CENTER FOR ARKANSAS HISTORY AND CULTURE
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

"No Regrets"

The Salina Journal Tuesday, June 5, 1990 9

Ex-governor doesn't regret blocking blacks

ABILENE (AP) — Former Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus, who used the National Guard to block nine black students from a Little Rock high school, had no regrets Monday night when he met with two of them 33 years later.

"I can't think of anything under the circumstances that I would have done differently," he said.

Faubus

Faubus met Thelma Mothershed Wair and Terrence Roberts, members of the "Little Rock Nine" who passed through angry mobs of whites to enter Central High School in 1957.

The governor's defense of school segregation drew international attention and prompted President Dwight D. Eisenhower to send troops to Little Rock so the children could enter the school.

Monday night's meeting came on the eve of a conference on Eisenhower's role in the 1950s civil rights movement at his presidential library in Abilene, the east-central Kansas town Eisenhower called home.

"We were watching TV and saw all those troops rolling over the Arkansas River," Wair said. "That was the greatest thrill of my life.

"We then knew that somebody big with all the authority cared about nine little black children."

Wair had never met Faubus before Monday. She said she felt no bitterness toward him.

"I guess he did what he thought he needed to do," she said. "I can't hold that against him."

At an afternoon news conference, Brownell said Eisenhower's deployment of the 101st Airborne Division was necessary to preserve the U.S. Constitution.

The move enforced the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Brown vs. the Topeka Board of Education that segregated schools were unconstitutional.

"(Eisenhower's) handling of that situation seems to me to be one of the high points of his career," Brownell said.

Faubus defended his action aimed at blocking implementation of the court ruling.

"There was a lot of publicity, but we had the confrontation out of the streets," the 80-year-old former governor said. "There was no property damage. No one was injured sufficiently to be hospitalized. No one was killed."

The conference today, called "The 50s: A Decade in Black and White," will feature Faubus, Brownell and other panelists from the Eisenhower administration, members of the Little Rock Nine and litigants in the Brown case.

"Ex-governor doesn't regret blocking blacks," *The Salina Journal*, June 5, 1990 (Elizabeth Huckaby Papers)

History Alive: Virtually!
Supported in part by a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities
UA at Little Rock Center for Arkansas History and Culture
ualr.edu/cahc | 501.320.5780