

Truth Homes Are Occupied

Troops and Police Form Heavy Guard

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The full authority of the law, enforced by the rifles and fixed bayonets of 1,000 Michigan State Troops, augmented in turn by 1,400 Detroit and State police, today protected the vanguard of 200 Negro families as they moved into the Sojourner Truth housing project, near Nevada avenue and Ryan road.

In contrast with rioting near the project last Feb. 28, there was no violence today as 14 families and their household effects were moved under police guard.

At least 10 men, three of them Negroes, were taken into custody, however, as police dispersed picket lines. The men were released at the Davison Station after stern lectures.

PASSES REQUIRED

The project and its environs for blocks around was an armed camp. Motorists on the main avenues were halted and obliged to identify themselves. Pedestrians were kept moving and passes were required of all those who entered the project grounds.

White residents along streets bounding the project shouted and booed at passing automobiles containing Negroes and there were frequent arguments with the police over the right of pedestrians to use the sidewalks.

Joseph Buffa, president of the Seven Mile-Fenelon Improvement Association, a leader in the fight to keep Negroes out of the project,

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Sojourner

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was one of the men taken into custody, observers said.

The furniture of five families arrived in vans at one time under police convoy. Some of the tenants protested that in order to join the convoy their vans had been driven miles out of the way. At a moving fee of \$6 an hour the plan cost them extra money, they said.

MAY REFUND TENANTS

Charles F. Edgecomb, director-secretary of the Detroit Housing Commission, said he was studying the possibility of refunding the tenants. He conferred with Guy C. Larcom, of Washington, representing the Federal Public Housing Authority.

Raymond M. Foley, State director for the Federal Housing Administration, today removed one of the chief objections given by white residents against Negro occupancy of the project. He announced that FHA-guaranteed loans may be obtained on properties in the district adjoining Sojourner Truth.

The project was the center of a 14-block area in which State troops stood on guard at 50-foot intervals. They were in full service dress and they halted each automobile entering or leaving the area.

After several "incidents" at Hilldale and Fenelon avenues, police detailed a riot car and several mounted patrolmen to that point. The arrests which followed were precipitated by the refusal of citizens to obey orders.

In the early hours, 75 persons, mostly women, attempted to organize a picket line. The leader, a man, carried a camera. Many women carried American flags. Dispersed, the group formed again in a nearby field.

CROWD DISPERSED

Later, the police dispersed a crowd of 200 persons. Women and children predominated. They shouted taunts at the police and at passing strangers. Someone threw a stone which fell harmlessly.

There were many porch-sitters in the so-called "white" residential area near the project's eastern boundary. They displayed small flags and eagerly quizzed each passing civilian:

"Which side are you on?"

Although all the main avenues bounding the area were patrolled by troops and blockaded by traffic signs at many points, motor traffic still was being permitted on Hilldale, which runs east and west at the northern end of the project.

Auto loads of Negroes, obviously sightseers, persisted in driving through Hilldale to the accompaniment of taunts from pickets and residents. State troops passed at intervals in large, open trucks.

At Hilldale and Sunset avenues, police halted a car containing five Negroes and arrested Taylor Smith, a DSR coach operator. Citizens said Smith had waved a large pocket knife as the auto passed. Smith, who lives at 953 Erskine street, was charged with carrying concealed weapons.

The first family to move in was that of Walter Jackson, 35-year-old defense plant worker, including his wife and five children ranging in age from nine months to 15 years.

YOU JUST DIE ONCE

"We are here now and let the bad luck happen," said Jackson. "I have only got one time to die and I'd just as soon die here."

Jackson, a short, wiry, 130-pound former UAW-CIO shop steward who took an active part in the sit-down strikes of 1937, said his

family formerly lived in an upper flat at 447 Superior street. Confined formerly to a second-story porch, the Jackson children today played happily about the project grounds as the furniture was moved in.

Officials, who had marshalled their forces in a surprise move during the night, furnished each Negro family with a scout car escort from the former home to the new housing project.

Residents of the area seemed bewildered by the show of strength displayed by Detroit and State governments. Those obliged to leave the area to reach their jobs were required to obtain passes. All attempting to enter the district likewise received passes only after identifying themselves and the nature of their business there.

WAVE FLAGS

A score of white women, some pushing baby carriages, waved American flags and paraded briefly along Conley avenue, north of the project. At Nevada and Justine avenues, bounding the project on the west, about 30 white persons, most of them women, gathered.

They booed when the Rev. Horace White, a member of the Detroit Housing Commission, appeared.

Police and military officers were optimistic as the first furniture vans began to arrive. They said they anticipated little or no trouble.

The State Troops were immediately under Col. William D. Howe, but their activities were controlled by Capt. Donald S. Leonard, who was in charge of all State forces.

TROOPS FORM CAMP

The troops, assembled during the night at the Detroit Light Guard Armory, Brush and Larned streets, were moved in trucks to the scene. They established camp in a field south of Nevada, facing the project.

In addition to rifles and bayonets, they carried mess kits, cartridge belts and wore steel helmets. Field kitchens served mess after 6:30 a. m.

The Troops are to be on duty for 24-hour periods, divided into guard assignments of four hours each, followed by rest periods of four hours. Those not on call are billeted at the Light Guard Armory, the old Infantry Armory on Piquette avenue, and in State Fair buildings.

Many of Capt. Leonard's State Police were held in reserve at the project and at the State Fair Grounds. There were reserve forces of the troops at strategic points in Detroit.

Commissioner Eamon was directly in charge of the Detroit Police force, estimated at 1,200 men. The Mounted Division was stationed at

Ryan road and Nevada, the chief riot scene in February.

Deputy Supt. Albert Siska supervised the uniformed division of policemen, while Inspector Paul Wencel, chief of detectives, supervised a force of plainclothes men.

Both Detroit and State police were prepared to extend the area of protection, if necessary, to a mile-square district bounded on the north by the Seven Mile road, on the east by Mound road, on the south by the Six Mile road, and on the west by Ryan.

THE FURNITURE STOP