

# Atlanta's First Patrol Of Negroes on Duty

By **ROLFE EDMONDSON**

For the first time in the history of the City of Atlanta, Negro policemen Saturday afternoon and night patrolled the streets of the city.

The eight Negro patrolmen worked in the immediate vicinity of and along Auburn Avenue, where thousands of Atlanta's Negroes gathered over the weekend.

First arrest by Negro policemen came five hours and 24 minutes after they went on duty. Patrolmen Claud Dixon and E. H. Lyons at 8:24 p. m. booked James Richard, 33-year-old Negro, of 73B Mason Ave., N. E., on a drunk charge. Eleven minutes later Patrolmen Robert McKibbens and John Sanders brought in Ethel Porter, 30-year-old Negro, of 322 Butler St., on a disorderly conduct-fighting charge.

Crowds of Negroes lined the sidewalks and virtually blocked traffic to watch Negro officers make their first swings over beats late in the afternoon.

Since their employment a month ago, they have been attending a police training school conducted by Police Capt. C. D. Hardeman. Though they still have four weeks to go in the training school, they were placed on the streets Saturday afternoon in or-

der that they could obtain practical experience.

While on the streets, they were under the direct supervision of Police Capt. M. W. Weaver, Police Lt. E. G. Stevens and Sgt. E. B. Brooks.

They will spend each Saturday on patrol duties until they have completed the routine classroom work.

The Negro policemen, when assigned to regular duties in Negro districts, will be under direct supervision of Sgt. Brooks, and will work out of an office in the Atlanta Negro YMCA, located at 22 North Butler St.

Under regulations laid down by  
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Constitution Staff Photo—Rynn Sanders

**NEGRO POLICE BEGIN PATROL**—Two of Atlanta's new Negro policemen, who began patrol in the Auburn Avenue section, are shown in full uniform as they check a driver's operating license while other Negroes look on with approval. The policemen, left to right, are E. H. Lyons and Claud Dixon.

## POLICE

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Police Chief Herbert Jenkins, the Negro policemen will be permitted to wear uniforms only while on duty.

Carl Sutherland, head of the Personnel Department of the City of Atlanta, pointed out that the Negro policemen had been carefully selected.

"There were 109 applications from Negroes for positions in the department," Sutherland said. "My department eliminated exactly 101 of these Negroes through careful screening, and I believe that the eight selected to become policemen will be of value to Atlanta."

A survey of the records in Sutherland's office shows that Negro Patrolman Claud Dixon, who recently passed his twenty-first birthday, is a graduate of Booker T. Washington High School, and has had three years in Morehouse College.

Henry H. Hooks, 31, another of the Negro policemen, is a graduate of Gadsden High School, served four years in the Navy, and since discharge has been employed here as an insurance salesman.

John Paul Jones, 28, spent four years in the Army, graduated from the Booker T. Washington High School, and has been a student at Morehouse College for the past two and a half years. He also is District Commissioner for the Negro Division of Boy Scouts in the Atlanta area.

Ernest Howell Lyons, 28, was a Staff Sergeant in the Marines, spent three and a half years in the Pacific Theater; graduated from Booker T. Washington High School, had one year in Morehouse College, and graduated from the mechanics course given by the Mergenthaler Linotype Company.

Robert McKibbens spent three and a half years in the Army and attended Booker T. Washington High School for two years.

John Sanders, Jr., spent four years in the Army, and is now employed by the city as building custodian at the Clark Howell School. He is a graduate of the Booker T. Washington High School.

Willard Strickland spent three years in the Army, being discharged as a Staff Sergeant. He is a graduate of the Grace Laboratory High School, located at Spellman University, and has also had one year at Morehouse College. While in the Army, he served as a military policeman. At the present, he is an insurance salesman.

Willie T. Elkins spent five years in the Army Coast Artillery, being discharged with the rank of Captain. He is scheduled to graduate from Morehouse College in June with a BS degree.

These are the first Negroes ever to be armed with police powers in Atlanta. A search through histories fails to show where any Negro policemen were ever before employed in Atlanta, even in Reconstruction days. Histories show that during the Carpetbag era Negro soldiers patrolled the streets of Atlanta, but no mention is made of Negro policemen.

Before placing the Negro policemen on duty here, Chief Jenkins, Capt. Weaver and Sgt. Brooks toured other Southern cities where Negro policemen are employed, and patterned their work here on the system employed by the cities they visited.