

# TEN DAYS IN MAY 1961

## Appleton, Alabama Viewpoints On Discrimination in North, South

**Montgomery Writer Criticizes  
Outsider Interference in South**

People's Forum  
Lawrence Students Point  
to Bigoted Appleton

The violence that occurred in May 1963 revitalized important conversations about racism in the community.

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court ruled that "separate but equal" segregation was unconstitutional and "inherently unequal." This ruling, known as **Brown vs. Board of Education**, provided activists with the legal footing to challenge segregation in the north and south.

Despite the legislation, violence and discrimination continued against Blacks. In 1955, a 14-year-old Chicagoan named **Emmett Till** was brutally murdered by whites while visiting relatives in Mississippi. In response to white aggression, many Blacks protested and sought actions to draw attention to injustices. The successful use of peaceful resistance evolved into such actions as lunch counter sit-ins and **Freedom Rider** protests in the South.

## An Appleton Freedom Ride

A *Freedom Rider* for Appleton was beaten in Montgomery, Alabama, on May 20, 1961. Jim Zwerg graduated from Appleton West High School before attending Beloit College. While studying in an exchange program in Nashville, Tennessee, Zwerg joined the Freedom Rider movement when he was 21 years old.

On a protest trip through the south, the bus was stopped in Montgomery, Alabama, where he and fellow riders were violently beaten by a white mob. Circulated images and descriptions of Zwergh's bloodied body forced local whites to talk about inequality. *Saturday*, the Civil Rights Movement was not isolated to the South. Debates on segregation began to appear in the *Appleson Post-Observer's* editorial sections.



This Associated Press image of Zwerg's bloodied body brought attention to racial violence in the South.

Getty Images

## Violence on College Avenue

Following Zwerg's beating, tensions were high in Appleton.

The Des Moines Demons visited Appleton for a baseball series against the Appleton Papermakers. Both teams were interracial. Their hard-fought games garnered local attention, but off the field, events would make national headlines.

After the series, on May 30, seven Black bullfighters from the *Demons* and *Papermasks* sought respite on College Avenue. Entering **Carl's Tap**, the men were comforted by Carl Ziesmer after they sat at the bar. Carl rushed the men with a leather club and demanded they leave the tavern because they were Black.

(Left, right) The incident at Carle's Tap reflected a national wave of violence against Blacks in the spring of 1964.

Carl claimed he feared the men were Freedom Riders or Jamaican migrant workers, who he believed were "going ruin [his] business."

Using the state's anti-discrimination law, Wisconsin brought charges against Zaeser. The Des Moines hailpayers, fearing for their lives, declined to return to Appleton to testify, and consequently, Zaeser avoided any punishment for his actions. Despite the violence and outcome of the event, Appleton began to debate discrimination and how to move the city forward.

# 7 Ballplayers Me Jim Crow In Wis.

APPLETON, Wis. — (UPI) — Seven Negro players from the Des Moines and Fox cities teams in the Three-I Baseball League were threatened with a blackjack and ejected from a tavern because of their color, this week.

Zimmer put this positively racist sign in his window that accused Blacks of being violent and drunk.

*San Jose Post-Creoscent*, June 16, 1991

