

Aug.-Sept., 1953

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HOW GARY HANDLES A DELICATE SITUATION



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NOTES

Victorial Digest Highlighting the News

HOW GARY HANDLES A DELICATE SITUATION

On the shores of Lake Michigan, Gary's Marquette Park features a protected bathing beach, a \$160,000 bath pavilion, two miles of beach, a children's playground with special equipment, a \$2,000,000 refectory with restaurants, banquet and dancing hall, casting piers, baseball diamonds, picnic grounds, refreshment stands and parking facilities. In addition to the two miles of beach the park contains 163 acres. Located within the Gary city limits, the beach attracts thousands of resident from all over Indiana and Illinois and from other states as well.

Beach Party Threatened and Assaulted

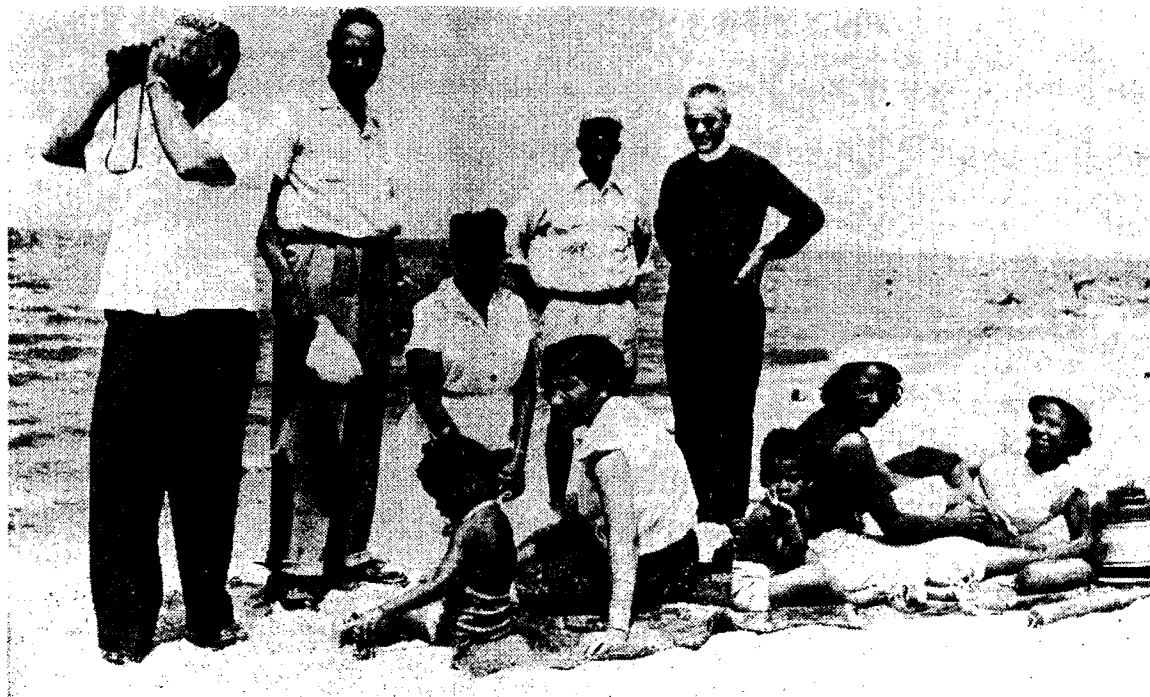
On the afternoon of July 1, 1953, the apparent usual tranquility of Marquette beach was interrupted when a group of Negroes from
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Partial view of Marquette Park Beach



Marquette Beach picnic area and playground.



Group at Marquette Beach for outing: left to right, standing, Al Thomas, Clifford E. Minton, Rev. E. B. Joyner, Father Wallace Wells; seated, Mrs. Stanmore Sanders, Mrs. Clifford Minton, Mrs. Al Thomas, Jr., and Mrs. Al Thomas.

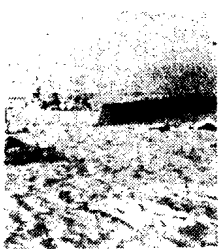


Members of hoodlums enjoying Marquette porters vigorously Negroes continued t

In lower photo Cliff Urban League, and group. Majority of



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Beach



layground.



Members of hoodlum element which objected to Negro citizens enjoying Marquette Park Beach facilities. Instigators and supporters vigorously contended that "there would be trouble" if Negroes continued to use tax-supported beach.

In lower photo Clifford E. Minton, executive secretary of the Gary Urban League, and Father Wallace Wells tries reasoning with the group. Majority of the objectors were in their teens.

Gary, consisting of Mrs. Theodore Vaughn, Mrs. Greta Vaughn Brown, Miss Peggy Vaughn, Mrs. Shirley Gibson and two-year old son, Mrs. William Staples, and Miss Irashel Pulliam went to Marquette beach for an outing. While there they were treated discourteously, insulted, and threatened by an element present which bordered on the hoodlum.

Police Indifferent; Citizens Offer Protection

The ladies involved in the incident feel that there was a definite indifference on the part of the police and even neglect of duty in not providing protection as required by law. When the individuals were pointed out to the police as the instigators of the disturbance, no effort was made to apprehend the culprits and all other suggestions were ignored.

The people on the beach as a whole seemed unconcerned about the presence of Negroes on the —continued on next page



E. Minton, Rev. E. B. Mrs. Al Thomas, Jr.,

How Gary Handles A Delicate Situation

beach and took it as a natural thing, which is as it should be. However, when the trouble began, they were still as unconcerned and made no effort to intercede and point out to this trouble-making element that what they were doing wasn't right.

There were those however who felt their democratic responsibility and offered the ladies the only protection they had. They were quick to point out that these ladies had as much right there as any group. One man said that he had a duty as a citizen to help protect the ladies. He spoke of how loyal the Negroes had been to the country; how they had fought in every war; how they had paid taxes—and how the Communists exploit undemocratic incidents such as the one in which they were involved.

The gang of instigators appeared to be daunted only by a show of force. Every appeal toward decency, democratic ideals, respecting the rights of others, had no apparent effect on them. Even those citizens who felt their democratic responsibility were threatened when they provided temporary protection for the ladies. It was only when the police appeared on the scene that the gang ran.

Seeing the effect that their mere presence had on the gang, it should have been obvious to the police that they could have controlled the situation. On the contrary those policemen that were there did not handle the situation neither ob-

—continued on next page

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How Gary Handles Delicate Situation

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How Gary Handles A Delicate Situation

jectively or intelligently and prac-
tically let the thing get out of con-
trol.

The sort of thing that happened
at Marquette Beach is not new. It
has happened before here in Gary
and in many other cities. It shall
continue to happen unless definite
action is taken to prevent this sort
of thing. It can be attacked through
the home, the church, and the
school. The fact that the bulk of
these agitators were youngsters in
their teens and early twenties in-
dicate that they have not received
the proper education in one of the
aforementioned institutions. The ba-
sic one however must be the home.
What the child is taught at home
can enhance or undo everything
that is taught anywhere else.

What is the answer here; since
this is a public park supported by
taxes, what can be done? Approxi-
mately 33.2% of the tax-payers dol-
lar is used toward Civil City ex-
pense. There is that element who
believe that the facilities should be
available to all or to none. This seg-
ment would close Marquette Park
to everyone, unless the public real-
ized that this is a public park sup-
ported by the tax-payers money and
at every citizen has a right to
the lawful use of public property.
Is this the answer?

That group which advocates the
"do nothing attitude"—on the as-
sumption that things will work
themselves out, is certainly years
behind in their thinking. This at-
titude has never accomplished any-
thing towards alleviating any situ-
ation. The sore spot still remains
seething and sensitive to the slight-
est touch, and the slightest pres-
sure will cause an eruption. This
certainly isn't the answer.

The method used in many other
cities successfully and the one ad-
vocated by others here, seems to
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How Gary Handles A Delicate Situation

be the most plausible. It demands positive, skillful, and conscientious police administration supported with sober-realistic community relations work by civic leaders and civil authorities.

Positive police work is essential. Gangs that obviously assemble to agitate or provoke trouble must be dispersed with dispatch and good judgment. If they do not respond to officers when given directions, sufficient grounds are provided for the police to pick up immediately the offenders and their leaders. Disrespect for the law must be clearly discouraged.

It is basic that park police, attendants, and other public employees be given proper educational and orientation work so they will realize that their duty is to the public and that hostile attitudes will not be tolerated.

The majority of these incidents are perpetuated by gangs and positive control of this pretty well defined gang is important in solving the problem.

Basically, Americans are great respectors of the law, and positive action on the part of police to discourage disrespect will accomplish little towards enhancing that American heritage.

This procedure has worked in D.C., in Detroit, in Chicago, and it can work in Gary.

Clifford E. Minton Urban League Secretary Takes Active Part

Spearheading efforts to bring the Marquette Beach situation under control and spending much time in the effort to assist in providing corrective measures was Clifford E.

—continued on next page

How Gary Handles Delicate Situation

Minton, Executive Secretary of the Gary Urban League. Upon learning of the incident involving the women involved, Minton contacted Mayor Peter M. Minton, Police Chief John F. Minton, and out if any steps had to be taken to provide necessary measures to eliminate occurrences similar to the July 1 disturbance.

In order to get a case history relative to the incident, on July 13 in the civic city, and fee from the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, Minton contacted a small group of citizens who had been on the beach for an outing. They were Rev. E. B. Joyner, of the Ministerial Alliance, Wallace Wells, Priest in St. Augustine Episcopal Church, Wellington Turner, Al T. a small group of ladies and The attitude of the park attendant was sullen and his words there would probably be discouraging to the group.

As in the previous incident, on July 1, the general public beach was receptive, but on the first incident, shortly after the arrival of the group they were surrounded by boys and girls in their attire, who showed their menacing attitudes and marks that they were organized effort to provoke a riot.

The appearance of Minton in no manner abated the actions of the gang. Disrespect for the law by the hoodlums was clearly evident. Efforts by Wells and Clifford Minton to reason calmly with the hostile group left them unmoved that such could not be done through that medium.

Other Negro groups who had journeyed to the beach in the morning—continued on

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Page Eight

How Gary Handles A Delicate Situation

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Gary Urban League. Immediately
upon learning of the incident from
the women involved, Minton con-
tacted Mayor Peter Mandich and
Police Chief John F. Foley to find
out if any steps had been taken
to provide necessary measures to
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July 1 disturbance.

In order to get a more definite
case history relative to the July 1
incident, on July 13 in collaboration
a the civic city, and a commit-
tee from the Interdenominational
Ministerial Alliance, Minton took
a small group of citizens to the
beach for an outing. In the group
were Rev. E. B. Joyner, president
of the Ministerial Alliance, Father
Wallace Wells, Priest in Charge of
St. Augustine Episcopal Church,
Wellington Turner, Al Thomas and
a small group of ladies and children.
The attitude of the parking attend-
ant was sullen and his warning that
there would probably be trouble
was discouraging to the group.

As in the previous incident on
July 1, the general public at the
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first incident, shortly after the ar-
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ing attire, who showed through
their menacing attitudes and re-
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ther Wells and Clifford E. Minton
to reason calmly with members of
the hostile group left them feeling
that such could not be obtained
through that medium.

Other Negro groups have so-
journd to the beach in hopes of
—continued on next page

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offers
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enjoying a pleasant moment but have been met with the same menacing and hostile attitudes.

Minton's Observations

The following observations were made by Clifford E. Minton in a concrete report to Mayor Peter Mandich as a result of the outing:

1. The solution of the Marquette Beach problem demands positive skillful and conscientious police administration supported with sober-realistic community relations work by civic leaders and civil authorities. The present situation is aggravated by the delay in giving recognition to suggestions regarding advance planning for the inevitable—until an incident required action.

2. Generally the citizens of Gary respect and uphold democratic rights and the law. The overt behavior of these small irresponsible gangs can be controlled, without violence, if handled properly. Positive control of this "pretty well defined gang" is basic in solving the problem.

3. Positive and skillful police work are essential. Gangs that obviously assemble to agitate or provoke trouble must be dispersed with dispatch and good judgment. If they do not respect the law or respond to officers when given directions, sufficient grounds are provided for the offenders and/or their leaders to be picked up by the police immediately. Disrespect for the law must be clearly discouraged.

4. It is basic that park police, attendants, etc., not only be given orders or directions, but that the proper educational and orientation

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**How Gary Handle
Delicate Situation**

work be done with the sincere interest and may be expected.

Attitudes of City

It is a well-known fact or Peter Mandich and officials were aware of situation surrounding the its facilities for many to that fact he had no the time of the incident made any strenuous effort matter his construction ship.

However, since the of the first and subsequent the Mayor has been to permit that the beach and supported facilities are citizens.

The object of the policeing the incident on Julyquette Beach to treat another routine report, usually the case when on ority group is involved back-fired on them who involved threatened to against the police who the necessary protection tacked and threatened by odiums at the beach.

Immediate interest of citizenry in the occurrence the Interdenominational Alliance, the N.A.A.C.P. and Clifford E. Minton ban League, forced the partment to change its cal attitude to one of

Info editors, J. T. Haddies, contacted Mandich and Police Chief Foley for comments regarding Marquette Beach situation ed for comments from plans or the probable solution or Mandich stated definitely he had no statement to

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AL'S TAVERN

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Page Ten

How Gary Handles A Delicate Situation

work be done with them, so that
sincere interest and cooperation
may be expected.

Attitudes of City Officials

It is a well-known fact that May-
or Peter Mandich and other public
officials were aware of the general
situation surrounding the beach and
its facilities for many years. Due
to that fact he had not, up until
the time of the incident on July 1,
made any strenuous effort to give
matter his constructive leader-
ship.

However, since the occurrence of
the first and subsequent incidents,
the Mayor has been forced to ad-
mit that the beach and other tax-
supported facilities are open to all
citizens.

The object of the police regard-
ing the incident on July 1 at Mar-
quette Beach to treat it as "just
another routine report," as is usu-
ally the case when one of a min-
ority group is involved, evidently
back-fired on them when the ladies
involved threatened to bring suit
against the police who denied them
the necessary protection when at-
tacked and threatened by the young
odlums at the beach.

Immediate interest of an aroused
citizenry in the occurrence led by
the Interdenominational Ministerial
Alliance, the N.A.A.C.P., the C.I.O.,
and Clifford E. Minton of the Ur-
ban League, forced the police de-
partment to change its lackadaisical
attitude to one of concern.

Info editors, J. T. Harris and H.
D. Waddles, contacted Mayor Peter
Mandich and Police Chief John F.
Foley for comments regarding the
Marquette Beach situation and asked
for comments from each as to
plans or the probable solution. May-
or Mandich stated definitely that
he had no statement to make at the
—continued on next page

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time, fearing that a definite statement to Info Magazine would not relieve the tension. Chief Foley was more cooperative however. The following letter clearly defines the policy of the police department:

Chief Foley's Letter to Info

July 31, 1953

Editors, Info Magazine
1983 Broadway
Gary, Indiana

Atten: J. T. Harris

Gentlemen:

Some of our finest minds and most conscientious humanitarians have wrestled with the problem that now confronts our own City of Gary. In recent years, conscientious citizens have sought to establish the Negro on an equal social, economic and recreational footing with his fellow citizens.

Many gains have been made over a period of years. The Negro himself has been responsible for a large share of these gains through the use of patience, persistence, and good humor. In the last three years the Negroes' right to use of the schools and of public recreational facilities has been established with the active support and protection of the Gary Police Department.

A great many charges and accusations have been flung at our department in regard to our law enforcement and also in regard to our attitude toward the Negro.

I am not going to deny that there have been isolated instances of prejudice and lack of tact, but I wish to point out that every man on the department has given lie to the charges that there is any deep rooted bigotry or prejudice rampant on the police force. Every man has willingly complied with the order cancelling all days off and has reported for extra duty each Sunday.

—continued on next page

Page Twelve

How Gary Handles Delicate Situation

Two-thirds of our police ment has been on the be detecting your rights.

We have, at the same time, attempted to handle the white tactfully in order to minimize tensions and to establish you to the use of the beach facilities as natural and as diplomats as possible.

You must remember that the appearance of our Negroes on a hitherto white beach has caused many of our white citizens. They had no time to think of the idea. This, quite naturally, caused some excitement and resentment. This resentment is evaporating as the majority of clear-thinking citizens of Gary are used to seeing more and more Negroes on the beach daily a day.

However, roughshod, clucking methods would have only increased tensions and a hatred for the minority benefited. This, I am certain, is of our citizenry desires.

Furthermore, the attorney for the City and County both state that the police had no right to arrest any groups that had as long as they did not commit an act of violence or a crime.

We, therefore, primarily to protect the Negroes on the beach, secondly, we sought to maintain order—and, thirdly, we attempted to keep any possible trouble under surveillance.

We arrested one man, charged with the act of throwing a bottle. His case will come up in Court in the near future.

We also escorted several trouble makers out of the beach area.

The methods being employed appear to have succeeded as far as the situation is concerned.

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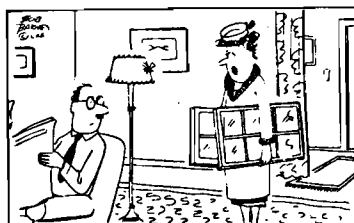
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MEANS' BROS.

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OFFICE: 2-3731—2-0464 RES. 2-1216

Office Open Sunday afternoons - 2 to 5

How Gary Handles A Delicate Situation

present date. On July 26, after a white group had assembled and had stood around for half an hour, they drifted away. The Negroes on the beach spent the day picnicking and swimming without further disturbance.

One group was never approached or disturbed at all. Nevertheless, every police officer remained on duty until the beach closed for the night. Certainly, we are not foolish enough to think that a total victory has been won. I assure you, we will maintain the same vigilance until the situation is resolved. We will make every effort to prevent any incidents from occurring. We will continue to protect the rights and liberties of all our citizens.

In return, we ask that the leadership among the Negroes, making use of the beach, be loyal responsible Americans. We deplore the appearance of the left-wing agitators and the professional "Jim Crows" who by an aggressive and defiant attitude make it plain to police and public alike that they feel that they are the imposed-upon members of an oppressed minority.

This not only detracts from the dignity of the Negro cause, but by putting emphasis on the novelty of the situation makes our own job that much harder.

We have noted that the Negro family groups who have come to the beach with apparently no other motive than to have a good time, are generally left alone. And, they seem to have a good time.

The first Sunday that the police department assembled on the beach,
—continued on next page

How Gary Handles Delicate Situation

I told all officers to perform duty irrespective of any feeling. I reminded them of their oath they took when they became officers.

Every man, to date, has been himself conscientious in the performance of his duty, and I am confident that the outstanding guidance and leadership of Captain Thomas Curley and of Captain James J. Conner has gone a long way toward the peaceful establishment of the Negroes' right to the beach.

Both Mayor Mandich and I will continue to make every effort to protect our Negro citizens in their use of the beach. We ask you, and, the help of all real Americans. This problem can be handled. Gary citizens if they will all cooperate.

Sincerely yours,
John F. Foley,
Chief of Police

JFF:c

In addition to this more aggressive policy of action by the police department, work is under way to increase the beach frontage at the age of Marquette Beach and The proposed plan of enlargement and extension includes increased parking and beach-house facilities.

It is true that this kind of constructive action could have been taken in time to prevent this incident, but the fact that it is being done is an indication that the citizens of Gary can have pride in their city in which they can be proud. To acquire this how will require constant vigilance on the part of every civic-minded citizen.

AL'S TAVERN

"... WHERE SMART PEOPLE MEET"
Chicken and Shrimps our Specialty
1756 Harrison St. Phone 2-7791

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PEOPLE MEET"
our Specialty
Phone 2-7791

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