

# Negro Pupils Report To Old Fort School, Denied Entry Told Integration Not To Be Begun This School Year

8/25/1955

Five Negro children, accompanied by a Negro adult, reported to Old Fort white school on opening day yesterday seeking entrance in the school.

They were not granted admittance.

Some 300 to 400 persons had gathered in the school building area at the time. Included were officers of the Sheriff's department and of Old Fort.

The Negro adult, Albert Joyner, presented himself at the entrance of the school at around 8:50 yesterday morning and was met on the steps by County Schools Supt. Melvin Taylor.

Supt. Taylor said the man inquired where he might find the office of registration.

He was told by Taylor that the McDowell County Board of Education had directed him to inform all principals throughout the county not to enroll any pupil — regardless of race — which would result in "transferring the pupil from a school previously assigned unless and until such request had been reviewed by the board and a formal transfer made by the board".

Taylor said he learned from Joyner that the Negro children accompanying him and seeking entry in Old Fort white school were Richard and Norma Greenlee, children of Thurmond Greenlee; Thomas Lowder, son of Lucille Lowder; and Audrey Logan and Teressa Murphy, grandchildren or living with James Bryson.

The children appeared to be of elementary school age, Supt. Taylor said.

In informing Joyner that the Negro children would not be enrolled, Taylor said he told Joyner they had a right to "appeal the matter to the Board of Education", but that he was authorized to inform all concerned that "integration would not be begun this year".

He said he further informed Joyner that a committee to make a study of the problem had been authorized by the Board of Education, and would soon be announced, and explained to the man that although the Supreme Court has made a decision directing school authorities to set up schools so as to eliminate discrimination between races, the Legislature of North Carolina and school authorities in this state have directed school people to keep races separate and, since the question is very involved, it will take time for settlement, perhaps requiring litigation to dispose of all mitigating circumstances and related issues.

### Not Molested

The crowd which witnessed the episode allowed Joyner and the Negro children to come and go in an orderly manner, without being molested.

### Move Follows Petition

Several weeks ago, the Board of Education had received through a Negro law firm in Raleigh a petition of Old Fort Negro parents asking that Negro pupils be admitted to the Old Fort white school at the beginning of the 1955-56 term.

The board made a written reply to the law firm, and, more recently had announced through the press that integration will not be begun in county schools this year.

All county schools except Nebo opened yesterday morning and no integration incidents were reported other than at Old Fort.

Nebo school, where renovation work is in progress, has delayed its opening until Wednesday of next week.