

February 16, 1950 the first protest was made against me. It was a regular meeting of the City Council, I was not present but the President of the Library Board, Russell Davis, was present and gave me a report as soon as the meeting ended.

A group of citizens, some forty in number, attended this meeting to protest my interracial activities, especially my taking two young Negro High School teachers to a drug store and asking for service at a lunch counter. Mayor Hudson, since deceased, said that was my private concern and the group, apparently prepared for such a reply, then began to question the contents of the Library, stating that I had purchased subversive literature, referring particularly to Nation, New Republic and Soviet Russia Today. The Mayor then asked Mr. Davis, with his committee, to study the periodicals cited.

In about two weeks (I cannot be sure of that date because the new Library Board now has all reports of old Board) the citizens group and Library Board met together. Each gave a report, citizens reporting only on this "subversive" literature and, on being asked twice whether they had any other complaint replying that they had not (The object of this question was to see whether they would make any complaint of my administration of the library or my interracial activities)

Reports of further meetings between commissioners and citizens' group are reported in the letter that you have mentioned in item 1 and signed "The Friends of Miss Brown". Inasmuch as I did not attend any of these meetings I assume that you do not want a repetition of what happened.

I will now give you a detailed statement as to what happened on July 25, 1950

This was an executive session of the City Council held in the City Manager's Office

Those present were Mayor Dunaway (appointed after Mayor Hudson's death)---City Manager Jones---City Attorney Alton Rowland---Commissioners---Margenau---Forrest---Hinton---myself

Object of the meeting, according to the Mayor, to question me as to certain stories and rumors

I went in and laid this typed statement on the Mayor's desk:

"Questions pertaining to operation of the Library I will be glad to answer. Questions as to my personal life are my personal life- I will answer these only if stated in writing, my answers to be given in the same form".

Mr. Dunaway read the above statement and it sounded as though I would answer no questions and that angered them, quite naturally. I told them I did not say that and asked the Mayor to read my statement again.

Then they began questions-the Mayor first---

"Miss Brown did you take two young colored women with you to a drug store where they weren't supposed to be?" I answered, "Personal question to be answered only in writing." To other questions on the same line I made the same reply.

Mayor, "Have you ever signed the Loyalty Oath?"

I, "I have never seen a copy but would be willing to sign one".

City Manager, searching thru papers on the desk, "I told Mrs. Sander-son (City Clerk) to have a copy here but I can't find it." No copy was found.

Next Mr. Margenau, who had a long list of written questions, Margenau, "You agree to the Old Board's decision as to the Nation and New Republic?" (Margenau's questions returned to Library)

I, "I do"

Margenau, "Who was responsible for those magazines being ordered?"

I "I was"



Margenau, "How many years had the Library taken them?"

I "I do not remember, 15 or 20 years"

Margenau, "What do you think of buying such trash from your very inadequate book fund?"

I "Considering that they were our only 2 liberal magazines and that we subscribed y about 75 other magazines I felt perfectly justified. As to our inadequate book fund, that merely meant a more careful spending, and mine was careful".

Margenau, "What about the advertising in the New Republic/ Didn't you know there were some very bad things advertised there?"

I "Mr. Margenau, I don't know what you are talking about."

Margenau, "Did you read Soviet Russia Today?"

I "Very little, for I found it boring."

Margenau, "How many free publications did you receive?"

I "I do not remember though they were listed in our report".

Margenau, "And you did not read all of them? Wasn't it your duty?"

I "I did not so consider it but considered my public capable of deciding what they wanted to read"

Margenau "But weren't they accessible to <sup>our</sup> young people?"

I "They had never heard of them until this controversy began".

Margenau "Did you ever have a picture of Paul Robeson hanging in your library?"

I "Not to my knowledge."

Margenau "Would you be willing to put that in writing?"

I "Mr. Margenau, I would for I am not lying"

Margenau "Don't you know Paul Robeson is a Communist?"

I "I do not"

Margenau "You, a librarian, and do not know that?"

I "I do not know he has ever said is a Communist."

Margenau "Don't you listen to the radio?"

I "Not often for I prefer to read."

Now Mr. Margenau speaks of the great harm I have done to Bartlesville.

I replied, "I do not consider I have done any harm"

Mr. Margenau, "I understand you to say you are not a Communist."

I "I certainly am not."

Now Mr. Forrest decides to make a few remarks.

Forrest "Of course we will agree that what Miss Brown is advocating if according to the Bible and the Constitution but it is not according to the majority in Bartlesville."

I "Are you sure? I would like to see a poll taken of that."

Mr. Forrest said he was sure and Mr. Margenau very vehemently was sure.

Margenau "Miss Brown if you remain here as librarian would you agree to do nothing more that would harm Bartlesville?"

I "Mr. Margenau, I have said that I have done nothing that would harm Bartlesville but, if the young man who interviewed me last week should send this story to a national magazine as he is thinking of doing that would not be very good for Bartlesville".

Margenau, "Miss Brown, did that happen?"

I "It did".

Margenau, "Who is this young man?"

I "I ~~am~~ am not saying".

Margenau, "Do you mean you talked to him without saying anything to us?"

I "Id do, It was my private life?"

Margenau "Mr. Mayor, we can't have this. They might make her out a martyr"

I "Oh no, they don't want my biography".

Margenau "Mr. Mayor, write this resolution

Miss Brown is not to interview this man again and if he writes this he must show it to the commissioners"

Rowland "But you can't stop a reported"

Margenau "You still refuse to answer personal questions except in writing"

I "I do"



3 Ruth W. Brown Archive: p.3  
They said that was all and I left.  
An hour afterward the City Manager called and said "  
Miss Brown, the commissioners asked to read you this statement  
before it goes to the paper"  
He then read the statement of my dismissal and /that is the only  
notice I have had--not a word in writing.

The report of this meeting is as I wrote it a few days after it  
occurred. Since it was an executive session that meant that  
no minutes were taken and that is the main reason why I would  
not answer questions about my personal life unless they were  
in writing.

The announcement appeared in the paper the morning of July 26th  
but I quite naturally thought they wanted me to stay until they  
had found a new librarian so went to the library as usual.  
In the middle of the morning a friend called and said that she  
thought I was not supposed to be there as the paper stated my  
services were to be discontinued "forthwith" I called the City  
Manager and he said he understood I was not to be there but  
to call the City Attorney. He said he thought that was right  
and I said, "Well, then, I am going home and who is to take charge"  
He said to call the new Library Board President. I did and he  
had gone to a funeral and there was no librarian.  
Then they asked my assistant to take over. She at first agreed  
and stayed until noon and then told them she agreed with my  
ideas and couldn't stay and turned over the keys.  
The Library was actually closed for not more than half an hour  
and then members of the new Board and others kept it open until  
a retired school teacher was made Acting Librarian and is still  
in charge.  
In a very few days "The Friends of Miss Brown" was organized  
as explained in item 3.

#### Old Library Board

Russell Davis---Home Savings and Loan Assn.  
Richard Kane---1606 S. Johnstone  
George Cade--now living in Virginia  
Mrs. ~~W. E.~~ C.E. Beecher--701 S. Shawnee  
Mrs. Walter Freiburger--505 Denver Rd.  
Mrs. Darlene Essary --200 E 11th

#### New Library Board

E.R. Christopher--1306 Osage  
Dr. Elizabeth Chamberlain--1316 S. Cherokee  
Mrs. Lloyd Lynd--1504 Hillcrest Dr.  
George H. Cohrs--1405 Johnstone  
T.R. Blachly---2026 S. Johnstone  
Don Koppel-1521 Cherokee Pl.

Commissioners (City election April 3rd and we hope new commissioners then  
Mayor E.S. Dunaway---1734 S. Osage  
M.L. Margenau--919 S. Cherokee  
E.F. Kindsvater--Phillips Hotel  
Joe Henton--709 S. Choctaw  
W.A. Forrest--225 N. Cheyenne