



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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Black students of Concord, N.C. sit-in for U.S. civil rights, 1960

- U.S. Civil Rights Movement (1950s-1960s)

Time period notes: The sit-ins stop around mid-April, and it is unclear if any action occurs between April and August.

12 February

1960

to: 17 August

1960

Country: United States

Location City/State/Province: Concord, North Carolina

Goals:

Protesters wanted stores to integrate their lunch counters in Concord, North Carolina.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 010. Newspapers and journals
- 162. Sit-in
- 167. Pray-in

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 016. Picketing
- 038. Marches
- 162. Sit-in
- 167. Pray-in

Methods in 3rd segment:

Methods in 4th segment:

Methods in 5th segment:

Methods in 6th segment:

Notes on Methods:

The later segments show inactivity, but are important to the campaign narrative because it is likely that this period when the students were on vacation was a time when the threat of resumption of the sit-ins hung over the white power structure. It is likely that they expected that when the students returned, given the South-wide intensity of the sit-in movement, the students would go back to sitting in if there was no settlement. For that reason, while in many campaigns the GNAD considers lack of

action = end of campaign, in this case the perception of the possibility of resumption makes those months alive for the campaign dynamic. - George Lakey, Manager 8/20/14

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Economic Justice

Human Rights

Group characterization:

- African American College Students

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Not known.

Partners:

Not known.

External allies:

Not known.

Involvement of social elites:

Not known.

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

- Barber-Scotia College students

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Segment Length: 1 month

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Managers of local lunch counters.

Repressive Violence:

Verbal abuse, Physical assault

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

6 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

2 points out of 3 points

Notes on outcomes:

Within six months the lunch counters of Concord were integrated.

On 12 February 1960, nearly two weeks after sit-ins at Greensboro, North Carolina (the Greensboro Four) began, over 100 students at the historically black school Barber-Scotia College started sit-ins in the lunch counter at Belk's department store and three other lunch counters in Concord, North Carolina. In addition to sit-ins, the students organized pray-ins, where they gathered for prayer in public areas and places reserved for whites. Aside from white teenage hecklers, the students did not face much initial repression.

However, on 25 March 1960, police arrested seven protesters for trespassing at a lunch counter, marking the first arrests since the sit-ins began. The lunch counter was a local drugstore, Pearl Drug Store. In response to the arrests, 58 students marched through Concord, carrying signs with slogans like "I am an American, too." They passed Belk's department store, two other lunch counters, and ended the march in the town square. The march remained non-violent despite jeering from crowds watching the students. The next day, the police released the arrested students on the conditions of a \$25 fine and a six-month probationary period.

A few weeks later, on 11 April 1960, another set of arrests occurred. This time, the local lunch counter was Williams Candy Kitchen. Six students were arrested for trespassing and released later on the same conditions as the group in March. One student sued the owner for physical assault charges, but the judge quickly dismissed the case.

After the April 11 sit-ins, protest activity halted due to the end of the school semester. During the four months without another sit-in, lunch counters in Concord quietly integrated. On 17 August 1960, a black couple ate at Belk's lunch counter at the whites-only section, signaling an official end to public lunch counter segregation in Concord.

Research Notes

Influences:

This sit-in occurred in response to the Greensboro Four sit-ins that began about two weeks earlier.

The initial issue of the campaign newsletter, "the Scotia Express," made the following statement that was repeated later by others in the sit-in movement: "We want the world to know that we no longer accept the inferior position of second-class citizenship. We are willing to go to jail, be ridiculed, spat upon and even suffer physical violence to obtain First Class Citizenship."

Sources:

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