LUNCH-COUNTER DESEGREGATION

IN

WINSTON-SALEM NORTH CAROLINA

By

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WAKE FOREST COLLEGE

July 25, 1960
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Statement of The Mayor of Winston-Salem

For the past eleven years it has been my good pleasure to serve the city of Winston-Salem as Mayor. During that time I have had the opportunity of becoming more intimately acquainted with the character of the city and its population. Winston-Salem is truly a city with a heart. It seeks to provide the best possible facilities for the enrichment of the lives of all its citizens. It insists on fair and just treatment to all people. It is willing to make wise and necessary changes. Thus I feel that our city justly merits its recent award as an All-American City.

When the time appeared appropriate I appointed a Goodwill Committee to give careful study to the lunch counter problem which came to our attention early in February of this year. I am proud of the work and accomplishments of that committee. It served as industriously and intelligently as any committee I have ever appointed. It endeavored to examine carefully every possible facet of the problem. I am convinced that the conclusions which the committee and the merchants reached were fair, just, and wise. They were in keeping with the character of our city and its people.

Also, I take considerable pride in the manner in which our people have accepted the change, and they, both Negroes and whites, have done so in a calm and courteous manner.

MARSHALL C. KURFEES, Mayor
THE CITY OF WINSTON-SALEM

Winston-Salem is largely an industrial city having a population of approximately 110,000 people, Negroes numbering about 46,000, and whites 64,000. By both Negroes and whites it is generally recognized as being a community where reasonable racial harmony exists. Its citizens take considerable pride in that fact. The city, on the basis of fair-play and expediency, has, when the occasion arose, been willing to break "the cake of custom." Numerous and significant changes have been made in customs involving interracial relations—some voluntarily and others by request, some freely and others grudgingly. The important fact to note is that they have been made, and all without incident.

The following are some of the alterations in interracial customs which the city has made: desegregation of the following: the public schools (if only token), public libraries, city buses, ministers' conferences, the public golf course; removal of signs indicating separate restrooms and drinking fountains in public buildings; abandonment of separate seating arrangements at the Reynolds Auditorium, the Coliseum, the baseball park, and community center; employment of some Negroes as mail carriers, police officers, and members of the fire department. Both Salem College and Wake Forest College have concerts and lectures that are open to the public and all people are seated on an integrated basis. Each school invites and entertains integrated learned societies and other educational groups. Wake Forest meets and entertains on its campus desegregated debating and athletic teams.

Winston-Salem was one of the eleven cities in the United States accorded All-American status for 1959 by Look magazine and the National Municipal League.

Eating Facilities for Negroes

Before desegregation of the lunch counters occurred two variety stores had separate sit-down counters, with complete menus,
for Negroes. Both of these stores, as well as several others, maintain non-segregated stand-up counters where drinks, sandwiches, pies, and cakes are served. At some of those counters Negro waitresses are employed. At most of the other downtown eating places Negroes may enter and purchase what they want on a take-out basis.

Bordering the main downtown section is the principal Negro business district. Several eating establishments are maintained in that area.

The Demonstrations

Protest against segregated service at sit-down lunch counters began in Winston-Salem about noon on February 8, 1960. A Negro transportation worker, Carl Matthews, a college graduate, took a seat in a variety store at a white lunch counter and requested food service. He was not served. After an hour or so of sitting he was served water. In the meantime he sat and smoked. He described his action as part of a Christian movement seeking fair treatment for Negroes.

Later in the afternoon of Matthews' sit-in demonstration, after the news had spread by radio broadcasts, he was joined by about twenty-five Negro sympathizers, including students from Winston-Salem Teachers College. Also, two teen-age white boys and two white men took seats at a counter and waved Confederate flags. They identified themselves as being from a town about twenty miles away. One Negro distributed American flags to the demonstrators.

A Negro boy bought a Confederate flag from a white boy, then tore it up. Matthews, the leader of the sit-ins, did not approve of that action. He said: "We are not here to start any violence or any trouble. We are here just to get something to eat . . . Don't say anything to people with Confederate flags no matter what they do to you. This is a peaceful movement just to get decent treatment for Negro customers."

1Data for much of this section were obtained from the Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel.
Some of the demonstrators who later joined Matthews said they were a part of a group of 100 or more persons who met Sunday, February 7, to plan such action, "but Carl beat us to the punch."

Objectives

In a statement given to reporters, Matthews said his objectives were as follows:

1. "To gain freedom for my people in every walk of life."
2. "To test the authenticity of 'The All-American City.'"
3. "To assure the students of A&T College and Bennett College of Greensboro (where sit-ins began on February 1, that they are not alone in their stand."
4. "To keep democracy alive."

Matthews further stated:

"My stand here today is symbolic to Daniel in the Lion's Den, but it truly represents the American Negro face to face with tyranny and being an American. I will not accept a back seat. I will not accept being cast aside. I will not accept being ignored because I am a Negro. With the help of God I intend to vigorously exercise my democratic and civil rights to the fullest extent. This is my city, an All American City. . . Today, I will either get served at the counter at which I am seated or get thrown out, or stay seated from the time I arrived here until the store closes. . . ."

The sit-in continued until the bell rang for the store to close at the end of the day. Matthews gathered the demonstrators around him and led them in repeating aloud the 23rd Psalm.

During the following month, February 9 to March 8, the demonstrations followed, in general, the usual pattern of those in other southern cities. Most of the stores involved were determined to keep their lunch counters open. The Negro protesters were determined to continue demonstrations whenever the counters were open on a segregated basis. There were numerous re-openings of the lunch counters and then immediate re-closings when the sit-ins were resumed.
22 Persons Arrested

The management of the stores followed the policy of avoiding arrests. However, the manager of one variety store departed from that policy on February 23 when he had twenty-two persons arrested and charged with trespassing at his white lunch counter. (Signs at the entrance to the lunch counter stated that the area was private and was for store employees and their guests only.) Included in the arrested group were eleven Negro students of Winston-Salem Teachers College, ten white students from Wake Forest College, and Carl Matthews, the Chairman of the Negro Passive Resistance Protest Group (as the protest movement was then called).

The entire group, charged with trespassing, was convicted on March 2 in the Municipal Court. The judge first suspended judgment in all twenty-two cases, but after the counsel for the twelve Negroes gave notice of appeal to the Superior Court, he revised his decision and continued prayer for judgment for twelve months. The result was that the twenty-two defendants were guilty as charged but the convictions could not be appealed since no final judgment had been reached.

March 7 Demonstration

On March 7 the Negro college students staged their biggest and largest demonstration up to that time. Approximately seventy-five demonstrators, carrying placards and singing songs, paraded in the downtown area for two hours. They were strongly warned by the chief of police that another such demonstration would result in arrests on charges of staging a parade without a permit.

During the course of the demonstration on March 7 Negro protestors were served at a sit-down lunch counter in a large hardware store. However, before opening for business the next morning all the stools at the counter were removed and the store began operating its lunch counter on a policy of serving all customers on a stand-up basis.
Behavior of Negroes and Whites

Throughout the various demonstrations both white and Negro people behaved themselves remarkably well. There was a minimum of heckling and jeering from either group. No serious incident occurred at any time. In any event, it appeared that the city police had the situation well in hand. Plain clothesmen and police officers were carefully instructed and stationed in strategic areas.

Mass Meetings

At various times mass meetings of the demonstrators were held. At one of the earlier meetings 500 (estimated) Negro college students and high school students pledged themselves to continue their “passive resistance” movement against segregated lunch counters in downtown stores until the counters became desegregated. At that meeting a number of local representatives of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were on the program. They assured the students of local and national support from the NAACP.

Boycott

In addition to demonstrations the Negro protest leaders called for a boycott. The press reported the president of the Winston-Salem chapter of the NAACP as saying that the ministers of all Negro churches in the city had been asked to urge their congregations to boycott the stores with segregated lunch counters. He further said: “We don’t call it a boycott. We call it a protest.” (There are indications that the boycott reduced considerably the business of the stores involved.)

Protestors Seek a Mediator

The demonstrators several times sought unsuccessfully for someone to organize and mediate a meeting between them and the store managers in an attempt to resolve the antisegregation movement on the basis of some mutual agreement. The leaders of the protest never met, as a group, with the managers of the stores where the protests occurred.
Protestors Not Subject to Interference

At no time were the demonstrators subjected to any interference from college or high school faculties and administrative officers or public officials. They were not advised to either refrain from or continue demonstrations that were of an orderly nature and in keeping with city ordinances.

Attitude of Citizens and Officials

The attitude of most of the white community leaders in Winston-Salem was that the lunch counter problem involved a policy matter that would ultimately have to be resolved by each individual business establishment. However, as the situation continued to develop into a serious problem involving civic peace and order, some official views were expressed.

On February 27 the Chief of Police, James I. Waller, said that, as he saw it then, the stores had three choices:
1. Keep the counters closed.
2. Open them and serve customers on an integrated basis.
3. Open them on a segregated basis and continue having trespassers arrested.

On the same day, Mayor Marshall C. Kurfees said:

“The stores can do one of two things. They can keep the counters closed, or they can open and feed everybody.”

Reactions Toward the Protest Movement

At no time was there any extremely vocal or organized effort directed against the desegregation of the lunch counter movement. There were those who were opposed to the movement but they seemed to be content to express their views in private conversation and through “Letters to the Editor” in the local papers. The Goodwill Committee, that was eventually established, received surprisingly few letters or phone calls.

It appears that the Negro leaders of the community, without exception, were in accord with the objectives of the protesters.
Sympathetic Expressions

There were numerous private and public expressions which gave sympathetic support to the movement. Given below are some of the public expressions which gave support to the Negro students and their objectives.

Motion of Ministers’ Fellowship

On March 7, the interracial and interdenominational Forsyth Ministers’ Fellowship passed a motion (although not unanimously) to endorse the city’s Unitarian Fellowship’s statement in extending “sympathy and admiration” to the Negroes involved in lunch counter sit-down demonstrations in Winston-Salem.

Petition of College Professors

On March 8, the following petition signed by 60 Wake Forest faculty members was sent to the managers of five local stores where “sit-ins” had occurred:

We, members of the Wake Forest College faculty, speaking as private citizens, urge the managers of local stores operating lunch counters to exercise their legal right to open such counters to all customers without reference to race.

Although the stores in question are privately owned, they invite the patronage of the general public. In stores open to the general public, no customer has, and certainly no customer expects, the privileges of the private club. The customer recognizes that he shops and lunches “in public” rather than “in private” when he is in your store. More and more, our citizens are accepting the view that “public” segregation on the basis of race is unfair to Negro citizens, that it robs them of their dignity as individuals and as a group, that it is undemocratic, and that it is un-Christian.

Any change of habit or custom requires “getting used to,” but we feel that the citizens of this community will accept the change rather quickly once it is put into effect.
Editorial of Local Paper

On March 17, a local paper, The Twin City Sentinel, carried the following editorial:

When Lunch Counters Reopen, They Should Serve All Customers

Negroes who seek service without discrimination at lunch counters in Winston-Salem variety stores now have the backing of two substantial groups in the community. Last week a majority of members present at a meeting of the Forsyth Ministers Fellowship expressed "sympathy and admiration" for the lunch counter protest. On Tuesday, 60 members of the Wake Forest College faculty, speaking as "private citizens," asked the managers of five stores to open their lunch counters to all customers, regardless of race.

Winston-Salem's experience in the field of race relations tend to support the belief of the Wake Forest faculty members that the community would accept the change rather quickly, once it is put into effect. This community, moreover, has avoided the disorder that has accompanied the lunch counter protest in other Southern cities. One reason we have not had serious trouble here is that the store managers have had the good judgment to keep the lunch counters closed most of the time since the protest started, rather than to try to operate them on a segregated basis.

It may be wise to keep the lunch counters closed here for the time being. But it is logical to suggest that when they are opened again that they be opened on a desegregated basis.

Such action will not solve all of Winston-Salem's race problems. They cannot be solved here or anywhere else by a single stroke. But such a move would tell the Negro citizens that the white community is receptive to reasonable requests for removing racial discrimination. That in itself could advance the cause of good race relations in the community.
A private business, of course, has the legal right to serve or to refuse any customer. Unwanted customers can be arrested for trespass if they disobey an order to leave the premises. But arrests for trespass are not the answer to the lunch counter protest.

The current protests are directed at business establishments that cater, in all departments except one, to customers without regard to race or color. The Negroes thus can logically complain of unfair discrimination when they are segregated or denied service at the lunch counter.

Winston-Salem has already moved away from enforced segregation in its public school system, on city buses, on its public golf courses and in Memorial Coliseum. Desegregation in these areas has been accomplished with little or no fanfare. It is an accomplished and accepted fact. We would reasonably expect a similar result if lunch counters were added to the list.

Desegregation of the Lunch Counters: How It Came About

Approximately two weeks after the sit-in demonstrations began in Winston-Salem the city manager, the secretary of the Retail Merchants Association and the writer of this report discussed the possible approaches to an objective and thorough study and possible solutions to the lunch counter problem. These three persons and the chief of police held a meeting with the managers of the principal stores involved. It was agreed at that meeting that a factual study of the situation should be made. There, however, was some question about who should sponsor and underwrite the study. With the encouragement of most of the merchants involved and a number of leading citizens this writer agreed to make the study on his own and without compensation. He spent approximately a month conferring with leading Negro and white citizens and store managers, conducting an opinion poll among variety store customers, and preparing a re-
port on his findings. About the time the report was completed, at an informal meeting of several interested citizens, it was agreed that the mayor should be requested to appoint a committee to hear the report and then do whatever it could in helping resolve the problem.

Goodwill Committee Appointed

On April 1 the mayor appointed a committee, called the Goodwill Committee, composed of ten Negro men and ten white men. The ten white members were: Gordon Hanes, president of Hanes Hosiery Mills; Joe S. Rice, president of Dr. Pepper Bottling Company; James G. Hanes, formerly head of Hanes Hosiery Mills and formerly a County Commissioner for three decades; J. Ernest Yarbrough, secretary of the Retail Merchants Association and member of the City-County Planning Board; Dr. Clarence H. Patrick, Chairman of the department of Sociology of Wake Forest College; Paul Essex, assistant superintendent of public relations at Western Electric; Irving Carlyle, a member of the legal firm of Womble, Carlyle, Sandridge, and Rice, city attorney, and a former State Senator; James A. Gray, publisher of the Journal and Sentinel; E. S. Heefner. Jr., Judge of Forsyth County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court; and Dr. Mark Depp, pastor of Centenary Methodist Church.

The Negro members were: Kenneth R. William, professor at Winston-Salem Teachers College and former City Alderman; Curtis Todd, attorney; the Reverend Jerry Drayton, pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church; the Reverend David R. Hedgley, pastor of the First Baptist Church; A. H. Anderson, principal of Atkins High School; Sam Harvey, executive director of the Winston-Salem Urban League; Edward E. Hill, president of Winston Mutual Life Insurance Company; C. I. Sawyer, teacher at Paisley Junior High School; Dr. E. L. Davis, chief of the medical staff of Kate Bitting Reynolds Memorial Hospital; and the Reverend H. W. Wiley, pastor of Second Mount Zion Baptist Church.

First Meeting of Committee

The Committee met on April 2 and heard the following report:
A STUDY OF THE LUNCH COUNTER SITUATION IN WINSTON-SALEM, N. C.

By CLARENCE H. PATRICK

The Larger Scene

The question of beside whom people sit at lunch counters is only one of the problems of the larger southern scene—a rapidly changing scene of which we are all inextricably a part. All but gone are many of the conditions and ways of our fathers and grandfathers. The South as they knew it, the land of cotton, sharecropping, salt pork, meal and molasses, has largely given way. The South today is one of the fastest, if not the fastest, changing regions of the United States. Trim modern factories, schools, hospitals, churches, and homes are springing up everywhere. The result is inevitable—a changing people. Among both Negroes and whites a new type of generation has appeared which stresses the importance of status, freedom, and human dignity.

More and more, to the new generations, the patterns of adjustment, or accommodation, which were an integral part of the Old South are no longer regarded as acceptable or workable. Ancient and established customs and traditions are being modified. Old ways are breaking down faster than new ways are being established. Many of these changes have not appeared uniformly either in degree or time in all parts of the South; changes are occurring at a more rapid pace in some states than in others. There are significant differences even between the various sections of some states.

1A second section, "The Local Scene" is not included since it is virtually the same as section one of the present document.
What the Negro Wants

The lunch counter demonstrations and "sit-ins" by Negro students which have occurred this year in Winston-Salem and numerous other cities are evidences of the new generation. The desire for lunch counter service on a non-segregated basis is a genuine desire. However, it would be short-sighted not to recognize it as a symbol of a more far reaching matter, the desire of the Negro to be treated no differently from anybody else in public. The Negro does not want to be singled out for differential treatment—segregated service. To him segregation is a form of ostracism implying inferiority. Thus he is asking for the same treatment—no better, no worse, not even equal if it is separate. This all adds up to the fact that the new generation Negro is jealous of his self respect, dignity and honor.

Public Opinion (Local)

What the variety stores will do or can do about the lunch counter situation depends considerably upon local public sentiment. Obviously, their success as business concerns rests largely upon a favorable public opinion. It often is difficult to know what the public actually thinks. Some segments of this community have expressed their sentiment on the lunch counter problem. A number of people have spoken publicly, petitioned, and written. As this study progressed it became evident that we needed to find out what the people who trade at the variety stores think. Thus, two types of interviews were used to obtain the opinions of the stores' customers. One was a brief interview which elicited a spontaneous, off-the-cuff response. The other was a depth interview, involving more time and more probing questions, which obtained a considered opinion. The study began with the depth interview which was used again (with the same results) when we saw the responses to the two types of interviews varied considerably. The persons interviewed were white customers chosen at random during shopping hours.
The responses received to the following statement (made in both types of interviews)¹ were:

The variety stores want to find a workable solution to the lunch counter problem. If they decide to open the lunch counters and serve everybody without regard to race:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>790 Brief Interviewsᵃ</th>
<th>52 Depth Interviewsᵇ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you think most people would accept that plan?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided or Don't Know</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you ever eat at these stores?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Would you accept the plan?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided or Don't Know</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Would you continue to trade at these stores?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided or Don't Know</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Made in four variety stores in Winston-Salem, N. C., March, 1960.

²Made by Dr. Patrick's Social Research Class, (15 seniors), Wake Forest College.

³Made by Dr. Patrick and Dr. E. Pendleton Banks, anthropologist, Wake Forest College.

In interpreting the results of this survey caution must be exercised. It cannot be said that people will always behave in terms of their stated opinions. In fact, it is well known that people generally behave more liberally than their commitments would indicate. For example, several years ago the Army polled sample groups of men in several divisions to discover how the attitudes of men who had served with Negroes differed from those who had not. In divisions where there were no Negroes, 62 per cent
of the soldiers said they would dislike very much to serve in mixed companies. Of white soldiers who had actually served in the same companies with Negroes, only 7 per cent said they disliked it very much.

**Possible Courses of Action**

The lunch counter problem must be settled eventually on some basis. Finding an acceptable and workable way out of the dilemma will be more difficult for some communities than others. In any case the alternatives are limited. Serious consideration, for very practical reasons, cannot be given to some suggestions that have been advanced. For example, a stand-up policy, that may work satisfactorily at a snack-bar, does not seem feasible for a lunch counter. A sandwich and a drink can be handled while standing up. Managing to eat a plate lunch in a standing position would be awkward, to say the least. Thus, the choices of action in Winston-Salem are few, possibly three or less.

One course is to maintain segregation. That policy would probably result in continued demonstrations, tests of strength, development of an atmosphere where potential violence would be latent; it also could alienate a large segment of our Negro population.

A second choice is to eliminate the lunch counters. For a community to follow the principles and philosophy which such a course implies could be disastrous. It would mean, if we were consistent, that we would keep on abolishing something each time a problem arises—and we can be sure problems will continue to arise. The end result of this course might very well be that few, if any, of our basic community services, agencies, and institutions would be left.

A third, and final, alternative is equal treatment to all at the same lunch counters on a sit-down basis. If our citizens are as sensible and manifest the same attitude of fair play and good manners as they have in the past, this plan could succeed. Without a large measure of tolerance and willingness to make adjustments, it probably would fail.
Committee Appoints Subcommittee

After the Goodwill Committee heard the report on the lunch counter problem, the majority of the members, at first, seemed to favor recommending that portion of the report which offered as one possible solution "equal treatment to all at the same lunch counters on a sit-down basis." However, several members wisely (as later developments in Winston-Salem and elsewhere indicated) persuaded the Committee that such action would be hasty and ill-advised without first conferring with the managers of the stores involved. A subcommittee of five (two Negro and three white persons) was then named to confer with the merchants. Also, the Goodwill Committee passed a motion which urged that there be no more demonstrations by any group and that the store managers not open their sit-down counters until a definite recommendation was made by the Committee. All parties, except two or three drug stores, agreed to that recommendation. Until the agreement was suspended on May 9, there were no further demonstrations and the variety store sit-down counters remained closed.

Subcommittee Works With Merchants

The subcommittee met numerous times with the merchants individually and as a group. It also conferred by phone, in cooperation with local managers, with the district and home offices of the variety stores.

The members of the subcommittee reached what was probably an extremely important decision. It decided that it would be unwise and perhaps fatal to make any sort of recommendation which the merchants could justly feel was something which was being imposed upon them. The committee concluded that its function should be to discuss every possible facet of the problem with the merchants and then with them reach a mutual agreement as to what seemed to be the most intelligent, fair, and workable solution. Significantly at one of the early meetings with the merchants, the manager of one of the variety stores proposed that the eventual solution would be desegregation of the sit-down counters.
Solution Almost Reached

At various times it appeared that a solution to the problem was imminent. The principal stores with sit-down lunch counters indicated a willingness to desegregate their counters on the condition that virtually all stores that sell merchandise and food on a sit-down basis follow the same policy. It was at this point that considerable difficulty was encountered. A list of stores that might be expected to follow the plan was given to the subcommittee. It had conferences with the managers of those stores. Some, two or three, non-variety stores, maintained that because of their unique situation they could not and probably should not be expected to go along with the desegregation plan.

Merchants Become Impatient

In the meantime five or six weeks had passed with the lunch counters of the variety stores closed and with no demonstrations. (Overlooked by some was the agreement of the protestors not to demonstrate during that period.) Some of the managers were beginning to think that the protest movement had about spent itself. Some drug stores were observed doing an impressive business at their lunch counters. The variety store managers were understandably becoming impatient. They naturally wanted to reopen their lunch counters and get back into business.

The subcommittee held a meeting with the merchants on May 7. A final report on the stores that were willing to go along with the desegregation plan was given. The store managers present said the list was not sufficiently inclusive and thus without others they were not willing to desegregate their lunch counters. The subcommittee felt that it could do no more under the circumstances at that time. It was disappointed but did not have a feeling that the situation was hopeless. It simply admitted that, as yet, a solution had not and could not be reached; that the situation would probably get worse before it improved. The stores and the protestors were released from the agreement not to reopen the counters and not to demonstrate.
Counters Re-Open; Demonstrations Resumed

The stores re-opened their segregated lunch counters on May 9. The Negro protestors renewed their efforts by staging their largest demonstration on May 10. Several hundred protestors marched into one store after another, milling around, making noises, and handling merchandise. The situation was sufficiently grave to cause genuine apprehension. The city manager and the chief of police were alert and with forthrightness and good sense restored order. They entered one of the stores where several hundred protestors (according to newspaper reports) had congregated and addressed them by saying that Winston-Salem has a city ordinance against such crowds which constitute a parade. (They had been so warned by the chief of police in February.) The city manager said: "I suggest that you break up into small groups and then stay downtown or go anywhere you wish ... But do not be parading in such a large crowd." A local paper reported: "Most of the Negroes booed and shouted loudly. A leader, Donald Bradley, jumped forward and said, 'He says there's a law against a parade. I say the Constitution gives us equal rights.'" Police immediately arrested Bradley and took him to jail, charging him with participating in an unlawful congregation without a permit. (Bradley was convicted, fined $50.00, later reduced to $25.00, and costs and given a 30-day suspended sentence.) There were no reports of any heckling and no angry vocal exchanges between white and Negro spectators during the demonstration.

The protestors carried signs which read:

"Segregation must go, go, go. We fought together, died together; why can't we eat together. Stand up for America plus equality. Does slavery still exist? We cook it, why can't we eat it together. We want first class citizenship . . . ."

The demonstrators left the store and moved to the City Hall. The city manager told them that he would be glad to have a committee of their selection in his chambers. About twelve demonstrators went into the city manager's office and talked with him and the chief of police. As a result of the conference, one of the protesting leaders issued a statement saying, "We are calling off
Committee Meets Again; Decision Is Reached

The subcommittee immediately resumed discussions with the store managers. After several days of discussion a meeting of the Goodwill Committee and the store managers was called. The result of that meeting was a decision to re-open the lunch counters on a desegregated basis. Although higher management of one variety store agreed to the decision to desegregate the lunch counters in Winston-Salem, the local manager (after thirty-seven years of service with that Company) resigned rather than support the plan. The Committee and merchants agreed that the following public statement be issued:

Statement of Mayor's Goodwill Committee

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

“At 3:30 o’clock Monday, May 23, 1960, the Mayor’s Goodwill Committee met with the merchants at the Community Center. The committee unanimously recommended that the lunch counters be desegregated. The merchants agreed with this recommendation and with the committee are working out a plan to put it into effect in the near future.

The Committee appreciates the patience and cooperation of the people of this community and is confident that everyone will continue to exercise the same restraint and good judgment in this matter as they have in previous undertakings involving community relations.”

Treatment by the Press

The local papers presented a factual account of the Goodwill Committee’s statement, including background material about the Committee and its work. Only a two-column headline was used in announcing the decision to desegregate. It read “Store Managers to Desegregate Lunch Counters.”
The Twin City Sentinel also carried the following editorial:

**Lunch Counter Decision Calls**

**For Restraint and Good Will**

In recommending that downtown lunch counters in Winston-Salem be desegregated, the Mayor's Goodwill Committee has acted with a courage born of patience, sound judgment and the good will which its name indicates. In agreeing to the recommendation, the affected merchants have demonstrated this same spirit of good will and sense of community responsibility.

It now remains for these two groups to put a plan of desegregation into effect, and for the people of both races in this community to accept it with the restraint and good judgment with which it has been presented. For, in a sense, this whole community is the Mayor's Goodwill Committee. The 20 men of both races who bore the name were charged only with the mission of leading the way for a peaceable settlement of the lunch counter dispute. This they have done, and for their patient and painstaking efforts, they merit this community's deepest appreciation.

But the mission of good will in race relations is one with which all responsible citizens of both races are charged. And in these next weeks and months, we are being given an opportunity to respond to this obligation with patience, conscience and confidence.

**The Plan**

A relatively simple plan for desegregation of the lunch counters was worked out. In essence, it provided that the stores would open the lunch counters on Wednesday, May 25, and that when the demonstrators began eating at the lunch counters, they, during the first two or three weeks, would have no more than two or three of their group in a store at one time and that they would avoid rush hours and Saturdays.
It was also agreed that the subcommittee meet with the managers again on June 7 for a progress report and be prepared to make any changes necessary.

**How Desegregation of the Lunch Counters Has Worked**

Two months have passed since the lunch counters were desegregated in Winston-Salem. A manager of one of the larger variety stores, describing desegregated eating at his counters said: “You would think it had been going on for fifty years. I am tickled to death over the situation.”

All of the managers report that their general business is back to about normal; one reported an increase. They report their lunch counter business somewhat under, equal to, or above what it was a year ago, varying with the facilities and location of the various stores. They all agree that they see only improvement in the future. One manager said that the only regret he has is that the step was not taken four months ago.

The demonstrators adhered to the agreements in the plan for desegregation. The general Negro shopper probably had no way of knowing about the restrictions in the plan with reference to numbers, rush hours, and Saturdays. (The plan was begun on a Wednesday thus no announcements could be made beforehand at the Negro churches.) Thus from the very beginning there were a considerable number of Negro lunch counter customers in most of the stores; some during the first week had as many as 142 in one day. The stores that are nearest to the Negro shopping district understandably attract more Negro lunch counter customers.

The public has accepted the change with unusual calm. There have been no unusual or ugly incidents. Neither the police nor the store managers has been called upon to handle a serious situation. There have been no such situations. One manager says he is having more white people sit at his “former colored counter than colored people sit at the former white counter.”

After the plan had been in operation for two weeks the managers agreed that desegregation was working so smoothly the
time was ready to lift all the restrictions. Thus the counters are now operating on a completely desegregated basis without any limitations.

Some Factors Contributing to Desegregation

The following factors have probably played some role in desegregation of the lunch counters in Winston-Salem:

1. Winston-Salem is a community where a marked degree of racial harmony and fair-play exist. That fact is shown by the number of important areas that have been desegregated in the past. It would be expected, therefore, that the city would be as willing and prepared as any southern city to desegregate its lunch counters.

2. The city has a sizable and respected group of both white and Negro business and professional men through whom channels of communication between the races have been developed and kept open. Through the local Urban League (the only one in North Carolina) and other interracial groups, leading Negro and white people, for many years, have sat at the same table to discuss problems of common interest.

3. The municipal leaders including the mayor, the city manager, and the chief of police, are men who believe in justice, fair-play, and protection of the rights of all citizens. They, from the beginning, took the position that the protestors, so long as they obeyed the law, would be protected and not abused. They at no time took a partisan attitude. Alert and prompt police supervision prevented possible disorder and conflict which would have made a solution even more difficult.

4. Excellent cooperation by the local radio, television, and press were manifested. They were present each time the full Goodwill Committee met but not at the meetings of the subcommittee. They agreed to permit the members of the Committee to speak off the record at any time. Publicity was kept at a minimum. The reports which were released to the public were factual, and of a non-sensational nature. None were of the sort that
might stir up or further racial antagonisms. The editorials which appeared in the two local papers, the *Journal* and the *Sentinel*, certainly helped shape a public opinion favorable to desegregation of the lunch counters.

5. The Winston-Salem store managers and the companies which they represented acted in an intelligent, restrained and fair-minded manner. They refused to abuse anyone or engage in arrests (with the exception mentioned above, which apparently was regretted and regarded as being a mistake at the time). They cooperated fully in the initial study that was made and with the efforts of the Goodwill Committee.

6. Of major importance is the fact that the Committee worked directly with the store managers and at no time sought to impose a solution on them.

7. Considerable weight would have to be given to the membership, attitude, and work of the Goodwill Committee. It was made up of highly respected and successful business and professional men. They sought to study the problem intelligently and objectively in the light of the conditions that existed in Winston-Salem. The problem was not solved by preconceived notions but by facts and ideas that became revealed as the Committee dealt with the situation.

8. The role played by the Negro members of the Goodwill Committee and other Negro leaders in the community was of immeasurable importance. It was largely through their wise and able leadership that the protestors were persuaded not to demonstrate during the period the Goodwill Committee was working. In fact, they are perhaps due much credit for the way in which the entire Negro community acted with good sense.

9. Time was one of the most important factors. The committee was probably over-optimistic in thinking that a solution in Winston-Salem could be decided upon at the very outset of the problem. People needed time to reason and to let their feelings moderate. Thus as more time passed members of the committee, merchants, and many citizens reported that an increasing number of people were saying, “Why don’t you go ahead and open the lunch counters and serve everybody alike.”