

SQUATTERS ARRESTED At Courthouse

Leon and Esther Lofton say they've faced legal trouble time and time again during their 19 years in California, so being evicted from a downtown hotel and getting arrested for squatting in the county courthouse is nothing new.

The Loftons and the two eldest of their eight children, who set up camp in the courthouse lobby Feb. 10, were arrested Feb. 11 when they refused to leave, claiming they had no place to go. "I will not send my children to their deaths on the streets of Los Angeles," Mrs. Lofton, 49, tearfully maintained.

Police then booked Lofton, 50, his wife, their son Michael, 22, and daughter Verna, 19, on suspicion of loitering.

Four young children — Darryl, 16; Tracy, 14; Gena, 9, and Heather, 2 — were turned over to juvenile authorities. Two other young children were not involved in the sit-in and escaped legal entanglements.

Police also confiscated the family's possessions, stored in a half-dozen cartons, pending further developments.

The Loftons went to the courthouse Feb. 10 in an effort to overturn their eviction from the Clark Hotel earlier that day.

Judge William Hogoboom said the next day he could not reverse the court-ordered eviction, but told the Loftons they could appeal.

The couple, both trained as teachers, said their troubles began when they came to California in 1957 and Lofton could not find any work. His wife was employed for one year as a substitute, but lost her job in 1958.

Five years later, the couple kept three of their children out of school, contending they could teach them themselves, and a judge fined them \$10 a piece for each truant child.

'The Los Angeles Sentinel', 'The Largest Black-Owned Newspaper in the West' ??, is a Yellow Journal. As a Black journalist, newspaper, etc., present falsehoods rather than the truth, with the intention of misleading the Black Community.

Sincerely,
Michael L. Lofton 10-12-98
 Michael L. Lofton

The entire family moved into Police Dept. headquarters in 1965, claiming they had no place else to go. Officers decided not to arrest them, however, and turned them over to the Salvation Army instead.

Still unemployed in 1967, the Loftons sued the city school district for alleged deprivation of their right to work. They lost, and one of the requests last week was for the judge to reopen that case.

This report, as well as others, quite FALSE.

Reprint of Original for Clarity

'Squatters Arrested At Court House', LA Sentinel February 19, 1976

Leon and Esther M. Lofton say they've faced legal trouble time and time again during their 19 years in California, so being evicted from a downtown hotel and getting arrested for squatting in the county courthouse is nothing new. The Loftons and the two eldest of their eight children, who set up camp in the courthouse lobby Feb. 10, were arrested Feb. 11 when they refused to leave, claiming they had no place to go. "I will not send my children to their deaths on the streets of Los Angeles," Mrs. Lofton, 49, tearfully maintained. Police then booked Lofton, 50, his wife, their son Michael, 22 and daughter Verna, 19, on suspicion of loitering. Four young children—Darryl, 16; Tracy, 14; Gena, 9; and Heather, 2—were turned over to juvenile authorities. Two other young children were not involved in the sit-in and escaped legal entanglements. Police also confiscated the family's possessions, stored in a half-dozen cartons, pending further developments. The Loftons went to the courthouse Feb. 10 in an effort to overturn their eviction from the Clark hotel earlier that day. Judge William Hogoboom said the next day he could not reverse the court-ordered eviction, but told the Loftons they could appeal. The couple, both trained as teachers, said their troubles began when they came to California in 1957 and Lofton could not find any work. His wife was employed for one year as a substitute, but lost her job in 1958. Five years later, the couple kept three of their children out of school, contending they could teach them themselves, and a judge fined them \$10 a piece for each truant child. The family moved into the Police Dept. headquarters in 1965, claiming they had no place else to go. Officers decided not to arrest them, however, and turned them over to the Salvation Army instead. Still unemployed in 1967, the Loftons sued the city school district for alleged deprivation of their right to work. They lost, and one of the requests last week was for the judge to reopen that case.

(Notice there is no byline as to who is the author of this article. Furthermore, no one from the Los Angeles Sentinel was present at any time during the illegal arrest, on February 11, 1976. There is not one grain of truth to this article, my parents (Mr. and Mrs. Leon E. Lofton, Jr., Sister (Verna G. Lofton), and I (Michael L. Lofton), spent four days in jail and there was no court arraignment proceeding to justify the booking, and incarceration, further showing that the arrest was illegal. To date the Los Angeles Sentinel has yet to print the truth regarding the Mr. and Mrs. Leon E. and Lofton, Jr. family unit. Contrary to this article we, the Lofton family, were arrested for trespass on the Superior Court Bldg.-111 N. Hill St., LA, CA, during open to the public at large hours, on February 11, 1976. Sergeant Roddy, a LA County security officer, signed citizen arrest papers, while on duty. The basic matter—Los Angeles Superior Court Case #895188, as filed in the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Los Angeles— involves violation of civil rights through FRAUD, COLLUSION, and MANIFEST ABUSE of DISCRETION. The NAACP, SCLC, CORE, PUSH, ACLU and others both locally and nationally have known of the Lofton matters for a number of years, and have yet to respond in our behalf. Judging by a deteriorating Black community we "the Loftons" are not alone in lacking representation.