


CLARKSDALE TOWN MEETING '77

"PEOPLE UNITED FOR GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES"

February 19, 1977

CLARKSDALE HIGH SCHOOL

CLARKSDALE, MISSISSIPPI



PU

GO

PEOPLE UNITED-GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES

SPIRIT OF CLARKSDALE

Hernando De Soto gazed upon the Mighty Mississippi River, not knowing at the time the future in store. From that moment a sense of pride and hope was intended for all people who were to make their home at that site of what is now known as Clarksdale. The Mississippi River, filtering its richness to the soils as it controlled and dominated everything in its flow, brought with it a mixture of peoples who have combined cultures and ideas to create a multi-diverse community.

Clarksdale has many problems to be solved. There are racial struggles along with financial struggles for existence. Clarksdalians have begun to buckle down to iron out these problems. The rich soil of this area has relaxed its hold on the economy and made room for industry.

The never dying spirit of hope and pride lives in each generation of citizens of our community. Citizens today experience problems of yesterday but in a different perspective. Many years have passed since De Soto first viewed the site of what is now Clarksdale, and that settlement has grown into a flourishing city.

There is hope that there would be no end to the dreams of having a near-perfect society where the citizens live in harmony.

THIS TOWN

CHORUS:

This town is your town.
This town is my town.
From 61 Highway to Sherard's boarder
From Delta flatlands to the Sunflower River.
This town is made for you and me.

VERSE I:

As we were sitting in the Bobo Building
We saw before us the endless problems.
We sought to solve them and bring you unity.
This dream is made for you and me.

VERSE II:

You may roam and ramble up Ole Man River
To larger cities on greater waters.
But the voice of Clarksdale is loudly calling,
"Come back and realize your dream.

VERSE III:

When the answers come for which we're striving,
For schools and highways, the jobs and playgrounds,
Opportunities arising; the chance before us.
This Town is best for you and me.

(TO THE TUNE OF "THIS LAND IS MY LAND")

CHALLENGE STATEMENT

In The Arena Of CULTURE

The fact that JEALOUSY, PREJUDICE, APATHY, AND FEAR

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is DISCRIMINATION

This contradiction is illustrated by: PUBLIC WORKS AND NO OPEN HOUSING POLICY

In the arena of ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The fact that COST OF LIVING, LACK OF ATTRACTING AND KEEPING COMPETENT LABOR, AND LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is SELFISHNESS, DISCRIMINATION, CITIZEN APATHY

This contradiction is illustrated by SELFISHNESS OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SEGMENTS OF COMMUNITY. FRAGMENTATION OF COMMUNITY, AND CITIZEN APATHY.

In the arena of POLITICS

The fact that WE HAVE UNEQUAL REPRESENTATION, DIVISION IN COMMUNITY, UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF CITY ASSETS, WARDS WILL ADD TO THE DIVISION OF CITY

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is WHITE POWER STRUCTURE

This contradiction is illustrated by ALLEY PAVED ON OAKHURST WHEN STREETS UNPAVED IN BLACK COMMUNITY, NO PARKS FOR BLACKS, NO BLACK HOMES ON WEST SIDE OF TOWN

CHALLENGE STATEMENT

In The Arena of CULTURAL - UNITED COMMUNITY, BEAUTIFICATION,
RECREATION, MEDIA

The fact that LACK OF PRIDE, APATHY, LACK OF GOVERNMENTAL ACTION

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is LACK OF EFFECTIVE
LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNMENT AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

This contradiction is illustrated by FAILURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
TO ENFORCE EXISTING LAWS OR ENFORCE LAWS SELECTIVELY
LITTER LAWS, VANDALISM LAWS, GARBAGE CAN ORDINANCE
NOT ENFORCED

In the arena of ECONOMICS

The fact that THE COST OF ENERGY IS HIGH

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is THE AVAILABILITY OF
NATURAL GAS TO CLARKSDALE FOR THE PRODUCTION OF
ELECTRICITY

This contradiction is illustrated by HIGH ELECTRIC BILLS:
CLARKSDALE'S ELECTRICITY RATES ARE SECOND HIGHEST
IN THE STATE

In the arena of CULTURAL

The fact that SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATION - DUAL SCHOOL SYSTEM,
COURT ORDER, APATHY PUBLIC

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is LACK OF AFFIRMA-
TIVE POLITICAL ACTION

This contradiction is illustrated by LACK OF INDUSTRY, HOUSING,
DECREASED CITY REVENUE

CHALLENGE STATEMENT

In the arena of POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

The fact that LACK OF HARMONY AMONG CITIZENS

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is TRADITION OF CLASS SUPERIORITY

This contradiction is illustrated by SEGRAGATION OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, EMPLOYMENT,
AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

In the arena of SOCIAL STRUCTURES

The fact that SPECIAL INTEREST IS SERVED IN BUDGETING AND POLICE RELATIONS

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is A LACK OF TRUST AND SYMPATHY FOR EACH
OTHER'S (RACE'S) NEEDS

This contradiction is illustrated by AVOIDANCE AND MISREPRESENTATION OF EACH OTHER

In the arena of POLITICAL COMMONALITY

The fact that INADEQUATE ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING LAWS, INADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR
REHABILITATION - DRUGS, YOUTH, MENTAL HEALTH

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is APATHY ON THE PART OF CITIZENS AND
ELECTED OFFICIALS

The contradiction is illustrated by LAWS EXISTING THAT ARE NOT ENFORCED

In the arena of ECONOMICS

The fact that THE COST OF ENERGY IS HIGH

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is UNAVAILABILITY TO CLARKSDALE OF
NATURAL GAS FOR PRODUCTION OF ELECTRICITY

This contradiction is illustrated by HIGH ELECTRIC BILLS; CLARKSDALE'S ELECTRIC
BILLS ARE THE SECOND HIGHEST IN THE STATE

CHALLENGE STATEMENT

In the arena of CULTURAL COMMONALITY

The fact that A HIGH COST OF LIVING AND LACK OF CIVIC PRIDE

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is TRADITIONAL
LIFE STYLE AND APATHY

This contradiction is illustrated by:

BLIGHTED CITY AREAS IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT
AND REASONING: A HIGH COST OF ENERGY AND AN
ENERGY SHORTAGE

In the arena of CULTURAL ISSUES COMMON TO ALL OF US

The fact that LACK OF SUPERVISION AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN
IN OUR COMMUNITY

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is:
POOR PARENTAL SUPERVISION

This contradiction is illustrated by:

POOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, WIDESPREAD VANDALISM,
AS IN REFERENCE TO BROKEN STREET LIGHTS, BROKEN
WINDOWS, DESTRUCTION OF SCHOOL, CHURCH AND
PRIVATE PROPERTY ALONG WITH EXISTING RECREATION
FACILITIES

In the arena of POLITICAL COMMONALITY

The fact that APATHY, INADEQUATE ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS--INADEQUATE
FACILITIES FOR REHABILITATION

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is:
APATHY--LACK OF CITIZEN INTEREST AND ELECTED
OFFICIALS

This contradiction is illustrated by:

LAWS EXISTING THAT ARE NOT ENFORCED

CHALLENGE STATEMENT

In the arena of CULTURAL

The fact that DIVIDED LACK, LACK OF COMMUNICATION OF COMMUNITY, BEAUTIFICATION AND RECREATION

Indicates that the underlying Contradiction Is LACK OF PRIDE, LACK OF GOVERNMENTAL ACTION

This contradiction is best illustrated by FAILURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO ENFORCE EXISTING LAW OR ENFORCE LAWS SELECTIVELY.

In the arena of CULTURAL

The fact that

1. FUNDS APPROPRIATED FOR-RECREATION ARE NOT EQUALLY DISTRIBUTED.
2. LACK OF INTERDEMONINATIONAL COMMUNICATION ON RELIGIOUS AND RACIAL MATTERS.
3. LACK OF BLACK INVOLVEMENT ON PLANNING COMMUNITY PROJECTS.

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is

1. LACK OF PROPER GUIDANCES ON PART OF MINISTERS AND LAY LEADERS.
2. PARTIALITY AND INDEFFERENCE ON THE PART OF ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS
3. APATHY ON THE PART OF BLACKS AND OF THE MINORITIES.

CHALLENGE STATEMENT

In the arena of POLITICAL COMMONALITY

The fact that THERE IS PUBLIC APATHY, UNEQUAL REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT, LACK OF FUNDS, AND LACK OF INDIVIDUAL UNDERSTANDING

Indicates that the underlying contradiction is THAT INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS DO NOT FEEL FREE TO ASSERT THEIR OWN VIEWS TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS WITHOUT RIDICULE OR OTHER REPRECUSIONS

This contradiction is illustrated by THE FACT THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD CONTAINS MEMBERS WHO DO NOT HAVE CHILDREN IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM; THERE IS UNFAIR REPRESENTATION ON THE CITY COMMITTEES; THE AVERAGE PERSON AFFECTED IS RARELY CONSULTED WHEN OFFICIALS MAKE LONG RANGE PLANS; OUR SCHOOLS ARE IN POOR CONDITION AND THERE ARE UNFAIR ZONING PRACTICES

ECONOMIC

We the citizens of Clarksdale in order to form a stronger economic base propose:

better communication and knowledge from the public officials concerning the current energy problems. To accomplish complete awareness by the public as it relates to our city owned utilities.

through: A monthly report in various local news media

We the citizens of Clarksdale in order to form a stronger Economic base

Purpose - A program to increase the average attain educational level in the city and county school system

through - support of compulsory school attendance, support Voc-Technical Education, support of public education institutions.

POLITICAL

PROPOSALS

We the citizens of Clarksdale, in order to establish an open house policy in city government propose to bridge the communication gap between elected officials, and the people through:

More town meetings, and encouraging individual involvement in community activities.

We the citizens of Clarksdale, in order to promote more equality in public life propose that our city and county governing bodies seek to bring this about through:

Consultations with those citizens who now feel that they are being presently denied the full privileges and benefits of citizenship, and reports to the people on their efforts on these matters.

We the citizens of Clarksdale, in order to unify the community propose to involve the community in activities through:

Town meetings, organize committees from all sections of the town - to plan for community festivals - petition that appointed officials to school board be elected - publicized through public media, the need for more parental involvement in schools.

CULTURAL

PROPOSALS

We the citizens of Clarksdale, in order to develop community pride propose 1. to promote a clean-up, paint-up, fix-up campaign. 2. Beautification and recreational development of Sunflower river through:

Community projects involving participation of all citizens through established civic clubs and media participation coordinated thru further participation of this committee.

We the citizens of Clarksdale, in order to promote a safe and desirable community in which to live propose to set up a community action (advisory) board through:

this committee meeting again to seek volunteers.

We the citizens of Clarksdale, in order to overcome racial and socio-economic discrimination within society propose an expansion of existing programs in the high schools for job training through:

Establishing a working committee, composed of members of this committee and other interested persons to persuade the Chamber of Commerce to involve more sponsoring agencies/companies for youth involved in DODE and similar programs.

We the citizens of Clarksdale, in order to establish responsible (Adult) behavior and civic pride propose 1. small neighborhood seminars or workshops to educate parents. 2. back compulsory school attendance law and truant officers through:

Committee member will ask other citizens, PTA, Social Agencies, Ministers, to consider this a project in their congregation. Committee members will write representatives to vote for compulsory school law. Committee members ask school groups (DODE/TIDE to phone "children do you know where your parents are?"

CULTURAL

PROPOSALS

We the citizens of Clarksdale in order to improve trust in government and develop more responsive leadership propose to observe and influence government and disseminate information so that its activities can be understood and trusted through:

Open meetings and encouragement of citizen participation. Form steering committee to coordinate civic, church and special interest organizations to influence government and other activities.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FEBRUARY 19, 1977

CLARKSDALE 76 TOWN MEETING

SPONSORS:

Bank of Clarksdale

Chamber of Commerce

Clarksdale Baptist Church

Clarksdale Public School System

Coahoma National Bank

Exxon Corporation

Garden Club

Lee Academy

Miss. Power & Light Company

Nail Signs

Press Register

Stephens-Adamson

Taylor Implement & Machinery

Wonder Bread Bakery

WROX Radio Station

WKDL Radio Station

Coahoma Junior College

Coahoma Opportunities, Inc.

Coca-Cola Bottling Company

Cooper Tire & Rubber Company

Emhart Corporation

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Miss. Valley Gas Company

Planters Wholesale Grocery

South Central Bell

Taylor Chair Company

Wigley & Culp

Woolbert's Office Supply

WJBI Radio Station

Holiday Inn

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FEBRUARY 19, 1977

CLARKSDALE TOWN MEETING

STEERING COMMITTEE:

Larry Lee, Chairman
Sandy Stillions
Tom Carter
Cris Fletcher
Sarita Owens
Walter Johnson

HONORED GUESTS AND DIGNITARIES:

Mayor Richard Walster
Commissioner Richard Weiss
Commissioner Grady Palmer
Commissioner Henry Espy
Supervisor Billy Howell
Commissioner Tommy Garmon

WORKSHOP LEADERS:

Tom Carter
Jerry Salley
Eric Nelser
Loistean Barron
Ginger Kalston
Dudley Barnes

NURSE:

Barbara Correro

EMCEE:

Jack Dunbar

HOSTS:

Clarksdale Public School System

ICA STAFF:

Diann McCabe
David Scott

NURSERY:

Mrs. Tom Carter
Mrs. Larry Lee