

BIENVILLE PARISH

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The Parish Seat of Bienville Parish is Arcadia, Louisiana. Other towns are Ringold, Gibsland and Mt. Lebanon. The main problem of concern is voter registration. Only six hundred (600) out of a potential three thousand one hundred seventy-seven (3,177) are registered. Although the parish as usual is totally segregated, people are concerned about the ballot. The Klan is active. In Ward 5, near Castor, Louisiana, KKK signs have been posted. Cross burnings, past beatings and police intimidation have served their purpose in instilling deep rooted fear in the Negro community.

CONTACTS:

- Rev. A. M. Cathcart - pastor of Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, president of the Bienville Parish Voters League
Gibsland, Louisiana

Rev. Cathcart is very active in local voter registration efforts. His large and new brick home is located on Highway 154 South. From Gibsland, take above highway fourteen (14) miles south. Be careful that you don't take Highway 517 out of Mt. Lebanon. Stay on Highway 154 South. When you see a large brick home that appears to be owned by white folks - on a hill - you are at the home of Rev. Cathcart. He was born in Bienville Parish, but until recently he lived in California. He is not afraid. However, he doubts as to whether the people will back him or us all the way.

There is some validity to his doubt. He has some followers, but fear governs the masses, at least for the present.

- Mr. John Blankenship - Vice-president of BPVL, lives in Ward 6 near the Shady Grove High School in Friendship, Louisiana

Indications are that others are interested in working. Jonesboro has greatly motivated their interest. Rev. Cathcart is interested in running for a school board position. He is also considering seeking ASOS committeemanship. The Negro cotton, corn, potato and sea growers could control an ASOS election if they would participate as they should. A rural organization might help foster the latter.

Fear cannot be overemphasized. The burning of the Jonesboro churches didn't help rally conservatives of the parish. People may not want CORE because they fear KKK reactions.

The voters league meets the first Tuesday after the first Sunday of each month. Rev. Cathcart will attempt to arrange a meeting of community leaders on Tuesday, April 13, 1965, at 7:00 p.m. at a local church. You should call Rev. Cathcart at 5671, Gibsland, Louisiana, for final plans relative to the meeting.

For more contacts on Bienville, Jackson and Lincoln Parishes, you should contact:

Rev. F. T. Eldines, president of the Triparish Baptist Ministers' Conference which covers the above three (3) parishes. He lives in Friendship, Louisiana.

Ronnie M. Moore
March 19, 1965

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