

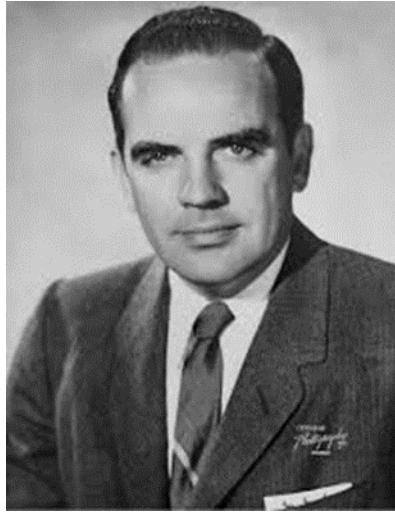
Clinton, Tennessee

In Clinton, on August 20, 1956, twelve African American students enrolled at Clinton High School for the fall semester. The following weekend, John Kasper from the Seaboard White Citizen's Council arrived in Clinton and rallied the pro-segregationists in Clinton to join him in picketing the school. When the school week began, segregationists rallied to prevent the black students from attending classes. Despite the resistance, the "Clinton Twelve" became the first black students to attend a state supported segregated high school in the South.

On the second day of school, an angry mob, s of about fifteen hundred segregationists, spurred by Kasper's rhetoric, formed to shout insults and threaten the black students. Tension rose overnight, and the Federal District Judge ordered Kasper arrested for disobeying a court order forbidding him from interfering with the integration of Clinton High School.

Unfortunately Kasper's arrest did little to ease the tension as Asa Carter from the White Citizen's Council of Birmingham arrived to continue instigating the crowd. On Labor Day Weekend, September 1st and 2nd, full scale rioting broke out. Angry white youths not only threatened the black community, but also threaten to dynamite the mayor's house, the local newspaper, and the courthouse. When the police force could not control the situation, local officials appealed to Governor Frank G. Clement for help. Clement responded by sending six hundred National Guardsmen to occupy the town and end the violence. Clement kept the National Guard in Clinton to maintain peace while the black students attended school. Like Chandler at Sturgis and unlike Shivers at Mansfield, Clement responded to a crisis of integration

at a public school by using state forces to quell violence so that black students could attend an all-white high school.



Frank Clement