J. L. Beckham - Alderman  
W. F. Fleet - Alderman  
Tabor A. McDowell - Alderman  
W. Hunter Pratt - Alderman  
W. A. Price - Alderman



Drew

W. O. Williford - Mayor  
Curtis E. Floyd - Marshal  
Janie Stancill - Clerk and Tax Collector  
R. W. Atkinson - Alderman  
D. Dorsey Hill - Alderman  
H. T. Miller, Jr. - Alderman  
Vernon Springer, Jr. - Alderman  
L. Westbrook, Jr. - Alderman

Indianola

(Private Charter)

T. M. Pitts - Mayor  
Burdell Adkins - Alderman  
James Andrews - Alderman  
Frank W. Baker - Alderman  
Ira T. Crosby - Alderman  
W. D. Hemphill - Alderman

Moorhead

W. I. Upchurch - Mayor  
Allen Murtagh - Councilman  
J. D. Sulser - Councilman  
Paul Q. Tenhet - Councilman  
Charles P. Foley, Jr. - Councilman

Ruleville

C. M. Dorrough - Mayor  
Mrs. R. L. Maxwell - Alderman  
A. E. Morgan - Alderman  
L. W. Pratt - Alderman  
J. M. Robertson - Alderman  
Charles E. Tuttle - Alderman

Sunflower

W. L. Patterson - Mayor  
W. E. Curry - Clerk  
J. B. Romine, Jr. - Alderman  
Robert W. Powell - Alderman  
J. H. Henry - Alderman  
A. B. McCarty - Alderman  
Joel T. Parker - Alderman

### THE SUNFLOWER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

There is an elected county school board. There are also two Municipal Separate School Districts in the county, at Drew and Indianola. Each of these has its own trustees.

The three boards may either buy supplies and equipment for their district themselves, or they may appoint school officials to do the job. They get federal, state, and local funds to pay for the cost of education.

Last year, only the member of the county board of education from Beat 5 was elected, on November 8, 1966. The board members serve for six years. The members of the Sunflower County Board of Education are:

Hunter Pratt - Inverness  
Harry Diamond - Moorhead  
Norman Pentecost - Doddsville  
L.A. Braswell - RFD, Shaw  
J.M. Robertson - Ruleville

In order to get Federal money, the school district must sign a compliance form saying it will let Negro children into the formerly all-white school. The county can get extra money under Title I of the Education Act of 1965 for each child whose family makes less than \$2,000 a year.

Mississippi spends less on the schooling of each child than any other state in the country.

Two members of the trustee board in Drew are elected, but not this year. The other three are appointed by the city council. The two elected men represent the area OUTSIDE Drew but INSIDE the Municipal School District.

Voters in the Indianola Separate School District will have to check with the superintendent to see when and how the trustees are chosen.



### THE POWER STRUCTURE

Sunflower County is controlled economically and politically by the planters and their lawyers and bankers. The Delta Council is the organization of the economic power of the Delta. The Democratic Party is largely the same people.

Oscar B. Townsend is Chairman of the County Democratic Party. He is also attorney for the board of supervisors and for the City of Indianola. In addition, he is attorney for the Indianola Bank. His wife is an election commissioner.

The governor gives honorary colonelships to his political backers. They are Governor's Colonels, and include powerful men in the county:

- William O. Shurden, Drew:  
planter, farmer, merchandising, banking. Owns 5,000 acre W. O. Shurden Farm. Vice President, Parks Gin Co., National Compress and Warehouse. Director Bank of Clarksdale, Merchants and Planters Bank (Drew), and Ruleville-Drew Grain Elevator Company.
- Ted Borodofsky, Ruleville:  
Treasurer of the Delta Council.
- H. Chester Eastland, Doddsville:  
Eastland Planting Co.
- Sidney Levingston, Ruleville:  
Also Director, Delta Council
- Nelson Trimble Levings, Jr., Moorhead:  
cotton planter, business executive and electronic manufacturer. Graduate of U. S. Military Academy, 1949.
- Frank T. Brumfield, Inverness:  
Farmer and cattleman; attended Mississippi State University. former President, Delta Council.
- Robert Francis Duncan, Sr., Inverness:  
Planter, cattleman.

There are others on whom we don't have much information.

The Delta Council Directors for Sunflower County are:

H. S. Carpenter - Moorhead  
J. C. Robertson - Holly Ridge  
H. L. Grittmann, Sr. - Drew  
John Hough - Indianola  
W. M. Garrard, Jr. - Indianola  
Sidney Livingston - Ruleville  
W. P. Scruggs - Doddsville  
Morris Lewis - Indianola  
W. W. Greshamer - Indianola  
Farmer H. Hamilton - Indianola

These men keep their land assessed at a low rate so they won't have to pay a fair share of taxes.





### The State Government

The State Government includes the Governor and other state officers, the State Legislature, and the State Courts.

The Governor is Paul B. Johnson, of Hattiesburg. Johnson's term runs out in 1967 and he cannot follow himself in office. Johnson was elected as a strong segregationist. But this hurt business coming into the state, so he began to call for law and order.

The governor sends his ideas to the legislature - like the voting laws of June, 1965, and legalizing liquor. He can call them into special session when needed.

He is commander of the Highway Patrol, which he sends to racial trouble spots. He can also call out the National Guard in emergencies.

The governor appoints many boards and commissions which do things like give out road contracts, choose school books, and try to get industries to move to the state.

The Agriculture and Industry (A & I) Board is the agency that tries to get companies to come to Mississippi. To encourage them to come, the legislature passed a law so that new factories wouldn't have to pay taxes for ten years. Also, towns can raise money to build factories (through BAWI bonds) and lease them to companies.

The other important state officers are the lieutenant governor and the attorney general.

The Lieutenant Governor acts as chairman of meetings of the State Senate. In December, 1966, Lt. Gov. Carroll Gartin died. His place was taken by Sen. George M. Yarbrough of Red Banks. Yarbrough has been second in command in the Senate. He is a member of the White Citizens Council. As Lieutenant Governor, Yarbrough is acting governor when Johnson is ill or out of the state and would become governor if Johnson died.

The Attorney General is the lawyer for the state. He fights suits in court for the state. He can tell state and local officials what a law means.

The State Legislature has 52 state senators and 122 state representatives. The legislature passes all laws for Mississippi. They decide how much money the state will spend, and for what. Mississippi spends less money on school and welfare than any other state.

The state legislature sets the rules for people getting welfare. They set the penalty for crimes. They say what the county and city officers can do. They have passed laws that make it hard for labor unions to organize in the state. The could set a state minimum wage for all workers and make a lot of changes for the better.

Sunflower County has 1 state senator and 2 state representatives.

The State Senator is Robert L. Crook, Ruleville, Twelfth District. The state representatives are John H. Hough of Indianola and Fred Jones of Inverness.

All state senators and representatives are elected in November of 1967.

Some senators and representatives come from areas of much smaller populations than others. The federal courts recently ordered the legislature to redistrict or "reapportion" itself so that each law-maker represented about the same number of citizens. The legislature turned in a plan in December. But the Freedom Democratic Party doesn't think the plan is fair, so it has asked the courts to redistrict the legislature. When this case is settled, some counties will have changes in the number of law-makers they elect.



### The Federal Government

The President, the Departments, Congress, and the Federal Courts make up the Federal Government.

Mississippi gets money for welfare, Medicare, poverty programs, education and agriculture from the federal government. Mississippi's Senators and Representatives have voted against these federal programs. Yet they try to control them when they come to the state.

### The President

The President decides what the country should do at home and abroad. He sends his ideas to Congress, which can approve them and set aside money for them, or turn them down. The President makes foreign policy: he decides what this country should do in Viet Nam, Europe, and other foreign places. He makes treaties with other countries with the advice of the Senate.

Congress is supposed to vote before the country goes to war. But in Korea and Viet Nam, the President has sent American soldiers into battle without war being declared.

President Johnson is also head of the Democratic Party. He uses his power as President to build a machine that will deliver votes for him in 1968. He is trying to put men who will deliver votes for him in charge of CDGM - the new MAP board.

### The Congress

Congress is made up of the Senate, which has 100 members, and the House of Representatives, which has 435 members.

Each state sends two Senators to Washington.

The number of Representatives a state sends depends on how many people live in the state. Mississippi sends 5 Representatives to Washington.



Congress is divided into committees. Each bill goes to a certain committee. The poverty program goes through the Education and Labor Committee; Adam Clayton Powell was Chairman of that Committee until he was kicked off in January of 1967.

The longer a Congressman sits in the House, the higher he rises. Committee chairmen are the members who have been in the House the longest. Most of them are Southerners. Mississippi's Senators are James O. Eastland and John C. Stennis.

Sunflower county is now in the 1st Congressional District; Thomas G. Abernethy is the Congressman who is supposed to represent this county.

All of them voted against civil rights, poverty programs, medicare, federal aid to education, and other programs to help poor people. But Republican Prentiss Walker (who ran for Senator in the November 8, 1966 election) says that Eastland and Abernethy are not enough against these programs. Mr. Dock Drummond, a Negro plumber from Kosciusko, does not believe that Abernethy represents poor people. So he ran for Congress as an independent against Abernethy last year.

Senators are elected for six years. Stennis was reelected in 1964, and Eastland won reelection last year (1966). Congressmen are elected every two years.

### The Departments

The Laws which are proposed by the President and approved by Congress are carried out by the Departments such as the Department of Justice, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the Department of Agriculture.

The President appoints men to head these departments. He approves or disapproves of what they do, if they take important actions.

The President and the Departments together have a lot to say about how laws are carried out.



The Department of Justice is under Attorney General Ramsey Clark. He is the chief law officer of the United States. The Attorney General can send federal registrars to a county where the Voting Rights Act is not being followed.

Also part of the Justice Department are the Community Relations Service and the F.B.I. The Community Relations Service is supposed to settle race trouble in communities. The Civil Rights Division brings lawsuits to make restaurants serve Negroes, and school desegregation suits. They also prepare cases against people who violate Negroes' civil rights. But they only rarely act with the power they have. The President is afraid that if he takes strong action to protect our rights, white people won't vote for him.

In six years, only one law enforcement officer has been sent to jail for brutality. And he was sent to jail for contempt of court.

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare is headed by John W. Gardner. It includes the Office of Education, which gives money to school districts, and the Bureau of Family Services, which is in charge of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Old Age Assistance, and Disability Programs. They set general rules for the states to follow. Under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, federal money could not go to segregated programs. The Office of Education makes each school district sign a compliance form saying they will have "freedom of choice."

The Office of Economic Opportunity is headed by R. Sargent Shriver. It is in charge of the War on Poverty program. At first, poor people were allowed some voice, as the law says they should. But now O.E.O. wants to give money only to people who will deliver votes to President Johnson, and not cause too much trouble.

Our county is poor because a few big white folks own all the land. The Poverty Program has done nothing about this, because the big white folks have Senator Eastland to speak for them, and others like him. They have political power. We need some of that, too!

The Department of Agriculture is headed by Orville Freeman. The Department does things for big farmers. They wrote the cotton program to force small farmers out of business.

They do not pay attention to the little man. Why? Because of Eastland. And because men who speak for big farmers give money to President Johnson.

Cortney Cortwright (president of the National Cotton Council, from Rolling Fork), Charles Sayre (president of the Staple Cotton Cooperative Association), Ernest G. Spivey (president of the Mississippi Federated Coops), and Leroy Percy (owner of Trail Lake plantation) each gave \$1,000 to President Johnson for his campaign in 1964.

The Agriculture Department has charge of the F.H.A. program, the A.S.C.S., and other farm programs. These, too, are run for big farmers.



### THE FEDERAL COURTS

The federal courts include the District Courts, the Circuit Courts of Appeals, and the Supreme Court. Federal judges are appointed for life by the President. But actually district judges are picked by the Senators from that state. They are political supporters of the President. Judge Claude F. Clayton was appointed by President Eisenhower, whom he supported in 1952.

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals hears cases which are not decided in the District Court. Most of the judges in the Fifth Circuit are good. But James P. Coleman, former Governor of Mississippi, was appointed to the court even though he is a segregationist.

The U.S. Supreme Court consists of nine men appointed by the President. They decide whether laws follow the Constitution. In 1954 they decided that racial segregation was not constitutional.

Federal judges hear such cases as redistricting Congress and the State Legislatures, voting suits, school desegregation suits, and federal crimes.

Federal judges don't depend on the Senators and the President. So they may be able to follow their own conscience more than other officials. Or they may misuse their power like racist Judge Cox.

Results of the General Election, November 8, 1966

<u>Precinct</u>	<u>Eastland</u>	<u>Walker</u>	<u>Whitley</u>
Inverness	423	50	41
Moorhead	371	104	81
Indianola	1121	380	143
Heathman	42	10	0
Fairview	26	16	1
Hale	40	18	1
Linn	105	29	2
Boyer	68	17	6
Blaine	81	13	0
Doddsville	112	6	14
Ruleville	410	59	45
Dockery	37	4	0
Drew	534	99	4
Rome	109	20	0
Baltzer	7	0	0
Sunflower plantation	84	27	4
Dwiggins	16	0	4
Baird	11	3	0
Sunflower	<u>161</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>143</u>
	3758	881	489

<u>Precinct</u>	<u>Abernethy</u>	<u>Alexander</u>	<u>Drummond</u>
Inverness	399	68	21
Moorhead	352	89	87
Indianola	1043	282	222
Heathman	47	7	0
Fairview	26	15	1
Hale	25	32	1
Linn	83	49	0
Boyer	65	21	5
Blaine	75	14	0
Doddsville	104	17	11
Ruleville	355	94	50
Dockery	27	15	0
Drew	486	127	1
Rome	96	23	1
Baltzer	7	0	0
Sunflower plantation	55	56	1
Dwiggins	15	3	1
Baird	9	6	0
Sunflower	<u>137</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>149</u>
	3406	960	551

Note that the vote was very small in the plantation precincts.

Mr. Drummond carried Sunflower City precinct.