

HOMETOWN

A STUDY OF RACE RELATIONS

RANDOLPH COUNTY, ARKANSAS

1865-1965

BY
DAVID D. TYLER

APRIL 21, 1995

The first streaks of day were breaking over the hills of the African-American community at Birdell as the McCarrolls began to load into the back of the truck to make the fifteen mile trip to Shane Mann's cotton field in the Black River bottom community of Skaggs in Randolph County, Arkansas. Life was hard in the 1930s, and many men, women and children Journeyed to the cotton fields to pick the white-gold that provided the necessities to sustain the family through the winter. Yesterday had been a bad day for the black pickers because they had been forced out of a field in the northeastern part of the county near the town of Biggers by the white pickers, but today Mann had promised them that they could pick for him. There was plenty of cotton which meant a large harvest and money. Money meant expectations and expectations meant, well, if you were an African-American, expectations did not always materialize. Today, trouble began at mid-morning when the whispers and low rumblings of the white pickers finally erupted against the Birdell African-Americans.¹

This altercation happened in a county where the African-American community peaked at six percent of the population in 1860, and by 1930 had dropped to less than two percent. Even with such a small number, African-Americans in Randolph County were subjected to the same prejudicial attitudes and actions as were used in the areas of larger concentrations of black people such as the Mississippi-Yazoo Delta. Therefore, these prejudicial actions by white Randolph Countians have given further support to James Cobb's and other historians' theory that "many of the major economic, political, and social forces" of the Delta influenced ideas in the rest of the United States². Even as the attacks and other discriminatory actions were being administered to the African-Americans in the county, white Randolph Countians maintained the self-deluding attitude that African-Americans were treated well. "The stories of extreme cruelty imposed on the blacks were badly exaggerated," maintained Lawrence Dalton, author of the only general history of Randolph County, in regard to past treatment of African-Americans.³ Dalton, undoubtedly, was influenced by the writings of L.F. Blankenship, editor of The Pocahontas Star Herald, Randolph County's only newspaper. In regard to race relations Blankenship noted, in his 1910 Directory, that "the Christian doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man has thrown around him (the African-American) a mantle of protection in all his rights as a man and a citizen."⁴ However, the mantle did not protect the black Birdell cotton pickers from the cotton bolls hurled at them by the white pickers.⁵

This study proposes to show that the existence of only a miniscule number of African-Americans in a region, as opposed to a high concentration of African-Americans, did not translate into good relations between its black and white citizens. Instead it afforded the white majority near total control over the African-American and diminished any chance of advancement even within the African-American community. Also, this study will show that the major source of conflict came from poor whites, although the

white middle and upper class provided the climate for the conflict to take place.

Finally, this study will refute a longstanding mindset in Randolph County, and much of the South, that African-Americans were treated well.

Located in the northeastern corner of the State of Arkansas, Randolph County is characterized by topography which retarded the spread of slavery in the county as well as into the counties to its west.⁶ Being equally hill country and river bottomland, the county was populated by settlers from the older states of the South,⁷ who found here no large alluvial plain which required a large labor force for cultivation, so slavery never took a firm hold in the region.

Like other settlers in the foothills of the Ozarks, most Randolph County whites held no slaves at all, and those that had slaves were "small or middling farmers owning no more than a single family of bondsman."⁸ By 1860, there were 367 slaves in the county with fifty percent of the eighty-six owners holding no more than two slaves.⁹ However, even without large slave holdings by the majority of the white population, the affections toward African-Americans of the county had been tempered through the years because a large number of the settlers in the area had moved from the "slave commonwealths of the older South."¹⁰

The prevalent banner in the 1850s throughout the South for the institution of slavery was the purported biological inferiority of the African-American.¹¹ Randolph County appeared to espouse this belief as much as the rest of Dixie. This belief was depicted in the writings of C. Q. Johnston, a witness to the lynching of Bird Mock, a slave in the Randolph County township of Columbia. In describing the conditions and treatment of the condemned man, Johnston wrote that "Bird was chained to a wheel and lay under the wagon like a dog. I was well acquainted with him. I would sit near and watch him as he would wall up his big white eyes at us boys but not a word did I hear him utter."¹² Johnston's reference to the gallows as a "pole put up by means of forks, like a pole to hang hogs on,"¹³ signaled that, to those present, the execution was viewed the same as the killing of an animal.

Furthermore, because of this belief of inferiority and fear of slave insurrections, Arkansas prohibited the entrance of any new free black citizens from other states into the state, and in 1860 passed measures to expel its resident free African-Americans. At this time, the state had less than a thousand freedmen.¹⁴ This action indicated that numbers were not to be a factor in relation to policies and actions concerning African-Americans. It appeared that Randolph County undoubtedly followed state law to the letter, particularly when the law coincided with the thinking of the white majority. Evidence for this assumption is the fact that the 1850 Census of the county showed that two free African-Americans lived in the county; however, by the 1890 Census neither Charity Bettis nor Margaret Brown appeared in the Census.¹⁵

Following the Civil War and through 1900, race relations in the county appeared to follow the trend described by C. Vann Woodward in The Strange Career of Jim Crow:

In a time when the Negroes formed a much larger proportion of the population than they did later, when slavery was a live memory in the minds of both races, and when the memory of the hardships and bitterness of Reconstruction was still fresh, the race policies accepted and pursued in the South were sometimes milder than they became later.¹⁶

During this time in Randolph County, the African-American population rose to an all-time high. In 1870, black residents numbered 330 of the county's 7,466 residents, and by 1900, the number had increased to 606. However, the percentage of black citizens to white citizens decreased because the total population more than doubled in 1900 to a high of 17,156.¹⁷

Moreover, the feelings of compassion as noted by Woodward were present as former slaveholders granted a "start" to their former slaves. This was true in the case of Perry Hardin. Hardin was a slave for William Hardin in the Randolph County township of Roanoke.¹⁸ After the war, William Hardin gave his former slave his name, a mule, a pig and forty acres in the hills near the community of Birdell.¹⁹

This gift provided the start of an all-black community in the hills of Birdell because black families by the dozen began to settle and homestead the unfilled land close to Hardin.²⁰ Birdell, which is located eight miles west of Pocahontas, the county seat of Randolph County, began to grow during this period of tranquility. By 1894, School District 79 was established and a one-room school building was built for the African-American students in the area. Prior to this time the children had been taught in their homes. As in the case of most of the black Southern schools, local African-Americans sacrificed and provided the materials to build this school.²¹ Neil McMillen in Dark Journey stated that black Mississippians, "believing as they did that education was the key to race 'uplift'. . . compensated for official white neglect by second-taxing themselves to help their children."²²

However, the gains and growth in the black communities up to the turn of the century began to diminish consistent with a change in the attitudes of the white majority. This change in attitudes, which mirrored the actions of the "rebel" legislature of Arkansas in 1866 and 1867, were expressed by L. F. Blankenship, civic leader and Pocahontas newspaper editor, in the Directory of 1910:

The race question here is no longer a problem. Matters have adjusted themselves in accordance with common sense. The Australian ballot system has eliminated all danger from ignorance, and the free school system is fast educating the negro in his duties of citizenship. The Christian doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man has thrown around him a mantle of protection in all his rights as a man and a citizen; he stands before the law equal of

all men, yet he has cheerfully accepted the doctrine that the white man ought to and will rule.²³

With this writing two factors became clear. First, the self-deluding attitude of treating African-Americans well was characterized in the reference to the free school system educating the African-American rapidly and to the protection of all rights with equality to all men. However, in reality only thirty-six percent of the eligible black students were attending schools in 1910 as compared to sixty-nine percent of the white students.²⁴ Also, by 1920, the black illiteracy rate in the county was over thirty-one percent as opposed to less than ten percent for the white population.²⁵

Further more, Ernest McCarroll, an African-American student at Birdell in the 1920s, remembered that the white school at Birdell was in session summer and winter, but the black school was open summers only. "They (the white County Board of Education) said that they didn't have enough money to have winter school for black kids. Said that all they (the African-Americans) need to know was to learn to work."²⁶

Moreover, the statement that the African-American "cheerfully" accepted the rule of the white man only epitomized the self-deluding attitude by white Randolph Countians. For in reality, this statement reflected that the small number of African-Americans had been given their "place" in Randolph County, that of subjection to the rule of the white citizen. These sentiments reflected the attitude that was present in the state during 1866 when former disfranchised ex-Confederates gained control of the Arkansas Legislature in 1866 and 1867.

Graves in Town and Country noted that the common view by the white majority expressed by the Des Arc Citizen in 1866 "enjoined the lawmakers to throw around him (the Negro) certain restrictions, while giving him certain rights and privileges, that he may be made most subservient to our purposes and interests."²⁷ Undoubtedly, with attitudes that went back to a time when African-American gains were stifled, as was the case in the 1866-67 Legislature, black Randolph Countians felt that their only choice was to leave, which they did in large numbers.

By 1910, the black residency number was down by fifteen percent from the last census.²⁸ However, by 1920, after Blankenship's writings, an additional forty-two percent of the black population left the county, thereby leaving the county with only 294 African-Americans.²⁹ This number was less than half of the 606 African-Americans in 1900.

This attitude by the white majority forced the black minority to seek a way to cope with the situation. Like other African-Americans in the South, black Randolph Countians saw their best chance for survival existed in being able to establish their own communities. As noted by Howard Rabinowitz in Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890, African-Americans who were "denied an equitable share of the public revenue and services, . . . had to contrive their own substitutes. In their churches and schools, blacks sustained their pride and passed on

the elements of learning to the next generation. "³⁰ During the 1920s, the African-Americans at Birdell maintained an edge over fellow African-Americans located in the nearby towns of Pocahontas and Diggers because of a geographical location which more or less isolated the Birdell community from any large area of white population. In Pocahontas and Diggers, the African-American found their communities surrounded by the white community. The Birdell isolation by nature allowed that community to exist without everyday interactions with the white population. Therefore, the fifteen to twenty families that lived in the community developed their school, church and community to provide an "insulated space for self-expression and growth."³¹

With the establishment of New Friendship School in 1894, the black community of Birdell saw families move to the area in order to provide educational opportunities to their children. Ernest McCarroll remembered that his father William McCarroll moved their family to Birdell from Ravenden, a town in Lawrence County, Arkansas, because there was no school at Ravenden for the African-Americans.³² Due to limited funding, New Fellowship School was only able to provide instruction during the three months of summer. However, the desire for an education was so strong that black families from other nearby communities that did not have black schools sent their children to Birdell. Roland McCarroll, Ernest's younger brother, recalled that four of his relatives from Ravenden would move in with them each summer to attend school:

"There were my parents and their six; children, and four cousins from Ravenden that managed to live in our log cabin every summer. Our cabin was only two rooms and a loft, and the children slept upstairs. I don't know how we got by with twelve people in that little house, but we did. People would do anything for an education back then. "³³

By 1933, as many as fifty students were attending the summer classes at Birdell, and this was at a time- when the total black population in the county was only 271 people.³⁴

Another factor that contributed to the short school term was the availability of teachers. Because white teachers in the area would not teach black children, black teachers had to be sought from areas of larger black populations. Teachers during the 1920s and 1930s came to Birdell and Pocahontas from Booker T. Washington School, an all-black school in Jonesboro, Arkansas.³⁵ "That's why they (the school directors) would have it (school term) in the summer. Because they (teachers at Jonesboro) would work there, and in the summers, until school started back home, they would teach here (Randolph County)," recalled Roland McCarroll.³⁶ Although better than no education at all, the system available to the African-Americans of the county at this time still kept one in three black residents illiterate.³⁷

When school was not in session, the New Friendship School building was used by the community for community gatherings, and every Sunday it was used for church services. The church not only allowed for a spiritual unity among its members, but became the

social hub for the African-American community, particularly for the dating-age youth of the area. "Most of the times (we would) see (each other) on the weekends, on Sunday at church." remembered Ed Young, a lifetime resident of the Birdell community. He continued, "all families around would come in their wagons . . . each Sunday." ³⁸

The church also provided the one social event of the year with the white residents living near the black community. Once every June, the church would have Children's Day, and after church services there would be a dinner served on the grounds. Young recalled that "they put food in tubs or anyway to get it there, and (then they) put a sheet on the ground, and (you would) get down on your knees and eat." He further noted that "several white people (would) come around then." ³⁹ However, as maintained by Rabinowitz, "when integration did 'occur, it was only at the initiation of whites. . . Whites were there because they chose to be." ⁴⁰ Like the rest of the South, Randolph County's integration policy went one way—the white way. Moreover, Roland McCarroll remembered that on different occasions white ministers from the Church of Christ at Hub bell Creek, located two miles from the African-American community at Birdell, preached at the all-black New Friendship Church. ⁴¹ However, in Pocahontas, African-American Pat Johnson recalled that Pyburn Street Church of Christ provided a church building and a black minister for black Church of Christ members. This showed that white members were concerned about their African-American counterparts; however, the result was still a separation. ⁴²

In the 1930s, another shift in relations occurred between white and black Randolph Countians. With the Great Depression, Randolph County's African-Americans had to compete with the white population for any available Jobs. During this time, Ed Young, a black teenager of Birdell during the Depression, remembered that the black farmers were not able to hire anyone so the only work available was from the "white folks." ⁴³ Prior to the Depression, "some of the jobs on a farm," recalled Young, "you (the black worker) could get easier and they were harder, (and) the white boys wouldn't do it." However, with the Depression, Young noted that both white and black workers found themselves in the same work situation, and both were needing the same jobs. ⁴⁴ This competition with the poor whites provided an arena for physical and verbal abuse in Randolph County against its black residents. Regarding the poor white, Claude H. Nolen in The Negro's Image in the South maintained that "the poor whites, no longer buttressed by slavery, objected to a policy which promised to obliterate distinction between them and the blacks. . . . if it were not for the 'red neck,' 'cracker,' or ' sand-hiller, ' the Negro would find the South a happy country." ⁴⁵

Therefore, like the rest of the South, black-Randolph Countians encountered hostilities from the poor whites, and in Randolph County, the arena was the cotton field. "They (the white pickers) went to throwing rocks, cotton bolls, and everything else," remarked Elsie Young, a lifetime African-American of

Birdell.⁴⁶ These clashes in the cotton field came about because white economic needs were being weighed against "traditional" white values. Because of the small number of African-Americans in the county, cotton had to be harvested by white laborers; however, to pick in the same field with black pickers, undoubtedly, changed the definition of the job. As McMillen noted in Dark Journey, the practice of working with ones hands was frowned on by white Mississippians, and white workers were denied arduous manual labor "lest they stigmatize the entire race."⁴⁷ Also, like white Mississippians, the white cotton-pickers of Randolph County had to "reclassify the 'negro jobs' they held by driving off black co-workers."⁴⁸ Giving credibility to this thesis, Roland McCarroll noted that "peoples had funny ideas about things. I think some were sincere about it. They (the white pickers) thought that was the right thing. They just said that they wasn't going to pick in the fields with, they didn't say blacks they had another name for it."⁴⁹

Although, the Delta landholder needed the large African-American population to harvest his crops, and many times made concessions to black laborers in order to maintain the necessary labor force, the landholder in Randolph County had to appeal to a white labor force to harvest the crop. Therefore, when the white pickers forced the black pickers from the fields, the white landowners, as in the case of Shane Mann, did not interfere with the actions.

Interestingly, this action by the landowner had nothing to do with the caste system but was based on economics. The issue was labor, not race. However, like the Delta planter, the white landowner in Randolph County were never "powerless to prevent it."⁵⁰ By allowing the assaults to occur, the Randolph County landowner merely displayed a different style of repression from that of the white picker. Moreover, as argued by Joel Williarnson, the actions by both the white picker and landowner showed that "whites of every station shared a common body of essential assumptions and consequent attitudes."⁵¹

Not all of the landowners allowed for the African...

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...had been built within the predominantly white community of Randolph County, and by the 1940s, the black population had declined to 202 residents, which was a mere one percent of the total population.⁷¹

The attitudes of the white population toward the African-Americans in the community can be seen through the writings of Lawrence Dalton. Dalton in his History of Randolph County Arkansas, which was written in 1946, used certain terms to identify black Randolph Countians that reflected the attitudes of the white residents in that time period. The terms, "darky," "colored," "old Mose," and "Rastus," showed that the mindset of white Randolph Countians mirrored that of the rest of Dixie.⁷² More importantly, Dalton after describing the thoughts of a "highly respected colored man and landowner" in the county,

stated that the thoughts "impressed" him. Moreover, he remarked, as if amazed by the statement, that "there is a thought behind this statement."⁷³ Therefore, showing that the white population of Randolph County still viewed their black counterparts as being inferior.

Despite these attitudes by the white population, African-Americans made some gains in the county during the 1940s. By the mid-1940s, they were allowed to attend the movie theater and area eating establishments on a segregated basis."⁷⁴ Also according to the Census of 1940, African-Americans in the county held seven employment positions of a professional or semi-professional status. Still, over seventy percent of the black work force were considered to be unskilled laborers."⁷⁵

Moreover, because of World War II and the service to the country by African-Americans in the county, there appeared to be a change of attitude by the black Randolph Countians who participated in the campaign, and those that did not. This can be seen in the statements of three lifetime African-American residents of Randolph County in regard to how they were treated in the county. Roland McCarroll, who was not inducted into military service because of medical reasons, maintained that he felt that the white population of the county was "sincere" in their actions toward the black population. He remarked that "they (the whites) thought that was the way of life," and he has accepted that the situation "was Just the way it was." ⁷⁶

However, Ed Young, who was stationed in England and Germany with the 191st Engineers, returned to Randolph County after the war and adopted a policy of excluding himself from businesses that treated him unfairly. Young noted:

I don't know what those people thought. My dollar looked as good as your (a white person's) dollar. When you had to pick at where you were going to spend it at. Because a man didn't want to be embarrassed at being turned away at the door. I was going in a restaurant in Imboden. I got a feeling that they didn't want me in there. If I don't go in there, then they can't do it, so I just buy me something, and Just sit and eat it on somebody's porch or in their back yard."⁷⁷

Black veteran Ernest McCarroll's service experience taught him how to "outsmart people." Also, it provided him with the training on the repair of large trucks which he used in a job at a tractor dealership upon returning to Pocahontas. In this job, he learned everything he was able in regard to the equipment he was working on; therefore, forcing his fellow white workers to ask him how something needed to be repaired."⁷⁸

With the end of the 1940s, race relations for the next two decades in Randolph County paralleled the desegregation of the public school system. Until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted, Randolph County continued in a "business as usual" mindset. This "business as usual" attitude by white Randolph Countians forced African-American students to continue in a one-room school setting under one teacher for their first eight

years, and then face a 100 mile round-trip by bus to an all-black high school in another county to finish their education."⁷⁹ This unequal, inconvenient education system for the black students contributed to the fact that, in 1950, only ten of the eighty-five black resident over twenty-five years old had attended any high school, and of this number, none had received a high school diploma. However, more striking was that over fifty percent of this group had less than a fourth grade education.⁸⁰

Even before the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education, Randolph County's Educational Board must have foreseen future problems with the existing black school system because on February 26, 1949, the County Board of Education of Randolph County dissolved New Friendship School District #79, the all-black district at Birdell, and transferred the authority for the school and its black patrons to Imboden School District #45 of Lawrence County, Arkansas.⁸¹ This measure ended the only all-black school district in the area and placed its students under the control of a white board of directors. Prior to this time, School District #79 board of directors were the black community leaders of Birdell.⁸²

This decision left the remainder of the African-American children in the county under the white school boards of Pocahontas School District #19 and Biggers-Reyno School District #87, and these boards continued the education of the black students of the county under the same standards that had been followed since the turn of the century. In 1957, due to a decline in the number of black students at Biggers-Reyno, authority for the education of the African-American students in the county was transferred to Pocahontas School District #19 and its white board of directors.⁸³

Sherley Johnson, an African-American student in the 1950s and 60s in the county, remembered the inadequate system:

We just had one school teacher. . . . (we) went from the first to the eighth grade, then you had to go to a different school. . . . We couldn't learn too much because (there were) too many of them to go around for one teacher. So we lost out on a lot of things, because we didn't have but one teacher.⁸⁴

Johnson also recalled how after finishing the eighth grade the transfer to a high school in another county was a drastic change on the students:

Most of us country kids out here were behind, and common sense would tell you that. . . . we just had one teacher and she (had) thirty to forty kids. . . . We had to be behind, and that's what happened to a lot of black kids. . . . They lost out. Ain't no way one teacher can take care of forty kids. No way.⁸⁵

During this period of passive resistance by the white population in the county, Randolph County's black parents hammered a doctrine of "place" and "submission" into their children. Apparently, this was seen as means of preservation during this turbulent period in the United States, because the

African-American population was at a ratio of one hundred to one in Randolph County.⁸⁶ Pat Johnson, a black teenager during the 1960s remembered the teachings at home:

This place (Randolph County) wasn't where a lot of trouble was. Me Just knew where our place was. (We) stayed in our place. Our place was (that) we stayed amongst our own people. My parents that (was) what they taught us. . . . I was taught . . . (when the) white told you something you best believe it and you go by it, and that's the way it was. It was just like everything that they done was okay. Everything. Whatever they told you, that's the- way it was.⁸⁷

Undoubtedly, these teachings were a mirror of the white conscience in the county during this period, because the "way it was" was indeed the direction that the county pursued until 1965. Minutes of the Pocahontas School Board reflected the continued disregard to the issue of desegregation. In 1963, two years before the district complied with the law and desegregated, the board decided to buy a new three-seat bus to "transport colored students to Newport."⁸⁸ This action of buying a new bus indicated that the district planned to continue the present situation for some time.

Conditions in the community facilities of Randolph County paralleled those of the school system during the 1950s and 60s. Pat Johnson recalled that, through the early 1960s,

we were separated. . . . when we went to the movies we had a separate place to sit. We had separate bathrooms that said "colored only." . . . Some said "white only," and we knew we had our place. . . . We were not allowed to go into the skating rink. We couldn't go bowling. It was in the late 60s before we' could go bowling. . . . We used to go to the old Rendezvous, the old bus station, and we could go down there to dance, listen to music and eat, but we had to be in the back. They had a small area back in the back where they called it, where the colored people had to go.⁸⁹

With the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the county's institution of a segregated society came to an end. On March 1, 1965, Pocahontas School District tt19 in a regular board meeting agreed "unanimously" to desegregate beginning with the 1965-66 school term. This act, which signaled a start in numerous changes within the county concerning race relations, was not a true testament of the feelings of the white community, because in the record of the minutes of that meeting the word "unanimously" has been corrected and typed in by another typewriter.⁹⁰

Within days of the board's decision, the Pocahontas Star Herald carried an editorial which condemned the civil rights marches in Selma, Alabama and called the marches "unwarranted." Additionally, the editor stated,

we have become quite disgusted with civil rights workers from ail over the country who are flocking to Selma. . . . why go to Alabama? Many parts of the country other than the South, have been guilty of mistreating the negro race,

although these states boast of total integration and complete equality for the negro.

Within the same editorial, the writer claimed that the decision by the school board to desegregate was "wise, right, and just," but concluded that "we must comply with the law."⁹¹

This writing further illustrated that the views of white Randolph Countians had not really changed. There existed no guilt for any past actions regarding the treatment of the African-Americans in the county. Instead, the guilt was being transferred outside the South, outside the county. Also, if the decision by the school board was "wise, right, and just" in 1965, why was it not "wise, right, and Just" to desegregate in 1954 after Brown v. Board of Education or even before?

Furthermore, in a 1966 article Tell T. White discussed the loss in the black population in the county between 1860 and 1870. In this article, White noted that "there was actually a loss of 37 blacks during the 10 years. We've been fortunate over the year(s) in that their numbers have declined regularly."⁹² Was this a change in attitude?

The answer to this and the race relations within the county as a whole, not individually, is synonymous to the hiring of Mrs. Eddie Mac Jones, the African-American teacher of the black students at the time of desegregation. Mrs. Jones was hired under the conditions of a plan for desegregation approved by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare for the Pocahontas School District. This plan called for the school to be "completely integrated, with the colored school teacher being offered a position."⁹³

Even with the hiring of Jones, the superintendent and board found it difficult to assign her to a teaching schedule. Finally in a special meeting of the school board on October 13, 1965, over a month after school was in session, the board gave the superintendent authority to assign Jones as he "sees fit." Her assignment was reading instructor.⁹⁴ To date only one African-American teacher, Eddie Mac Jones, has taught in the desegregated school systems of Randolph County.⁹⁵

Initially the hiring of Jones was symbolic of change, and since that time the trappings of a segregated society have disappeared. No longer are there separate church meetings and excluded and segregated facilities. However, since the only additional African-American ever employed by county governing offices is an African-American in the sanitation department of Pocahontas, many things in Randolph County remain the same.⁹⁶

NOTES

1. Roland McCarroll and others, interview by author, tape recording, Pocahontas, Ar. , 22 October 1994.
2. James C. Cobb, The Most Southern Place on Earth (New York; Oxford University Press, 1992), viii.
3. Lawrence Dalton, History of Randolph County Arkansas (1946; reprint. Little Rock: Democrat Printing and Lithographing Company, 1981), 133.
4. L.F. Blankenship, Directory of Randolph County 1910 (1910; reprint, Pocahontas AR: Star Herald Printing Company, 1978), 6.
5. McCarroll and others, interview.
6. Robert B. Malz, "Arkansas Slaveholdings and Slaveholders in 1850, "The Arkansas Historical Quarterly 12 (1953): 39.
7. Tell T. White, "1850 Census of Randolph County," The Randolph County Historical Review 2 (January 1966); 1.
8. John William Graves, Town and Country: Race Relations in an Urban-Rural Context Arkansas, 1865-1905 (Fayetteville, Ar. ; The University of Arkansas Press, 1990, 6.
9. Tell T. White, "1860 Census of Randolph County," The Randolph County Historical Review 2 (June 1966); 18. There was a listing in this article of all the slaveholders in the county and the number of slaves each held.
10. Graves, Town and Country, 7. White, "1850 Census," 1.
11. Graves, Town and Country, 8.
12. C.G. Johnston, "Oh, For the Good Old Days of the Long, Long Ago," The Randolph County Historical Review 1 (April 1965); 18.
13. Ibid.
14. Graves, Town and Country, 8.
15. White, "1850 Census," 12. "1860 Census," 1.
16. C. Van Woodward, The strange Career of Jim Crow 3d ed. (New York; Oxford University Press, 1974), 65.
17. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1901, Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900. Population. Part 1 vol. 2 (Bureau of the Census: Washington, D.C., 530.
18. White, "1850 Census," 18. McCarroll and others, interview. In the 1850 Census the list of slaveowners names a William Hardin as having four slaves and the McCarrolls state that their grandfather was a slave of William Hardin.
19. Roland McCarroll, interview by author, tape recording, Pocahontas, Ar. , 28 January 1995. Ernest McCarroll, interview by author, tape recording, Pocahontas, Ar., 29 January 1995.
20. Ann B. Carroll, "New Friendship School—A Look Back," Pocahontas Star Herald. 20 October 1994, 7B.
21. Ibid.
22. Neil R. McMillen, Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow (Chicago; University of Illinois Press, 1990), 79.
23. Blankenship, Directory of 1910, 6.
24. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1913, Thirteenth Census of the United States 1910: Population, vol.2 (Bureau of the Census; Washington, D.C.), 129.

25. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1922, Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920: Population, vol . 2 (Bureau of the Census: Washington, D.C.), 96.
26. Ernest McCarroll, interview.
27. Graves, Town and Country, 9.
28. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1910, 129.
29. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1920, 96.
30. Howard N. Rabinowitz, Race Relations in the Urban South 1865-1890 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), xi.
31. Cobb, Most Southern Place, 165. Roland McCarroll, interview.
32. Ernest McCarroll, interview.
33. Carroll, "New Friendship School," 7B.
34. School Enumeration Form E-102: District 79 (Randolph County: County Educational Board, 1933). U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1932, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930: Population, vol.2 (. "Bureau of the Census; Washington, D.C.), 116.
35. Carroll, "New Friendship School," 7B. Roland McCarroll, interview.
36. Roland McCarroll, interview.
37. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1920, 96.
38. Ed Young and Elsie Young, interview by the author, tape recording, Birdell, Ar., 6 January 1995.
39. Ibid.
40. Rabinowitz, Race Relations, 197
41. Carroll, "New Friendship School," 7B.
42. Pat Johnson and Sherley Johnson, interview by the author, tape recording, Pocahontas, Ar., 27 March 1995.
43. Ed Young, interview.
44. Ibid.
45. Claude H. Nolen. The Negro's Image in the South: The Anatomy of White Supremacy (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967), 107.
46. Roland McCarroll and others, interview.
47. McMillen, Dark Journey, 159.
48. Ibid.
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50. McMillen, Dark Journey, 239.
51. Ibid, 238.
52. McCarroll and others, interview.
53. Cobb, Most Southern Place, 162.
54. Blankenship, Directory of 1910, 6.
55. McCarroll and others, interview.
56. Ibid.
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58. Rabinowitz, Race Relations, 196.
59. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1930, 148. McCarroll and others, interview. Young, interview.
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61. Ibid.
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63. Woodward, Strange Career, 37.
64. Roland McCarroll, interview.
65. McCarroll and others, interview.
66. Oscar Prince, Jr., interview by author. Pocahontas, Ar., 20 March 1995.
67. Roland McCarroll, interview.
68. Ibid.
69. Claxton Smith, interview by author, Pocahontas, Ar., 20 March 1995.
70. Woodward, Strange Career, 33.
71. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1943, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940: Population, vol. 2 (Bureau of the Census; Washington, D.C.), 493.
72. Dalton, Randolph County, 131-33. Cobb, Most Southern Place, 225. In quoting Hazel Smith's editorial policy of equality for African-Americans, Cobb noted that Smith says that most of her fellow Mississippians did not think that the African-American were "People."
73. Ibid, 134.
74. Johnson, interview.
75. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1940, 448.
76. McCarroll and others, interview.
77. Ibid.
78. Ernest McCarroll, interview.
79. McCarroll and others, interview. Johnson, interview.
80. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1952, Census of Population: 1950. Arkansas, vol. 2 (Bureau of the Census: Washington, D.C.), 4-96.
81. County Educational Board Record - Randolph County, vol. 1, County School Supervisor, 108.
82. School Enumeration form E-102. On these forms the names of the board of directors were listed from 1933 to the demise in 1949. These names are those of the black residents of Birdell. The names were Perry Hardin, William McCarroll, Tom Johnson, Monroe Binkley, Barney Oaks, Bobby Johnson. These names were identified by the African-Americans living in the county today.
83. County Educational board Record, 226.
84. Johnson, interview.
85. Ibid.
86. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1950, 4-S1, 4-96. U.S. Bureau of -the Census, 1963, Census of Population: 1960, Arkansas vol. 1 (Bureau of the Census: 1-Washington, D.C.), 5-16, 5-66.
87. Johnson, interview.,
88. Minutes of Pocahontas School District #19 Board Meeting, Pocahontas, Ar., 20 July 1963.
89. Johnson, interview.
90. Minutes of Pocahontas School District #19 Board Meeting, Pocahontas, Ar., 1 March 1965. This has the word "unanimous" retyped by another typewriter.
91. Ann B. Carroll, "Editorials-Racial Demonstrations No Longer Necessary, " Pocahontas Star Herald, 18 March 1965.

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94. Minutes of Pocahontas School District #19 Special Board Meeting, Pocahontas, Ar., 13 October 1965.
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