

560119-005

DATE: January 19, 1956
 PLACE: 717 So. Holt Street
 Age: 65-70
 SEX: Female
 OCCUP: Run's an Employment Bureau

INTERVIEWER: Willie M. Lee
 RESPONDENT: Mrs. Mary Kinney

Interviewer: As it is stated in the letter from Mr. Pierce, I am doing research on the bus protest. I have been reading the newspaper, but I feel that they are a bit biased and incomplete, therefore, I came down here to get information directly from the people involved. I'll appreciate it very much if you'd tell me just what has been happening and what is happening now.

Respondent:

She's still running her biz

"Well, having my business here in my home. I don't ride the buses much and even less now than I did ten years ago when I was younger; however in my business, I deal with people from all walks of life, so I usually know what's going on most of the time. From my own experiences over a period of years I have witnessed several incidents wherein the bus drivers were quite nasty to Negro patrons, and I've also witness very nice bus drivers. In fact the drivers in this vicinity are very nice to me. Several times they've pulled away from the stop, but will wait across the street if they should see me coming, and I always thank them with a smile because he didn't have to stop. On the other hand there are two cases I remember very distinctly. In the first case I was going out Maxwell Road, and there were four young colored ladies sitting on the first two horizontal seats and two white airmen got on the bus. The bus driver yelled 'let me have those seats.' There were no other seats in the back, so the girls had to stand. The airmen were very much embarrassed. They didn't care to take the seats, and said do every one could hear them; 'I never heard of such women stand while men sit.' "In the next case, the two seats across the aisle from a colored lady was vacant, but the driver demanded that she move, because a white man could not sit opposite a colored lady. In this case, however, there was a seat or at least part of a seat in back. I say part of a seat because the woman sitting there weighted around 250 pounds which means she left only about half of the second seat vacant, and the woman whom the driver asked to move back weighed nearly 200. Anyway she refused to move. The driver called her a few nasty names and asked her to come up to the front of the bus.

*→ Non-violence?
→ people always comply - no force*

She told him, 'If you want me, you'll have to come back here, and if you do, the undertaker sure will dress you.' The other people on the bus told her to move back that there was no use in getting in trouble over something like that. So she finally moved back.

Now about five years ago there was a teacher by the Name of Wingrave who had a teen-age daughter to be arrested because she refused to move. I don't know exactly how the case came out, but I do know they left town.

So you see, things have been piling up over a period of year, and these people are not going to give up easily. The people are all on levels of helping. Even the drunks will not ride the buses. They say they'll walk and use bus fare far more whiskey

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I cannot help but remember how pleased I was when I learned about the "boy-cott". I was when I learned about the "boy-cbt" I was downtown when some landed me one of ther leaflets, and I said " At last it has come."

Interviewer: Since it has come, hasn't it had any affect upon you business?

Respondent: "None at all. I have been in this business since 1931 and I know quite a few white people and noe of those I've sent employees to have fired any (employees) since this protest started. I have not had a single case, where a person reported having been fired because of the protest, and I've only heard of one. I heard that one lady asked her maid did she ride the bus and when the maid said that she did not, the lady said that she could not use her anymore; however, the maid was hired immediately after leaving by the next door neighbor.

It may interest you to know that plenty white persons are giving money personally. I don't know of any who have given through organizations.

Demand for labor exceeded supply

Interviewer: Speaking of organization, do you belong to any which aids in the movement?

Respondent: "Why yes. I'm a member of the Sara Anderson Charity Club. I'm president of the lend-a-hand club and of the Builder's Club. We have given and will give as long as it is necessary. I also belong to the Omega Five which has contributed, and of course, I give in the special collection at my church."

multiple membership many orgs giving to boycott

Interviewer: Well, tell me how do you think this will affect future relations between Negroes and whites?

Respondent: "For one thing, it is favorable toward the colored people. Sales are falling off as well as the bus company;s great loss and this is making the white's aware of the strength of the colored people. The colored people have learned, on the other hand, where the white man can be hurt most - in his pockets. To show you what I mean. it was rumored that Mrs. Parks had been fired and in one day approximately 100 accounts were closed at "Montgomery Fair", (very large department store), and a similar thing happened at one of the dairy companies. The president of the dairy company made a public statement that he did not say that Negroes should ride the buses. The people started back buying milk and Mrs. Parks was brought back from the smaller store to the main Montgomery Fair.

Interviewer: About how long do you think this protest will last?

Respondent: "I really don't know, however, I don't feel that there will ever be a complete recovery. You see people are buying cars now as never before and more people will ride with neighbors. People are getting to know more people, therefore, people who usually go home alone won't fear asking people about their direction and giving them a lift.

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"Oh, I do know that these buses are financed by a concern in Chicago and that the franchise is out in March, so something will have to be done before then because stock-holders begin to withdraw their money when they start losing as they have been doing here.

Interviewer: You have been very helpful and I appreciate it very much, but what I want to know now is, who are the leaders of this movement?

Respondent: "Well the ministers are. This is the first time in history I suppose where all of the minister have joined together for a worthy cause for the people. "

Interviewer: I see. Now what are they striving for?

Respondent: "They want Negro bus drivers in areas where there is a large number of colored people; courteous drivers and a first come first serve policy."

Interviewer: What does this first come first serve policy involve?

Respondent: "They want the colored people to start in the back and fill up toward the front and the whites from the front toward the back and that no person should have to get up and give his seat to someone else."

Interviewer: Are there any colored people still riding the buses?

Respondent: "From what I hear, and my source is very reliable because I deal with a wide range of people, there are very few person still riding, and I feel that if their conscious don't bother them, let them ride ."

Interviewer: Speaking of bothering people, I read in the papers that there are goon squads operating to keep people from riding the buses. Do you know anything about them?

Respondent: "Those are Sellers (city Commissioner)lies. He'll do anything to save his face. Everything they do back fires. After hearing about the boycott and that there was going to be trouble when it started he placed policemen behind each bus. The colored people thought they were there to keep them from riding the buses, so you can see what that did. When the newspapers publicized it, it served to let people know about who had not heard about it.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your cooperation, Mrs. Kinney, you have been most helpful.

General Statement :

Mrs. Kinney neatly dressed, dignified lady with silvery haird. Has warm personality and is easy to talk with.