

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 27, 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR GOVERNOR ADAMS

FROM: Maxwell M. Rabb *MMR*

RE: MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT EISENHOWER AND NEGRO LEADERS

STATUS

I have completed my discussions with Roy Wilkins and we have tentatively come to an understanding about the meeting as set forth below. I have also talked with Congressman Powell and Jackie Robinson about it. My discussions were held on a confidential basis and I am hopeful that there will be no disclosures to the press until the plans have been absolutely firmed up.

COMPOSITION OF THE GROUP

I stressed the fact that the group should be a small one, six or seven at the most, but it may be that we will have to expand the number to nine if we are to touch all the bases. The following will attend:

Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.

Roy Wilkins, Executive Director of the NAACP

(There was a question that Dr. Channing Tobias, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the NAACP would attend but this now seems unlikely.)

Reverend Martin Luther King

Mr. A. Philip Randolph, Vice President of the AFL-CIO

Jackie Robinson

It was felt that the women and the press should also be represented. In the former category the candidate would be Mrs. Irene McCoy Gaines, President of the National Association of Colored Women, who is an ardent Republican and a strong supporter of the President. William O. Walker, President of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, will be the individual who represents the press. We have, of course, many friends in this field but his position would make it unnecessary for us to choose between them. Walker is a Republican of long standing.

Our real problem comes down to the question of the inclusion of members of the clergy and that has not as yet been definitely decided. Wilkins feels that their representation would be most helpful as the church is an important avenue of communication with the Negro people. Reverend Joseph H. Jackson has just been elected for the third time as President of the National Baptist Convention, which includes over five million members. He has been a very outspoken friend of the President and has asked for an appointment on many occasions. If he is left out we would have a problem on our hands. However, if we do name him, we must take someone from the Methodist Church and in this connection Bishop S. L. Greene, Presiding Bishop of the AME Church would be the appropriate nominee. If we include the two church leaders we would have nine in the delegation.

On your own personal list there were some other names which we have not included for the following reasons:

Thurgood Marshall would give the NAACP another representative in the group and this organization should not be top heavy with respect to membership in the delegation.

Dr. Bond of Lincoln University and Dr. Fatterson are two outstanding gentlemen but if they are included there would be reason to expect a clamor from others who would want to be present.

TIME OF APPOINTMENT

Tentatively, we have agreed on October 15th, should this be generally acceptable and should conditions be appropriate. Wilkins feels very strongly that the meeting should be completely divorced from the Little Rock situation and that the farther away the meeting is held from that incident the better it will be for all concerned. He understands that circumstances may call for the meeting to be put off until sometime in November.

AGENDA FOR THE MEETING

1. Several members of the group may give very brief statements about the aspects of the problem with which they are personally familiar.
2. They will pledge their aid in obtaining the cooperation of the Negro community in developing a calm and orderly approach to the integration problem.
3. They will urge that the appointment of the Civil Rights Commission be made as soon as possible in order to fill in the lack of factual knowledge that presently exists with regard to this entire situation.

They have agreed not to quote the President (I hope), and will ask the President for permission to mention the fact that they brought up the three points previously outlined. It may be that other problems will arise in the meantime which they will want to discuss but if this is the case I will be advised beforehand.