

# Decade of Black Struggle Has Mixed Result in South

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NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 7—Blacks and whites may now eat together publicly in the South, and frequently do. But they are still not permitted to drink together in many places. They go to baseball games, political rallies and carnivals together, but it is still hazardous to go to church together.

They go to school together, but not to school dances.

So it goes in the South in 1970. The last 10 years—beginning with the Greensboro, N.C., lunch counter sit-ins of February, 1960—have brought more change to the lives of black Southerners than all the rest of the 107 years since emancipation.

## No More Jim Crow

But resistance to change in the South continues to shape and to confine the lives of its blacks almost as much as change, itself.

Some of the big changes in the racial situation are easily shown, as follows:

¶ School desegregation is up from 1.17 per cent of Southern black pupils going to desegregated schools in 1963 to about 35 per cent in 1970, and the

Continued on Page 50, Column 1



# Life of Blacks in South Affected by White Resistance as Well as Racial Gains

Continued From Page 1, Col. 6

rate is climbing rapidly under recent court orders.

Black voter registration was up from 1,463,333 in 1960 in the 11 states of the Confederacy to 3,248,000, or 64.8 per cent of those eligible in 1969.

Elected black Southern officials increased from an uncounted handful in 1960 to 78 in 1965 to 528 in 1969.

Jim Crow is officially dead, thanks to the civil rights movement and Federal legislation. Blacks are legally free to use almost any public accommodation from rest room to restaurant.

However, it is necessary to back away from broad statements and generalized statistics to understand what the years have done to the daily lives of black Southerners.

## Lunch Counter Peace

On a typical midday, for example, several hundred blacks and whites crowded together side-by-side recently on the lunch counter stools of four variety stores along Canal Street.

They ate hot dogs (30 cents), hamburgers (55 cents) and fish sandwiches (45 cents) in absolute peace, with no hostility between customers or between customers and waitresses.

The same scene is repeated every day at hundreds of lunch counters from Waco, Tex., to Richmond. One wonders what all the fuss was about 10 years ago, when black students had to suffer curses, spit, battery and arrest to gain the privilege of eating at these same lunch counters.

But it would be misleading to suggest that public eating places have all become integrated, raceless institutions in the South. Officially, blacks can eat in any restaurant. In practice, they make little use of the higher priced, traditionally white establishments.

## Money Problem Stressed

Interviews with large numbers of black people across the South in recent weeks indicated that the greatest single concern of Southern blacks was no longer the more overt forms of discrimination, but problems connected with prices and making ends meet.

A black taxi driver in Atlanta said: "You got the money, you can go anywhere in Atlanta. They're glad to take it. But making that money—that's your problem."

Money is only part of the story, however, many blacks with money say, for instance, that they dine at predominantly black restaurants simply because they are more comfortable. There is still a risk—slowly decreasing, but still present—of encountering hostility in a "white" restaurant.

One day last month, two black men and a white couple ate lunch together at Galatoire's, one of the French Quarter's favorite restaurants for several generations.

## Truce Through Football

The middle-aged white waiter made no attempt to hide his hostility—glowering bristly, throwing the menus onto the table, speaking gruffly—until one of the black men asked him the score of a football game that was in progress elsewhere in the city.

The waiter relaxed at once, apparently deciding that anyone who liked football must be worthy of Galatoire's, and served the rest of the meal with courtesy and even friendliness.

New Orleans recently enacted a public accommodations ordinance that opened bars, among other things, to all races. The Federal Civil Rights Law of 1964 prohibits discrimination in restaurants, but not bars, and most Southern bars that cater to whites are still segregated.

In spite of the alarm of white bar owners over the New Orleans ordinance, blacks here have not abandoned their own favorite neighborhood bars to drink in "white" neighborhood bars. At least six Southern cities now have public accommodations ordinances, and the experience reportedly has been the same in the other cities.

## Unpredictability on Road

Another problem for blacks in the South—an ordeal until recently—has been traveling.

Black travelers were welcome only at clearly identified black motels and restaurants. Many service stations would not allow them to use their rest rooms.

Change began with the civil rights movement, and the black traveler then entered an era of uncertainty. Some motels and restaurants would welcome him and some would not, and the only way he could find out was to stop and risk being insulted.

The unpredictability at times reached absurd proportions. Addie Ringfield, a black secretary in Atlanta, recalls stopping for gasoline at a service station in Birmingham a few years ago. She asked the attendant where the soft drinks were and he replied: "The black Coke machine is in the back." Sure enough, the station had two machines with signs saying "white" and "colored."

During that period it was common to find three rest rooms at Southern service stations, numbered "1," "2" and "3." "1" was for white women, "2" for white men and "3" for Negroes, both sexes.

Some service station rest rooms are still kept locked. But in many cases, the locks are more to please white customers



One thing whites and blacks may do in the South is eat together, as here at a counter on Canal Street, New Orleans

than to keep black customers out.

Black travelers are now welcome at almost all chain motels and restaurants. Middle-class blacks use them regularly. There is still some risk of hostility at locally owned motels, especially the smaller ones, but that seems to be gradually disappearing.

Those who travel by bus—and most bus passengers seem to be black now—find that bus station waiting rooms, rest rooms and restaurants are generally desegregated. The anger of the whites who attacked the "Freedom Riders" of the early 1960's has given way to acceptance.

Ten whites and 25 blacks sat matter-of-factly together at noon Wednesday in the waiting room of the Trailways bus station here.

An elderly white woman with a handful of religious tracts sat in earnest conversation with a middle-aged black man. A white toddler wandered away from his mother to play with two black children and the white mother, after glancing up to see where he was, let him be.

White Southerners have resisted every change in the racial status quo, but once the change has been established, they have tended to accept it.

Movie theaters, for example, were once living caricatures of the segregated system. Negroes were generally shunted to the balcony, or, if the theater had more than one, to the highest balcony. The theaters in Lumberton, N.C., used to have five separate sections—for whites, blacks and three kinds of Indians.

## Black Balconies Gone

Movies now are integrated everywhere and blacks go to the theaters in fairly large numbers. The balcony for blacks has gone the way of the back of the bus.

The public accommodations that remain segregated are usually kept that way more by custom or social pressure than by vestiges of Jim Crow law.

A great many publicly owned swimming pools that were closed or sold to avoid integration have never been reopened, although some have. Hundreds of little towns still have empty pools, blue-painted scars lying dry and tacky behind rusty chain-link fences.

Some county officials still segregate their courthouse rest rooms on the sly by locking them and placing the key in the trust of the county clerk or the sheriff.

A few laundromats are segregated by force of custom, although most of the signs saying "white only—maids in uniform allowed" have been taken down.

Some physicians still keep segregated waiting rooms and dental care is not available to Negroes in some small towns unless there is a Negro dentist.

White and black children in desegregated schools seem to be getting along more cordially than in the early years of desegregation, except in certain social matters where their elders take a hand. Many school dances that were once held in the school gymnasium are now held in hotels, country clubs and other adult havens.

The children, themselves, fall out more frequently over such things as singing "Dixie" at pep rallies and flying the Confederate flag from the school flagpole.

## Schools Jobs Resented

Negroes also resent having black principals and other supervisors demoted to "assistant principals" to save white people the embarrassment of working for black people in the newly integrated schools.

Racist attitudes in white teachers continue to depress black students. A white teacher at a recently desegregated school in Jackson, Miss., wore a bright red dress to school one day last week and explained to her fellow teachers that it was because "red is the niggers' favorite color."

Another area of Southern change is housing. Integrated neighborhoods were once common, but the trend now is toward residential segregation, especially in the cities.

Thus, the growing black middle-class is faced with the irony of being increasingly isolated.



In Hammond, La., Jessie Carter has moved his family from one of a row of rundown houses to a home bought recently with the aid of a Federal Housing Administration loan.

lated from the white community as it becomes increasingly able to afford the white man's standard of living.

In southwest Atlanta, for example, whites are continuing to leave their expensive ranch houses and hilly, pine-covered lots almost as fast as affluent blacks move in.

## Small Towns Affected

Even the small towns are not immune from the trend. Hammond, La., is a town of about 10,000 persons, about 35 per cent of whom are black. The two races once lived together like pepper and salt, but the town is now becoming residentially segregated.

Rudolph Gibson, 41 years old, the black principal of an elementary school that was fully integrated this year, lives in a section of Hammond that Southerners would call "nice."

When he moved there in 1957, the neighborhood was three-fourths white. Now it is four-fifths black.

Because he is solidly middle-class, Mr. Gibson and his family no longer suffer many of the affronts that were once part of every Southern black person's lot. But what about a more ordinary family in the same town?

Jessie Carter is 36 years old. He works as a laborer at a concrete plant in New Orleans, a two-hour truck ride to the South. He has lived in and around Hammond all his life, except for a brief stay in Lansing, Mich., when he worked in a factory that made automobile parts. He has a wife and five children.

Around the corner from Mr. Carter's house begins a row of rundown houses that continues for nearly half a mile. Many of Hammond's poorer Negroes live there.

## The Good Comes First

The Carters escaped from there only four months ago and moved into a new house bought with a low-cost loan from the Federal Housing Administration.

When asked to describe how things had changed for black people in Hammond, Mr. Carter's first response was the same as that of many other blacks across the South. He talked about the improvements that had been made.

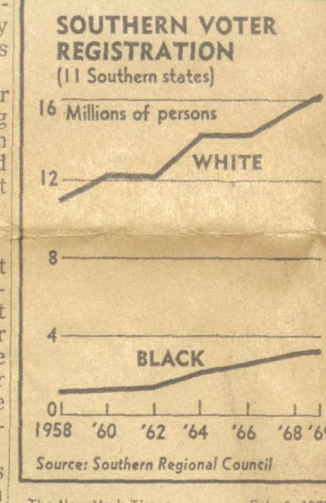
He mentioned that his children went to integrated schools this year for the first time.

"I can go anywhere I want to," he said. "The movie theater is integrated. The cafes, everything, I can vote. I don't think we could vote in 1960, could we?" He glanced at his wife.

"No, don't you know. If you didn't spell the name of the parish right, they'd turn you down."

Asked if anything still bothered him, Mr. Carter pondered a moment and then said he wished he had a better job. There is no good work for Negroes around Hammond, he said.

He earns \$2.38 an hour. He does not remember how much he was earning in 1960, but he recalls that he was doing the same kind of work and making almost that much. Mrs. Carter works in a motel laun-



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dry to stretch the family income.

Mr. Carter said he had the feeling that whites still got the better jobs around Hammond.

The Carters were asked how they got along with the white people in Hammond. Fine, they said; just fine.

Mr. Carter left the room for a few minutes. Mrs. Carter, who had fallen silent and reflective, gestured toward the back of the house where her husband had gone and said, "He went down to the ice machine one night a few weeks ago and some white boys started throwing bottles at his truck."

She said that she and four of her children went to a wedding Christmas Eve at a church down the street. As they were walking home on the shoulder of the street, which has no sidewalk, a car carrying two young white men sped toward them with its lights off.

"I snatched the children in the ditch," she said. "I just had time to grab the children out of the way, and they went flying by, laughing and squealing."

Mr. Carter, who had returned and had sat listening, then recalled that two or three months ago, while the whites were still angry over the integration of the town's schools, someone fired a shot into the home of a Negro principal, a person Mr. Carter admired.

## Desire for Revenge

He said that made him feel like getting a gun and shooting back.

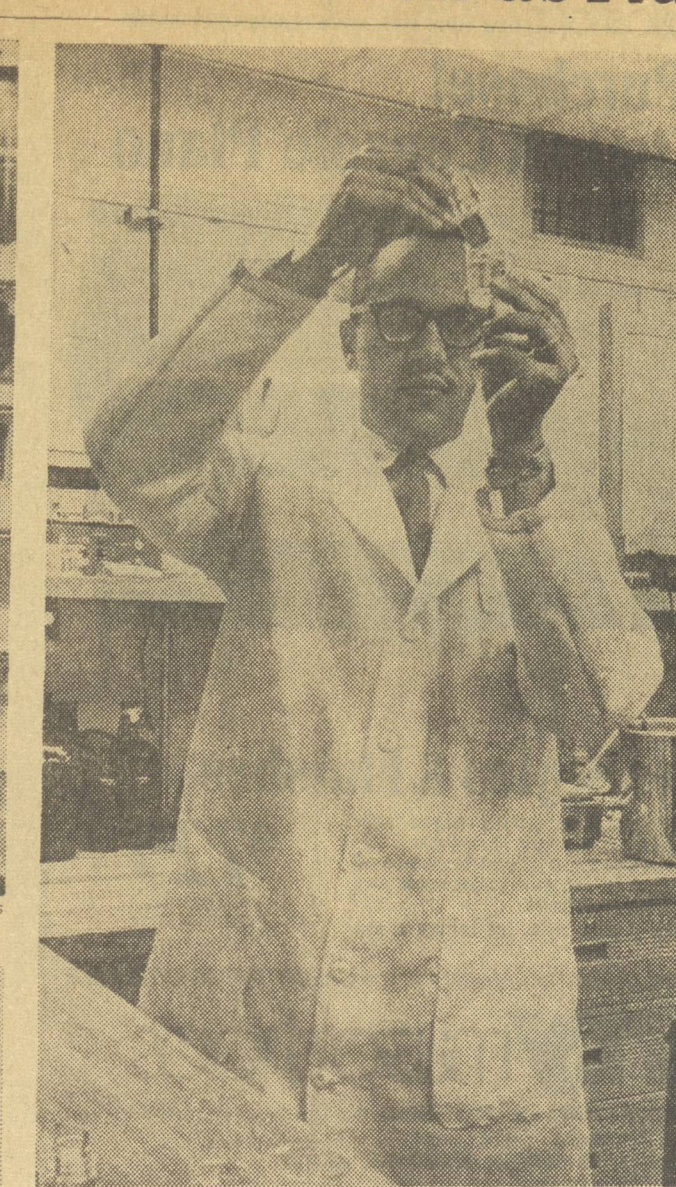
"You are not going to solve anything that way," his wife said sharply. "You might end up shooting somebody that didn't have nothing to do with it."

"I know that," Mr. Carter said. He tapped his finger against his slender chest. "But I'd feel better by doing it."

Mr. Carter, however, does not think of himself as angry.

He grew up in a shack that had walls papered with old newspapers. His new house, the first good house he ever lived in, sits on a spacious lot facing a paved street. It has a brick front and wooden sides. It contains a television set, an automatic washer and a telephone—none of which the Carters had 10 years ago.

The living room is spotless



Albert Wheaton is a chemist at a General Electric plant in Lynchburg, Va. Many jobs are opening up for Negroes.

crimes at last are being punished with some frequency.

Nevertheless, twice as many Negroes as whites still sit in the death rows of Dixie's prisons, and nearly everybody knows that. So an enraged black man will just naturally pause a moment longer in this part of the country, even in 1970.

A young militant black in New Orleans, who asked that his name not be used to protect him from what he believes would be undue attention from the authorities, said recently that Southern schools, even those that are desegregated, were filled with "institutionalized racism."

"There is no school in America that teaches blacks to read," he said. "They are simply not interested in blacks. There is no black poetry, no black plays. They teach Shakespeare but not LeRoi Jones. I never read a book until I dropped out of school."

## Anger Over Police

Probably the greatest source of resentment among young blacks is the police. The New Orleans man said the police had beaten 14 blacks during the last six months in his ward alone. One, he said, was a black man who tried to buy a drink at a "white" bar.

As in Northern cities, the resentment of the black young in Southern cities is more and more frequently taken out on any hapless white who might be passing through a black neighborhood.

This week, a white woman and her two children were attacked by a group of black youths as they walked home from a carnival parade here. One of the white children was stabbed and paralyzed.

Politically, it is hard to judge the effect of the increas-

ing black influence in the region. In some places there has been no influence and no effect. For example, in Plaquemine Parish, La., where the heirs of the late Leander Perez, the segregationist boss, still rule, only 184 of nearly 3,000 eligible Negroes are registered to vote.

In other places, like Fayette, Miss., and Greene County, Ala., black majorities have voted in virtually all-black slates.

## Small Representation

The more typical case lies between those extremes. A great many cities and counties have elected to their city councils, school boards and other public bodies one or two Negroes—just enough to give blacks their first representation in public offices.

The effect of this kind of representation varies greatly. The white majorities of some Mississippi school boards that have a single black member reportedly meet secretly and make decisions without them.

In other places, black officials report that white officials are cooperative and that improvements for blacks are already being produced by the mere presence of a black official in a policy-making body.

Some gains for blacks can be seen even in places like Hammond, La., that have no black officials. Black voter registration and voting have gone up steadily in Hammond, enabling established black leaders to convert the increased political power into material gains for black people.

Perhaps the main black leader in Hammond is Levoice Harvey, a heavy, well-satisfied man who operates on the theory of getting his voters what they want.

One of the things they want is better jobs. Scorning demon-

strations and talk of "revolution," Mr. Harvey has negotiated with the white establishment and produced clerical jobs for Negroes in most of Hammond's downtown stores and in both the county and city government.

The Harvey method has achieved similar results in many places in the South. Very little direct action civil rights activity is to be found anywhere in the South today.

It appears that economic necessity will finally open more jobs for blacks in the South than political power will. Several industries, particularly textile and furniture manufacturers, are losing white workers to higher-paying industries and are turning to blacks to replace them.

The Southern Furniture Manufacturers Association estimates that 20 to 25 per cent of the furniture makers' labor in the South is now black. The blacks reportedly are placed in the various skilled jobs without discrimination. Supervisory positions are another matter. Practically all white-collar people are still white.

Black gains are being made largely in spite of organized labor. A report recently released by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission showed the following percentages of minority memberships in the mechanical trades unions of these major cities: Memphis, 0.9, New Orleans, 0.3, Atlanta, 0.1 and Houston and Birmingham, 0.

The latest Federal reports show that blacks still earn only 54 per cent as much money as whites in the South, compared with 59 per cent nationwide. Twice as large a percentage of blacks as whites are unemployed in the South.

Much of the black anger in the South is a result of the difficulty many have in finding jobs.

John Lewis, one of the founders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and now director of the Community Organization Project for the Southern Regional Council, sees hundreds of black men lined up on street corners outside Atlanta's employment agencies every morning.

"You see guys racing and fighting to get on a pick-up truck to go to work, to get something to do," he said.

For all the problems, fewer Southern blacks seem to be leaving for the North and West. Census Bureau figures show that black out-migration from the South has fallen off 50 per cent since 1940.

Vernon E. Jordan Jr., the black director of the Voter Education Project of the Southern Regional Council, believes that the preservation of hope is the main thing that distinguishes black Southerners from black Northerners.

Mr. Jordan was interviewed recently in the Parasol Lounge of Atlanta's plush hotel, the Regency Hyatt House.

Referring to the gains of the Southern civil rights movement and increased black political participation, he said, "The difference between Negroes in the South and the North is that Negroes in the South have won a victory."

"What we've got to do now is maximize that victory, or we may end up like the Negroes in the North. You ask a Negro in Chicago, 'What have you won lately?'"

He shrugged and turned his palms up, then let them fall on the elegant barroom table.

"It was a victory just to get to Chicago from Coahoma County," he said.