

COUNCIL OF FEDERATED ORGANIZATIONS - Sunflower & Bolivar Counties

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEGRO FIRST IN EASTLAND'S BACK YARD

Indianola, Mississippi. June 23. Mrs. Rennie Williams, Negro, of Ruleville, Mississippi, participated in the Sunflower County Democratic Party Convention in Indianola today - the first Negro known to have participated since reconstruction days. Ruleville Mayor Charles M. Dorrrough accepted Mrs. Williams' nomination of another Ruleville Negro, Mrs. Ruby Davis, for alternate delegate to the Mississippi State Democratic Party Convention even though Mrs. Williams was not officially a delegate to the County Convention.

Mrs. Williams attended the meeting because Negroes were barred from precinct meetings on June 16th, when delegates were elected to the county meeting. Mrs. Williams nominated Mrs. Davis when the Ruleville delegation caucused this morning; Mrs. Williams' was the only vote for Mrs. Davis during the balloting. Mrs. Williams failed to gain recognition three other times during the Convention.

Sunflower County is the home of Mississippi Senator James Eastland; Eastland owns a large plantation in Doddsville, 15 miles North of Indianola.

Accompanying the Ruleville resident were three civil rights workers - Charles McLaurin, 23 year old Negro from Jackson, Miss, a staff worker for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and director of the Council of Federated Organizations' Sunflower-Bolivar Counties Summer Project; John Harris, 20 year old Negro from Birmingham, Alabama, SNCC Staff worker; and Dale Cronemeier, 25 year old white teacher from Los Angeles, a SNCC summer volunteer.