

Laurel

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new precinct. This is a local matter. It should be handled locally."

Gunter also opposed the division because of the costs involved and reminded the commissioners that none of the Laurel Democratic precinct officials were notified of the planned division.

Before closing his remarks, Gunter told the commissioners, "You are creating a headache that an aspirin the size of this courthouse won't cure." Gunter also presented the commissioners with a list of Walnut residents he claimed signed the petition presented by the provision voters.

Claude Wallin of Guntertown also spoke in favor of returning the Laurel precinct to its original boundaries. Wallin said that Revere residents have received representation in party affairs, citing Ervin Adams' selection as a delegate to the county convention as an example. Wallin said he believed the commissioners were misled into believing that Laurel voters wanted to divide the precinct.

Donald Norton told the hearing, "I've seen these ups and downs all my life. Most of these people are good Democrats, but we're letting the Democratic Party down." Norton also opposed the newly created precincts.

Raymond Cutshall of Spillcorn also opposed the division, saying, "We've got one of the best precincts in the county. I don't understand why anyone would want to break it up except for selfish reasons. If you cut the precinct, you'll weaken the precinct and you'll weaken the party."

Phillip Franklin also opposed the split, saying the county should spend money for schools instead of voting machines. Franklin pointed to dangerous conditions on SR 1316 as one place the money might be better spent.

Laurel registrar Fronia Gunter, Sheila Ledford and Billy Cantrell of Spillcorn and Garland Adams also addressed the hearing and each opposed the division of the Laurel precinct.

Madison County Democratic Party chairman Zeno Ponder then addressed the hearing and called for a vote. After asking if anyone was undecided on the matter and receiving no response, Ponder said, "There's not an undecided soul in the place."

Larry Leake then proceeded to poll the audience which had earlier been divided into voters in the old Laurel precinct and those living in the new Revere-Spillcorn precinct.

Each area's residents were asked if they wished to remain in the old Laurel precinct or in the new Revere-Spillcorn township. Spillcorn voters elected to remain in the former precinct while Revere voters favored the new precinct.

Board member Virginia Anderson then requested an executive session with the board members and Leake.

When the commissioners emerged from the closed door session, chairman Ervin Adams asked Leake to read a resolution he had prepared during the closed session. Leake then read the resolution calling for the return of both Spillcorn and Big Laurel to the old Laurel precinct and the creation of a Revere-Rice's Cove precinct. The commissioners then voted to pass the resolution and adjourned the meeting.

The compromise agreement seemed to please those who opposed the precinct division. Terry Gunter told The News Record, "You don't get everything you want, but this is a good decision. I think they did the only thing they could. I think it went well."

As the 200 Democrats left the court house, one observer was heard to say, "If they could get them into church to pray like they get 'em into the court house to argue, they'd really be doing something."

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