

White Patrons Balk Negro Sitdowners

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Greensboro Daily News High Point Bureau

HIGH POINT, Feb. 12 — White patrons, the majority of the high school students, took over the seats at Woolworth's lunch counter this afternoon and held them throughout a demonstration by Negro high school students protesting segregated food service.

There was some indication that at least some of the white students were being paid to hold the seats.

The Rev. B. Elton Cox told a reporter that yesterday when William Penn High School's Negro students walked into Walgreen's and filled all the lunch counter seats until the store closed he had seen and heard a white man agreeing to pay white youngsters to sit at the counter today.

Store Manager A. L. Steen denied any knowledge of this, and the Rev. Mr. Cox could identify no one connected with the store as the man he had seen.

However, Cox identified a local merchant as the man late this afternoon. The man he identified was Herman Gooden, a jewelry salesman. When questioned by a reporter, Gooden answered only, "No comment." However, he spoke to several of the students at the counter and told them they were doing a fine job.

An estimated 150 white students began crowding into the store shortly before 3:30 p.m. A

few minutes before 4 p.m. between 60 and 70 Negro youths filed into the store. They crowded into the aisle behind the white youths at the lunch counter and held their ground until 6:20 p.m., when they left in a body.

There were several minor incidents.

One Negro girl had obtained a seat but was refused service.

Police on duty in the crowded store where there were many white and Negro spectators asked several white persons to leave. It proved impossible to keep the aisles immediately behind the counter open.

Cox said he suggested to the Negro students that they leave instead of risking more serious trouble. He told a reporter that the original group of demonstrators—those who made the initial move on Woolworth's and McLellan's yesterday—could be depended upon to keep calm and out of trouble. However, he said, a thing like this grows and no one can control a mob.

The minister is vice president of the High Point branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He told reporters yesterday that the students had asked his advice concerning their planned demonstration and he had told them that it was within the realm of human dignity.

Many of the white students—those not occupying seats left the store after an hour or so, thus making it possible for the Negroes to take places directly behind those occupying seats.

When one white girl left her seat, the white boy waiting to take over and a Negro girl managed to each grab a half of the seat. The Negro girl was pushed from it by the white boy.

Following the initial demonstration yesterday eating establishments here chose their own way of preparing for the sit-downers today. McLellans kept its counter closed, and the stools were removed from in front of the counter. The lunch counter was used to display merchandise.

At the College Village Shopping Center, Woolworth's continued to operate the luncheonette today apparently without incident. Eckerd's at the shopping center also had its counter open today apparently without incident.

Once yesterday and again this morning groups of Negroes walked into Everett's cafe on South Main street and were refused service. They did not linger. These were adults.