



Dwight D.
Eisenhower
Memorial

NATIONAL EISENHOWER MEMORIAL EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

LESSON

Eisenhower and the Responsibility of the President



Duration

One 45-minute period

Grades

7–12

Cross-curriculum Application

U.S. History, Government



Historical Background

The Supreme Court decision to desegregate public schools, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), did not end segregation immediately. The conflict in Arkansas between federal courts ordering desegregation and state governments refusing to allow it became national and even international news in 1957. Orval Faubus, the governor of Arkansas, refused to allow nine African American high school students to enroll at Little Rock Central High School on September 5, 1957 citing dangers to public safety. In response, President Dwight Eisenhower authorized the 101st Airborne Division to ensure that the court order was carried out.

President Eisenhower faced a difficult choice. Sending U.S. troops to enforce a Supreme Court ruling was an extreme step, but the alternative was to allow the state of Arkansas to ignore the law. The National Park Service provides an overview of the sequence of events and issues at stake (see *The 1957 Crisis at Central High* in *Related Resources* below).

For more background on the Constitutional responsibilities of the president of the United States, the *Dwight Eisenhower and the Little Rock Nine* lesson in *Related Resources* below provides a great model. Teachers might want to use that lesson or a similar lesson on Article II of the Constitution as an introduction to this lesson.

Objective

By examining primary sources related to the Little Rock Crisis, students will learn about the relationship between state and federal Constitutional powers, as well as the relationship between the executive, state, and local levels of government. By “grading” the president and governor of Arkansas, and justifying their grades using primary sources, students will better understand the responsibilities of the state versus the federal government.

Essential Questions

1. What is the role of the president?
 2. How did Eisenhower view the Constitutional duties of the presidency?
 3. How did that influence the actions he took in Little Rock?
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Sources

- » “Little Rock: Civil Rights Battleground.” Eisenhower E-Memorial.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKNpKO7JPC4>
Teacher Notes: A short video documentary (~7 minutes) on the Little Rock Crisis and President Eisenhower’s decision to send troops from the 101st Airborne Division to enforce the federal court order to desegregate Little Rock Central High School.
Interesting details:
 - Eisenhower, in a televised press conference, blamed “disorderly mobs” for preventing implementation of a federal court order. Eisenhower makes clear that federal troops were in place to make sure the court order was carried out.
 - Eisenhower stated that troops would “aid in the execution of federal law.”

- » Excerpts from *The Mike Wallace Interview* with Guest Orval Faubus. September 15, 1957. Harry Ransom Center - University of Texas at Austin.
<https://hrc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15878coll90/id/28/rec/35> *Teacher Notes: This source consists of excerpts from a television interview with Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus.*
Interesting details:
 - Faubus claims not to oppose desegregation and emphasizes that it should be carried out in a “peaceful manner” and “without disorder and violence.”
 - Faubus argues that his most important responsibility is to public safety.
 - Southern governors opposed to integration often cited public safety as the reason schools must remain segregated.
 - The interview was conducted on September 15, 1957 — after students first attempted to integrate the schools, but before Eisenhower ordered federal troops to Little Rock.

- » Handwritten notes by President Eisenhower on his decision to send troops to Little Rock. September 1957. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.
<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/research/online-documents/civil-rights-little-rock/dde-troops-to-arkansas.pdf>
Teacher Notes: President Eisenhower’s handwritten notes on Little Rock and his decision to send federal troops to enforce the federal court ruling.



Interesting details:

- *Eisenhower emphasized the need to enforce the ruling of the courts and to not allow “opposition by violence” to decide the matter.*
- *Eisenhower states that his only other choice would be to “stand by . . . and see the whole entire court system disintegrate.”*
- *A typed transcript of the note is provided as a separate handout.*

» Press release, containing the speech on radio and television by President Eisenhower. September 24, 1957. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/research/online-documents/civil-rights-little-rock/1957-09-24-press-release.pdf>

Teacher Notes: President Eisenhower’s statement explains his decision to send federal troops to Little Rock.

Interesting details:

- *Eisenhower acknowledges the violence and disorder in Little Rock, but asserts that the court’s order to integrate must be “executed without unlawful interference.”*
- *To Eisenhower, the mob violence had a goal: to stop integration from being carried out. Contrast this with Faubus who seemed to be saying that violence was inevitable in any attempt to integrate and claimed that by opposing integration he was preventing violence.*

» Telegram, Woodrow Wilson Mann to President Eisenhower. September 23, 1957. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/research/online-documents/civil-rights-little-rock/1957-09-23-mann-to-dde.pdf>

Teacher Notes: The telegram from Mann, the mayor of Little Rock, to Eisenhower blames Faubus for the unruly mob.

Interesting details:

- *The date on the telegram: September 23rd is the day before the President orders the 101st Airborne to Little Rock.*
- *The mayor tells Eisenhower that assembly was not “spontaneous” and that he believes that an “agitator” connected to Governor Faubus was behind the mob.*



- » Telegram, Woodrow Wilson Mann to President Eisenhower. September 24, 1957. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/research/online-documents/civil-rights-little-rock/1957-09-24-mann-to-dde.pdf>

Teacher Notes: Another telegram from Mann to Eisenhower where Mann urges Eisenhower to send federal troops immediately.

Interesting details:

- *This telegram from the mayor to the president was sent on September 24, 1957, the day Eisenhower decided to send the troops.*
- *Mann describes the mob as larger and more violent.*
- *Mayor Mann describes the situation as “urgent” and states that the town needs federal troops “within several hours.”*

Materials

- » Little Rock and Responsibilities Handout

Preparation

- Print out sources:
 - Eisenhower sources for half of students:
 - Handwritten notes by President Eisenhower on his decision to send troops to Little Rock
 - Press release containing speech on radio and television by President Eisenhower
 - Faubus source for other half of class:
 - Excerpts from *The Mike Wallace Interview* with Guest Orval Faubus
 - Telegram, Woodrow Wilson Mann to President Eisenhower. September 23, 1957 and Telegram, Woodrow Wilson Mann to President Eisenhower. September 24, 1957 for each student pair.
 - Print out Little Rock and Responsibilities Handout for each student.
 - Cue video: “Little Rock: Civil Rights Battleground” (Optional).
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Procedure

Part One

1. Provide students with background information on the Little Rock Crisis. They may read the overview from the National Park Service (see *Related Resources* below) or view the short video, “Little Rock: Civil Rights Battleground” from the Eisenhower E-Memorial. Focus question: *What did President Eisenhower see as his responsibilities as president? What options did he have?*
2. Give each student either the sources by President Eisenhower (“Handwritten notes by President Eisenhower on his decision to send troops to Little Rock” and “Press release, containing speech on radio and television by President Eisenhower”) or the source by Arkansas Governor Faubus (“Excerpts from *The Mike Wallace Interview* with Guest Orval Faubus”).
3. Direct students to find a partner who has the same document(s). Working together they should examine the document(s) carefully. Tell students to find the words “responsibility,” “responsibilities,” or “obligation” in their document(s) and to circle them each time they appear.
4. On the Little Rock and Responsibilities Handout, have students record what their individual — either President Eisenhower or Governor Faubus — views as the responsibility of their office. Remind students that these responsibilities correspond to the responsibilities and powers of the federal and state governments outlined in the Constitution. (For more resources on the Constitution and the separation of powers, see *Related Resources*.)
5. Coming together, have each group share a responsibility. Write the answers on the board and have students record the other groups’ answers on their handouts.

Part Two

6. Have students find a partner who examined a different document. For example, if a student examined the Eisenhower sources, they should work with a student who had the Faubus interview. Together they will examine the two telegrams sent by Little Rock Mayor Woodrow Wilson Mann and use them to fill out the questions on the handout.
7. Direct students to grade the president and the governor (on an “A” to “F” scale) on how well they think this leader met his responsibilities using the information from the tele-



grams and the table above. In the comments section under each grade, students should use specific examples from the sources to support the grade. Student prompts: *Was Eisenhower meeting his responsibility as president under the Constitution by sending troops to enforce the court order? What were his other options? Was Governor Faubus meeting his responsibility as governor? What were his other options?*

Differentiation

The text sources may be further excerpted by the teacher to accommodate different levels of reading ability. The Eisenhower speech and Faubus interview might also be shown in video format rather than read.

A possible assignment extension might include examining more primary sources (see *Related Resources* below) and have students speculate on other ways the conflict might have been resolved.

Teachers may also make use of the Teacher Notes that accompany the above sources. Providing these notes to students may help them to notice important details within the sources.

Assessment

Students will be assessed on their handout assignment and how they develop an understanding of the learning objectives listed above concerning the responsibilities of federal and state government. Students' justifications for the grades they assigned to President Eisenhower and Governor Faubus should be based on evidence from the primary sources provided.

Related Resources

Lesson Plans

- » *Dwight Eisenhower and the Little Rock Nine*. Periodic Table of the Presidents.
<https://periodicpresidents.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/dwight-d-eisenhower-and-the-little-rock-nine.pdf>

This creative lesson explores Eisenhower's actions during the Little Rock Crisis in the context of the president's Constitutional responsibilities. Students read excerpts from the Constitution on the role of the president and supreme court and relate these to President Eisenhower's executive order to send troops to Little Rock.



- » *Little Rock Crisis*. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford University.
<https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/liberation-curriculum/create-your-own-classroom-activity/little-rock-crisis>
A series of classroom activities focused on the Little Rock school desegregation crisis.
- » *The Little Rock Nine and the Children's Movement*. TeachingTolerance.org.
<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/the-little-rock-nine-and-the-childrens-movement>
In this lesson, students will learn about the nine African American students who integrated Little Rock's Central High School in 1957 and develop an awareness of the important role the Little Rock Nine played in the civil rights movement.
- » *Trouble in Little Rock: The Desegregation of Central High School*. National First Ladies Library.
<http://www.firstladies.org/curriculum/curriculum.aspx?Curriculum=1822>
Lesson plan focused on teaching about the Civil Rights Movement using the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Secondary Sources and Digital Resources

- » *African American Odyssey, American Memory*. Library of Congress.
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aaohhtml/exhibit/aopart9.html>
Images and documents are used to provide context for Civil Rights events in the United States.
- » *America's Story: Eisenhower and the Little Rock Crisis*. Library of Congress.
http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/eisenhower/aa_eisenhower_littlerock_1.html
Brief overview of Eisenhower and the Little Rock Crisis.
- » *Crisis Timeline*. National Park Service.
<http://www.nps.gov/chsc/learn/historyculture/timeline.htm>
Timeline of events at Little Rock Central High School from September 1927 to August 12, 1959.
- » *Interactive Constitution*. National Constitution Center.
<http://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution>
An excellent resource on the Constitution and the powers allocated to the federal and state



governments. Each article and amendment is examined in detail and includes analysis by Constitutional scholars.

Primary Sources

- » *Civil Rights: The Little Rock School Integration Crisis*. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.
<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/civil-rights-little-rock-school-integration-crisis>
PDF files of some of the primary source documents at the Eisenhower Presidential Library relating to Little Rock.
- » *Executive Order 10730: Desegregation of Central High School*. National Archives and Records Administration.
<http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/?dod-date=923>
Digitized copy of Eisenhower's cease and desist order to citizens obstructing entry to African American students at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Contains a link to an article that briefly explains the significance of Executive Order 10730.
- » *Little Rock School Desegregation*. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Global Freedom Struggle. King Center, Stanford University.
http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/encyclopedia/enc_little_rock_school_desegregation_1957/
This site contains several primary sources including two telegrams sent to Eisenhower by Martin Luther King, Jr., on September 9, 1957, and September 26, 1957.
- » *The Eisenhower Administration and Civil Rights: The School Integration Issue*. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.
<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/civil-rights-little-rock-school-integration-crisis>
Guide to primary and secondary sources at the Eisenhower Presidential Library relating to school integration.
- » *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. Legal Information Institute. Cornell University Law School.
<https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/347/483>
Text of Chief Justice Warren's Opinion of the Court on *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, argued on December 9, 1952, and decided on May 17, 1954.



Excerpts from The Mike Wallace Interview with Guest Orval Faubus, p. 1. September 15, 1957. Harry Ransom Center - University of Texas at Austin.

Transcript

Excerpts from "THE MIKE WALLACE INTERVIEW"
Guest: Orval Faubus
9/15/57

WALLACE: All right, sir. A Federal District Court has already ruled that Little Rock Central High School should be integrated. And the reasons for preventing integration now are anemic. In view of your promise to the President, will you respect this decision and give your okay to integration beginning tomorrow morning?

FAUBUS: I've previously given my okay to integration. The Guard was not called out to prevent integration, but to keep the peace and order of the community. And, of course, I disagree with your preliminary statement that we are in defiance of a Federal Court order, based upon the premise that the peace and good order of the community is paramount to all other issues...

WALLACE: I understand....

FAUBUS: ...and that for a time, it would not be possible to integrate without disorder and violence.

WALLACE: I understand that, but the specific question: Will you give your okay to integration tomorrow morning?

FAUBUS: If it could be accomplished in a peaceful manner without any disorder and without violence, I have already so stated as a witness in chancery court and do so now.

WALLACE: Do you believe that that can be accomplished peacefully and without disorder tomorrow morning?

FAUBUS: Not at the present time.

WALLACE: You feel that violence is still a possibility?

FAUBUS: Yes, sir.

WALLACE: Therefore, will the National Guard troops continue to surround Central High school tomorrow morning?

FAUBUS: Well, the troops will still be on duty in the morning.

WALLACE: They will be. Do you foresee their being taken away from the school this week?



Excerpts from The Mike Wallace Interview with Guest Orval Faubus, p. 2. September 15, 1957. Harry Ransom Center - University of Texas at Austin.

FAUBUS: It is possible.

WALLACE: Under what circumstances?

FAUBUS: Under a condition of tranquility and general acceptance by the people, which would then lessen the possibility of disorder or violence.

WALLACE: Who will determine this state of tranquility, yourself, Governor Faubus?

FAUBUS: That has to be my responsibility because the paramount obligation of the Chief Executive of any state is to maintain the peace and good order of his state and community.

WALLACE: How do you determine when tranquility has been arrived at Governor?

FAUBUS: On the basis of facts and information that are available to me.

.....

WALLACE: And therefore you would take the word of a survey to the effect that eighty-two percent of the people thought that you were right and defy a Court Order... defy an order of the Federal District Court.

FAUBUS: We are not defying a Court Order.

WALLACE: How do you say that, sir?

FAUBUS: Because the paramount obligation is to keep the peace and good order of the community. If it interferes for a time with certain other liberties, then that has always been the case. In the case of floods -- when we used to have the great floods on the Arkansas -- the federal authorities could make a decision to dynamite and breach the levies and flood hundreds of people out of their homes. Weren't those people deprived of certain privileges and liberties for the benefit of their whole, in that particular case?

WALLACE: You regard yourself as a preservator of the peace, is that correct?

FAUBUS: Yes.

WALLACE: A preservator...

FAUBUS: That's my obligation.

WALLACE: Now, that is a word which I am told has crept into your vocabulary only since Governor Griffin was your guest in the Mansion here.

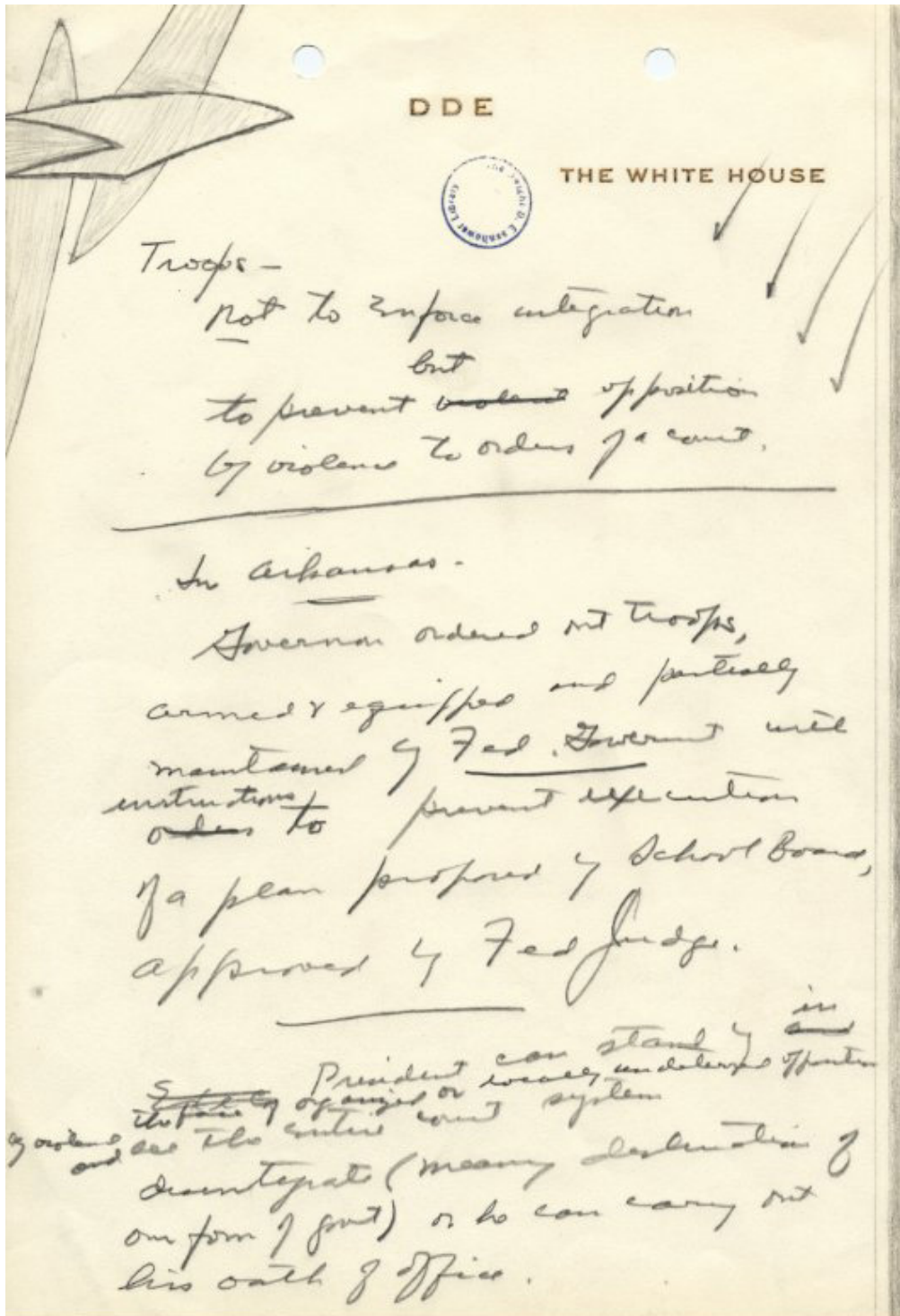


Excerpts from The Mike Wallace Interview with Guest Orval Faubus, p. 3. September 15, 1957. Harry Ransom Center - University of Texas at Austin.

And it is a word, preservator which Governor Griffin has used for a considerable length of time. I'm suggesting, of course, that it's a mere coincidence that perhaps you did talk about preservatores.

FAUBUS: No, we certainly did not. If that is true, then it is a coincidence because I wasn't aware. And I am not aware yet until you said so, and I have no reason to doubt your word, that he has used that language. But that is a natural word for the Chief Executive, I am sure and under similar circumstances, it might have been used by the Governor of any State.

Handwritten notes by President Eisenhower on his decision to send troops to Little Rock. September 1957.
Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.



DDE
THE WHITE HOUSE

Troops -
not to enforce integration
but
to prevent violent opposition
by violence to orders of court.

In Arkansas -
Government ordered out troops,
armed & equipped and precisely
maintained by Fed. Government with
instructions orders to prevent execution
of a plan proposed by School Board,
approved by Fed. Judge.

President can stand ⁱⁿ and
order ^{locally} ^{undeterred} ^{to} ^{execute} ^{the} ^{order}
and see the entire court system
disintegrate (meaning destruction of
our form of govt) or he can carry out
his oath of office.



“Press release, containing speech on radio and television by President Eisenhower,” p. 1. September 24, 1957.
Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

FOR RELEASE AT 9:00 P. M. EDT, SEPTEMBER 24, 1957
James C. Hagerty, Press Secretary to the President

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF THE ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED STATES, DELIVERED FROM
HIS OFFICE AT THE WHITE HOUSE, TUESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 24, 1957, AT 9:00 P. M. EDT

My Fellow Citizens:

For a few minutes I want to speak to you about the serious situation that has arisen in Little Rock. For this talk I have come to the President's office in the White House. I could have spoken from Rhode Island, but I felt that, in speaking from the house of Lincoln, of Jackson and of Wilson, my words would more clearly convey both the sadness I feel in the action I was compelled today to take and the firmness with which I intend to pursue this course until the orders of the Federal Court at Little Rock can be executed without unlawful interference.

In that city, under the leadership of demagogic extremists, disorderly mobs have deliberately prevented the carrying out of proper orders from a Federal Court. Local authorities have not eliminated that violent opposition and, under the law, I yesterday issued a Proclamation calling upon the mob to disperse.

This morning the mob again gathered in front of the Central High School of Little Rock, obviously for the purpose of again preventing the carrying out of the Court's order relating to the admission of Negro children to the school.

Whenever normal agencies prove inadequate to the task and it becomes necessary for the Executive Branch of the Federal Government to use its powers and authority to uphold Federal Courts, the President's responsibility is inescapable.

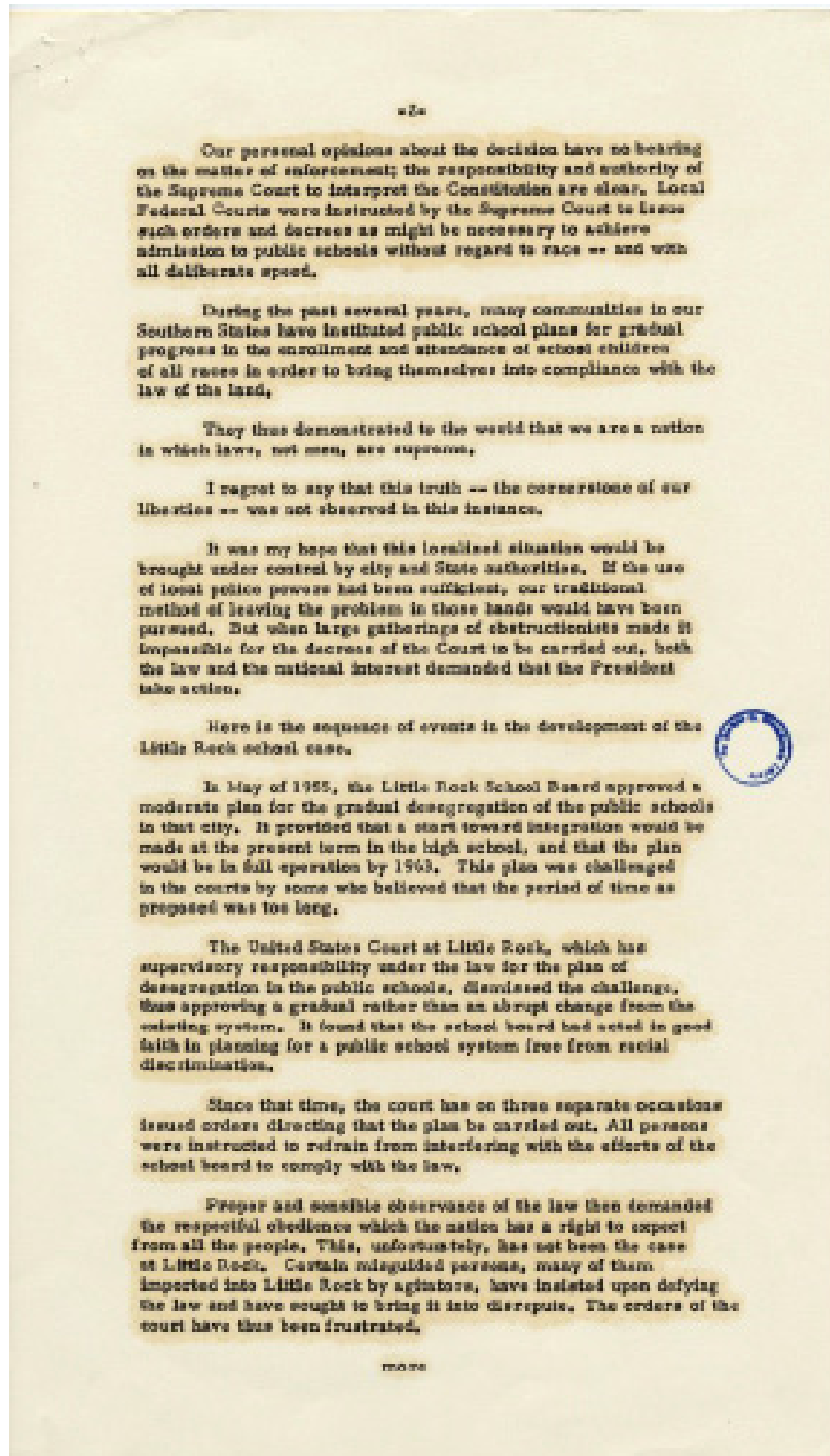
In accordance with that responsibility, I have today issued an Executive Order directing the use of troops under Federal authority to aid in the execution of Federal law at Little Rock, Arkansas. This became necessary when my Proclamation of yesterday was not observed, and the obstruction of justice still continues.

It is important that the reasons for my action be understood by all citizens.

As you know, the Supreme Court of the United States has decided that separate public educational facilities for the races are inherently unequal and therefore compulsory school segregation laws are unconstitutional.

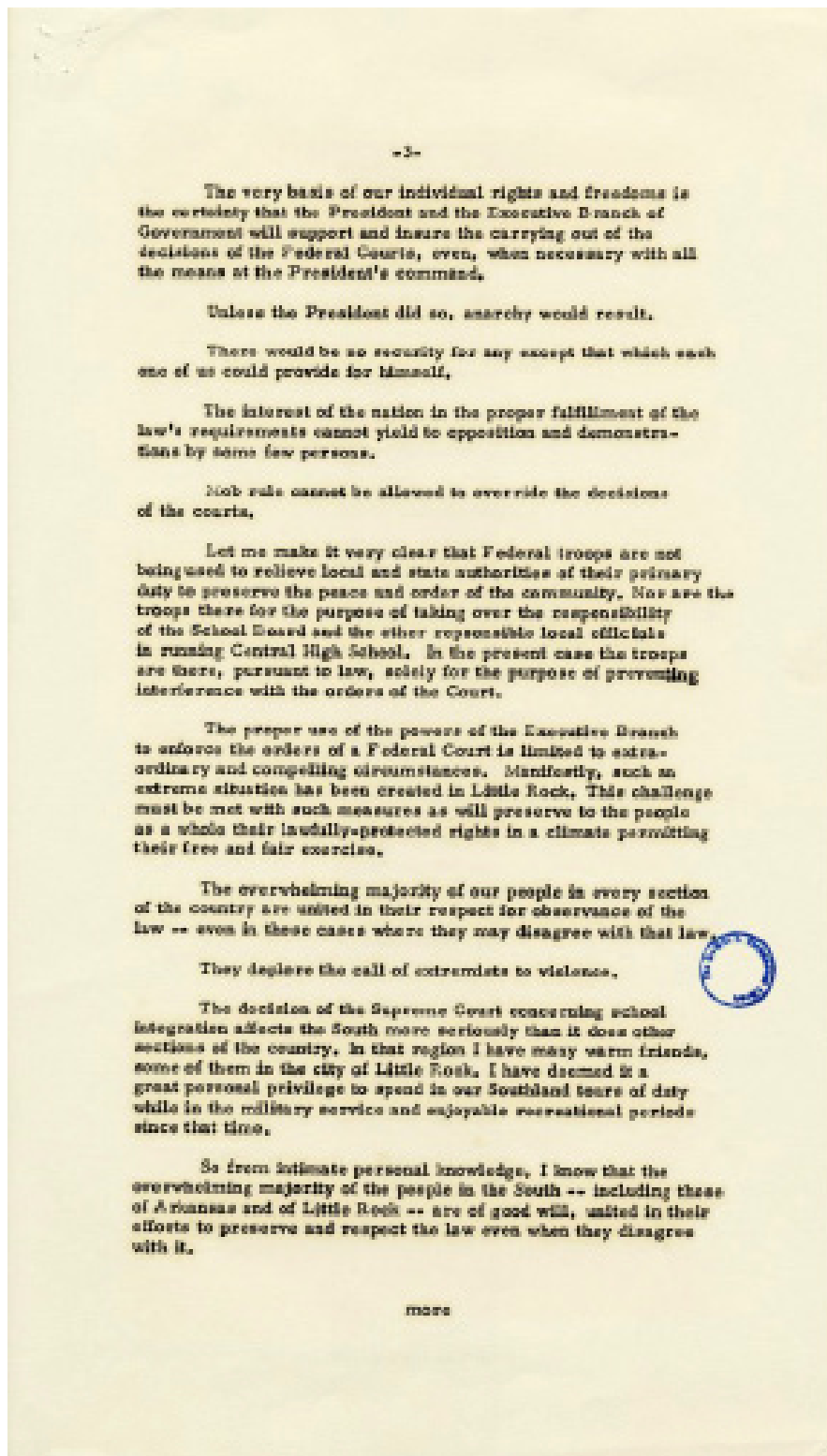
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“Press release, containing speech on radio and television by President Eisenhower,” p. 2. September 24, 1957.
Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

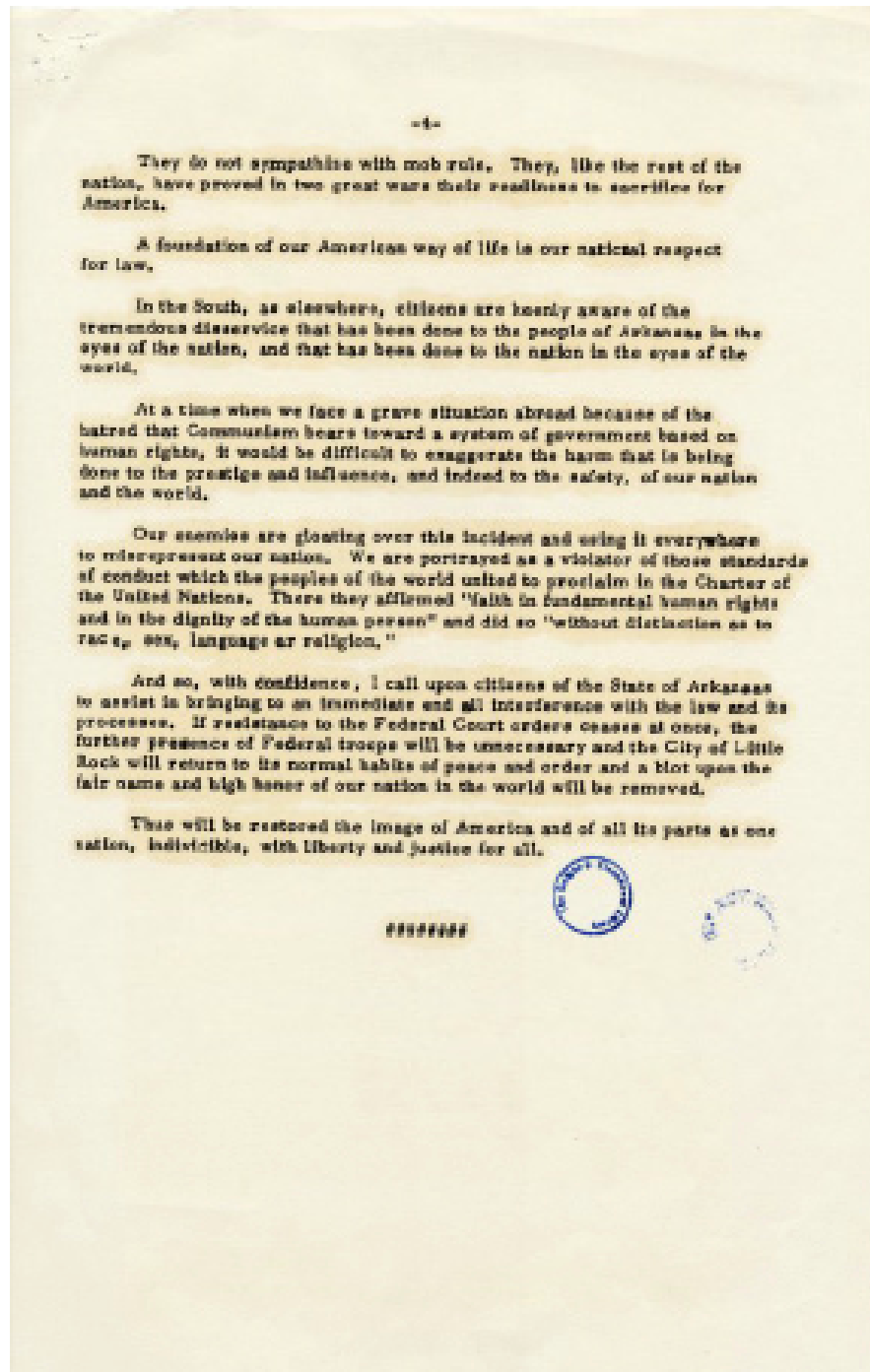




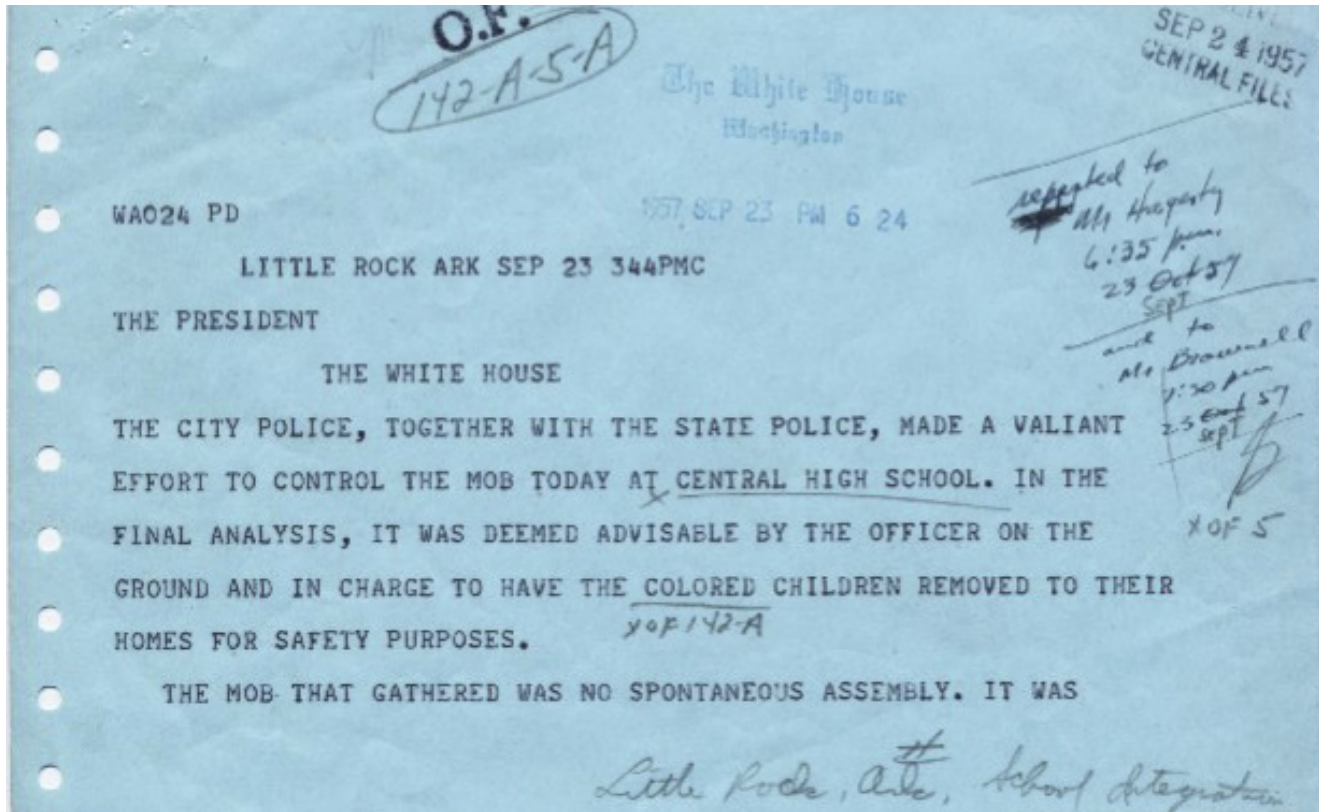
“Press release, containing speech on radio and television by President Eisenhower,” p. 3. September 24, 1957.
Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.



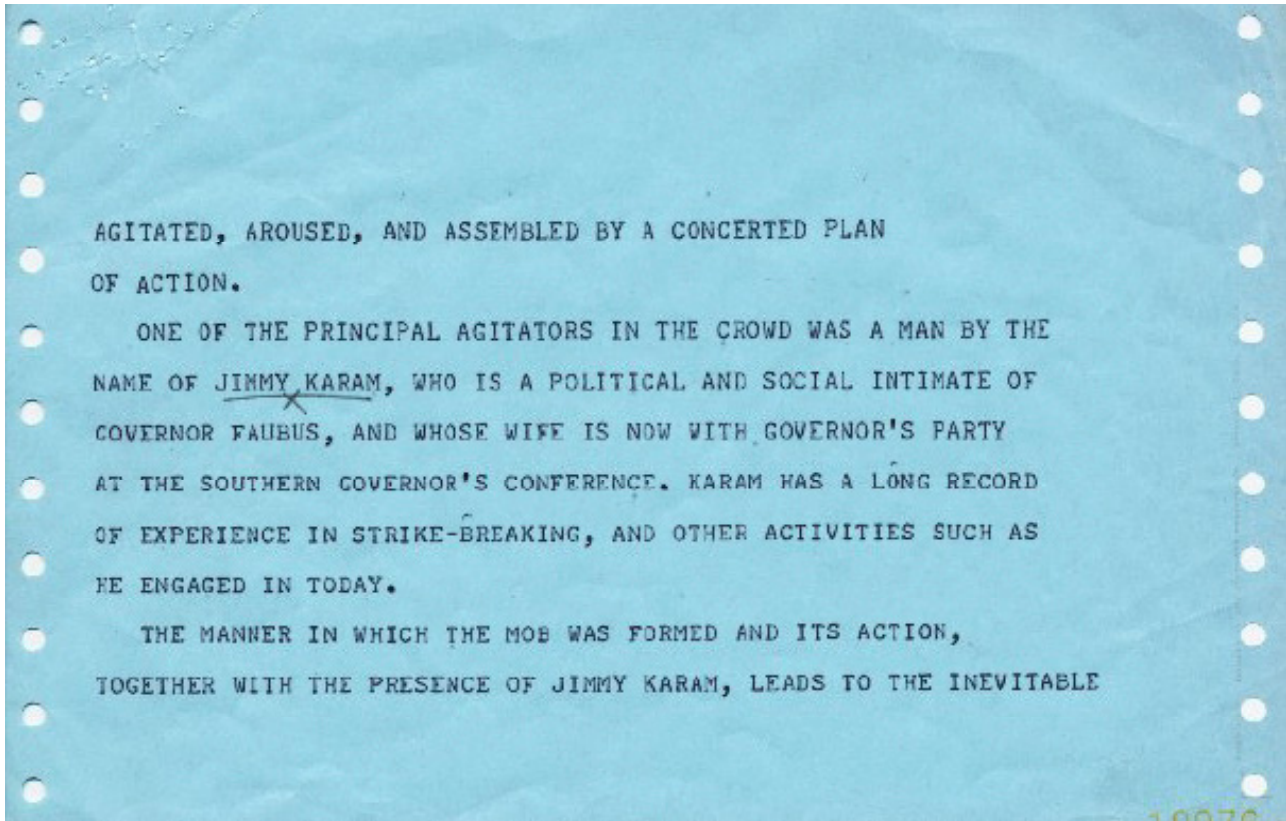
“Press release, containing speech on radio and television by President Eisenhower,” p. 4. September 24, 1957.
Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.



“Telegram, Woodrow Wilson Mann, Mayor of Little Rock, to President Eisenhower,” p. 1. September 23, 1957. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.



“Telegram, Woodrow Wilson Mann, Mayor of Little Rock, to President Eisenhower,” p. 2. September 23, 1957. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.



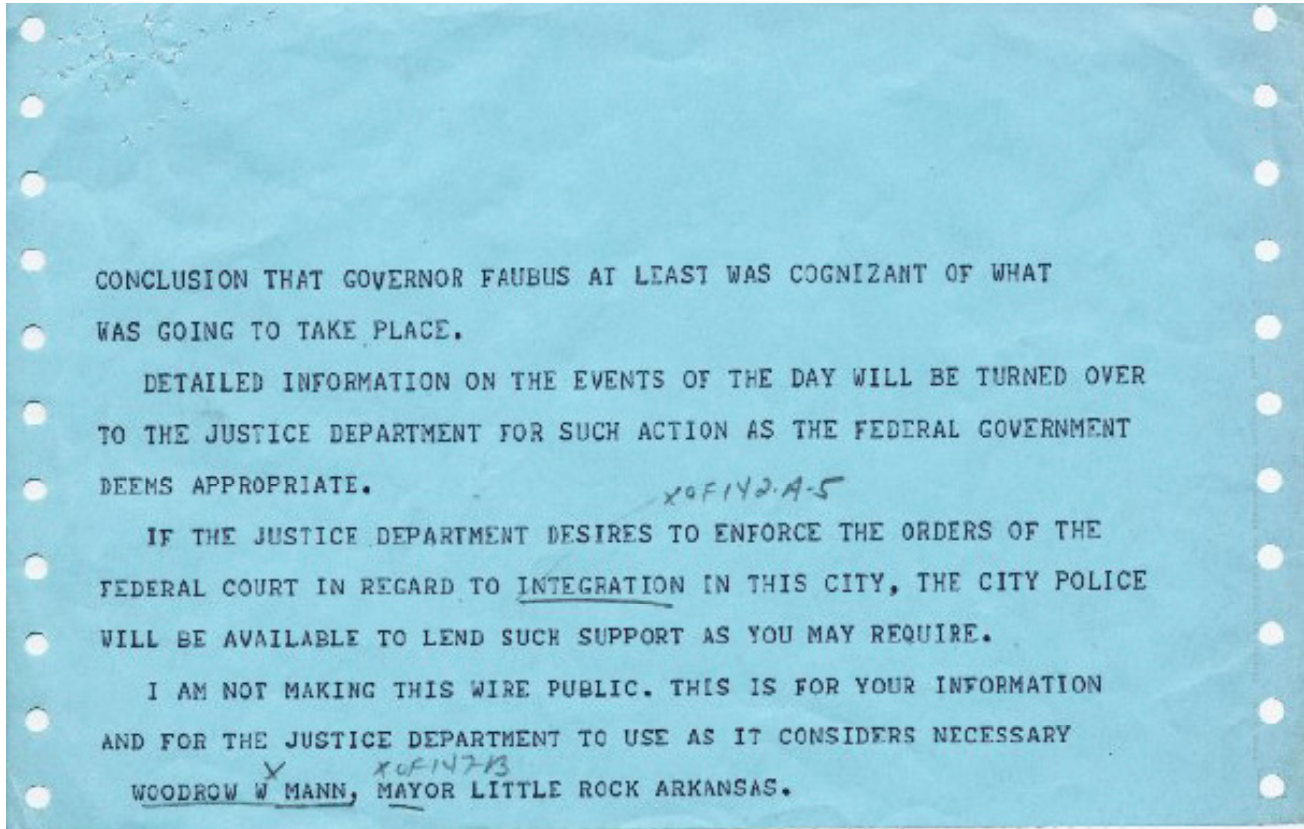
AGITATED, AROUSED, AND ASSEMBLED BY A CONCERTED PLAN
OF ACTION.

ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL AGITATORS IN THE CROWD WAS A MAN BY THE
NAME OF JIMMY KARAM, WHO IS A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INTIMATE OF
GOVERNOR FAUBUS, AND WHOSE WIFE IS NOW WITH GOVERNOR'S PARTY
AT THE SOUTHERN GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE. KARAM HAS A LONG RECORD
OF EXPERIENCE IN STRIKE-BREAKING, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES SUCH AS
HE ENGAGED IN TODAY.

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE MOB WAS FORMED AND ITS ACTION,
TOGETHER WITH THE PRESENCE OF JIMMY KARAM, LEADS TO THE INEVITABLE

10070

“Telegram, Woodrow Wilson Mann, Mayor of Little Rock, to President Eisenhower,” p. 3. September 23, 1957. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.



CONCLUSION THAT GOVERNOR FAUBUS AT LEAST WAS COGNIZANT OF WHAT
WAS GOING TO TAKE PLACE.

DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE EVENTS OF THE DAY WILL BE TURNED OVER
TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT FOR SUCH ACTION AS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
DEEMS APPROPRIATE. *XOF142-A-5*

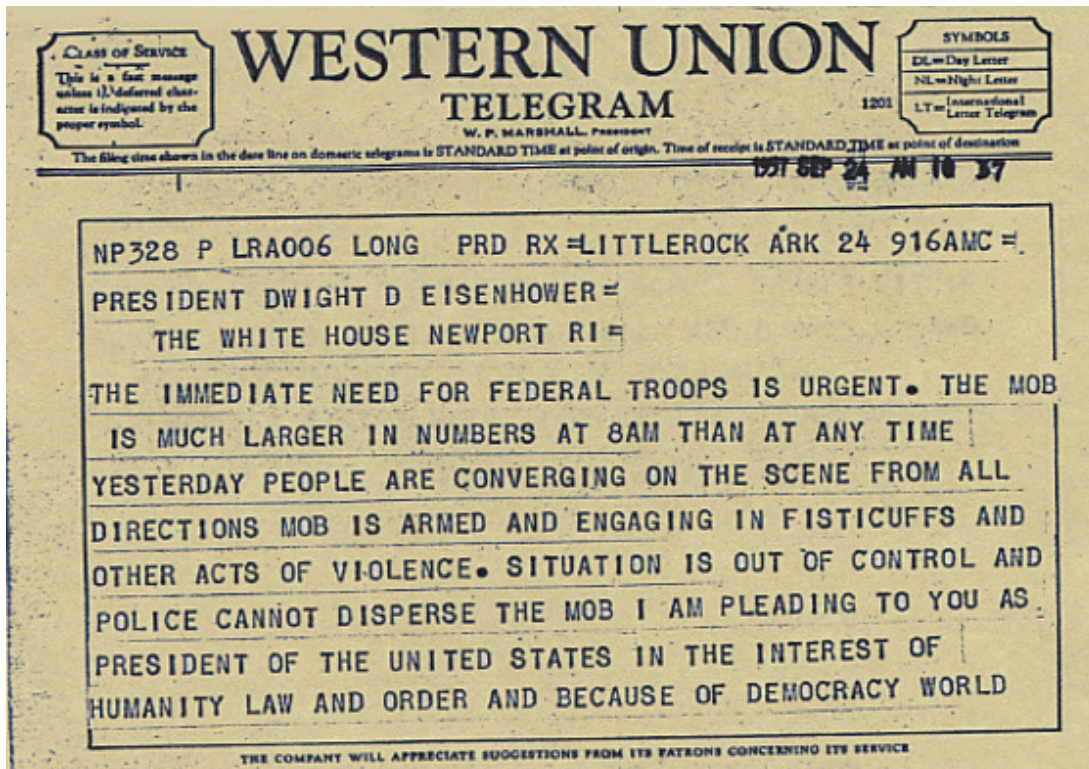
IF THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT DESIRES TO ENFORCE THE ORDERS OF THE
FEDERAL COURT IN REGARD TO INTEGRATION IN THIS CITY, THE CITY POLICE
WILL BE AVAILABLE TO LEND SUCH SUPPORT AS YOU MAY REQUIRE.

I AM NOT MAKING THIS WIRE PUBLIC. THIS IS FOR YOUR INFORMATION
AND FOR THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO USE AS IT CONSIDERS NECESSARY

X *XOF147-B*
WOODROW W MANN, MAYOR LITTLE ROCK ARKANSAS.

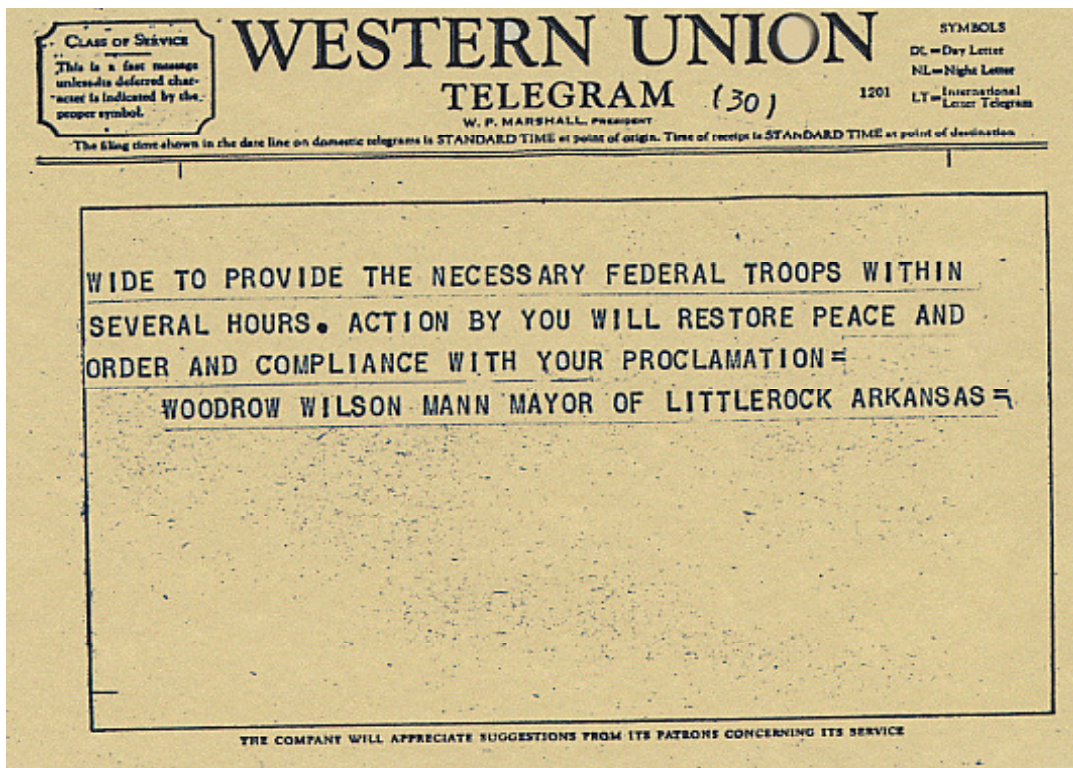


Telegram, Woodrow Wilson Mann to President Eisenhower, p. 1. September 24, 1957. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.





Telegram, Woodrow Wilson Mann to President Eisenhower, p. 2. September 24, 1957. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.





Little Rock and Responsibilities Handout

Background: *The Supreme Court decision to desegregate public schools, Brown v. Board of Education (1954), did not end segregation immediately. One conflict between federal courts ordering desegregation and state governments refusing became national and even international news when the governor of Arkansas refused to allow nine African American high school students to enroll at Little Rock Central High School on September 5, 1957 citing dangers to public safety. In response, President Dwight Eisenhower authorized the 101st Airborne Division to ensure that the court order was carried out.*

Responsibilities: *Find a partner who has the same source as you. Read the source and underline every time the words “responsibility,” “responsibilities,” and “obligation” appear. Using that information fill out the side of the table for your individual. Be prepared to share your answers with the class. Use the other side of the table to record the answers you hear when other groups share their answers.*

President Eisenhower	Governor Faubus



Little Rock and Responsibilities Handout

PART II: *Examine the two telegrams from Mayor Woodrow Wilson Mann to President Eisenhower. In two sentences summarize what Mann writes.*

*Grading the President and the Governor: Now using the information from the telegrams and the table above, grade the president and the governor (A – F). **Base your grade on how well you think they met their Constitutional responsibilities.** In the comments section under each grade use specific examples from the sources to support your grade.*

President Eisenhower:

Responsibilities grade:

Comments:

Governor Faubus:

Responsibilities grade:

Comments:
