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COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
TUESDAY MORNING SESSION
SEPTEMBER 27, 1960

HEARING HELD
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COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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TUESDAY MORNING SESSION

September 27, 1960

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The Commission met in Room 222, U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals Room, Federal Post Office Building, New Orleans, Louisiana, at 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, September 27, 1960, Dr. John A. Hannah, Chairman of the Commission, presiding.

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PRESENT:

JOHN A. HANNAH (Chairman)

ROBERT G. STOREY (Vice Chairman)

DOYLE E. CARLTON (Commissioner)

REVEREND THEODORE M. HESBURGH (Commissioner)

GEORGE M. JOHNSON (Commissioner)

ROBERT S. RANKIN (Commissioner)

ALSO PRESENT:

GORDON M. TIFFANY (Staff Director)

BERL I. BERNHARD, (Deputy Staff Director)

A. H. ROSENFELD (Director, Division of Complaints, Investigations and Surveys)

ALSO PRESENT:

WILLIAM MOTTOLESE

CHARLES ED CLARK

DAVID KOONCE

W. OTTO McLARRIN

NORMAN E. SIMPSON

EZEKIEL SMITH

LYSBETH SANTON

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: Ladies and gentlemen, I am John A. Hannah, the Chairman of the Commission on Civil Rights, and I should like to present the members of the Commission.

On my left, your right, is Professor Robert Rankin of Duke University of North Carolina.

Next to him, Governor Carlton, former Governor of Florida, from Tampa, Florida.

On my left, the Vice Chairman of the Commission, Dean Robert F. Storey of Dallas, Texas, former President of the American Bar Association and long-time Dean of Southern Methodist University.

On my immediate right, Dean George Johnson, former Dean of the Law School of Howard University, Washington, D.C., and a native of California.

On the extreme right, Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, President of the University of Notre Dame, who has returned all the way from an international meeting in Vienna which he left yesterday afternoon in order to be here today.

The Commission on Civil Rights, established under the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is charged with the fixed responsibility to investigate allegations in writing, under oath or affirmation, that certain citizens of the United States are being deprived of their right to vote and have that vote counted by reason of their color, race, religion,

or national origin.

The Commission has the further responsibility under this statute to study and collect information concerning practices constituting a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution.

To fulfill these congressional mandates, the Commission is authorized to hold such hearings as the Commission may deem advisable.

Over the past two years numerous complaints that voting rights were being denied have been received from certain parishes of the State of Louisiana, and at this point I should like to have the record show that no voting complaints have been received by this Commission involving the City of New Orleans or Orleans Parish.

Over a year ago a preliminary investigation uncovered information which led the Commission to unanimous agreement that a hearing should be scheduled for July 1959 to gather facts concerning the voting situation in several parishes in the State of Louisiana.

As many of you know, we were ready to proceed with the hearing but were enjoined from doing so by the Federal District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

The question in issue before that court concerned the rules of procedure used by this Commission in the conduct of its hearing.

The basic fairness of the Commission's hearings and its rules of procedure were sanctioned by the Supreme Court. The Vice Chairman of this Commission, Dean Storey, will have more to say about the Supreme Court decision in a few moments.

Subsequent to the decision of the United States Supreme Court, this Commission decided, upon re-investigation of the outstanding complaints, along with investigation of complaints received since July of 1959, that a hearing was still necessary.

We felt that an objective appraisal of the voting situation in certain parishes of Louisiana could not be made without such a hearing, and it should be noted that the Commission on Civil Rights is an independent agency of the government. It has no connection, even administratively, with the Department of Justice or with any other enforcement agency.

This Commission is a fact-finding body, obligated to determine, among other things, what the facts are about denial of voting rights in the United States and to report these facts to the President and Congress on or before September 9, 1961. Prosecutions, indictments -- indeed, law enforcement in any form whatsoever -- are beyond the power of this Commission. The firm resolve of this Commission and its staff is to be objective.

As the Commission views it, objectivity presupposes getting all of the facts.

The Commission does not consider itself a protagonist for one view or another, and in that connection, I would point out that of the six members of this Commission, three are from the south and three from the north. Politically the Commission is composed of three Democrats, two Republicans, and one independent.

The Commission was established in the hope that through a dispassionate evaluation and appraisal of the facts, reason and light could be brought to bear upon problems of national importance which until recently have been frequently and passionately debated but seldom assessed soberly.

This Commission is keenly aware of strides taken throughout the south in recent years by way of assuring equal access to the ballot. Not many years ago, in many parts of the south, only white citizens were permitted to vote, and while the situation has improved in many areas, we have found that many otherwise qualified Negro American citizens are still being denied opportunity to vote because of their race.

This Commission, being of the resolute conviction that the uninhibited right of all citizens to exercise the voting franchise equally is fundamental in a democracy and essential to the preservation of our constitutional form of

government, it is determined to glean the true facts where, as in this case, proper allegations have been made reflecting possible denials of the right to register, to vote, and to have that vote counted because of race or color.

This hearing then is just such an attempt, to ascertain about voting in Louisiana. Louisiana was not selected because of any predisposition on our part to single out this state for criticism or for censure. It was selected because the Act under which we operate requires that we investigate valid voting complaints, and a large number of such complaints have come from Louisiana. This Commission has already held hearings on civil rights problems in a number of other states, and in 1958 a two-day hearing was held in Alabama regarding voting complaints received from that state.

Now I am asking the Vice Chairman of this Commission, who is a distinguished attorney, a former President of the American Bar Association and former Dean of the Law School of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, and president of the Southwestern Legal Foundation, to take over and preside at this hearing from this point forward.

I should point out that two other members of the Commission are distinguished attorneys, Governor Carlton of Tampa, Florida on my left, and Dean Johnson of Howard University on my right.

Father Hesburgh and Dr. Rankin and I have decided that, not being attorneys, we may participate in the questioning of the witnesses from time to time, but in general we will rely upon the lawyer members of this Commission to bring out the facts.

Vice Chairman Storey, in accordance with the unanimous desire of this Commission, will you please take over this hearing from this point forward?

(Vice Chairman Storey assumed the Chair at this point.)

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Members of the Commission, our staff, ladies and gentlemen: Let me reiterate what the chairman has already stated. Our Commission was designed to find facts and to report our findings, along with our recommendations, to the President of the United States and to the Congress.

We have received many sworn complaints in proper form from Negro American citizens living in a number of Louisiana parishes which allege denial of the right to vote or to register upon the grounds of race and color.

Our purpose is to secure a full and true account of these complaints under oath. That is why we are holding this hearing. To dispel whatever uncertainty may remain in the minds of any of you here today, I believe it will be well to state again that our Commission has no power to grant to any person his or her right to vote or to register or to undertake any action to compel anyone else to confer

such right upon any citizen.

Our role is a fact-finding mission. The chairman has referred to the resistance encountered by our Commission with a special focus on the rules of procedure. These rules were attacked in the summer of 1959 by officials of the State of Louisiana. The Supreme Court of the United States held on June 20, 1960 that the Civil Rights Act of 1957 authorized the Commission on Civil Rights to adopt the rules of procedure to govern and to conduct its hearings. The court decided that the rules adopted by our Commission violate no constitutional right of any witness subpoenaed to testify at a Commission hearing.

This decision was bottomed on a recognition that the function of our Commission is purely investigative and fact-finding. It is not adjudicatory; it is not an adversary proceeding.

The holding of the court is made clear in the following language, and I quote briefly: "The Commission does not hold trials or determine anyone's civil or criminal liability. It does not issue orders; nor does it indict, punish, or impose any legal sanctions. It does not make any determinations depriving anyone of his life, liberty, or property. In short, the Commission does not and cannot take any affirmative action which will affect any individual's legal rights.

"The only purpose of its existence is to find facts which may subsequently be used as a basis for legislative or executive action."

The court further noted, quoting again, "The purely investigative nature of the Commission's proceedings and the traditional procedure of investigating agencies in general leads us to conclude that the Commission's rules of procedure comport with the requirements of due process."

Lest there be any lingering misconception about the nature of the Commission's purpose, it is worth reading one additional passage from the concurring opinion of the Supreme Court, and this is the quote: "Were the Commission exercising any accusatory function, were its duty to find that named individuals were responsible for wrongful deprivation of voting rights and to advertise such findings or to serve as a part of the process of criminal prosecution, the rigorous protections relevant to criminal prosecutions might well be the controlling starting point for assessing the protection which the Commission's procedure provides. The objectives of the Commission on Civil Rights, the purpose of its creation, and its true functioning, are quite otherwise. It is not charged with official judgment on individuals, nor are its inquiries so directed. The purpose of its investigations is to develop facts upon which legislation may be based."

Each witness subpoenaed for this hearing received a

copy of Rules of Procedure at the time when he was served with the subpoena. We have sent a copy of our Rules of Procedure to the Attorney General of Louisiana, and I am sure that his assistants, who are here, and the Attorney General are cognizant of this fact, so that all involved, directly or indirectly, will understand the procedure thoroughly.

Let me discuss for a moment some of the specific rules.

Constitutional rights of witnesses will be protected fully as provided by our statute, which reads, again quoting from the rules: "Witnesses at the hearings may be accompanied by their own counsel for the purpose of advising them concerning their constitutional rights." Examination of rights will be undertaken by the Commission itself since this is not an adversary proceeding. There will be no examination of witnesses by persons other than members of the Commission, or, as the Commission may authorize, specific staff personnel.

I must stress at the outset that the nature of this proceeding, being fact-finding and non adversary, does not allow for any counsel to take part in the questioning or to make speeches or arguments. Counsel may, of course, sit by the side of the witness who is his client and advise him of his constitutional rights respecting any question put to him by this Commission.

The testimony taken at this hearing will be under oath. The oath will be administered at the time each witness is called to testify. A transcript of the testimony of all witnesses will be made. Each witness has the right to inspect the record of his own testimony, if requested. Furthermore, a witness may purchase a copy at a nominal price of his testimony, and a transcript copy of public sessions may be obtained by any citizen upon payment of the cost.

Should the Commission determine that any evidence or testimony may tend to defame, degrade, or intimidate any person, the Commission shall: 1. Receive such evidence or testimony in executive session; 2. Afford such person an opportunity voluntarily to appear as a witness; 3. Receive and dispose of requests from such person to subpoena additional witnesses.

Evidence or testimony taken in executive session will not nor can it be released or used without the consent of the Commission.

You will observe that representatives of the press, radio, TV, and other news media are present. These gentlemen will be expected to conduct themselves in a quiet, cooperative fashion as they have done in the past. In this regard, our rules provide that, quoting again: 'Subject to the physical limitations of the hearing room and consideration of the physical comfort of Commission members, staff, and witnesses,

equal and reasonable access for coverage of the hearing shall be provided to the various means of communication, including newspapers, magazines, radio, newsreels, and television. However, no witness shall be televised, filmed, or photographed during the hearing if he objects on the grounds of distraction, harrassment, or physical handicap."

Our rules provide further that any witness desiring to read a prepared statement in the hearing shall file a copy with the Commission or subcommittee 24 hours in advance of the scheduled hearing.

"The Commission or subcommittee" again quoting from the law, "of the Commission is empowered to decide whether to permit the reading of such statement."

While copies of these rules have been made available to any and all interested persons, I have invited your attention to certain provisions, trusting that this will increase your awareness of our procedure and thereby create greater appreciation that our resolve is to treat all witnesses with the utmost fairness. While this hearing is informal, it will be conducted in an orderly manner without undue or improper interruption or interference.

At this time I would like to introduce the Staff Director of the Commission, Mr. Gordon M. Tiffany -- will you stand up, Mr. Tiffany -- who will indicate -- and you may be seated at this time, thank you -- who will indicate the

outline of this hearing and who will call upon various members of the staff to carry out our responsibilities.

Finally, let me restate the issue before this fact-finding body: Are certain citizens of the United States being deprived of their right to vote and to have that vote counted by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin.

Mr. Tiffany, will you take over at this time?

MR. TIFFANY: Mr. Chairman, Vice Chairman Story, members of the Commission: This hearing is convened as a result of the unanimous decision of the Commission at its meeting in Washington, held on August 4, 1960. In effect it should be viewed as a continuation of the hearing scheduled for July 1959 in Shreveport. These proceedings have been held in abeyance pending the dissolution of the injunctions issued by the U. S. District Court Judge, Ben. C. Dawkins, Jr., and the three-judge District Court.

For the record, I now submit the orders vacating the injunctions in those proceedings following the decision in Hannah vs. Larche by the United States Supreme Court. This is submitted as Commission's Exhibits Numbers 1 and 2.

(The documents referred to
were marked for identifica-
tion as Exhibits 1 and 2.)

MR. TIFFANY: The Commission's Rules, as already pointed out, permit statements to be submitted for consideration

24 hours in advance of the hearing.

However, as of the present time, only one such statement has been received; and this will be called to the attention of the Commission for its consideration in due course.

The evidence to be presented at these hearings will fall into three categories: First, oral testimony by complainants based upon their own knowledge that they or other citizens have been denied the right to register, vote, or to have their vote counted because of their race or color.

Second, documentary evidence, collected and verified by the Commission's staff, which tends to support the allegations of denials of the right to vote. Third, charts and graphs prepared on the basis of authentic and official sources.

As to the first type of evidence, I have asked the Assistant Staff Director in charge of complaints, investigation, and surveys, Colonel A. H. Rosenfeld to introduce the witnesses who have been subpoenaed to testify as to their experiences in several different parishes in Louisiana. This testimony will show the various ways in which the right to vote has allegedly been denied.

In introducing the witnesses, Colonel Rosenfeld will preface the testimony by introductory comment as to the relevancy of the statement to the issues presented before the

Commission.

Generally these witnesses will be identified by their parish.

As to the documentary evidence, I have asked Deputy Staff Director, Mr. Berl I. Bernhard, to submit certain documents relating to the statutory obligation of the Commission to study and collect information concerning legal developments constituting the denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution.

Third, as to the presentation of charts and graphs, these have been prepared to save time and to present effectively a mass of official and historical data which should be helpful to the Commission in its fact-finding and reporting duties.

In the offer of documentary and graphic evidence, Mr. Bernhard will be assisted by Mr. William Mottolese, a member of the staff in the Division of Laws, Plans, and Research.

Before the introduction of evidence, I would like to emphasize that this Commission is equally concerned, not only with the continuance, but with the discontinuance, of practices relating to the equal protection of the franchise without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin.

If, after the close of the hearings, the witnesses subpoenaed to testify here at this time are later granted the

right to vote or are the subject of further sanction, we would expect them to furnish such further information under oath to the Commission as to such subsequent developments.

I will now call on Mr. Bernhard to offer, in the first instance, some documentary evidence.

MR. BERNHARD: May it please the Commission, in order to gain some historical perspective as to the present status of the Negro vote in the State of Louisiana, it is helpful to trace the strength of the Negro vote from the reconstruction era to the present time and compare this to the white vote.

For this purpose I would like to have marked as Exhibit A-1, the official registration statistics of the State of Louisiana from the period 1888 until the present.

(The document referred to
was marked for identifica-
tion as Exhibit A-1.)

MR. BERNHARD: Secondly, I would like to have marked as Exhibit A-2 a chart which is based on the official registration statistics of the State of Louisiana, as well as the literacy figures published by the United States Bureau of the Census.

(The document referred to
was marked for identifica-
tion as Exhibit A-2.)

MR. BERNHARD: You will observe that the chart starts in year 1888 and runs to the period 1960.

Let me explain the various lines first. The red line represents the per cent of the Negro registered voter over age 21.

The green line represents the per cent of the white voting age voter; that is, age 21.

The black line represents the per cent of literacy of the Negro aged 21 and over traced historically from 1888 to 1960.

With the Commission's approval, I should like to interpret this graph, which I believe will put into proper context the subsequent evidence to be received through oral testimony.

You will observe that from the period 1888 until 1910, the per cent of registered Negroes dropped from 53 per cent until one per cent; whereas, the per cent of white voter dropped from 40 per cent to 25 per cent.

From the 45-year period commencing in 1910 and extending through 1944, the per cent of the registered Negro age 21 and over -- that is, those who were registered -- never exceeded one per cent of the Negroes who were potentially otherwise of voting age.

During the same period you will observe that the per cent of white registration rose from 25 per cent up until 80

per cent.

During the same period when the Negro registration did not exceed one per cent, the growth of literacy of the same voting age Negro rose some 30 per cent, from 48 per cent in 1910 to 78 per cent in 1944.

I might add that during this entire period the per cent of Negro age 21 and over in the State of Louisiana never was below 34 per cent of the total voting population.

In the ten-year period following World War II; that is, approximately 1944 or 1945 through 1954, Negro registration rose from one per cent to 27 per cent in 1954.

The white registration fluctuated between a high of 86 per cent and a low of 67 per cent.

You will also observe that during this same period, the ten-year period following World War II, the literacy of the Negro rose to 82 per cent.

In summary, let me state that during the entire period, namely, from 1898 until 1960; that is, the 62-year period, Negro registration never has exceeded 28 per cent of the potential voting age Negro; that during 34 years of the 62-year period the Negro age 21 and over registered to vote remained at approximately one per cent.

During the entire period from 1898 right through 1960, Negro literacy rose some 49 per cent; that is, from 33 per cent until it is presently 82 per cent.

I submit that this chart speaks for itself and further suggests the possibility that there are certain forces operating in this state to perpetuate the conditions which are reflected by this chart by way of imposing certain artificial restrictions on the participation of the Negro in the franchise.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Mr. Bernhard, may I ask you two or three questions?

As I understand, your factual background for the delineation of the lines on the chart is substantiated by the official published state records regarding voting in the State of Louisiana.

MR. BERNHARD: That is correct, Mr. Vice Chairman, and they have been introduced in the record and marked as Exhibit A-1.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: That is the exhibit you introduced previously.

MR. BERNHARD: That is correct.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Then, as I understand, this has been drawn mathematically correct, based upon the information as disclosed by the public records.

MR. BERNHARD: That is correct.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: May I ask you, why was there such a severe drop from, say, 1888 to about 1910?

MR. BERNHARD: It is very difficult to pinpoint all

of the answers. It was a period of stabilization, subsequent to the reconstruction era. We do know that in 1898 the grandfather clause was put into effect, and this appears to be one of the factors, but it was also a period when the state again took over substantially its own control of its own machinery.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What about the condition as to the franchise in the year 1888 when this started? Was it a free franchise or not?

MR. BERNHARD: That is a difficult question to answer. We do not have the type of facts that I would consider to be hard facts, worthy of consideration by the Commission. It would be a historical guess or valuation at best.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: We don't want to do any guessing.

I wonder if any other members of the Commission have any questions on this chart?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I might ask one question, Mr. Vice Chairman. Mr. Bernhard, your chart indicates a rise in the number of Negro voters beginning about 1945 or somewhere. In your research did you come upon information that might give us some ideas of some of the factors that were involved in that rise?

MR. BERNHARD: Well, we have attempted to note some of them. In 1944, as the Commission is no doubt aware,

the case of Smith vs. Allwright was decided, which outlawed the white primary. In addition, during the period following 1944, and perhaps as a result of Smith vs. Allwright, which seemed to increase the possibility of voter participation by the Negro, various moves were instituted by certain people in the State of Louisiana. We have seen, for example, complaints which were filed with the Department of Justice in 1944 to the Honorable Francis Biddle, then Attorney General, as well as Assistant Attorney General Tom Clark, who is now in the Supreme Court, along with complaints filed in New Orleans with the U. S. Attorney by a New Orleans lawyer, Mr. A. P. Tureaud. These complaints included an analysis which perhaps was one of the first analyses made of registration practices in various parishes throughout the entire State of Louisiana. During this same period of time various civic organizations began to grow up in some of the parishes. These seemed to be some of the reasons that we have been able to document by way of explanation.

I would point out, however, that the chart still remains as 28 per cent of the total potential Negro voter. I think it would be worth informing the Commission at this time of the recent staff investigations which likewise bear upon this chart and subsequent testimony you will hear.

Our staff has made an investigation of many parishes in both the northern and southern portions of the state, and

I am very pleased to be able to report to the Commission that in the following northern parishes we have found that there is very little trouble on the part of the otherwise qualified Negro to become registered. The parishes from which we have received these reports include Cadwell, DeSoto, Morehouse, Sabine, and Union.

It has also been reported that the same condition exists in practically all of the southern parishes in the State of Louisiana with the possible exceptions -- or investigations would make it -- with the exceptions of Washington and Plaquemines Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are there other questions? Father Hesburgh?

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: Mr. Bernhard, I think possibly unintentionally you didn't carry your explanation of the statistics out to the very end of the chart, and I think for the record it might be good to give the final figures on the chart for Negroes and whites now registered.

MR. BERNHARD: The figures now reflect that 28 per cent of the Negro population, age 21 and over, is registered, and the white population age 21 and over stands, I believe, at 82 per cent.

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: Thank you.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other questions?

If not, the next exhibit.

MR. BERNHARD: At this point, if the Commission please, I would like to have the following visual aid identified as Exhibit B.

(The document referred to was marked for identification as Exhibit B.)

MR. BERNHARD: The Commission will indulge our just closing out this one for a moment.

This visual aid, now identified as Exhibit B, reflects the various parishes from which not only complaints have been received, but from which you will hear oral testimony during the course of this proceeding. As the first witness is called from each parish, we will point out the percentage registration figures as well as the potential registration figures in these parishes.

The next exhibit I would like to have identified as Exhibit C, and this exhibit is an official form of booklets which are used during registration procedure or challenging procedure in the State of Louisiana.

(The document referred to was marked for identification as Exhibit C.)

MR. BERNHARD: The last exhibit before commencement of oral testimony I ask to be identified as Exhibit D, and it is a set of 24 constitutional test cards. So that the

Commission is better apprized of exactly what the contents of these are, these are test cards which may be used by the registrars in the various parishes to test constitutional knowledge and literacy of prospective registrants.

(The document referred to was marked for identification as Exhibit D.)

MR. BERNHARD: I would like to read from one of them, to give you some idea of what their contents are. It is entitled "Constitutional Test For Registration," and it reads and I quote: "Applicant shall read to the registrar of voters and give a reasonable interpretation of the following clauses of the Constitution. The United States shall guarantee to every state in the Union a republican form of government. The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution or prohibited to it by the states are reserved to the states respectively or to the people. No law shall be passed to curtail or restrain the liberty of speech or of the press."

On the reverse of the card there is a statement as to the legal requirement for registration. It reads: "Section I (c) Article (8) of the Louisiana Constitution provides that citizens of this state applying to register as electors and possessing other qualification prescribed by law, "shall be of good character and understand the duties

and obligations of citizenship under a republican form of government,' and 'shall also be able to read any clause in this Constitution or the Constitution of the United States and give a reasonable interpretation thereof.'"

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Mr. Bernhard, did I understand you to say there were 24 of those cards of a similar nature except the provision of the Constitution was different on each card?

MR. BERNHARD: That is correct, Mr. Vice Chairman.

That concludes the initial introduction of documentary evidence and exhibits, and we are prepared to commence with oral testimony.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Thank you, Mr. Bernhard.

Just a moment. I notice a distinguished visitor has come in. I would like to introduce the Honorable Jack Gremillion, Attorney General of the State of Louisiana. I understand you have some of your associates and officials here. If you would like to present them, we would be happy for you to do so.

MR. GREMILLION: Dean and members of the Commission, M. E. Culligan, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the New Orleans office.

Mr. William Shuler, Assistant Attorney General.

Mr. Henry Roberts, likewise Assistant Attorney General.

Mr. John Jackson, Assistant Attorney General.

Mr. Cleburn Dalton from Baton Rouge, Assistant Attorney General.

I believe, Dean, you have met most of these gentlemen personally. I don't believe we have ever had the privilege of making the personal acquaintance of the other members of the Commission.

We thank you for inviting us here. We are here more or less as observers, and if there is any assistance that we can give you by way of information, you will be pleased to call on us, and we will be very glad to do what we can.

I might say that we do appreciate the fact that you reserved this place. We are very grateful for it, and some of us will be here throughout all of your sessions, and we thank you for your kindness.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Thank you, Mr. Gremillion. You may proceed, Mr. Tiffany.

MR. TIFFANY: The first group of witnesses will be introduced by Colonel Rosenfeld.

COLONEL ROSENFELD: If it please the Commission, the oral evidence will be presented according to a topical arrangement. The topics under which a witness testifies represents a particular experience to which that witness was

counted. Some of the witnesses obviously have had experiences encompassing more than one topic.

The first topic on which evidence will be presented is the requirement exacted by certain registrars to produce registered voters of the precinct for the purpose of attesting to the identity of the applicant, and the first witness to be called under this topic is the Reverend John Henry Scott of East Carroll Parish. He will also act as a background witness.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Come around, Mr. Scott.

Will you please hold up your right hand and be sworn?
Will you hold up your right hand?

REVEREND SCOTT: Yes. May I make a statement as I made to the Commission?

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Or affirmation; I understand.

REVEREND SCOTT: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. You have no objection to affirming.

REVEREND SCOTT: No objection, I tell the truth. As a Christian I feel I should tell the truth at all times.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You hold up your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

REVEREND SCOTT: I do.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have this seat over here, please.

JOHN HENRY SCOTT

EAST CARROLL PARISH

MR. BERNHARD: If the Commission please, in referring to Reverend Scott's testimony, I would like to point out that Reverend Scott is from East Carroll, that in this particular parish, you will note --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Point out East Carroll.

MR. BERNHARD: East Carroll is right in this portion of the state. You will observe that the nonwhite age 21 and over -- that is, the colored potential Negro voter -- constitutes 4,690. The number of colored who are registered is zero; obviously the per cent over 21 is zero.

At the same time, whites age 21 and over constitute 2,836. Whites registered are 2,826, and the per cent comes out that 99.7 per cent of the white 21 and over are registered in East Carroll Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Thank you, Mr. Bernhard. Now, will you please state your name, your age, and place of residence?

REVEREND SCOTT: My name is John Henry Scott. My age is 57.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Where do you live?

REVEREND SCOTT: I live in East Carroll Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long have you lived there?

REVEREND SCOTT: I have lived there all my life.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What is your occupation?

REVEREND SCOTT: My occupation is minister.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Of what denomination or church?

REVEREND SCOTT: Baptist. I am pastoring one of the churches that my great grandfather organized.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long have you been pastor of that church?

REVEREND SCOTT: I have been pastoring there since '47.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you give briefly what your education is?

REVEREND SCOTT: I would be afraid to say as far as public school is concerned. I quit school in the ninth grade, but after I entered the ministry, I have been in school practically every year.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you hold any degrees?

REVEREND SCOTT: Yes.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What degrees?

REVEREND SCOTT: I hold B.Th. from the United Theological Seminary. Also I have done work at Leland College, and I have attended Southern University three years or in the extension work there by the Home Mission Department.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Both of those universities or colleges are in the State of Louisiana, are they not?

REVEREND SCOTT: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you own any real property, any real estate?

REVEREND SCOTT: No more than heir to property, and my grandfather --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you own any personal property?

REVEREND SCOTT: No personal property.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Automobile?

REVEREND SCOTT: Just heir.

Yes, I own an automobile, and I live on the property of East Carroll Baptist Association on which we pay taxes. I am their president. I represent them.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: The church furnishes your home?

REVEREND SCOTT: Yes, East Carroll Baptist Association.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you a registered voter?

REVEREND SCOTT: No.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you attempted to register?

REVEREND SCOTT: Many times.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right.

Now, tell the first time and where and the circumstances. What happened? Just tell in your own words.

REVEREND SCOTT: Well, the first time that I

attempted to register, that is back in 1946. Another young man named Reverend Paul Taylor, we decided we would go and try.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you go together?

REVEREND SCOTT: We went together. He lives in St. Louis, Missouri now. Well, we didn't know exactly where the registration office was, so finally we went upstairs, and we got to the door, and I said, "Paul, here is the door," and we went to the door, and the registrar of voters say, "Go to the next door." So we went to look for another door, and when we got back, the door was locked. So we didn't make any attempt to go in. We give up that time.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Where was this? What town and what parish?

REVEREND SCOTT: That is East Carroll Parish, Lake Providence, Louisiana.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right.

Is that all that happened on that occasion?

REVEREND SCOTT: That was all that happened on --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: When did you next try to register?

REVEREND SCOTT: The next time I tried to register must have been about two years later, around '47, the Reverend Mason and I went together.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Where did you go then, the same place?

REVEREND SCOTT: Went to the same place, the same registrar. She was very nice. She gave us the card to fill. When we filled it she looked at it and said, "Well, we wouldn't know where to find you all," or something, so we went out and a little later on I decided to go back. I don't know whether I am giving them in the order, but I am truthfully stating it. I believe Brother Atlas and I went --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: About how long was that after the second time?

REVEREND SCOTT: Well, maybe it would be a year or six months before I tried again.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Go ahead in your own way.

REVEREND SCOTT: So I decided that probably trying to be a Democrat was making it difficult for me to register.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You mean you belong to the Democratic Party?

REVEREND SCOTT: Well, that is the party I wanted to.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Go ahead.

REVEREND SCOTT: So I decided to put on my next card "Republican." I didn't want to put "Communist" on there, and so when I put "Republican" on, the registrar of voters looked in the office, and she picked out a card, and

she looked at it, and she said, "Well, on this card you said you were a Democrat. On this card you are saying you are a Republican." She said, "What are you?"

I said, "Well, I am not anything until you register me."

So she said, "Well, don't you know you can't change your party that fast?"

So I had to go out.

So later on, about '50, somewhere about 1950, I believe, Reverend Mason and several others went in, decided to try again, and she gave us all a card, and we filled them out, and she told Reverend Mason that his was perfect, but he would have to get someone to vouch for him or sign, identify him. All of which he was successful, but that didn't work, either. In fact --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Could I ask you, how many signed recommendations or vouched for him?

REVEREND SCOTT: Well, just one.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right.

REVEREND SCOTT: But they didn't accept that one.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: That was about 1950?

REVEREND SCOTT: Yes.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What did you do at that time?

REVEREND SCOTT: I come on out.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you attempt to register again?

REVEREND SCOTT: Yes. Reverend Henderson and I went together, and she told him his was right, and he was fortunate to get a white person to go up there that had not been brought up to the proceedings, and he was turned away, after he had gone down, and they told him what he should do, I guess, and what he shouldn't do. That is my thinking, what he told Reverend Henderson. I can't fool with that. So he went away. So we were not able to get anyone to come, and if we got them, it was to no avail because they had made their mind up not to register anybody. So recently they put a new man or they put a man in office after our present registrar resigned or went on retirement, and we thought we would try him, I believe last September, and several of us went..

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How many went along with you? About how many?

REVEREND SCOTT: About five.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. What happened then?

REVEREND SCOTT: He asked us how long had we been living there. Most of us had been living there all of our life and he said, "Well" -- he handed us a form, he said, "You will have to get two qualified electors from your ward and

precinct to identify you."

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you know the registrar personally?

REVEREND SCOTT: I didn't know him --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: And he didn't know you personally.

REVEREND SCOTT: Yes.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Go ahead.

REVEREND SCOTT: So he didn't register. So the lady that was with me, she said, "I can get two to identify me." I said, "Well, you think you can, but you can't." She said, "But I know I can," she said, "I have some white friends, and we are all Christians." I said "But Christians and this registration business is different. Nobody's a Christian when it comes down to identifying you."

So she went and tried. She said, "Oh, yes, they say they will go with me Monday," and I thought -- and she said, "Well, it is just like you said, they told me that they couldn't bother with it."

So we decided to go back, I believe, in July, possibly July 25.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What year?

REVEREND SCOTT: This year. A group of us went.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: About how many?

REVEREND SCOTT: About 21.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Go ahead. Tell what happened.

REVEREND SCOTT: So we went in. The registrar of voters asked us what did we want. We said we wanted to register. He said, "Do you have anybody to identify you?" I says, "We can identify each other." I said, "We identify folk at the bank and at the post office." I say, "We have come around and got folks out of jail and signed, went on their bond." I said, "We be here long enough to be known."

He said, "No, you can't do that. You will have to have two qualified electors from your ward and precinct, and you can't take these forms out for them to sign. You have to bring them to this office." So he asked us, he said, "Give me your names." One of the men that was with us, he said, "Oh, sure, we will give you our name," and I said, "There is no use in giving you our name. You give us the card to fill out, and we will sign our name to the card."

I said, "But we didn't come to sign up. We come to try to register."

So we could not register. It seemed to be, in my way of thinking -- and I am sorry to have to appear before this Commission, I am sorry to be in New Orleans. I never did think that in America or that a citizen would have to do all of this for an opportunity to vote.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Now, Reverend Scott, the last

time you went in July, what was the reason the registrar told you people that you couldn't register? What reason did he give? "Because you didn't have these identifying persons?"

REVEREND SCOTT: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Now, as I understand, the law as to identity reads this way: "If the register has good reason to believe that he" -- meaning the applicant -- "is not the same person, he may require the applicant to produce two creditable registered voters of his precinct to make oath to that effect."

Now, then, did you each time try to get some registered voter to identify you?

REVEREND SCOTT: I did not because, Reverend Mason and Reverend Henderson, the effort that they made, it was turned down, and I had a white friend that was on the police jury at that time, and he told me that it wouldn't be any use because it was strictly made up not to register any Negroes.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Now, tell me how long have you lived in this county? Since what date?

PRESIDENT SCOTT: Oh, I have been there since 1901. That is when I was born.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you ever have any trouble being identified at banks or the courthouse or any

other place?

REVEREND SCOTT: No. My great grandfather lived there, my grandfather lived there; my grandfather was a minister, and I mean, we are all very well known, everybody. Someone asked me about coming down here --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Don't tell about coming down here.

REVEREND SCOTT: What I was trying to say is that everybody knows everybody. You can't -- well, you just can't hide. When you walk down the street, everybody knows everybody.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Well, now, this other question. The records show that there are no Negro registrants in your parish.

REVEREND SCOTT: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Is that true?

REVEREND SCOTT: That is true.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: According to your own knowledge.

REVEREND SCOTT: That is true.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: The records show that.

Why do you want to vote?

REVEREND SCOTT: Well, I have always felt like that was a responsibility that belonged to the citizens, after reading -- even Louisiana history and the Constitution of

Louisiana and the United States, it say that that belong to the citizens, and another thing that I noticed, it always give recognition; I noticed the streets where they vote, they were fixed; I noticed the roads where the people lived on where they vote, it was gravel; I noticed the people that vote, the officers of the law respected them and treated them different from the people that didn't vote, and after reading Negro newspapers, traveling quite a bit, I felt like that it was a responsibility, and after my brothers -- which I didn't go because I was a minister -- went to the Army, and back there in World War I, when the President was talking about make the world safe for democracy, and everybody had the right and privilege to participate, it always has been a burning zeal and desire within my heart, and I have never been able to tell my children the reason why that Negroes should be treated in such a way or be cast about.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Well, now, Reverend Scott, have you been arrested in your lifetime?

REVEREND SCOTT: No.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you know of any impediment that disqualifies you from voting or registering?

REVEREND SCOTT: No.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Are there other questions from other members of the Commission? Father

Hesburgh?

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: Reverend Scott, have you ever had any trouble being identified for taxes?

REVEREND SCOTT: I didn't understand.

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: I say, have you ever had any trouble being identified for tax purposes? Have you ever had any difficulty being identified for paying taxes?

REVEREND SCOTT: No, sir; no, sir. I have an old poll tax receipt before they stopped receiving poll tax. I had it.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever had any suit in connection with voter registration?

REVEREND SCOTT: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: When and where?

REVEREND SCOTT: In 1951 we filed a suit against the registrar of voters in East Carroll Parish. Our attorney from this city filed the suit for us, Louis Barry, who is out of town. It is quite discouraging.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Just tell us this. What happened to the suit?

REVEREND SCOTT: Well, the suit just drug along until -- from one court -- not one court to another, but from one attorney in court to another, on technical grounds. I believe it was in '57, from '51 until '57, and at that particular time, Jurist Ben Dawkins put us out of his court, said

he had no jurisdiction, it belonged to the three-judge court, and after that our attorney went off to California. So I don't know. He just dropped the suit or what.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You didn't get any relief of the suit.

REVEREND SCOTT: No, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Any other questions?

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: Yes.

REVEREND SCOTT, do you have any sons or relatives that have served in the armed forces?

REVEREND SCOTT: No. I have brothers. My son is still in school.

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: Do you have brothers that have been in the armed forces of the United States?

REVEREND SCOTT: I have a brother in the armed force now; he is in Germany.

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: He is a native of Carroll Parish?

REVEREND SCOTT: That's right.

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: There are a goodly number of Negroes in Carroll Parish that are now or have in the past served in the Army or the Navy or the Air Force or Marine Corps?

REVEREND SCOTT: That's right. I have two brothers live there that served in World War II.

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: Any other questions?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I wonder if I could ask just one question.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Dean Johnson?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Reverend Scott, as a result of your rather persistent effort to get registered over a considerable period of time, I was wondering, have you ever been threatened or intimidated because of this kind of activity?

REVEREND SCOTT: Well, slightly. I don't like to talk about intimidations. I would rather forget them. I always felt if a fellow thought he was doing you some harm or that he was bluffing you or was upsetting you in your mind, that he would go further, so I just let it go. They have told not to say anything about it. Well, the officer of law at that time, sheriff of East Carroll Parish -- I can call his name, he is out of office now -- Matt Fowler, and we had a meeting our -- well, at that time that NAACP was having a membership drive and had invited Mr. Daniel E. Byrd to speak for us, and after he got to town, everything was so excited, and they sent for him to come to the Court House, and they picked me up, and I picked up several other ministers, and we went to the Court House, and the sheriff told me come to the office, his office, and don't bring anybody. So I went down, and they seated me around a table like that there, and they wanted to know what kind of meeting

we were having. He said he had been called up during the day, and someone said that somebody was coming there to teach us how to vote, and I told him no one had to come there to teach us how to vote, that practically all of us knew how to fill out those forms and figure our age correctly and so on. So the collector of court has passed on now to the Great Beyond. He was across the table from me, he said, "If you don't like our way of doing things, why don't you leave here?"

I said, "Well, I was born here, and if I leave here, I might not like the things that go on where I go, but I think that I could stay here and try to help correct some of the things." So they wouldn't allow us to have the meeting at the school house, and we went to a church. When I walked out of the sheriff's office, he said, "You be damned sure and tell him don't say anything about voting." So the next day he picked me up, and he asked me to name some of the leaders and those that understand how to fill out those forms. I say, "Is this strictly confidential between you and I and nobody else?" And he said, "No, I am not going to promise you that." I said, "I am not going to tell you the names, either." So then he went on to tell me about going to start a riot and so on, like that, he was sheriff, and he had to furnish protection, and he couldn't put up with anything like that. So times moved on.

I just go on, go on because I feel like I am right, and I know where I am going, I know what I am talking about, and I don't care what happens. Whatever happens, I got to go to heaven, and if I go for my people or for the right to vote, I would be perfectly satisfied, so that the way I feel about it.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: No further questions.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: No further questions.

Thank you, Reverend Scott.

Next witness.

COLONEL ROSENFELD: The next witness, if it please the Commission, is Francis Joseph Atlas of East Carroll Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you hold up your right hand and be sworn. Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MR. ATLAS: I do.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have this seat over here, please, Mr. Atlas.

TESTIMONY OF

FRANCIS JOSEPH ATLAS

EAST CARROLL PARISH

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you please give your full name, where you live, your age, and your occupation?

MR. ATLAS: I am Francis Joseph Atlas. My age is 55 years old. I live in East Carroll Parish, Lake Providence, Louisiana, and I am a farmer.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long have you been farming?

MR. ATLAS: Well, about 15 or 20 years.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you lived in that parish all of your life or not?

MR. ATLAS: With the exception of some few years I spent in school.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Some three or four years?

MR. ATLAS: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Other than that you have lived there all of your life?

MR. ATLAS: All of my life.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What education do you have?

MR. ATLAS: Well, I finished the school at that time known as the East Carroll Baptist School, and I went to Tuskegee. There I finished a trade in brick mason plaster.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: That is Tuskegee Institute at Tuskegee, Alabama?

MR. ATLAS: That's right

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You completed that course?

MR. ATLAS: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long did you spend in Tuskegee Institute?

MR. ATLAS: Three years. That was the years I was absent from Lake Providence.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you belong to any fraternal

organization, churches? If so, what are they?

MR. ATLAS: I am a Mason, I belong to Progressive Missionary Baptist Church. I am superintendent of that Sunday school.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you own your own farm?

MR. ATLAS: I do.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How big is it?

MR. ATLAS: Well, my own farm is 65 acres, and I am heir to 113 acres.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You own an automobile or truck?

MR. ATLAS: I do. Automobile.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever been arrested in your life?

MR. ATLAS: No.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you ever have any military service?

MR. ATLAS: No more than just registering to go to World War II.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Registered --

MR. ATLAS: I registered in World War II.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: And were not called?

MR. ATLAS: I was not.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you a registered voter?

MR. ATLAS: I am not.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever made any attempt to register?

MR. ATLAS: I have.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: When was the first time and tell us the circumstances.

MR. ATLAS: Well as near as I can recall, the first time we made an effort to register was when the primary case was broke in Texas and we went before the officials -- what gave Negroes the right to participate in white primaries -- we went to the officials of the town and questioned them about that, and they refused us.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you remember about what year that was?

MR. ATLAS: Well, as near as I can recall, it was in 1948.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Well, did they give you any reason for not letting you register?

MR. ATLAS: Well, I would consider them random.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You mean not satisfactory?

MR. ATLAS: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you ever make any further attempt to register?

MR. ATLAS: I did.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: When?

MR. ATLAS: As I can recall, I believe in 1950, we

went to the registration office, and I applied for a registration card, and the lady gave it to me, and I filled it out as best I knew how, and she looked at it and said it was incorrect. So as I can recall --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: In what respect, did she say?

MR. ATLAS: She did not tell me what.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right.

MR. ATLAS: So I had to leave, so I came back on another occasion; what distance that was apart, I don't recall.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Well, about how long, a year or two?

MR. ATLAS: No, it wasn't a year, it was right around a month or maybe two years.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What happened then?

MR. ATLAS: I filled the card correctly, and she told me to get three electors to identify me.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you make an effort --

MR. ATLAS: So I made an effort. I contacted some I thought was my friends, one man I had been doing business with --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: White or colored?

MR. ATLAS: White. No colored is registered there, so I had no ground --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did they require that you

get a registered voter to identify you?

MR. ATLAS: That's right. So they told me, one told me, politics, and he didn't want to have anything to do with it. And the other one say, "Well, the position I hold, I couldn't have anything to do with it."

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did the registrar know you personally?

MR. ATLAS: Well, now, I really don't feel safe in saying that she know me personally.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: But you went back to see her two or three times, did you?

MR. ATLAS: I did. Two times.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you have any trouble identifying yourself to the bank or stores or anybody else in your parish?

MR. ATLAS: Not that I can recall.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Then when is the next time you went back?

MR. ATLAS: Well, I didn't go back any more.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Didn't go back any more. Have you ever filed a suit or made any further efforts with any other group?

MR. ATLAS: Well, I was with the group that did file a suit in 19 -- I don't remember the exact or what year

it was.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Was that the one Reverend Scott testified about?

MR. ATLAS: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You were a party to that suit?

MR. ATLAS: I was a part of that suit.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you been back this year?

MR. ATLAS: Well, I was with the group, but I didn't go before the registrar of voters because I had met so many of them, and they told me the results and I didn't see where it was necessary.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You say you were with the group. When was that? A group when?

MR. ATLAS: That was this last July, July 25.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: July this year?

MR. ATLAS: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: About how many went?

MR. ATLAS: About 21, as I can recall.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You found out that some of them couldn't register?

MR. ATLAS: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did any of them register?

MR. ATLAS: No, not a one.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: And when it came to your

turn, you just gave up, did you?

MR. ATLAS: I didn't feel like it was necessary.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any questions from the Commission? Father Hesburgh?

COMMISSIONER HESBERGH: Mr. Atlas, did you have difficulty registering for the Army?

MR. ATLAS: No, I did not.

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: Thank you.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other questions? Why do you want to vote, Mr. Atlas?

MR. ATLAS: I am a taxpayer. I want a voice in the government in which I live. I feel that is my constitutional rights, and I just feel like it is my responsibility as a citizen to take whatever -- if I can share it as a taxpayer and other reasons, I think I should vote.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Well, thank you.

Any other questions? If not, you may be excused.

COLONEL ROSENFELD: The next witness is the Reverend William J. Neal of Madison Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Come around, Reverend Neal.

Will you hold up your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

REVEREND NEAL: I do.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you have a seat over there, please.

TESTIMONY OF
WILLIAM J. NEAL
MADISON PARISH

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Mr. Bernhard, do you want to identify this parish?

MR. BERNHARD: Yes. This parish is Madison Parish. It is directly below East Carroll Parish, the parish in which the prior witnesses reside. You will observe that in this parish Negro citizens age 21 and over amount to 5,933. There are none registered. The per cent is therefore zero. The white age 21 and over are 3,160. 2,633 are registered, and the per cent of the white registration is therefore 83.3 per cent.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you give your full name, your age, your occupation and place of residence?

REVEREND NEAL: My full name is William James Neal. I reside at Tallulah, Louisiana. My occupation is minister. My age is 29.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long have you resided in Tallulah, Louisiana?

REVEREND NEAL: I have resided in Tallulah about two and one-half years.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Where did you live prior to that time?

REVEREND NEAL: I lived in the State of North Carolina.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long did you live in North Carolina?

REVEREND NEAL: I was there for a period of 9 1/2 years.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Were you a registered voter in the State of North Carolina?

REVEREND NEAL: I was not a registered voter, but I was a qualified voter, I had understood, according to the law of North Carolina; I was in school during the time, and I didn't participate in any of the voting.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you hold any degrees or education in higher institutions of learning?

REVEREND NEAL: I hold a Bachelor of Arts degree from Livingston College.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Which college?

REVEREND NEAL: Livingston, in Salisbury.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right.

REVEREND NEAL: And further degree -- in pursuit of the Bachelor of Divinity at the Hewitt Theological Seminary, of which I completed 2 years and am now candidate for the Bachelor of Divinity.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Louisville?

REVEREND NEAL: Hewitt Theological Seminary at Salisbury.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Do you own any personal property?

REVEREND NEAL: No personal property outside of automobiles.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever been arrested

in your lifetime?

REVEREND NEAL: I have been arrested.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: For what?

REVEREND NEAL: I was arrested in an accident.

We had a wreck in the State of Carolina.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You mean an automobile wreck?

REVEREND NEAL: An automobile wreck, yes.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Traffic violation?

REVEREND NEAL: Well, it was a traffic violation; yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Well, were you ^{re}penalized for it?

REVEREND NEAL: Well, I don't say that I was penalized. I mean, I was given a reprimand on the part of the jury.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What I mean is, did you go to jail or pay a fine?

REVEREND NEAL: I paid a fine.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How much?

REVEREND NEAL: I think it was around \$20.00. I didn't have sufficient lights.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Didn't have sufficient lights.

REVEREND NEAL: Yes.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever attempted to register in your home parish?

REVEREND NEAL: I have attempted to register in Madison Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: When was the first time?

REVEREND NEAL: My first attempt was made, there was a group of us in the month of July, of ministers.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: July of what year?

REVEREND NEAL: This year, 1960.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You were with this same group Mr. Atlas was with?

REVEREND NEAL: That was in East Carroll.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: That was in the other parish; pardon me.

REVEREND NEAL: This attempt was made in Madison Parish in the month of July. This was an effort drawn out of an effort that was made by a group previous to my arrival in Tallulah. There was a group that had made an attempt in the year 1954 in June, which I think they still have records of that proceeding that was held, and the attorney that represented this case was, I believe, one of the attorneys was Attorney Sharp from --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You weren't present in the original --

REVEREND NEAL: I wasn't present at that.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: In July of this year about how many of you were there?

REVEREND NEAL: Five of us.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What did you do, and just tell in your own words what happened.

REVEREND NEAL: As we approached the registration, which is in the Court House, the registrar, we were directed to go to the sheriff instead of the registrar, and we went to the sheriff and made known our requests to register, and he told us, asked the question, weren't we getting along well enough in that parish, why did we want to register. There were many varied answers given. The one answer that I gave was as a similar answer has already been given here, that we felt that we were citizens and that we were good citizens, taxpaying citizens, and we saw no reason as to why as we couldn't or shouldn't register if we could qualify, and then an argument, rather, a discussion followed, and in this discussion the question was asked, first of all, as to why we should have to go to him, of which he said that he admitted that he would have nothing to do with the registration. Then we said then our next procedure then would be that we would go to the registrar, but he told us that it was not advisable for us to even attempt to go to the registrar --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: This is the sheriff talking.

REVEREND NEAL: Yes -- because, first of all, it

wasn't time, the time had not come for Negroes to register and vote in that parish. Then we asked why. Now, his statement was that, first of all, that the Negro progresses too fast, one, and the next was that he figured that by the Negro outnumbering the white of that parish, such per cent as indicated here, that they would receive too much power, voting power, and he felt that by receiving this voting power, that the Negro who would be on these polls would tend to perhaps sell their votes to candidates that would not be pleased or would not be acceptable candidates to them, and that was one, the next reason why he gave as to why he wouldn't advise us to attempt to register.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Then what did you do?

REVEREND NEAL: We further pursued a discussion, and in the discussion we asked what objection would they have of Negroes registering. He said that for one thing the Negro has progressed in the last few years of his freedom with what little rights he had, and then we began to mention certain things that had taken place in that parish, as he begin to ask us why we wanted to vote. We related various reasons as to why we wanted to vote. One was that Tallulah is known as a village. It is a wide open town. I have branded it personally as Little Las Vegas, because we have open saloons, open seven days a week, some of them 24 hours a day, and they sell whiskey. Many children, many of

our children, who are minor, go in these saloons. They have laws to say that no child should enter a place such as that, but we have not been successful in getting those laws enforced, and we wanted those laws enforced so that these children would not be permitted to go and that anyone who sold alcoholic beverages to a child would be put out of business, and that the saloons would respect the law of the State of Louisiana, I believe, that maybe have some -- with regards to opening of these saloons, selling of whiskey at all hours of the night and all day on Sunday, and the situation of streets, which is known as buckshot, I think, mud is known as buckshot mud, and one only has to be around in the rain -- we have a slogan there that the mud, if you stick to it when it is dry, it will stick to you when it is wet, so we want some of the streets paved and sewage put down.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Was all this in conversation with the sheriff?

REVEREND NEAL: Yes. So that we could have this, and he advised us that the time wasn't right, that he would want to first find out the results of some new legislation that had been passed in Baton Rouge, and after he found out this new legislation as how it would affect us as voters, and we asked what he mean by affecting us. Then he said the area dealing with rascality, that he thought a great deal that we would be affected by this rascality section in the

new voting requirement for the State of Louisiana.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Well, was that the end of that conversation?

REVEREND NEAL: That was the end of that conversation.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right.

Now, did you make any further attempt to register?

REVEREND NEAL: We made a further attempt in August.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Of 1960?

REVEREND NEAL: August of this year.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: About what time in August?

REVEREND NEAL: It was the last Monday.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. What happened. Tell us where you went and what was said.

REVEREND NEAL: We made another attempt. We went to the Court House right after this election, and when we entered this court house --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Talk up just a little louder.

REVEREND NEAL: -- we found that the office was closed.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You mean the registrar's office?

REVEREND NEAL: Registrar's office was closed, and we left.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What day of the week was that?

REVEREND NEAL: That was on Monday.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. About what time?

REVEREND NEAL: That was at 10:20 a.m.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right.

REVEREND NEAL: And we came back, several of us had agreed that we would watch, and when we found the office open, we would call the others and go back. We did that. I can only testify what I did. Last Friday I made the last attempt.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Last Friday?

REVEREND NEAL: Last Friday, and the office was closed. They had a green curtain pulled down there in the office, I mean indicating, I imagine, that the office was closed. I indicated to go in, but the door was locked. I thought maybe the registrar was in recess or something, so I waited around a few minutes, and no one appeared.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: That is the last time, Friday of last week?

REVEREND NEAL: Yes.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you on a substitute teacher list?

REVEREND NEAL: Yes.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: That is, in the public schools?

REVEREND NEAL: Public schools.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever taught any as a substitute teacher?

REVEREND NEAL: I taught from September of 1958 up until July.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Of what year?

REVEREND NEAL: Of 1960.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Well, what happened then?

REVEREND NEAL: Well, I was told by the principal that certain technicalities had come up with regards to my family situation that I wouldn't be permitted to teach any more.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did he tell you what they were?

REVEREND NEAL: My wife had come down to the Carolinas with me; she had visited Tallulah. Various things had happened. She became sick, and I had to send her back to the Carolinas, and we have four children, and one of the children were born there while she was away, and I have been supporting her, and they indicated that my reason for being taken off the list was because my wife had indicated non-support for the children, and I had been sending this money ever since 1958 -- '59, pardon me.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You were continuing to support the children?

REVEREND NEAL: Yes.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any questions?

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: Do you feel that was the real reason?

REVEREND NEAL: I wouldn't want to say that it was the real reason, and I wouldn't want to say because I don't have any knowledge of the fact as to whether or not that was the real reason.

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: How large a community is Tallulah?

REVEREND NEAL: Tallulah, which is known as a village, I would say approximately from 8 to 12,000 population.

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: There are more Negroes than whites in Tallulah?

REVEREND NEAL: There are.

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: That is all.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Dr. Rankin?

COMMISSIONER RANKIN: Do you think the refusal that you received to register was due to the purge of Negro votes? In other words, if there had been fewer Negroes in Madison Parish, do you think you would have had a better chance of getting registered?

REVEREND NEAL: I don't think even had there been fewer Negroes there that we would have had any greater chance of being registered. I think that it was established, according to statements that had been given by reliable sources

that no Negro should ever been registered to vote in that parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other question? Father Hesburgh?

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: Reverend Neal, just one point I was curious about. Are you going to keep on trying to register?

REVEREND NEAL: I intend to pursue this until my church sees fit to transfer me to some other place. We will continue.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other questions? Thank you. You may be excused, Mr. Neal. Next witness.

COLONEL ROSENFELD: The next witness is Mr. James Sharp, an attorney of Monroe, Louisiana, who will testify with respect to Madison Parish. Mr. Sharp.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you hold up your hand and be sworn. Do you solemnly swear that the evidence you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MR. SHARP: Yes, sir.

TESTIMONY OF

JAMES SHARP, JR.

OUACHITA PARISH

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you please have a seat. Will you please state your name, full name, your age, your residence, and your occupation or profession?

MR. SHARP: My name is James Sharp, Jr.; I am 37 years of age. I reside at Monroe, Louisiana, and I am an

attorney and a businessman.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long have you lived at Monroe?

MR. SHARP: I was born in Monroe and have lived there all of my life except three years in the Army and schooling.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Are you a registered voter in that county?

MR. SHARP: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long have you been registered?

MR. SHARP: I have been a registered voter since on or before the year 1952. I don't remember the exact date.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Now, how long have you practiced law?

MR. SHARP: I have practiced, have been in active practice since April 2, 1952.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you a graduate of any university or college?

MR. SHARP: I did undergraduate work at Southern University. I hold an LL.B. degree from Lincoln University of Missouri, and I hold certificate in the civil courts subjects from the Southern University Law School in Baton Rouge.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you devote all of your time to the practice of your profession?

MR. SHARP: Yes, sir; I do. I am a full-time practitioner of the law.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you own any land?

MR. SHARP: I own my home and considerable other real estate there in Ouachita Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: I assume you have an automobile.

MR. SHARP: Yes, sir; that is correct.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you serve in the last war or not?

MR. SHARP: I did three years of active service in the Army during World War II, having served approximately two years overseas.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever been arrested?

MR. SHARP: No, sir; no more than minor traffic violation.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: I believe you are a registered voter. Have you had anything to do with attempting to register other Negroes?

MR. SHARP: Well, I have. I have participated in efforts to get them registered, and particularly in Madison Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Tell what you did with

reference to your efforts in Madison Parish. In other words, Madison is different from your home town, isn't it?

MR. SHARP: That's correct, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You live in Ouachita Parish, is that correct?

MR. SHARP: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Monroe, Louisiana, and you are talking now about Madison Parish.

MR. SHARP: Right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Go ahead and describe it and tell what you did as briefly as you can.

MR. SHARP: About January or February of 1954, a group of citizens in Tallulah, Madison Parish, consulted me with respect to the voting situation over there.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Were they colored citizens?

MR. SHARP: They were colored citizens. They came into the office and related the fact that there were no registered Negro voters in Madison Parish and that they wanted to take whatever steps were necessary to correct that situation. I was officially employed by them and authorized to direct them in whatever channels I saw fit to see that they were permitted to register. I conferred with them several times in Tallulah and also at my office, attempting to find out just what the situation was.

During the month of March 1954 I wrote Mrs. Mary K.

Ward, who was the registrar of that parish at that time, a letter. That letter is missing from my file at this time, but the substance of that letter was that I understood that there were no registered Negro voters and that I wanted to know maybe what her policy was or what reasonable method could we use to get this matter straightened out. A copy of this letter was sent to the office of the mayor at Tallulah, Louisiana, in which I had this to say. It is a very brief letter. "A copy of my letter to Mrs. Mary K. Ward, registrar of voters, Madison Parish, will fully explain the subject about which I write. In this connection I am expressing my desire to cooperate with local authorities and hope that we will be able to quietly adjust the possible problem. I respectfully ask your assistance and recommendations."

A copy of this letter was also sent to Judge Frank Voelker, who was the judge of the Sixth District Court there in Madison Parish at that time.

I heard nothing from the mayor, the registrar, or the jurist, so --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What did you do after that?

MR. SHARP: Yes, sir. After that I thought it time to make a personal visit to the registrar's office in Madison Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you go?

MR. SHARP: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did anyone accompany you?

MR. SHARP: No, I went along.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You went alone?

MR. SHARP: I went alone.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Whom did you see on that trip and about when was it? Well, approximately. Still in the year '54?

MR. SHARP: Yes, sir. That was during the month of March or April 1954. I went to the office of the registrar, and I talked first to Mrs. Mary K. Ward who was the registrar at that time.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Will you give the substance of your conversation, both yours and her remarks?

MR. SHARP: When I walked into the office, I introduced myself to Mrs. Ward as being the lawyer who had written her the letter and that I came to maybe discuss with her the policy and just what could be done in regards to getting Negroes of that parish registered to vote. Mrs. Ward told me she had been registrar of voters for Madison Parish at that time for 31 years, that there had been no Negroes on her books registered to vote during those 30 years, and that there were no Negroes registered to vote in Ouachita, Madison, and East Carroll Parish. She stated to me that she operated under orders from the sheriff and other public officials there and

that she had not seen fit at that time to permit any Negroes to register and vote. She suggested that if I cared to, I could discuss the matter with the sheriff of Madison Parish who at that time was a Sheriff C. E. Hester.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you discuss it with him?

MR. SHARP: I left out of her office at that time, and I went down the hall into an office which they directed me as being the office of Sheriff Hester. I walked in the office, and Sheriff Hester was sitting at the far end of the room behind a table, and I went on down to his desk, and I looked around, and there were two armed officers, one at that time was in the doorway and another one standing over just to his left, near the corner. Sheriff Hester demanded in a very angry and intimidating fashion that I sit down.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you sit down?

MR. SHARP: Yes, sir. At that time I followed his instructions. I sat down.

I was somewhat surprised at the intimidating fashion in which he went about it, and the officers standing there with their pistols on seemed to be very solemn, and I wasn't able to size up the situation right then. Sheriff Hester began at that moment to denounce the administration of Mr. Truman, and he did seem to express just a little more regards for the administration of Mr. Eisenhower, and he told me that I was sitting on a powder keg, that in effect he said that if

I pursue what appeared to be my purpose any further, that he would take me for a ride. He further stated that any efforts that I would make in that direction I could assure myself that I would not have any protection whatsoever from his office.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Is that about all that happened?

MR. SHARP: That is all what happened in his office except I was able to get out without any bodily harm, what I would say, correctly sizing up the situation and being rather tactful.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Then did anything else happen at the Court House?

MR. SHARP: Nothing else happened there at the Court House. I did not return. I concluded at that time that personal contact would not be advisable, and then I went back and reported the situation to my clients, and very shortly after then, I believe in the month of June, we filed legal proceedings.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Has that litigation been terminated?

MR. SHARP: That litigation has been terminated. That was the suit of Zelma C. Wyche and others versus Mrs. Mary K. Ward. It has been terminated, but with no relief to the plaintiff.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Was that in the state or federal court?

MR. SHARP: That was in the federal court, the Western District of Louisiana, with the Honorable Ben C. Dawkins, Jr. presiding.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: But the litigation has been terminated but without right of your clients to register.

MR. SHARP: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Is that correct?

MR. SHARP: It has been so determined.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you made any further efforts in that particular parish?

MR. SHARP: No, sir; I haven't made any further efforts in that parish. Now, I might bring you up on some of the negotiation leading up to the filing of this suit.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Well, unless there is something unusual, it is just the details of the suit. Did you go back to this county any more, this parish?

MR. SHARP: I didn't go back.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Pardon me. I live in east Texas, and I call them counties; parishes over here.

MR. SHARP: No, I didn't go back, but I sent my clients back to prepare this law suit.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you know of anything else

that bears on that issue in connection with your services as attorney for these people?

MR. SHARP: No, sir; I don't know anything else.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other questions of the Commission?

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: Not knowing the geography of Louisiana, where on the map is Monroe, Louisiana?

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you turn around and point it out, please, Mr. Sharp? Point out Ouachita Parish. Madison is "H" there.

MR. SHARP: This is Ouachita Parish here.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: And Monroe is in there.

MR. SHARP: Monroe would be right here.

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: That is all.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other questions?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Attorney Sharp, I would like to ask you just one question. As a lawyer, I am sure you are familiar with the legal developments in this whole voting area in Louisiana. Have you apprized the various agencies that have responsibilities in the voting area with the problems that you have met in your efforts to secure relief for the people in Madison County?

MR. SHARP: Yes, sir. I have apprized that situation in Madison Parish; also in my home parish, Ouachita Parish. It is quite evident that in Madison Parish they have concluded

not to permit any Negroes to register and vote, and they feel that they can accomplish that purpose simply in one respect by requiring that a prospective registrant -- they require him to be identified by a registered voter in his precinct, and there are no Negroes registered to vote in the precincts over there in Madison Parish, and no whites want to identify the people desiring to register, and consequently it is impossible for them to comply with their request, and as I said here, the registrar said that there had been none in here for 31 years, and she indicated to me that there was some kind of agreement between those parishes that there would be none.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Just one other question. You mentioned that you had taken the matter up not only with respect to Madison Parish, but the parish in which you live. What are the special problems where you live, if they are different from the problems in Madison Parish?

MR. SHARP: Well, I had personal contact with the registration situation there in Madison Parish during the year 1956 when the purge of voters took place there, and there was a pattern of segregation and discrimination there in the office which increased the possibility, or, rather, decreased the possibility --

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Are you speaking now of Ouachita Parish?

MR. SHARP: This is Ouachita Parish -- which decreased

the possibility of those who had been challenged to get back on the roll. I have numerous calls in my office complaining about unreasonable requirements in the interpretation of certain provisions of the Constitution. I remember distinctly an elderly lady said that the registrar of voters asked her what was the legislature, and in her own words she told her -- she said she told her that the legislature makes the laws of Louisiana. But she did not accept that interpretation.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I have no further questions.

MR. RANKIN: Have you received any intimidation at all for your activities?

MR. SHARP: I received threats during my participation in this vote case in Ouachita Parish. There were several calls telling me to get out of town, that they would take me for a ride. That would be all.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Well, thank you very much, and you may be excused.

At this time we will take a ten-minute recess.

(Recess.)

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Ladies and gentlemen, may we have order. This announcement: We will recess for lunch at 12:30 and reconvene at 1:30, and may I make this announcement for the benefit of the witnesses. No witness is excused to leave until he gets permission from Mr. Tiffany, because you might be recalled or something like that.

All right, will you call Mr. Rosenfeld, the next witness.

COLONEL ROSENFELD: The next witness is the Reverend Philip R. Brown of Ouachita Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you hold up your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

REVEREND BROWN: I do

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have the seat over here, please.

TESTIMONY OF

PHILIP R. BROWN III

OUACHITA PARISH

MR. BERNHARD: If it please the Commission, Ouachita is here, or "F", as Attorney Sharp has previously indicated. In this parish there are 19,692 Negro American citizens age 21 and over. There are 723 registered, which is 3.7 per cent of the population of voting age. The whites age 21 and over, 42,511. The whites registered are 23,804. The per cent over 21 of the whites registered constitutes 56 per cent.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you please state your full name, your age, your residence, and your profession or occupation?

REVEREND BROWN: Philip R. Brown III. I am 42 years of age, live in West Monroe, Louisiana, pastor of the Calvary Missionary Baptist Church and an instructor in the United Theological Seminary.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long have you lived in Ouachita Parish?

REVEREND BROWN: A little more than one year and

one-half.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Where did you come from to West Monroe?

REVEREND BROWN: New Orleans, Louisiana.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long did you live in New Orleans?

REVEREND BROWN: All of my life.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Were you born here?

REVEREND BROWN: Born in New Orleans.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long have you been a minister?

REVEREND BROWN: Since 1937.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you a graduate of any higher institution of learning?

REVEREND BROWN: I am a graduate of the Union Theological Seminary, have the Bachelor of Theology degree.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Union, is that the one in New York?

REVEREND BROWN: No, sir; that is the one here, and I also studied at Xavier University.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Do you happen to own any real property or any personal property?

REVEREND BROWN: An automobile, that is the only property I own.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever been arrested?

REVEREND BROWN: Not for anything other than minor traffic violations.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever been a registered voter in the State of Louisiana?

REVEREND BROWN: I have, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Where?

REVEREND BROWN: In the City of New Orleans. I should like to add, I also conducted here during the year of 1958 a registration drive. I was the promotional director for six months. We added more than 5,000 people to the rolls here.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: That is 5,000 Negro voters?

REVEREND BROWN: Negro voters, that is correct.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Here in New Orleans?

REVEREND BROWN: That's correct.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long were you a registered voter in New Orleans?

REVEREND BROWN: About 12 or 15 years.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Were you ever turned down for registration in New Orleans?

REVEREND BROWN: Never was.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you been permitted to vote freely?

REVEREND BROWN: Regularly and freely.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you a registered voter

in your present place of residence?

REVEREND BROWN: I am not.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you attempted to register?

REVEREND BROWN: I have attempted.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: When?

REVEREND BROWN: The first--several times. The first time was the latter part of July of this year.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Tell what happened and what you did, whom you saw and what was said by the official and by you.

REVEREND BROWN: Thank you. I was under the impression that you needed to be in the parish a year, so after I lived in Ouachita Parish for twelve months, I went to the office of the registrar of voters, and the lady in charge asked what I wanted. I told her I would like to register, and I attempted to produce my driver's license and other personal identification papers that I had. She said that that would not be sufficient, I would have to bring in two persons of my ward and precinct who were registered voters to identify me. I left and returned the first part of August, on or about the eighth of August.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: That was this year.

REVEREND BROWN: This year. I was unable to get two persons of my same ward and precinct.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you try?

REVEREND BROWN: I attempted.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Why couldn't you get them?

REVEREND BROWN: Well, those who were eligible -- by that, they say -- the persons whom I contacted said that it was their understanding that if you identified a person within a twelve-month period, then you were ineligible to identify anyone else. They would not go with me. One man who thought he had identified somebody before twelve months ago did go with me, and we approached the registrar the second time, and as I went in, she asked if I had the two people. I told her I hadn't been able to find but one, and then she began to interview the man whom I brought, and he told her that he thought he had identified somebody about eleven months ago, and she said, well, that was not long enough, he wouldn't be able to identify any other person until after twelve months, and he walked out, and then she said to me, "How long have you lived in Ouachita Parish?" I said, "Well, I have lived here more than a year." The registrar of voters said, "Well, if you will bring in three documents or bills or receipts or letters showing your name and address at this address, then you will be able to register."

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you do that?

REVEREND BROWN: I did that. I went back again on or about the 15th of September.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: That is this month.

REVEREND BROWN: This month; that is correct. I brought with me at that time a letter from the Treasury Department showing that my address had been changed from another address to an address in Ouachita Parish, and that document was dated in 1959, 4/30/59.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What was the next?

REVEREND BROWN: I brought another document, since she had said three, which was a charge account book from Sears, Roebuck & Company of Monroe, showing June 23, 1959, a purchase was made, and a letter from the Secretary of State, Wade O. Martin, Jr., of the State of Louisiana, post-marked July 1, 1959, addressed to me at my home. But she would not look at them. She would not look at them. I told her, I said, "The last time I was in, you said if I would bring three letters or receipts, then I might be able to register." She said, she was sorry, but she was not the person who had waited on me and that these documents would mean nothing to her, she would have to have two registered voters out of my ward and precinct.

I said to her that I had not been able to find any registered voters who had not identified someone else within the twelve-month period within the ward and precinct. She said, well, she was very sorry, but that was the law because she did not know me. So then I said, "Well, thank you very kindly, but I notice that as I waited for my turn, the

registrar waited on five white persons, and neither of the five white persons had anyone to identify them." So this lady said, "Well, evidently she knew them." I said, "Well, I am sorry, but she could not have known them because she asked the man and his wife where they were from. They said they were from Shreveport, Caddo Parish, and the registrar of voters said, 'Well, welcome to Ouachita Parish,' and gave them a card, and they began to fill it out."

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Let's have order, please. Go ahead.

REVEREND BROWN: I said, "And the young man told her he was from Lake Charles, and she told the young man, 'Well, put your sister's address on the card if she lives in the parish.'" I said, "I know she couldn't have known them."

So she said, "Well, I am running the office, you are not running the office."

I said, "Thank you, very kindly. What is your name?"

She said, "My name?"

I said, "Yes."

She said, "My name," and I understood her to say her name was Mrs. Morgan, but I later learned her name is Mrs. Moran, and she said, "This lady," pointing out another lady, "is Mrs. Lucky. She is the registrar of voters."

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Is that all that happened

there?

REVEREND BROWN: Yes. I haven't been able to find two people yet.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: And you have not registered?

REVEREND BROWN: I have not.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you going to try to register again?

REVEREND BROWN: I will try.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you had any trouble in identification of yourself or making your identity known at banks and business houses in West Monroe or Monroe?

REVEREND BROWN: None whatsoever, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: That is all. Any other questions?

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: I would like to ask something. You are the pastor of a church.

REVEREND BROWN: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: How large is the church? Around how many members do you have?

REVEREND BROWN: We operate on \$20,000 a year budget. Our membership is not very large, but most of our members are regulars. I would say we have approximately 250 members.

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: It is a church well known, easily found?

REVEREND BROWN: Oh, yes; owns quite a bit of

property, brick building, departmentalized church, one of the first class churches in the area.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other questions?
Father Hesburgh?

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: Reverend Brown, how many of your parishioners would be registered?

REVEREND BROWN: Thank you very kindly. When I first went into the church, I found that a number of the parishioners had been removed from the roll by purges, so we set up a registration school in the church for the membership, and we have registered just about all of our members of our church through this medium. We have a copy of the constitution and the voter registration laws and the 16 questions that we were able to get that they might ask, and we have two persons who are members of our social action committee who go over the questions of the constitution with the members, and we have been able to register quite a number of them.

COMMISSIONER RANKIN: Is it your impression that if you had two electors to vouch for you, you would have been permitted to register?

REVEREND BROWN: No, I do not feel that. The procedure is, whatever you have, it is what you don't have that you need. That is the procedure. My members are familiar with it, but I feel if I could have gotten two, then

I would have been told, "Well what you need to do now is to interpret the Constitution." You see, I didn't even get to the filling of the card, you see, and if I had, then that would have been questioned.

COMMISSIONER RANKIN: Have you heard of any white people being refused?

REVEREND BROWN: None whatsoever. I haven't heard of one since I have been there.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: Mr. Brown, you mentioned before the purge procedure, and the preceding witness from the same parish mentioned something about the purge procedure. This may not be the place in our testimony that fits logically, but we may not get you back on the stand. I would like to have you tell me, what do you mean when you say the "purge procedure"?

REVEREND BROWN: Well, the information I received from my members when I became pastor of the church was that some two or three years before some thousand, 3 or more thousand, Negroes had been taken off of the registration roll just before an election because they had been challenged for such reasons as not crossing a "T," not dotting an "I," or their name wasn't in the phone book or something like that, and of course they have to appear, you see, to answer this challenge within ten days. Then they have to bring with them

two persons who are on the rolls to identify them that they are the person whom they say they are, and then when they would bring the two persons, the registrar of voters, according to the information given me, would say, "These two people can't identify you because their challenge is in the mail now; they will get it tomorrow," and that procedure always followed, so that is why they never did get back. That is what my members told me.

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: Do you have reason to believe that there were a significant number of previously registered Negro voters in your parish that have been removed from the voting rolls through this purge procedure?

REVEREND BROWN: Yes, I have good reason to believe that.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other question? Well, thank you.

MR. BERNHARD: Mr. Vice Chairman, may I ask the Reverend Brown whether or not he would care to introduce those three identifying letters into the record here?

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you have any objection?

REVEREND BROWN: None whatsoever.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. If you will hand them to Mr. Bernhard, they will be marked for identification and made a part of the record.

MR. BERNHARD: I will ask that they be identified as

exhibit 2.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: They will be received as part of the record.

(The documents referred to were marked for identification as Exhibit No. 2.)

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Call the next witness.

COLONEL ROSENFELD: Mr. Frederic D. Lewis of Claiborne Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you hold up your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

TESTIMONY OF
FREDERIC DOUGLAS LEWIS
CLAIBORNE PARISH

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you have a seat over here, please. Mr. Bernhard, will you identify this parish and statistical data?

MR. BERNHARD: The parish is Claiborne. It is identified in purple and marked with the letter "D". In Claiborne Parish the Negro citizens age 21 and over number 4,846. There are 16 Negroes registered in this parish, which comes out to a percent of .3 per cent. The whites age 21 and over number 5,981. The whites registered, 5,735. The per cent of whites over the age 21 registered is 95.9 per cent.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you please give your full name, your age, your residence, and your occupation?

MR. LEWIS: My name is Frederic Douglas Lewis, born in Lisbon, Louisiana, 1905, October 21. I am a member of the Masonic Lodge, member of the CME Church, and former district director of Sunday schools for the district.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What do you do to make a living?

MR. LEWIS: Well, I used to farm until my health was such until I had to retire from actual labor.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long have you lived in your parish?

MR. LEWIS: I have lived there except a few years I spent in Ohio and California, about 50 years, I would say.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you a graduate of any universities or colleges?

MR. LEWIS: No, sir; no, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What about high school?

MR. LEWIS: Junior high.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you had any military service?

MR. LEWIS: No, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you own any property?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, heir to about 600 acres.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Talk out so everybody can hear you. Heir to about 600 acres?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Is that where you farm?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir. Claiborne Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: I believe you said you had to quit farming on account of your health.

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever been arrested?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever been a registered voter outsider of Louisiana?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Where?

MR. LEWIS: California.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: When?

MR. LEWIS: 1950 and '51.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What were you doing in California at that time?

MR. LEWIS: Well, I worked as a carpenter and stone mason. I also worked for an insurance company, Howard Insurance.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you have any trouble registering in the State of California?

MR. LEWIS: No, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you vote in the elections?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir. I voted in the state election in 1950 and a couple of primaries in 1951.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you a registered voter in your home county?

MR. LEWIS: No, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you attempted to register?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How many times, approximately?

MR. LEWIS: Approximately about 12 times, more or less.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Tell, as well as you can remember, when you first attempted to register?

MR. LEWIS: When I first attempted to register --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: About what year was that?

MR. LEWIS: 1935.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Tell what happened then.

MR. LEWIS: Well, at the time the poll tax law had been abolished in '34 and went into effect the same fall, and so the state officials issued notices that everybody would go and sign the free poll tax books and get your receipt. So I did, and if you don't mind it, I would like you to make a record; my 1934 and '35 poll tax receipt, and --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you have any objection to this being made part of the record?

MR. LEWIS: Not a bit.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: It will be so done then.

MR. LEWIS: In other words, there was some threatening remarks made to me by the then sheriff of the parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Tell just what was said by any official.

MR. LEWIS: When he passed us over -- another fellow in there with me got his also. He asked the question, he said, "What election do you boys expect to vote in?" I said, "All of them."

"Didn't you know this was a white primary?" I says, "Well, I am going to register as a Democrat, and I will be eligible to vote in all the elections." He said, "Well, I tell you, anybody come in here trying to vote, trying to vote in the white primary, is going to get the hell knocked out of them." I said, "Yes, sir." I proceeded down to the registrar's office, and I filled the blanks, she failed me, but I don't know what point. She wouldn't tell me. So that was for that time, 1935. I went back in 1956, which was presidential election year, September and October, and I was told that I had to have two registered voters from my precinct and ward.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Who told you that?

MR. LEWIS: Registrar of voters.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right.

MR. LEWIS: So I made two trips without anyone to

accompany me there. But about the last of October, a few days before the books were closed, I carried two registered voters, and she asked -- one was a lady. She asked the lady how many times had she been in there, and she said one time. The registrar said, "You can't come in here but one time." So I stepped across the hall to get the tax assessor to identify me, but he said he couldn't do it. He didn't give any reason. I didn't ask him. So that was that for that year.

I make this statement. I spent about practically half a day around there, and I noticed white people going in there, two or three or probably half a dozen, and they carried no one in there to identify them. I watched that particularly, and it seemed that they ran into some difficulty, and she would point out some things, I don't know what she said, but when they got through, they was handed cards to identify them at the polls. And my next trip was in May, June, of 1958. I was told then that I had to bring somebody in to identify me, two persons. So I asked her would she accept my driver's license, and she said no. I said, "What about some statement from the bank over there?"

No. Not unless they are going to identify you in person, no written statement.

Well, I went back the next time about May 1959, and I carried one man with me. I had already been identified

by one fellow, so I carried him, who was a registered voter. She asked him how many times had he been in there. He said two times. And she says, "Well, you can't come in here but two times," and then she turned to me and said, "I am not discriminating against you now." I said, "Well, lady, you told the lady that she couldn't come in but one time. Now you are telling this man that he can't come in but two times." I says, "I didn't think the Constitution of this state varied like that." She says, "Well, it is different in the Constitution and the registration rules."

I said, "Is that so? Well, I thought the whole business was governed by the laws of the State of Louisiana and not by certain organization," and so she said, "Well, that is just that." So I said, "Well, will you accept my driver's license and Social Security, any other document with my signature?"

She says, "No, it has to be persons."

So that was 1959. In June 1960 I went back. At that time she didn't have any blanks. She said, "I don't think I have any blanks," So we stood there, and she asked the question two or three times, how many wanted to register. I said three. The third time I said three. I said, "We have two vouchers." So she sat down, she got a blank, she took one name, and she said, "This blank calls for three." I said, "Well, I will go get the third one, I know where he

is," and before I could get started she says, "I am out of blanks. You have to come back next Thursday," and one man spoke up and said, "The books will be closed Thursday."

So she said, "Well, I have to order some, so you come back Monday," so we didn't go back. We had been there several times, and I figured that it was worthless to keep going.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: And that was when?

MR. LEWIS: June 1956.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: That is the last time you tried?

MR. LEWIS: Last time.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Why do you want to register and vote?

MR. LEWIS: First, I want to be a full-fledged citizen, and we are taxpayers, we pay our taxes, we have no representation. You take for an example, if some of us happen to get into trouble with the law, when we are arrested, we are arrested by a white policeman, and we are indicted by white grand jury, and we are tried before petty jury or trial jury.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever been arrested yourself?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, I have been arrested.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever been convicted?

MR. LEWIS: No, sir, never been convicted. This was walking late at night in Shreveport. So you see we have nobody to represent us, on the jury, school board office, the state legislature, nowhere. All the laws are being passed we have no voice in, whether it is for us or against us, and I don't think you can find many that is for us.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other questions?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Just one question. Mr. Lewis, is it?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Mr. Lewis, the period of time from 1935 to date is rather lengthy, and you indicated that you were intimidated as early as 1935. Have you been the victim of threats or intimidation since---

MR. LEWIS: That is the only time.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: That is all.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other question? Father Hesburgh?

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: Mr. Lewis, are you going to keep on trying now?

MR. LEWIS: I guess I will. If I don't do that, I will try to encourage the rest to go. But I will have something to do with it.

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: You believe that the reasons that you give for wanting to vote that you just

expressed are worth keeping trying for.

MR. LEWIS: You say is it worth -- yes, sir. Oh, yes, it is worth keep trying.

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: You are going to keep trying?

MR. LEWIS: I am going to keep trying.

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: God help you.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: That is all then. Thank you, Mr. Lewis.

MR. BERNHARD: For the record, Mr. Vice Chairman, I ask that the poll receipts of Mr. Frederic D. Lewis be identified as Exhibit 3.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: It will be so done.

(The document referred to was marked for identification as Exhibit 3.)

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right, thank you. You are excused.

COLONEL ROSENFELD: If the Commission please, the next witness is Otha Tillman Lewis, also of Claiborne Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you hold up your right hand. Do you solemnly swear the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MR. LEWIS: I will.

TESTIMONY OF

OTHA TILLMAN LEWIS

CLAIBORNE PARISH

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have a seat. Will you give your full

name, please, together with your age and where you live and what is your occupation?

MR. LEWIS: My name is Otha Tillman Lewis. I was born in Lisbon, Louisiana. My age is 46 years, and my occupation is part-time farming and other odd jobs such as carpenter and masonry work and factory.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You need to talk just a little louder so all of us can hear you. Are you related to the gentleman who preceded you on the stand?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What relation?

MR. LEWIS: We are brothers.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You are brothers.

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you lived anywhere else besides in your own home parish?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir. I lived in Tennessee in and out a few years, and I was in the armed force three years.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: The late war, World War II?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you overseas experience?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir, two years.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Where?

MR. LEWIS: European Theater.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What branch of the service

were you?

MR. LEWIS: Quartermaster, Army Quartermaster.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Were you in any of the campaigns?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir. I went in four campaigns.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you have the little bronze stars to indicate your service as a serviceman?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, I have four.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What has been your education?

MR. LEWIS: I just went through the ninth grade.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Ninth grade.

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir; elementary school.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you own any property?

MR. LEWIS: I am an heir to some property.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Real estate?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you working on that property now or not?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, I am.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: So you farm and then do the odd jobs that you mentioned in addition to farming?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir. When one goes bad, I start on another.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever been arrested?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir, I was arrested once, in Homer, Louisiana.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What was it and what happened, just as brief as you can.

MR. LEWIS: My sister-in-law asked me to pick up a radio that she had carried back to a man that didn't give service, and she wanted to get it fixed or something and somehow, she got in an argument or something.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Who got in an argument?

MR. LEWIS: My sister-in-law and the dealer. It must have been because he appeared to be very angry when we walked in.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Were you with her?

MR. LEWIS: I went in to get the radio. I wasn't with her when she was in talking with him.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. What happened?

MR. LEWIS: The man asked why was I here for as I walked over to receive the radio, and I asked him what did he mean, so he handed me the radio and pulled my collar and started hitting me in the face and scratching, and so I didn't hardly know what to say to him. I hadn't had any word with him or anything like that, and so for a little while I didn't know what to do, and finally I came to myself and started trying to defend myself against the attack, and when I left there, I went to the sheriff office to report it,

and he said, "Well there will be another officer in in a few minutes," so pretty soon another officer, three more officers came in, and they came in and asked me what was the matter, and I told them a man attacked me over there. He asked me what was I doing in the store. I said, "Well, I went in to pick up a radio for my sister-in-law." So he wanted to carry me on to jail, and another officer that went in there first just saw blood on my face, you know, and he thought, 'didn't anything else happen, so he said, "Let me go and talk with the man," so he went over and came back, and I guess he saw that I had to defend myself and came back and said, called me by my name and said I was crazy and he said if I was going to live there, I would have to learn how to live.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you have to pay a fine?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir. They handcuffed me and carried me on to jail, and I got out on \$300 bond. Then I met the grand jury, and they still held the charge against me, and I changed my plea from not guilty to guilty, after I saw that everything was in his favor, and I paid a fine of \$35.00 plus costs of 10. Then I paid an attorney \$150.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever been arrested for anything else?

MR. LEWIS: No, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: When you lived up in

Tennessee were you a registered voter?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir; I was.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you vote in the elections up in Tennessee?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: In what part of Tennessee did you live?

MR. LEWIS: Nashville, Tennessee.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Nashville?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How many times did you vote up there, do you remember?

MR. LEWIS: Well, I voted in three presidential elections starting in 1940. Of course I vote absentee ballot from Europe.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Absentee ballot from Europe?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: When you went in the service were you a resident of Tennessee then?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir, I was then.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Then under the Armed Services program you voted absentee ballot, is that right?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you a registered voter in your home parish?

MR. LEWIS: No, sir; I am not.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you attempted to register?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: When and how many times have you attempted to register?

MR. LEWIS: Twice.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Tell when and what happened each time.

MR. LEWIS: Well, the first time was in June of 1959. I had been informed that it took two registered voters to identify you, so there were very few there in my ward. So one registered voter told me that the registrar told me she couldn't identify again. So I got one man to go with me, and I took my Army discharge record with me, and I asked her if that would answer for one person. She said no, it takes two registered voters.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Was this an honorable discharge from the United States Service?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir, an honorable discharge.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: I believe you said she told you you had to have two registered voters from your own precinct, is that right?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Or ward.

MR. LEWIS: Ward. Yes, sir; I believe "ward" she

said.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you ever attempt to register any more?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What happened then?

MR. LEWIS: This was around last of May or first of June in 1960.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: This year?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir. I carried two registered voters with me, and she said, she asked me when we walked in, "What could I do for you?" I said we would like to register. She said, "How many?" So I said, "I want to register," and then someone else spoke and said, "Three of us want to register."

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you go with the other people or not?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir, I was with three others, first two registered voters.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: In other words, you took along two registered voters to identify you, is that correct?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right.

MR. LEWIS: So she begun looking for blanks, and she had some yellow pads like this with leaves in it, and she finally came out with one book, and she asked me what was

my name, and I gave my name, and she took the name of the two that were going to identify us, and she said, "Well, it takes three." She said, "These forms call for three." So my brother spoke and said, "Well, I can get the third one." Then she said, "I don't believe I have the right blanks." She said, "You will have to come back. I will have to order some."

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: These two that you took along with you, were they registered voters in your own ward?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir; they were.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: White or colored?

MR. LEWIS: They were colored.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Anything else happen then?

MR. LEWIS: No, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you been back since then?

MR. LEWIS: No, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you expect to go back again?

MR. LEWIS: Well, I hope to go back, and if there is any improvement at the registrar's office, I certainly would go back.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other questions?

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: Did you have any trouble getting identified when you joined the United States Army?

MR. LEWIS: No, sir. I got a greeting from

President Roosevelt.

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: I would like to ask a question that was asked the other witnesses. Why do you want to register and vote?

MR. LEWIS: Well, we used to have what we call orientation when we were overseas, when we had a little time, and we discussed all the things that was worth fighting for, or worth doing whatever had to be done, and we felt like that, you know, if we made a -- we could have a chance to register and vote and all, we can get to help to get people in that is willing to do what is right. If a white man attacks me, well, then arrest both of us. Then I feel like that I have a right to, you know, my choice of candidate, and this fact, if we are good enough to fight, we are good enough to register.

COMMISSIONER RANKIN: Could I ask you where you voted in Tennessee?

MR. LEWIS: Where? In Nashville, Tennessee.

COMMISSIONER RANKIN: Davidson County?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other?

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: Have you paid taxes all your life?

MR. LEWIS: Taxes?

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: Have you paid taxes all your

life?

MR. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: You are going to keep trying?

MR. LEWIS: Well, I hope to.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Thank you, Mr. Lewis.

Next witness.

COLONEL ROSENFELD: If the Commission please, the next testimony will be evidence bearing on the application of the Louisiana statute which requires a prospective voter to establish his identity and residence, and the first witness will be Dr. C. O. Simpkins of Caddo Parish. Dr. Simpkins is a registered voter and will give the background of the voting situation in Caddo Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right, come around, Doctor. Hold up your right hand and be sworn. Do you solemnly swear the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

DOCTOR SIMPKINS: I do.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have a seat, Doctor, will you, please.

TESTIMONY OF

DOCTOR CUTHBERT O. SIMPKINS

MR. BERNHARD: Mr. Vice Chairman, I would like to identify where the parish is. It is letter "A" over in the extreme northwest tip. The figures in this parish, the Negro citizens age 21 and over are 47,668. The number of colored who were registered is 4,735, coming out with a per

cent of 9.9 per cent of those eligible to vote, at least by age.

The white citizens age 21 and over number 92,228. 57,394 are registered, and the per cent is therefore 62.2 per cent. Thank you.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you please give your full name, your age, your residence, and your occupation or profession?

DR. SIMPKINS: I am Cuthbert O. Simpkins. My occupation, a dentist. Residence, 1508 Gary Street, Shreveport, Louisiana.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long have you lived in Shreveport?

DR. SIMPKINS: Since 19 and 42.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Where were you born?

DR. SIMPKINS: I was born in Mansfield, Louisiana.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: And did you move from Mansfield to Shreveport?

DR. SIMPKINS: I moved from Mansfield to Shreveport.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: And you lived there since that time?

DR. SIMPKINS: Since that time, except the time I was in school.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Where did you go to school and what degrees did you receive, if any?

DR. SIMPKINS: I attended college at Wiley College in Marshall, Texas. Then Tennessee State College in Nashville, Tennessee. Then Meharry Medical School in Nashville, Tennessee.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What degrees have you received?

DR. SIMPKINS: Doctor of dental surgery.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Doctor of dental surgery?

DR. SIMPKINS: Dental surgery.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You graduated from college before you took your professional work?

DR. SIMPKINS: I did the required work, the requirements for --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. How long have you been practicing your profession?

DR. SIMPKINS: Since 1948.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you have any service in the late World War?

DR. SIMPKINS: I served in the Korean War.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: For how long?

DR. SIMPKINS: For two years.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: In what branch?

DR. SIMPKINS: The Air Force.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: And what rank or position did you have?

DR. SIMPKINS: I was service captain.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Service captain. Were you practicing your profession in the Korean War?

DR. SIMPKINS: I was practicing my profession.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Specializing in that. Were you up on the front?

DR. SIMPKINS: I was in the United States. I was unfortunate not to go overseas.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: In other words, you were in the Korean War, but in the States all the time.

DR. SIMPKINS: In the States.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long have you been a registered voter?

DR. SIMPKINS: Since approximately 19 and 53.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you have any difficulty in registering at the time?

DR. SIMPKINS: I didn't experience any at the time.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You didn't experience any. Now, in connection with your acquaintance and your activities, have you attempted to assist others in registering in your parish?

DR. SIMPKINS: Well, we have attempted to get other people to register in the parish. After I came out of service, around 1953 or 1954, I decided to run for the school board,

seeing the need of representation on the school board, and at that time, well, I ran for office, and I didn't win, I was defeated, but the election showed me two or three different things. It showed, one, that white people as well as Negroes would vote for a qualified person. Number two. It showed the need of more Negroes, more registered voters. It pointed out those two things, and then we got busy and tried to get more registered voters. We worked through the civic organizations and through the churches, and as more people went down, the greater the resistance became. At first there was no difficulty at all. But as more people went down to exercise the privilege to register, the difficulties began to increase.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You say "more people." you mean the Negroes?

DR. SIMPKINS: Well, more Negroes.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Well, now, will you just describe within your own knowledge what the difficulties were and what was done and what happened.

DR. SIMPKINS: Well, one of the chief difficulties, the first one we encountered was one of figuring your age in years, months, and days correctly.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What difficulty is there about that? Will you illustrate or tell us what the problem was?

DR. SIMPKINS: Well, on the registration form, it is blank --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you look at one of the forms?

MR. BERNHARD: This is marked Exhibit C. Is that an accurate copy of the registration form LR-1?

DR. SIMPKINS: This is correct.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right, go ahead and describe what you are talking about.

DR. SIMPKINS: Well, on the form here it has a place for, "I am now," blank years, blank months, and days of age, and if that is not filled correctly, it will be turned down.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Well, you say if not filled correctly. What problem was there about it? What was the discussion? What were the facts?

DR. SIMPKINS: The fact was, you had to figure your age. If you are born in 1900 on December 25, something like that, you had to figure how old you were and the number of years and how many months and how many days. Well, some people experienced difficulty in that, and we began to set up clinics to instruct people how to figure out their age. Soon they began to overcome this difficulty. Then there was another difficulty of the part of the blank that says "The name of the householder at my present address is." Well,

some people would place that the householder was the husband, but there was some difference of opinion there, and the registrar seemed to want them to place there the person who owned the place, but to a person who is rooming, renting, it was kind of confusing, and they were disqualified on this particular thing. Then another difficulty they had --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You say some were disqualified on that point?

DR. SIMPKINS: Because of this.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Were any disqualified because the blanks weren't filled out as to the age, the year, the month, and the days?

DR. SIMPKINS: Quite a number were disqualified until we began to set up these clinics and to instruct them in that, and after we got over that barrier, there came another one.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Go ahead.

DR. SIMPKINS: Then after we got this one straight, we had another one with identity. That is, you had to prove your identity to the satisfaction of the registrar. In other words, any identification that you would carry down, it might not be what she would accept. In some cases she would accept one thing, the same thing for one person, and turn it down from another person. For example, we have had people go down with rent receipts dating back three and four

years, federal tax, withholding statements, bills where they made purchases, bank entries where they made deposits and where they made withdrawals, all of this, some had birth certificates, and some had birth certificates of where they gave birth to children and where they had prenatal care and postnatal care and the birth certificate of the baby which was over a period of twelve years. This in a lot of cases was turned down, so you can see the problem of identity came up later. Some people registered and some registers were delayed or slowed down. Many people went back, as reported to me, as many as eight times before they really became registered voters.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What is the present situation as to the registration of Negroes in that parish?

DR. SIMPKINS: Well, just a few months ago we had another voter registration drive there, and we have had a group of people to go down. It had been the practice of the office to give identification cards -- give the card where you were a registered voter upon satisfactory filling out the blanks. But now the policy appears that they mail you the form, mail you the certificate of registration, and a lot of the people who went down in this drive, which has been now over 45 to 60 days, have not received their --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How many have go down in that particular drive that you are talking about?

DR. SIMPKINS: On Monday of that day, approximately 51 went down, and the next day, approximately 120, 125.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: When was that?

DR. SIMPKINS: About two months ago.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: About two months ago. Have any of those been registered?

DR. SIMPKINS: Well, we have a report that only two of the group received the cards. Others have called on, and they have inquired as to why or the status of their request for registration, and were told that they made just one little mistake, and they asked what that was, they wouldn't tell them.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: You understand that two have actually received their registration certificates?

DR. SIMPKINS: To the best of my knowledge two have received them.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Is your interest purely from the standpoint of civic improvement to help train voters so that they could register and meet the qualification?

DR. SIMPKINS: That's right. I am the president of the United Christian Movement, and we have in it a lot of ministers and a lot of laymen, and they have set up clinics in their churches and different civic organizations to encourage people to go down to register, and the only difficulty they would have had, whenever we have increased the

number of people going down, the resistance increases, opposition increases, and there is actually a slow down. It slows down process of election.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other questions? Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: I would like to ask a question. You say that when they called about their registration notice, they were told that they had failed in some small particular, but they were not told how they failed. Did I understand that correctly?

DR. SIMPKINS: That is correct. They weren't told how they were failed or anything about it.

CHAIRMAN HANNAH: Even when they specifically asked the registrar what kept them from being successful, this information was never given to them, just a blank statement that you failed.

DR. SIMPKINS: Never given to them. Just you failed.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Father Hesburgh?

COMMISSIONER HESBURGH: I was just curious, Dr. Simpkins, do the white registrants have to produce all of these same affidavits and so forth? Have you had any comparison between the way white registrants are treated and the way --

DR. SIMPKINS: Well, it has been impossible to

really compare, but I am quite sure, if you had had the same difficulty, you would have far more complaints than you have now.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Dr. Simpkins, just one question. You say it is impossible to compare. Why?

DR. SIMPKINS: Well, it is impossible to compare because the practice is now only two people can get in the registrar's office at a time, and also, it is impossible to actually compare because we do not have the knowledge of white people being actually turned down. We actually know that they are being registered, and the number of white people registering is increasing daily. Only two days ago a hundred persons registered, it was stated in the paper, over a hundred.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Are your registration offices segregated?

DR. SIMPKINS: No, they are not segregated.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: One other question. You indicated that as you step up your interest in this voting situation, the resistance to voting increased.

DR. SIMPKINS: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Resistance to registration. Because of your own activity, have you ever been the victim of intimidation or threats?

DR. SIMPKINS: Well, we have received quite a few

of those phone calls and the like; when I ran for school board I received quite a few.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: That is all.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other questions? Thank you, Doctor Simpkins.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Next witness.

COLONEL ROSENFELD: The next witness is Dorothy Louise Jackson of Caddo Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you please hold up your right hand. Do you solemnly swear the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MS. JACKSON: Yes.

TESTIMONY OF

DOROTHY LOUISE JACKSON

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have this seat over here, please. Will you please give us your full name, your age, your residence, and your occupation?

MS. JACKSON: My name is Dorothy Louise Jackson.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: I believe you will have to talk out just a little louder.

MS. JACKSON: My name is Dorothy Louise Jackson. I live in Shreveport, Caddo Parish, and I am 28 years old.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What is your business or profession?

MS. JACKSON: My business, I am machine operator and part time beautician.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: What is your education?

MS. JACKSON: I completed high school education, also I have completed the course of beautician.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Then you are a machine operator in a garment factory, and you do some beautician's work in spare time.

MS. JACKSON: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you own any real property?

MS. JACKSON: Just I am buying some property.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Is that your home?

MS. JACKSON: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: In other words, you are like a lot of the rest of us, you are paying for your home?

MS. JACKSON: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: But you have title to it. I assume you are unmarried, are you not?

MS. JACKSON: No, I am not married.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you ever been married?

MS. JACKSON: I have.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you a registered voter?

MS. JACKSON: No, I am not.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you attempted to register?

MS. JACKSON: I have.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: More than once or not?

MS. JACKSON: Twice.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you tell about the first time and what the circumstances were and what happened?

MS. JACKSON: Well, the first time I went to attempt to register was the latter part of July of this year. With me I carried a slip, letter from Dales, Jewelers and Furnishers that the manager wrote me for identification, and a lady ahead of me also carried a letter from the same place, and when she went in to register, the gentleman told her that he had accepted the letter from a lady ahead of her and he couldn't accept more than one letter, so when she came out and told me that he wouldn't accept her letter, then I didn't attempt to use mine. Then I went and called my sister, and I asked her to bring me my beautician license. She brought me my beauticianer license for '57 and for '60, but she didn't bring the ones for 1959. So I went back again that day.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Same day?

MS. JACKSON: Same day, and I went in to use my beauticianer license for identification. She told me that the '57 was too old and the '60 wasn't old enough, so then I left the office. On the following day I went back again. I carried my '60 license. I got to the office kind of early that morning and later up come the registrar. Then after that a white man came up, and he opened the door and walked in. Then she informed him that the office wasn't open, so he walked out. Then after a few minutes after 9:00 that morning she pulled the curtain and the two of us, two other ladies and

I, we started in; we was there first so we started in. She told us to get back out the door because the white man was in there first. Then we stepped back outside the door and waited until he went in. He went in and took another fellow that had come up during the time that we was standing out there waiting. He went in, and I noticed that when he was filling out his card that the fellow was talking to him, and he pointed on this card with his pencil -- simply what was said, I don't know. Then when they came out, the two of us went in again. I presented to her -- she asked me what was I in there for. I presented to her my '60 beauticianer license. Then she gave me the card to fill out. I filled the card, and when she began reading the card she said that, why did I put "machine operator" on my card if I was a licensed beautician. I told her that I did machine operating full time, and I was only doing beauticianer as a part time job. Then she told me, she say why did I put in the blank where I put household owner, I put my name. She said, "Well, it would be better for you to go down and get a homestead exemption to get registered. So I didn't do that because the property wasn't signed in my name.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Was that the last of it?

MS. JACKSON: That was the last of it.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you made any further attempt?

MS. JACKSON: No, I haven't.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you expect to?

MS. JACKSON: I expect to.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you going to keep on trying?

MS. JACKSON: That's right.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Why do you want to vote?

MS. JACKSON: I feel that I am a citizen of the United States, and I should be a registered voter.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other question, Mr. Chairman? Any other?

Thank you very much.

MR. BERNHARD: Mr. Vice Chairman, may I ask Miss Jackson whether or not those are her two licenses that you presented?

MISS JACKSON: These are the licenses, also the letters from Dales, Jewelers and Furnishers.

MR. BERNHARD: Do you need your 1960 beautician license in order to operate?

MISS JACKSON: Well, I could --

MR. BERNHARD: Would you object to introducing or allowing us to introduce into evidence the remainder of the letters and your old beautician's license?

MISS JACKSON: No, I don't.

MR. BERNHARD: I would therefore ask the Commission

to identify those letters and 1957 beautician's license as Exhibit Number 4.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. It will be so done, and she will retain the 1960 license.

(The document referred to was marked for identification as Exhibit No. 4.)

MR. BERNHARD: May I just ask, is the 1957 license the same or identical to the 1960 except for the date?

MISS JACKSON: Well, except from the date the address was changed.

MR. BERNHARD: Thank you.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: The form is the same.

MISS JACKSON: The form is the same, but the address was changed.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. Hand them to Mr. Bernhard, please. Mr. Rosenfeld.

COLONEL ROSENFELD: Next is Reverend Harry Blake of Caddo Parish who is a background witness.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you hold up your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

REVEREND BLAKE: I do.

TESTIMONY OF

HARRY BLAKE

CADDO PARISH

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Will you have this seat over here, please, Reverend Blake. Will you kindly give your

name, full name, your age, your residence, and your occupation?

REVEREND BLAKE: My full name is Harry Blake. My age is 25. My residence is 2121 Woodward Street, Shreveport, Louisiana, Caddo Parish. My occupation is clergy.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you giving your full time to the work of the clergy?

REVEREND BLAKE: Yes, I am. I have two part-time churches.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: I see. But between them you devote all of your time?

REVEREND BLAKE: Between them I devote my time, along with some time, too, this area of voting and registration.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: This area of voting or registration, are you doing that as a public service?

REVEREND BLAKE: Well, not as a public service, I would say. I am employed by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: I see. You are one of the paid officers of that conference?

REVEREND BLAKE: Yes, I am.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: And you carry it along with your ministerial duties?

REVEREND BLAKE: I do.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right.

Now, tell what you do with reference to your voting activities, and just give the background of it and what you have done and what your efforts are and how you train them.

REVEREND BLAKE: Well, we try -- along with the United Christian Movement in Shreveport. However, my work is broader than just Shreveport. We try to increase Negro voter registration by helping the persons in certain areas to overcome whatever difficulty has been encountered. As has been indicated by Dr. Simpkins, at different times the difficulties vary. There are times when we have helped people to figure their ages, and we try to help them to secure proper identification and so on.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Are you, yourself, a registered voter?

REVEREND BLAKE: I am.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How long have you been registered?

REVEREND BLAKE: Since about 1955.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: In Caddo Parish?

REVEREND BLAKE: In Caddo Parish.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: All right. What success have you had in your training and efforts to get people registered?

REVEREND BLAKE: Well, I don't know if I can state

the success, but we have helped any number of people to go down. However, this last voter registration drive which was during the month of July --

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Of this year?

REVEREND BLAKE: Of this year, 1960 -- very few people were registered. However, we had more than a hundred odd to go down to attempt to register. Very few that I know of have received cards.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: How many have received them, do you know?

REVEREND BLAKE: I cannot be exact as to specifically how many, but I do know at least two have.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Have you worked with Dr. Simpkins in this activity?

REVEREND BLAKE: Yes, I have.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Do you have any further information that would throw light on this problem there, based on your experience, either as a minister or working for this particular cause?

REVEREND BLAKE: During the month of July of 1960, at which time the voter registration drive was being conducted, I was on the Court House lawn and in the lobby of the first floor, seeking information from Negroes who came in to register, and the information was in this wise, to see whether they had proper identification so as not to slow down

the line if they did not and to help those who might have encountered difficulty in figuring their age.

Being in the lobby, a policeman whom I had previous encounters with came into the lobby and asked why were we there. I was there along with perhaps two other young men who were college students, who were home for the summer. We told him we were attempting to help the Negroes to register. He told us that we could not hold our office in the lobby of the Court House room, and if we wanted to help, we could go up on the third floor, and the third floor is where the registration office is housed, and he stated, I quote, "If they permit you to stay up there, then it is all right."

Then he left us and went into the sheriff office or police -- the sheriff's office. We immediately left the lobby of the Court House and went to the third floor. Shortly afterward the policeman, Badge Number 166, came up and went into the registrar's office, and shortly -- may I say immediately -- a lady came out of the registrar's office and asked were we there to be registered. We said no. Then she said we could not remain on this third floor of the Court House, and if we did not leave, she would have us arrested. Of course, having been previously told that we could not remain in the lobby, and being now told that we could not remain on the third floor, we vacated the building and went on the outside. This was late afternoon of the first

day, and the second day I returned to the Court House alone. I was there, I would say, approximately thirty minutes or maybe longer. The registrar, along with a policeman -- a policeman who works in the Caddo Parish department that I cannot identify -- and another man came and said to me, "Blake, what are you doing down here?" I said my reasons for being there, and they asked did I not know that there were city ordinances against loitering, and then he went to quote the section that it is found and asked me to leave the grounds of the Court House or I would be arrested and charges would be pressed.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you leave?

REVEREND BLAKE: I left immediately.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you have any further incidents of that type?

REVEREND BLAKE: Of course I did not go back to the Court House any more. This policeman Badge 166, I was arrested by him once driving along the street.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: When, since that time?

REVEREND BLAKE: Before that time. Before that time. He stopped and said to me that he wanted to talk and began to search me and asked me did I have the key to my trunk of the car, and I opened it and showed him what was back there. I had some books. I, incidentally, had a volume of Shakepear's incomplete works. I showed it to him and asked

REVEREND BLAKE: That was the close of that incident. However, I had to meet court, and I was found guilty of careless and reckless driving. The officer reported that I was cutting in and out of traffic. When he approached me, I was standing still, however.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Did you have to pay a fine?

REVEREND BLAKE: I appealed the case, and even after that I had to pay a fine.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: Any other questions?

REVEREND BLAKE: May I add this, sir? That same officer, 166, has -- I have been driving down the main street of Shreveport more than once, meeting him, and he would turn around in the middle of the street to drive behind me or drive up beside me and stop me and tell me to get out of town and don't show up.

VICE CHAIRMAN STOREY: If there are no other questions, we will stand in recess for an hour. Be back at 1:30.

(Thereupon, at 12:35 p.m., the meeting was recessed, to reconvene following lunch.)