

# Northern Segregation Differs in Methods

(Editor's note: The U.S. Civil Rights commission, in a study of public school segregation last December, reported that the practice of segregation in the North differs only in method from that in the South. What is "Northern style" school segregation, what causes it and how can it be remedied? In the following dispatch, UPI reporters Frederick H. Teesh, Robert W. Irvin and Leo Soroka examine the situation in three cities cited in the Civil Rights commission report - New Rochelle, N.Y.; Highland Park, Mich., and St. Louis, Mo.)

## A UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL TEAM REPORT

On a bright Monday afternoon in May, 1957, the United States Supreme Court handed down its historic decision declaring segregated schools to be unconstitutional.

"Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal," the court said in a unanimous opinion. The court ruled on a Southern case, but the nation was to learn that segregated schools in the North - regardless of how they got that way - were affected by its findings.

In 1960, New Rochelle, N.Y., was rocked by a Federal Court order to desegregate its 94 per cent Negro Lincoln school. The publicity surrounding the case branded New Rochelle "the Little Rock of the North."

"It's a shame for them to take all the abuse when this (school segregation) is as common in the North as apple pie and cheese," said Negro attorney Paul Zuber, who launched the New Rochelle litigation and participated in several other desegregation cases.

Hempstead, N.Y.; Newark, N.J.; Highland Park, Mich.;

Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis; Gary, Ind. - all scattered Northern communities - have had segregation controversies. There have been dozens more.

A bitter feud involving picketing and school boycotts is now in progress in Englewood, N.J., a fashionable suburb across the Hudson river from New York City.

For a look at how segregation problems develop in Northern cities and suburbs, United Press International assigned reporters to study the situation in New Rochelle, where a school was desegregated by court order; Highland Park, where a segregation problem was solved by negotiation, and St. Louis, where schools once desegregated are "resegregating" because of shifting housing patterns.

**NEW ROCHELLE, N. Y.:** When the school segregation crisis came to New Rochelle, N.Y., cooler heads failed to prevail and, in a bombast of unfavorable publicity, the city became the first in the North to have a public school desegregated by court order.

The hilly community in fashionable Westchester county, just north of New York City, has a population of 77,000. Its character is mainly residential.

Negroes began migrating to New Rochelle decades ago from seamy Harlem and elsewhere, attracted in part by work in light industry. The big influx came after World War II and the Negroes became increasingly ghettoized in the aging and congested central area. By 1960, there were 16,000 Negroes residing within the city limits.

**Racial Balance** New Rochelle's schools were for the most part successfully integrated. Its high school was bi-racial and there was a reasonable racial balance in its two junior highs, considering the preponderance of whites in the city. Eight of the city's elementary schools were integrated without an unreasonable percentage of either race. No Negroes lived near three other schools.

The ugly duckling in this picture of apparent racial harmony was Lincoln building, an antique (1888) building in the central city surrounded by preponderantly Negro housing. In 1960, the 400-plus student body of Lincoln was 94 per cent Negro.

The board of education contended that the imbalance resulted solely from housing patterns and it had no obligation to undo a situation it did not create. Negroes complained the school was inferior, that over the years it served any lines of the area it served were gerrymandered to contain the Negroes and at times the school system's transfer policies were discriminatory: whites were allowed to transfer out, the Negroes were not.

**LEGAL ACTION.** The emotionally-charged situation came to a decisive stage in 1960 when the board of education won authority to rebuild Lincoln school on the same site. The board's decision was non-negotiable and the Negroes turned to legal action.

On Oct. 21, lawyer Zuber filed a complaint in Federal Court. Civil Rights Commission Investigator Frank Kaplan wrote in the 1962 report: "The complaint, in essence, was a frontal assault on the problem of de facto school segregation."

On Jan. 21, 1961, Judge Irving R. Kaufman ruled that the school board had 1 1/2 years past gerrymandered the Lincoln district and had discriminated in its transfer policies. He ordered the board to present a desegregation plan.

Finding it unsatisfactory, the judge issued his own order, embodying free transfers to other schools but not compelling the closing of Lincoln school. The board appealed, finally to the Supreme Court, but lost.

In September, 1961, the Kaufman plan was complied with without incident. About half the Lincoln students transferred.

As to how "desegregation" of Lincoln school worked after its first full year, Law Professor Kaplan said:

**Sees No Chaos** "There was no administrative chaos. Lincoln did not become more racially imbalanced; rather, since most of the white students chose not to transfer, the percentage of Negroes dropped from 94 to 88. . . nor were transferring Lincoln students greeted with hostility. . . every effort was made by both teachers and students to bring them into the life of their new schools." A number of problems still remain, not the least of which is what to do with Lincoln school. Closing it and redistributing its student inevitably would tip the racial balance in nearby schools.

Another, according to Kaplan, is this:

"One of New Rochelle's two junior high schools practices a rigid ability grouping which has left few, if any, Negroes in the fastest classes and a preponderance in the slowest. Negro leaders have branded this type of grouping a method of segregation; Negro children and perpetuating the unfair treatment they have received in the elementary schools. . . unless some settlement is reached in the near future the tranquility of New Rochelle may be disturbed again."

But the word most frequently heard in New Rochelle now is "hope." There appears to be a mutual recognition of the magnitude of the problems and a willingness to discuss, where formerly there was inflexibility of position.

**Controls Board** Said attorney Zuber last week:

"I think a moderate group now controls the board (of education). The structure of the new board in New Rochelle now makes it more conducive to discussions. I honestly believe they're trying to do something."

Dr. David G. Salten who became superintendent of New Rochelle schools last July is hopeful for much the same reasons. (The Civil Rights commission report describes Salten as "a vigorous, nationally respected educator who enjoys the confidence of all factions.")

Dr. Salten said he was encouraged because:

"First," the board of education for the first time in many years commands the respect, if not the full agreement, of almost everybody in the community.

"Second, there has been a reduction in the polarization - there is now a group of moderates. There is movement

toward the center; it's slow but on the way."

Dr. Salten said the school board is intensively studying the lingering segregation problem and has ordered him to prepare a long-term, comprehensive plan to improve the educational quality.

"I hope one of the by-products will be a reduction of ethnic imbalance," he said.

Dr. Salten said the rigid ability grouping may be more indefensible from an educational point of view than from a segregation viewpoint and future ability groupings may be highly flexible.

Attorney Zuber begins arguments in a state court next week on a petition to require the state to pay the cost of transporting students from the Lincoln school area to other schools. They now are carried on a private bus at parents' expense.

Zuber did not name the New Rochelle school system as a party to the action.

**HIGHLAND PARK, MICH.:** This relatively young city, surrounded on four sides by Detroit, has a problem common across the nation: race relations.

Yet, unlike other cities, Highland Park has proved it can settle big racial issues peacefully, without recourse to a court injunction. What's more, the problem of school segregation was resolved when white and Negro parents banded together to oppose policies of the school board, instead of being on opposite sides.

In 1907, this was a sleepy, rural area to the north of Detroit. But Henry Ford built a factory to make Model T's here and it grew from 4,000 to 48,000 in the decade around World War I. It grew faster in the 20's when Walter P. Chrysler established an auto firm in the new city.

Recent immigrants - Italians and Syrians - settled in the southeast corner near the factories. But many left after World War II and Negroes moved in. Their children went to the Donald Thomson school and it became predominantly Negro - nearly 100 per cent by 1961. Most of the white families sent their children to Barber school a half-mile away.

**Redistrict School** In 1961, the school board redistricted and said children of either race could go to either school. Negroes thought the new boundaries were to keep Thomson segregated; the whites were unhappy because the new boundaries meant some children would have to move from mostly-white Barber to mostly-Negro Thomson school.

Both sides believed that if the boundaries were allowed to stand, the remaining white families would move or send their children to private or parochial schools, thus completely segregating Thomson. As a result, a neighborhood group - the Massachusetts Avenue Improvement association - filed suit in Federal court against the school board. Two white men and two Negro men were plaintiffs.

The plaintiffs argued Thomson was being conducted as a racially segregated school.

Former Federal Judge John Feikens settled the dispute out of court. He said he would rule against the school board - if it came to that - but suggested instead that both sides sit down and work the problem out themselves. Both Thomson and Barber schools were closed for a week while a compromise solution was worked out.

The Thomson boundaries were slightly changed and it was reopened as a K-3 (kindergarten to third grade) school, plus some special classes for mentally retarded children. Barber continued as a kindergarten to sixth grade school with the Thomson children above the third grade going there.

**Crisis Remains** Feikens, now a Detroit attorney, said the school settlement "did not end the critical problems of segregated housing that caused the school crisis."

"The big problem that remains is one of housing," Feikens said. "How are you going to keep a school integrated and have a proper balance between Negro and white children. . . if white people continue to move out and Negroes continue to move in? This only makes the housing imbalance worse."

"The problem may eventually solve itself if the Massachusetts Avenue Improvement association can convince the white people to stay and then educate the Negroes on improving the quality of their homes."

**Run Down Homes** The neighborhood generally is old, often run-down frame homes.

Thomson today still has only a relatively small percentage of white children among its 275 students. Most classrooms have no more than five. The building is old but

freshly painted and children bubble with enthusiasm.

"They get along well together," said Walter Zellman, the principal. "These smaller children don't have any built-up prejudices and animosities."

They probably were too young to realize what was happening when they picketed with their parents carrying "No Jim Crow School" signs.

In its report on Highland Park, the civil rights commission said the settlement shows that "if reasonable men sit down together, reconciliation of differences is not impossible."

St. Louis is facing a problem of "resegregation" - schools once bi-racial are becoming all-Negro or predominantly Negro because of ghettoizing housing patterns.

"On the balance, de facto segregation in the St. Louis public schools has patently worsened during the last seven years," said the U.S. Civil Rights Commission in its December report.

It added: "Not a little 'resegregation' has developed; that is, some schools which were predominantly white or substantially inter-racial, just after desegregation, have since become all-Negro schools or virtually so."

Mrs. Margaret Bush Wilson, Negro attorney and fourth generation St. Louisan, drew a rough map of the city. It showed the Mississippi river on the east. On the other three sides she sketched in a "black corridor," where Negro fam-

ilies live, surrounded by predominantly white neighborhoods.

"This corridor of concentration of Negroes makes it impossible for complete school integration on any neighborhood basis," Mrs. Wilson said.

**Corridor Binds** She said the school system's multi-million dollar building program in "black corridor" neighborhoods had the effect of "keeping our people in."

Phillip J. Hickey, St. Louis superintendent of instruction, said the schools are being built where the children are.

"No one denies we have resegregation," Hickey said. "But there's no intentional segregation."

James Armstrong Scott, Negro assistant superintendent of schools who helped with the school site selection, agreed with Hickey that schools must be built near heavy population areas. He blames the "influx of Negroes into the corridor" for the schools' resegregation problem.

Be that as it may, Negro leaders say, something must be done to reverse the trend.

Mrs. Wilson suggests that the board of education consider some other concept of assignment to schools other than the present neighborhood school plan.

**Rezoning Plan** Miss Roberts said if the board desired to improve integration it would consider a rezoning plan.

"We redistrict and rezone political wards, why can't this be done on the school boundary levels?" she asks.

The Civil Rights Commission noted that St. Louis also had a "serious imbalance in the distribution of white and Negro teachers."

Wylie H. Davis, author of the civil rights commission report on St. Louis, wrote:

"Not one predominantly white school. . . has a Negro principal. In fact, there are no Negro principals in any of the schools. . . whose enrollments approximate a 50-50 Negro-white ratio."

Most of the St. Louis schools with predominantly Negro student bodies have predominantly Negro faculties; vice-versa with predominantly white schools. Wylie says there is no evidence Negro students suffer educationally because their teachers are Negro but there is no reason why integration of teachers need wait for a massive change in the student pattern.

Despite its problems, the rights commission cites St. Louis as a place credited with "remarkable achievements in human relations" and there appeared to be "an outstanding exception to the general rule of lack of rapport between school officials and the Negro community."

"The ray of hope is that the lines of communication between Negroes and school officials are open," said a prominent St. Louis Negro leader.

Vocational training in St. Louis schools has no racial bars but graduates are having serious troubles gaining admittance to apprenticeship programs.



**AN ARMFUL**-A tiny horse called "Brandy" provides a happy "pick-me-up" for Earl Mountbatten, Great Britain's chief of defense staff. The Earl, on a good will tour of Latin America, saw the pigmy horse while visiting a farm outside Buenos Aires, which is noted for producing the world's smallest horses. (UPI)



**SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL** - Armatha Risinger, 15, has been suspended from school at St. Louis, Mo., for refusing to take square dance lessons on religious grounds without having a confirming letter from her minister. She is shown at home with her father, Jewel Risinger. She was sent home twice and then suspended although her mother had written the principal and visited the school on two occasions. (UPI)

## Plans Being Made For Investigator

Printed applications for the new special investigator on non-support cases will be available at the district attorney's office in approximately

two weeks, Jackson County District Attorney Alan Holmes has announced.

Screening all applicants probably will start early in May, he added.

"Clackamas county has set the qualifications for its special investigator along civil service recommendations. They require two years of college and two years of law enforcement experience or its equivalent," Holmes said.

"Our qualifications will probably follow those lines pretty closely. The job duties will be outlined carefully in the application forms."

Jackson county circuit court judges now indicate they would require such an investigator in the district attorney's office to check all divorce cases involving children.

The Jackson county public welfare commission probably will want immediate follow up on their aid to dependent children cases involving non-support by the father, Holmes noted. Deserted mothers will also want immediate action, he added.

"We may have created a monster," the district attorney commented. "We indicated to the budget committee that we will need another deputy and girl in the office in the near future to handle an increased work load."

## EMBEZZLERS GET DEATH

Moscow - Six persons have been sentenced to death in Sverdlovsk for embezzling gold and other precious metals and gems. Tass news agency reported Wednesday.

Sixty-two other members of the ring received prison sentences up to 15 years. Tass said the ring illegally obtained \$56,000 worth of gold, platinum, rubies and other valuables from Ural and Magadan ore mines.

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