

INTEGRATION CAME QUIETLY TO JACKSON

JACKSON, Miss.—Ten long years after the Supreme Court ordered desegregation of United States public schools, racial integration came quietly to Mississippi's capital city last week. Mississippi was the last state in the nation to make a start toward integration below the college level. Bloody rioting erupted two years ago when James Meredith became the first Negro to enter the University of Mississippi. Last week 43 Negroes were registered without incident for first grade classes in eight formerly all-white Jackson schools.

Elaborate precautions had been taken to prevent violence. Policemen stationed at each of the city's 26 formerly all-white elementary schools kept cars and pedestrians moving. Only children, parents and registering teachers were allowed to linger in the vicinity of schools.

THE BREACH in the racial barrier affects only the first grade. It stems from a Federal court order requiring desegregation of a grade a year in Mississippi's largest city.

Court-ordered desegregation under the same plan also starts this fall in Biloxi, Clarksdale and Leake County, Miss.

Seventeen Negro first graders applied for admission to previously all-white schools in Biloxi without incident last week. Actual assignments will be made soon. Classes begin Aug. 31.

Registration in Leake, home county of former Gov. Ross R. Barnett, will be held on the first day of classes there Aug. 28. School begins in the delta town of Clarksdale next week, preceded by registration.

No Negro pupil has actually been assigned to a formerly all-white school in Mississippi yet, but under the court-approved plan the Jackson Board of Education must place the 43 Negroes in the schools of their choice to the extent that facilities permit.

The same strict precautions against violence that prevailed here last week will be repeated

at newly integrated schools Sept. 14, when fall classes begin, the police said.

THE MISSISSIPPI integration ruling stemmed from suits filed in behalf of Negro children last year by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Among the children named in the Jackson case were the son and daughter of Medgar Evers, NAACP field secretary who was slain by a sniper here last year.

At a mass meeting last week, Evers's brother Charles urged Negro parents not to "let a little fear stop you" from registering their children in previously white schools.

Nevertheless, concern about retaliation by white employers and toughs was widespread in

the Negro community. Evers said the number of Negroes registering to integrate schools had been kept down by telephoned threats of retaliation.

Mayor Allen C. Thompson recently called for full support of the integration plan and urged citizens to cooperate in avoiding trouble. News-men were not permitted to observe the registration for fear that their presence could help precipitate incidents.

In a statement, Evers commended Jackson officials and citizens "for the splendid manner in which they received the desegregation of our public schools."

He said he hoped citizens of other Mississippi towns facing desegregation would behave similarly.



SILHOUETTE CLUB OFFICERS—Here are first officers of women's auxiliary group of newly chartered Las Vegas Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. Seated are Acting President Yvonne Smith (left) and Secretary-Treasurer Ethel Booker. Rear are Acting Assistant Program Director Gwendolyn Booker (left) and Program Director Jacqueline Hoggard.

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