

1955

Employment of Black Deaf at Firestone

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May 19, 1955

Mr. Robert Henry Weir, Jr.
315 Stanley Ave.
Barberton, Ohio

Dear Mr. Weir:

Mr. Firestone sent your letter to me and asked me to give it careful consideration. I am deaf myself and have arranged for many deaf people to find work with the Firestone Company.

I am sorry to say that the Company has no suitable job for you at this time. However, if you will call at the Firestone Employment Office next Tuesday morning, May 24, I will be glad to talk to you and do what I can to help you find work somewhere.

Just show this letter to the watchman at the gate.

Very truly yours,

B. M. Schowe
Labor Department

Firestone
INTEROFFICE

MAY 17, 1955

Sharon M. Schowe
See Mr. Weir?
Bu 117

TO MR. JOSEPH THOMAS

FROM B. M. SCHOWE

REFERRING TO LETTER OF

SUBJECT ROBERT H. WEIR, JR. (Colored-Deaf)

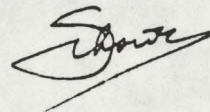
Mr. Weir has never applied for work at Firestone. Since there is no hiring in the Employment Office at this time, we called the State rehabilitation bureau to find out if they could serve him. They say they gave him the complete treatment between 1949 and 1951 and closed the case after he was placed as a steam presser in a dry cleaning plant at \$55 a week.

That just about exhausts all normal resources under present circumstances. However, if I had an opportunity to talk to him, I might be able to suggest something. The rehabilitation bureau also might undertake to advise him further if he called on them. It should be noted that Mr. Weir never attended a school for the deaf and probably does not use the sign language. That means he does not "belong" to any recognized social grouping and is probably "maladjusted" as well as deaf.

For reasons I cannot explain, we have had very few applications from colored deaf over the years. I recall only two men and one woman, all in wartime. One elderly man was hired for janitor service and worked until his health went bad after several years. A husky young "mute" was hired as trucker at Xylos, but never reported for work. I tried to place the young woman as spray painter at aircraft but, for reasons I cannot now recall, the hiring was never completed.

Goodyear Aircraft had one or two colored deaf in war time. One of these (very intelligent) was rehired at Goodyear Tire and is now working as a tire builder according to reports received through personal friends.

Apparently, there is very little migration among colored deaf and we get few applicants from other cities and states. That is the only explanation I can offer for preponderance of white deaf people in Akron.



B. M. SCHOWE

MAY 18 1955
LAW DEPARTMENT

May 16, 1955.

ROBERT HENRY WEIR, JR.

FROM BUREAU OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION, UNITED BLDG., AKRON, OHIO
BL 37324.

FRS. HOPE BAIR.

She knows him well and she likes him. She knows him and has trained him. It was May 18, 1949 when he came in. He cannot wear a hearing aid. The loss (95% loss of hearing) is due to lues and so he has a permanent deafness and the Doctors doubted if the hearing aid could be helpful at all.

They started him at the Brieff cleaners. This did not work out because the man spoke "foreign" and did not take time or trouble to work with him it was thought.

They then transferred him to Mr. West on Lake Street, in South Akron. He went there 5-5-50 and stayed to the end of June. Worked as a dry cleaners assistant. This was set up for two months. Some changes were made and so he went to the Canton Road Cleaners (8-14-50 - to be there 2 months, and this was extended to 11-30-50.) He was paid maintenance at the rate of \$13.50 per week and transportation - \$1.50 per week, during training.

Prior to his training he was sent to Kent Speech and Hearing Center. There He had lipreading and acoustic training. He had 15 individual lessons both with and without hearing aid (to determine whether it was worthwhile to get a hearing aid for him. Record does not show that a hearing aid was purchased (she links because it did not work out satisfactorily).

He then went to work at the Canton Road cleaners.

He is very unstable due probably to the cause of his loss of hearing. He had a 6th grade education but intelligence considerable beyond that.

Does not know why or when he lost this job. was making \$55.00 per week as of Feb. 1951, when the case was closed. He had developed speed and dexterity in steam pressing.

BJ
5-16-55,
Library

by telephone
Mrs. Hope Bair

Dear Sir

I hope you would think
me bold for writing this.

I am a negro 24 years
old and since I was 16 I
have been completely Deaf and
as such I find it difficult if
not impossible to get a job of any
kind. for the past year and 1/2 I
have been on relief although
both willing and able to do any
kind of work. It is not the purpose
of this letter to seek a handout but to
find if possible some kind of work.

Thanking you in advance for any
thing you can do, I am your very

sincerely

Robert Henry Wain Jr.
315 Stanley ave
Barberton Ohio

6-1-58
3:58 PM

STATE EMPLOYMENT OFFICE He 4-2141

Mr. Mercer Bratcher, Manager

Ben Schowe, specialist in employment of deaf workers at Firestone, has an exceptional case he has been asked to take up with you.

(I would rather not give details but if he requires information, explain we refer to young colored deaf man with good qualifications who is very hard to place -- Robert H. ~~W~~ater, Jr. I be-

lieve that I can be of some help in placing him and want to explore the possibilities)

Firestone management is interested in this case and I would like to have an appointment to see Mr. Bratcher for a few minutes some time tomorrow. Thanks.

Hamlin Metal Products Co.

PL 3-7791

to-Employment Manager

From - Scherer who hires deaf
workers for Finestone.

We have fine colored deaf boy 24
years old - 175 pounds, 6 ft. tall,
intelligent, can speak and read lips.
Can you offer him anything? I
will bring him in tomorrow if you
are interested.

Firestone

May 24, 1955

INTEROFFICE
RECEIVED

TO

MR. JOSEPH THOMAS

FROM

B. M. SCHOWE

*Secretary and
General Counsel*
MAY 24 1955
LAW DEPARTMENT

REFERRING TO LETTER OF

SUBJECT

ROBERT H. WEIR, JR. (Colored-deaf)

This boy came in for an interview this morning. He is an exceptionally fine specimen in every way-- six feet tall, 175 pounds, coal black, lean and strong, good hands and good disposition, sixth grade education but very intelligent and fine sense of humor. He cannot use the sign language, but speaks and reads the lips very well.

He has had varied employment experience as a laborer and clothes presser. His explanation as to how he lost his several jobs rang true. Generally it is possible to spot weaknesses and wrong attitudes in an interview of this kind, but I am willing to go this boy's bond on the strength of the interview I had with him.

He is 24 years old. Right now, his problem is that he needs a job which will support a wife. He has found a deaf colored girl. Judging from the picture he showed me, she is a good looking mulatto and a good mate for him.

I introduced him to Mr. Wilson in the Employment Office to be sure we were not missing anything there. Apparently there will be no hiring for six months or more.

Three possibilities are in view:

1) Some one in management might be able to use him as a yard boy or houseman. He was sensitive of the proprieties and would be quick to learn any job not requiring him to respond to sound signals. Provision would have to be made for the girl he wants to marry. Aside from that, I believe his wage requirements would be moderate. Quite likely the girl would be good for laundry and cleaning.

2) The State employment office has never been able to do any thing for him. I might be able to promote something for him down there and will try, if you think it advisable.

3) He does not want to work as a clothes presser because the work is not steady and he cannot support a wife. However, the Rehabilitation Bureau might help us place him as a presser, with the understanding that we would try to place him here at Firestone as soon as there is an opening anywhere.

This boy won my complete confidence and I welcome the chance to do anything I can for him.

