

## A True Tale Of Tallahassee

by Richard Haley

(Editor's Note: The writer of this story in 1960 was teaching at Florida A & M University in Tallahassee. He took a leadership role in the local CORE group's campaign to desegregate lunch counters. As a result, he was named "Teacher of the Year" by the university's Student Congress. Also, as a result, he was dismissed from his position, without explanation. Now, he is assistant to CORE's national director.)

On January 8, two Negro students walked into Woolworth's in Tallahassee. They sat down at the lunch counter, ordered and were served without incident. This scene was repeated, with minor variations at Walgreen's, Neisner's, McCrory's and Sears Roebuck. A 3-year CORE campaign in the only Florida city still maintaining lunch counter segregation, had ended successfully.

The campaign's first sit-in occurred at Woolworth's on February 13, 1960. A second sit-in a week later resulted in arrests. Five of those arrested—Patricia and Priscilla Stephens, John and Barbara Broxton and William Larkins, Jr.—set a precedent by becoming the first jail-ins of the nationwide student movement. Rather than bail-out, they served 46 days. Patricia wrote from Leon County Jail: "We could be out on appeal but we all strongly believe that Martin Luther King was right when he said: 'We've go to fill the jails in order to win our equal rights.'" The five students were recompensed by receiving the first annual CORE Gandhi Award. But the lunch counters remained segregated.

CORE suspended its picketing for several months at the request of several local leaders, but no change took place. So, picketing and sit-ins were resumed. In March 1961, Patricia Stephens and Ben Cowins were arrested at Neisner's after they were attacked by several white men. Pat's sentence was later reversed, but Ben chose to be jailed-in.

First break in Tallahassee's segregated eating pattern occurred as a result of the Freedom Rides in the summer of 1961. Complying with the new ICC regulations which resulted from the Rides, the Greyhound and Trailways lunch counters desegregated. Following the arrest of 10 ministers and rabbis on CORE's Interfaith Freedom Ride, the airport restaurant, operated by Union News Co., closed for several months but finally reopened on an integrated basis. In the spring of 1962, shortly after an-

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## NEW FREEDOM TASK FORCE IN SOUTH



by Gordon R. Carey

This photo shows mass picketing of the S & W Cafeteria in Greensboro, North Carolina. CORE's campaign to desegregate the S & W and Mayfair cafeterias, which has become a major issue in Greensboro, is just one of the projects in which CORE's newly-established Freedom Task Force is involved. During November, 111 Negroes and whites were arrested for sitting-in at the two cafeterias. First to be tried was Isaac Reynolds, one of the initial volunteers for the Freedom Task Force. Both he and Richard Ramsey, who was tried with him, received 30-day jail sentences after rejecting suspended sentences with the proviso that they not be convicted of a similar offense for a year. Their attorney, Floyd McKissick, announced that the cases will be appealed. Trials of the 109 others are scheduled to start as this issue goes to press.

The Greensboro campaign is but one example of the type of project being aided by members of the Freedom Task Force, who in effect are full-time volunteers. The Freedom Task Force, which went into action December 1, following a final 2-day training period, is a continuation of last summer's successful Freedom Highways project. Although it is still small and in the experimental stage, its participants have been active in a number of communities.

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## TALLAHASSEE

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nouncement of CORE's Freedom Highways project, all Howard Johnson restaurants in Florida—including Tallahassee—desegregated.

This past fall, a full-scale sit-in campaign was started and I returned to Tallahassee to help coordinate it. Police seemed grudgingly committed to maintaining peace inside the stores, despite threats and profane language from white onlookers and exhibition of some lethal-looking knives. The lone white CORE member, chief target of the threats, was escorted to safety in the center of a hollow square of Negro CORE members. One of our cars was damaged. But police made no arrests nor even issued any warnings to those molesting us. The sit-ins continued.

Finally, for the first time, a prominent downtown minister succeeded in arranging a meeting between a CORE committee and a representative of one of the stores. Ironically, this manager hastily informed us not only that he was not authorized to represent the other stores, but that he could not even represent his own. Eventually, however, negotiations with the managements got under way and an agreement was reached to desegregate the lunch counters early in January. A long-overdue change, which had been successfully delayed by the segregationist City Commission, finally became a reality.

## FORT SMITH'S LUNCH COUNTERS DESEGREGATE

First project of the CORE group formed in Fort Smith, Arkansas last September was to desegregate the local lunch counters. By mid-January the lunch counters of Woolworth's, Kress's and McCrory's were serving everybody, regardless of color.

The change was accomplished through a series of negotiations sessions with a committee appointed by the mayor, who took the initiative after receiving CORE's request for his intercession. Reginald Watson, chairman of Fort Smith CORE, headed the group's negotiating team. CORE National Chairman Charles Oldham and CORE Field Secretary Mary Hamilton participated at various stages.

According to the agreement reached two-man test teams ate at the lunch counters during the week preceding desegregation. The Sunday prior to the change, announcements were made in the city's churches. Under terms of the agreement, desegregation will shortly be extended to other eating places in Fort Smith.

## TASK FORCE

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In Lebanon, Tennessee, Winston Locket and Jon Schafer have been working with our new CORE group there in a situation where violence has threatened. Early in January, while Winston was picketing a food store where CORE is seeking a fair employment policy, a stick of dynamite was planted on the roof. It was only after protests to the governor and the U.S. Department of Justice that local police began providing adequate protection and taking steps to prevent violence.

In Durham, North Carolina, the Royal Ice Cream Co. operates an ice cream parlor with a front room for whites and a back room for Negroes. As far back as 1958 a young Negro minister, Rev. Douglas Moore, organized sit-ins by high school students, who constitute most of the establishment's customers. The action was renewed with vigor in November when members of CORE and the NAACP youth group began picketing and boycotting.

During a Task Force training session, which I was leading, a minister reported that some of the Negro schools which used Royal Ice Cream in their school lunches were willing to join the boycott. Within two days, Task Force members mobilized leaflet distributions at every Negro school. The students supported the boycott. One teacher reported that only 3 students out of 900 had eaten ice cream at her school.

The company agreed to negotiate and has already offered to serve Negroes in both the front and back rooms. Realizing that mere maintenance of the two rooms would perpetuate segregation, we rejected this offer and the boycott continues.

Statesville and Hickory are two other North Carolina communities where Task Force volunteers have been working. They are able to work in communities for prolonged periods of time. The cost of having paid staff in such situations would be prohibitive. Most of the volunteers are college students with previous experience in nonviolence. As this program develops, CORE hopes to organize a much-needed source of trained manpower to pursue non-violent action on the community level in the south.

## REGISTER A PROTEST WITH YOUR S & W MANAGER

If you live in a community where there is an S & W Cafeteria, write or speak to the local manager, protest the chain's policy of refusing to serve Negroes (except in Washington, D. C.), express support of CORE's present campaign to desegregate the company's Greensboro branch. This appeal to CORElator readers comes from William Thomas, Jr., chairman of Greensboro CORE.

Communities where S & W operates cafeterias, in addition to Greensboro and Washington are: Asheville, Charlotte (location of company headquarters), Durham and Raleigh—North Carolina; Lynchburg, Richmond and Roanoke—Virginia; Chattanooga, Tennessee and Atlanta, Georgia.

## LOUISIANA REGISTRAR QUILTS ON ACCOUNT OF "ILL HEALTH"

Milton Dardenne, the registrar of Iberville, Louisiana, named in 17 recent voter-bias complaints filed with the U.S. Department of Justice, has resigned because of "ill-health."

In reporting his resignation TV Station WDSU in New Orleans stated that friends of Dardenne had attributed his "ill-health" to the Negro registration drive in this area which is headed by Ronnie Moore, CORE field secretary. The complaints to the Department of Justice were an outcome of this campaign.

However, no immediate era of voting justice in Iberville parish is anticipated because, to replace Dardenne, the police jury has named Mrs. Ella Billings, a member of the White Citizens Council. Mrs. Billings reportedly told one of the 17 plaintiffs to the Justice Department: "If I would have checked the other (Negro's) application card, she wouldn't have passed either."

Nevertheless, CORE is pursuing its voter education campaign. Since Dardenne's resignation, 10 Negroes have been registered and 24 rejected. Of the latter, some plan to file complaints with the Justice Department.



## HOWARD JOHNSON'S STATEMENT

Last CORElator featured an account of Desegregate-Howard-Johnson's Day (October 6), on which CORE groups across the country picketed for service without discrimination at all the company's southern restaurants. Just before the demonstration, Howard Johnson, himself, agreed for the first time to negotiate (previous negotiations had been with the company's attorney). Two subsequent sessions were held—with representatives of the NAACP as well as CORE present. As a result, the company on December 12 issued a public statement which was carried widely by the press.

Asserting that "only 18 of the 297 company-operated restaurants" are still segregated, the statement said: "Where it has been possible to change the operation of our company-operated restaurants in the south to conform to our national policy of service without discrimination, this has been done. In Florida, for example, our 66 restaurants are open to all who desire service.

"This review of Howard Johnson's record in regard to desegregation was undertaken with the cooperation of officials of CORE and the NAACP, both of which organizations have led the battle against segregation and discriminatory practices."

Regarding the arrests which occurred at a number of franchised Howard Johnson restaurants in North Carolina last summer during CORE's Freedom Highways campaign, the statement said: "CORE and NAACP both recognize that the Howard Johnson Co. was not a party to this action directly or indirectly, that the company caused no arrests and was powerless to have the charges dismissed against those arrested."

Commenting on the statement, CORE National Director James Farmer said: "It is commendable that Howard Johnson's has put itself on record publicly regarding desegregation. However, it is regrettable that the company remains uncooperative in applying pressure to its franchised restaurants in the south which, after all, bear the Howard Johnson name and to the public are undistinguishable from the company-operated restaurants. CORE intends to pursue its action program until all Howard Johnson southern restaurants, franchised as well as company-operated, became desegregated."

## REV. COX SPENDS SECOND CHRISTMAS IN JAIL



Rev. B. Milton Cox, CORE field secretary, spent his second consecutive Christmas holiday—and then some—in the East Baton Rouge parish jail. Nine days before Christmas, 1961, on the evening of a student mass demonstration protest-

ing the arrest of twenty-three CORE pickets, Rev. Cox was jailed on a "conspiracy" charge. This past Christmas, he was jailed on a charge of "defaming" a judge and a district attorney at an NAACP mass rally. Imposing the maximum penalty, Judge Fred LeBlanc sentenced him to a year in jail and \$3,000 fine on each of two counts with the prison terms to be served consecutively, rather than concurrently. Rev. Cox is still in jail as this issue goes to press, but it is hoped that he may soon be bonded-out on appeal.

Ronnie Moore, former chairman of Baton Rouge CORE and Patricia Tate, the group's present chairman, accused of "defaming" a grand jury by offering to testify on Rev. Cox's behalf, were also convicted by Judge LeBlanc.

Attempts to desegregate the parish courtroom and coffee shop during the trial, resulted in six arrests. The four arrested in the courtroom were charged with contempt and sentenced by Judge LeBlanc to a mandatory 10 days in jail and \$100 fine. The two arrested in the coffee shop were accused of "disturbing the peace."

## SEATTLE'S FIRST NEGRO STORE MANAGER

Through the efforts of Seattle CORE, a Negro has been hired for the first time in Seattle as a store manager—at the main store of J. C. Penney Co. He went to work upon completion of the company's management trainees course.

A second Negro trainee will be employed as manager of one of the company's stores in San Francisco. In addition, Penney's has hired several Negro clerks in one of its local branch stores. The company started taking-on Negroes at its main store several months ago, following a threatened boycott by CORE.

## IN BRIEF

In his initial speaking tour on behalf of CORE, James Baldwin, popular author, lectured during October at Harvard, MIT, Brandeis and Cornell. He started on a CORE speaking tour through the south, as this issue went to press. He is scheduled to do a west coast tour in May.

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Following the unprovoked police beating on December 3 of Jackie Washington, a Negro student at Emerson College, Boston CORE mounted a major protest campaign in an attempt to avert a repeat performance.

\* \* \*

The South Carolina Supreme Court on November 28 unanimously reversed the conviction of 42 Morris College students who participated in CORE-sponsored sit-ins at Sumter lunch counters in October 1960 and February 1961.

\* \* \*

Two major boycotts are presently being conducted by CORE on the fair employment issue: one against Seal-test Milk in New York City, the other against Kroger's grocery stores in St. Louis and in Columbus, Ohio.

\* \* \*

An International Forum dinner sponsored by the National Broadcasting Co. at the Hotel Roosevelt in New Orleans Jan. 11 was picketed by the local CORE group after its chairman and vice-chairman found that their reservations were not honored.

## BEQUESTS

CORE recently has received two substantial bequests from the estates of Blanche Harriet Meyer of Portland, Oregon and Barbara Blumenthal McClure of New York City.

CORE regards such bequests with special obligation and pride. Contributors wishing to insure continuance of CORE's work after their death, should contact Marvin Rich at the national office.

## "NEITHER NEGROES NOR ANIMALS . . .

. . . may use benches, rest rooms, or restaurant facilities at the zoo in state-owned Audubon Park, New Orleans." This is the way Oretha Castle, chairman of New Orleans CORE expressed it after Jean Thompson and Carlean Smith were arrested and charged with "criminal trespass" for testing the park's facilities.

W. L. H.

## HOUSING SIT-INS — EAST AND WEST

In Edgewater, N. J. . . .



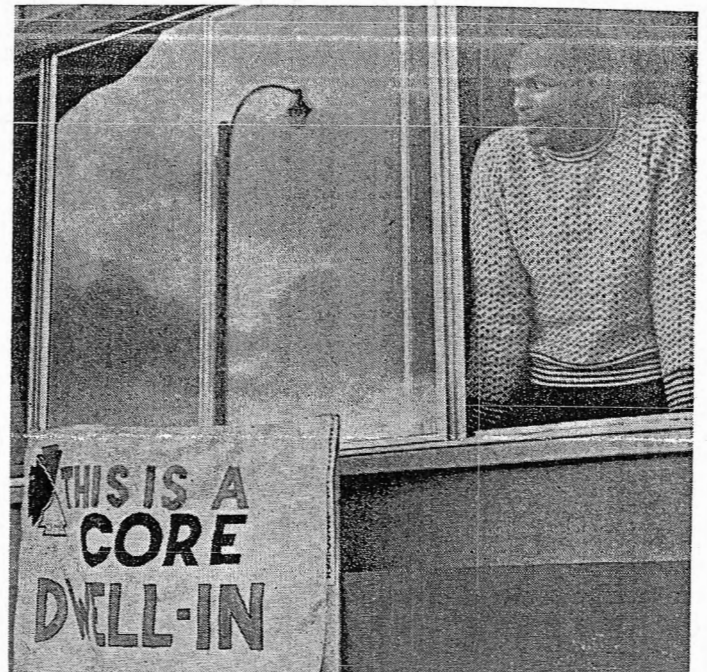
. . . Mrs. David and her three children sit-in at an apartment which the Vesta Corp. refuses to rent them. Forced to move after their home had been destroyed by fire, the Negro family presently is cramped into makeshift quarters where the ceiling has collapsed and leaks have sprung. Sponsoring the sit-in is Bergen County CORE. Three of the sit-inners have received court summonses but were acquitted.

And in New York City in connection with a Brooklyn CORE housing protest, there took place on December 19 the first sit-in inside a bank. The bank—the West Side Federal Savings & Loan Co.—insisted on prohibiting the Molo Construction Co. from renting one of its Brooklyn homes to a Negro couple. The bank sit-in lasted two hours after which the five participants were arrested. The sit-in at the home continued.

In Syracuse, N.Y., a sit-in, which resulted in the arrest of 7 CORE members, won for two African students, the 3-room apartment which they originally had been refused because of their color. Lloyd Clifford, the owner, also agreed not to press trespass charges against the 7 arrested sit-inners among whom were Evart MaKinnen, chairman of Syracuse CORE and Rudolph Lombard, vice-chairman of national CORE. The two Africans, Skeva Soko from Northern Rhodesia and Antonio Boustcha from Mozambique, are graduate students at the Maxwell School of Public Administration.

In San Francisco what was shaping-up as an impending housing struggle had a happy-ending. "The owner who was in Europe when I applied for the apartment was most distressed when she learned that her managers had denied occupancy to a Negro," reports Doris Thomas of San Francisco CORE. "She agreed to register all future vacancies with CORE, to permit CORE to screen applicants and to pay me reasonable damages for my inconvenience and delay."

In Wilmington, Calif. . . .



. . . a Los Angeles CORE member looks out of the window of a Sun-Ray Estates home during a 6-day "dwell-in" which ended with arrest of the 7 participants. The protest action then became a "dwell-out" in the front yard and within two weeks the arrests totaled 42. The dwell-out ended after the McLennan's obtained a court order securing the home.

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