

Louisville Defender 5.3.1947
 Interracial Group Reports on
 Travel Conditions in South

Fellowship of Reconciliation

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Information Concerning

LOUISVILLE DEFENDER

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Interracial Group Reports On Travel Conditions In South

An interracial group which traveled from April 9 to 28 through the upper South discovered, according to a report released this week that "bus companies are attempting to circumvent the intentions of the Supreme Court in the Plessy Morgan decision." Banned down in June, 1946, this decision outlawed racial segregation in interstate travel.

The two-week trip, through Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky, was sponsored by the Congress of Racial Equality

and the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Passengers Reported
 "The report finds that 'the great majority of the passengers were speechless and did not register their feelings.' This conclusion was based on the fact that on buses where the driver ignored the Negroes riding in front seats, passengers generally paid no attention. Even in cases where drivers did raise the issue and where buses were delayed, the passengers' attitude was generally neutral."

During the two weeks the group made 25 tests aboard Greyhound and National Trailways buses, with Negroes sitting in front and whites in the rear.

There were a total of 13 arrests, including Negroes and whites. They occurred at Petersburg, Amherst, and Culpeper, Va., and at Durham, Chapel Hill, and Asheville, N.C. At Durham, where three arrested men were released without charge, a false arrest suit has been instituted. In Asheville, where two men were sentenced to the maximum of 30 days under the state's Jim Crow law, the appeal will come up May 8. Trials of the other cases will take place within the next month, with appeals planned in the event of adverse decisions.

Arrested on Buses

All the arrests occurred aboard National Trailways buses. On several occasions aboard Greyhound buses, drivers requested Negroes to move to the rear, but no arrests were made. At Oxford, N.C., a Greyhound driver called the police, but no arrest was made and the Negro involved remained unmolested in his front seat. In the four tests made aboard railroads, there were no arrests, but two threatened arrests.

The only act of hostility encountered by the group was at Chapel Hill, where cab drivers attempted to mob four men arrested there. No act of hostility was threatened at any time by passengers, although in a few instances passengers brought drivers' attention to Negroes sitting in front seats. On several occasions white passengers spoke up for the traveling group. Among bus drivers, passengers and police, there was a general ignorance of the Supreme Court decision in the Plessy Morgan case. Those who had heard about it vaguely did not know whether or how it applied.

Get Legal Aid

Local branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Iowa along the way gave the traveling group full legal aid and sponsored meetings to hear about the trip's progress. Meetings were also held with student groups in Richmond, Charles W. Fisher, president of the Virginia CIO Council, voiced full support. Moss Plunkett, noted Virginia liberal who ran for Governor against the Byrd machine, expressed his support at the Roanoke meeting.

Altogether, 16 men participated in the project, either part or full time. For purposes of clarifying the nature of the tests described

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