

Mayor Jackson Gives Proclamation To City's First Eight Policemen

On Wednesday night, over 125 persons attended an affair, sponsored by the Butler Street YMCA Boys' Branch Board of Trustees, in honor of the first eight Black Atlanta policemen, employed April 3, 1948. Owens presided over the program which was held at the M.L. King

Jr. Center.

Atlanta Daily World Editor C.A. Scott, one of the consistent advocates of Black policemen as a necessary means of checking white police brutality against blacks, told the group that Atlanta had produced more Black leaders through the fight

to eliminate the white primary law. He also paid tribute to the role that the *Atlanta Daily World* had played in helping to overcome obstacles of racial prejudices, adding he was selected, along with former Chief of Police Jenkins and the City Personnel Director, to give the first Blacks their oral examination of fitness to be employed.

Representative Billy McKinney joined the police force soon after the selection of the original eight and served several years before going to the legislature. He pointed out his persistent efforts to remove further restrictions pertaining to arrests.

The first eight officers worked out of the Butler Street YMCA under a white supervisor. Apparently, the experiment was so successful they soon worked out of the police headquarters.

Present Chief Eldrin Bell said he had been visiting the YMCA since he was a boy of eight years old. All of the first policemen had been served by the "Y" and "they expressed pride in being part of the community." He added crime in Atlanta is on the decrease and we have become a majority in the department.

Mayor Maynard Jackson presented a proclamation and commented that "we have come a long way, but we have a long way to go."

Retired Major Ernest Lyons, who was one of the first Marines in World War II and credited with doing a good job as a policeman, expressed appreciation for the opportunity of having served his community

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and nation. He also expressed appreciation for the affair being held.

Retired police officers Johnny P. Jones and Robert McKibbens are the other two living officers of the original eight, but could not be present.

Ralph Harris, President of the Boy's Branch Board of Trustees, expressed appreciation for the support given to the event and invited those present to share in refreshments. He also presented a large plaque to be placed in the front awards room of the Butler Street "Y".