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HOW FREEDOM RIDERS
AFFECT BUSINESS
IN THE SOUTH



JACKIE VINCENT &
SYLVIA VINCENT:
Pretty Harlem sister
nurses study nursing
at Columbia University

DOCTOR'S DAUGHTERS CHOOSE NURSING CAREER

DESPITE WOES, FREEDOM RIDERS

Despite hardships faced by the Alabama and Mississippi Freedom Riders, the Crusaders were able to laugh at southern justice following their speedy arrests and convictions in Jackson, Miss.

Given a \$200 fine and a 60-day jail sentence (suspended) in a trial which resembled a scene from a Broadway comedy, the Freedom Riders emerged as the stars of the show when they proudly began to fill the jails—after integrating the courtroom.

As segregated spectators and reporters watched in amusement, Atty. Wiley Branton, one of four defense counsels, demanded that the 25 Negro and two white defendants be placed together so he could consult them. Judge James Spencer reluctantly agreed.

"Ah believe when in Rome you do as the Romans do," drawled Capt. J. L. Ray, the state's only witness, who admitted he arrested the Freedom Riders on breach-of-peace charges because they walked into a white waiting room.

Completely ignored was testimony that an out-of-order sign was on the colored waiting room door and that the bus passengers had not had a regular rest stop since leaving Montgomery—280 miles away.

When asked where he was arrested, the Rev. James H. Lawson, one of the non-violent leaders, answered: "In the rest room."

"Why didn't you move on when the officers asked you?" Prosecutor Jack Travis asked.

"It would have been rather embarrassing to do so at the time," Lawson replied, smiling.

The Rev. Cordy T. Vivian also testified he rushed into the white rest room upon arrival in Jackson because Mississippi National Guard Col. Gillespie Montgomery refused to allow the bus to make a rest stop.

"Did Col. Montgomery have a rest stop?" Asst. Prosecutor Bob Nichols asked.

"No, I don't believe he did," the Rev. Vivian replied sweetly.

"Then, he was just as uncomfortable as you," Nichols

FIND HUMOR IN MISS. COURTROOM

snapped as he attempted to win a legal point.

"Well, we hadn't had a rest stop since we left Alabama and the Colonel didn't join us until we reached Mississippi. I don't know what he was doing before then," the Rev. Mr. Vivian shot back.

After Judge Spencer jokingly recessed for "a rest stop," Chief Defense Atty. Jack Young told the court: "These defendants were already under arrest when they left Montgomery and were delivered to Jackson police to be put in jail." Ignoring dismissal appeals, Judge Spencer began reading his guilty verdict the minute the trial was over.

Transferred from the new city jail to the Hinds County penal farm, the Freedom Riders were taken back to jail after the Rev. Mr. Vivian reported he was beaten for not saying "sir" to a guard. **Jean Thompson** and Henry Thomas also reported they were slapped. Meanwhile, Supt. Max Thomas was ordered to take "a few days off" while city officials investigated the beatings.



The Rev. Cordy T. Vivian pleaded for Mississippi guards to allow bus rest stop, later charged he was beaten at a county farm.