

Ohio Town to Keep 'Its Segregated School

Will Rebuild School White Man Burned

By RAY PAUL

HILLSBORO, O.—Despite rising protests from Negro citizens here, the Hillsboro Board of Education this week voted unanimously to repair the Jim-Crow Lincoln elementary school which was burned on July 5 by County Engineer Philip Partridge, who hoped the destruction of the school would end the town's 100-year practice of school segregation.

The Hillsboro board reached its decision after accepting an insurance adjustment offer of \$4,295.50 for the fire-damaged building. Repair work has already started.

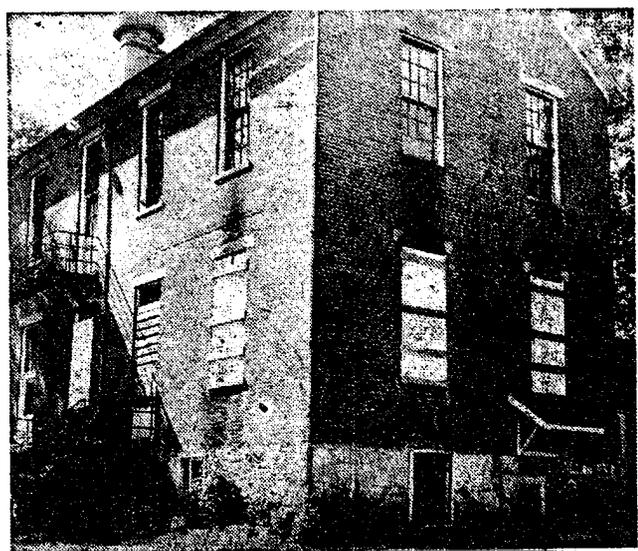
In the discussion which preceded the vote, board members argued that "Negroes are asking the impossible" in demanding an end to the school segregation pattern that has existed for more than 100 years. "Why can't they hold out for perhaps two more years?" one member asked.

Members indicated that they intended to retain the segregated pattern at Lincoln, where Negro children are forced to attend classes from the first to sixth grades before being integrated into the

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REV. RITA LEE ... she'll lead fight to integrate all Hillsboro schools.



PROTEST FAILS: Hillsboro, Ohio—When Phillip Partridge (lower left) set fire to segregated Lincoln Elementary school (above) he hoped his action would result in wiping out the jim-crow pattern of separate school education that has persisted in the small Ohio town for 100 years, but Board of Education officers have voted to repair the school and continue its all-Negro occupancy.

A fight looms, however, as Rev. Mrs. Rita Lee (top left) of the First Wesleyan Methodist church, has organized a citizens' committee which has served notice that it will fight the decision in Ohio courts.



PHILIP PARTRIDGE The fight he started will find supporters in Hillsboro.

we will not send them to school at all."

Only 23 persons have refused to sign the petition and according to committee members they have not contacted half of the colored citizens "yet."

Vernon Young, R.R. 3, former president of the now defunct Hillsboro NAACP assured the writer that they intended to finish the fight and that the men were supporting the women "One hundred per cent."

Rev. T. H. Abercrombie, minister of New Hope Baptist Church who lives at 1214 Myrtle Avenue, Cincinnati, stated that he was with the entire community and would fight the entire two years, if necessary for full integration.

Mrs. Goldie Taylor, 333 Wellston St., reported that the people were intensely interested in the fight for full school integration.

Other members of the Citizens Committee are Eliza Thurman, chairman, Ethel Gallagher and Rev. Margaret Peak of Cincinnati.

The Board is worried because they realize that the usual docile Negroes of the community have risen to fight. The temper of the colored citizens was reflected in a letter sent to this city's two daily papers by Rev. Mrs. Rita L. H. Lee, pastor of the 1st Wesleyan Methodist Church of 230 N. East St. Rev. Lee has only been in Hillsboro, from Dayton, two years, but the publication of her letter caused the entire edition of one of the dailies to sell out.

Letter to Paper

Her letter is as follows:
"At a meeting held last Friday evening, July 16 at New Hope Baptist Church, a group of American Negro citizens and parents of the children who have attended Lincoln Elementary Public School, voiced their sentiments concerning this schools existence in the following manner:

First—The already existing inadequacy of the over 100-year old building, the crowded conditions and not sufficient teaching faculty for the number of children. Second—The hardship imposed on our children who must walk the distance from the East End and past the Washington School to reach Lincoln. Third—We consider the destruction from the recent burning and do not expect to accept it repaired.

In a previous publication of your paper it was stated that we as a group were divided. We refute this statement as we may not all be able to express ourselves, but we are definitely together.

We are asking for integration of both pupils and teachers in the light of the Supreme Court decision and following the pattern of other Ohio cities as we have some of the finest teachers in our group as ever graced any nation. If we do not have what is needed here it is available elsewhere and can be brought in. Since integration is what we want and we only have one teacher here with proper credentials we want her retained and placed along with our pupils, as there are two other buildings. This community has a right to look after its own constituents first and force public school education on all people alike.

If there should be an influx of other American children to this area there would immediately be a place made to accommodate them in the public school system. Inasmuch as it is necessary for our children to cope with the present trend in the Army, Navy, Marine and in the Air force and we go and always have given our life's-blood for the preservation of this nation. It is therefore imperative that our educational facilities be the best that can be afforded along with other Americans.

We cannot fight Communism with prejudice even though a statement made in the Cleveland CALL & POST of July 17 by our super-

intendent of schools that it did not exist here.

Let us be fair minded American citizens portraying the truth of the Bible since it is the only weapon of our Christian Standard and American Way of Life which cannot anytime or anywhere be defeated if we use it, and I am sure all minor details can be worked out. Jesus said in St. Johns 15:31 "Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend," and we feel that we have made and are making that contribution.

Elder Rita E. H. Lee,

230 N. East St., Hillsboro, Ohio

The above letter has sparked some indignation among whites, but it has also served the purpose of welding the Negro citizens into a solid mass of indignation and rallied them behind the committee.

Rev. Mrs. Lee told the CALL & POST that she feared no reprisal and that she was an old fighter in the fight for equality. She received a complimentary letter from a Mary E. Lewis of 500 Terrace Ave., Cincinnati. Miss Lewis described herself as a former rural nurse and social worker. She complimented Mrs. Lee on her letter and informed her of the fight Cincinnati Negroes are waging to enter Coney Island Amusement Park.

Rev. Lee also received a telephone call from a woman who "didn't think much of the letter or the publisher for printing it... felt Rev. Lee "must feel proud of yourself," and... "would rather see my children dead than in a mixed school." To the last Rev. Lee answered: "You may live to see just that."

Will Rebuild School

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Hillsboro schools at higher levels— "until new elementary schools are completed."

Still in Hospital

Meanwhile, Partridge, who hoped his sacrifice would result in the abolition of "inequalities" between white and Negro children, is still being held at Lima State hospital for sanity tests. He has been charged with arson.

His act, however, seems to have stimulated the Negro citizens of Hillsboro to fight for full integration in the public schools. They had complacently accepted the segregated setup at Lincoln until the white county engineer sparked them to fight through his school-burning exploit.

Mrs. Irma Jean Curtis of 151 Baker St., has arisen to spearhead the fight against the Board's decision by forming a Citizens Committee for School Integration. Mrs. Curtis reported to the CALL & POST that she had been approached several times by interested mothers, but had taken no action previously in the hope that the School Board would end the segregated pattern.

Write to Board

The first action taken by the committee was in the form of a letter to school board secretary, William Paul demanding an audience with the school board. The committee will meet with the board Aug. 9 at 7:30 and at that time will demand full integration. If they are refused according to Mrs. Curtis they will take legal action.

The school board will be presented with a petition demanding that: "...the Board admit colored children to Webster and Washington Schools. We believe that conditions at Lincoln (the burned all-Negro school) are such that our children cannot receive the proper education...the solution to this problem would be integration of the schools...A NEGATIVE REPLY WILL RESULT IN LEGAL ACTION."

Mrs. Curtis along with Mrs. Beatrice Metcalfe, 530 E. Walnut St., deplored the fact that 71 colored elementary pupils have only two teachers for six grades. They said some children walk over one and one half mile, passing the white schools to reach the all-Negro school. They pointed out that children could not possibly get a full education under such an arrangement.

Plan Legal Action

Mrs. Curtis said legal action would follow if immediate arrangements were not made following a march on the white schools in September. "We will obey the state law by sending our children to school, but we will take them by the hand and lead them to the white school. If we are refused