

Liberal Moves May Pace Centennial Celebration

The centennial celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation will stay in full swing for the rest of the year, and there are signs the nation will become far more liberal before the 12-month observance is over.

Already President Kennedy has been busy in helping to prepare the centennial celebration. . . . The Labor Department has officially recognized the celebration with a booklet paying tribute to those who helped bring about freedom for all citizens.

In this year the president has sent a strong civil rights bill to congress. His brother, the attorney general, has climaxed a long series of anti-segregation moves by calling on labor to remove the remaining vestiges of discrimination from its ranks, both in the North and South.

But celebrations are one thing, and changing scenery may be another. The recent action in Albany, Georgia, where segregation ordinances were wiped out, seemed at first a liberal move, and may yet benefit the cause of racial equality in the U. S.

But even city officials admitted this was far from the purpose of the move, which they felt would keep out federal judges, who could order them to admit Negroes to facilities.

And Atlanta, this year, has her ups and downs. A Negro sits in the Senate, where he is treated with courtesy, but the "wall" had caused much embarrassment, until it was ordered torn down out on Peyton and Harlan Roads.

The overall picture does indicate progress, however, and the NAACP apparently is conducting its biggest membership drive this year. Negroes are beginning to appear on television shows, both as guests and actors. In a few isolated instances they appear in advertisements. Negro men play opposite women of other races when there is need, instead of changing the script and making the darker person Chinese or Indian.

Negro leaders are busy as ever, fighting for equal justice, and even though many southerners still scream "integration," rather than desegregation, the ideal of the emancipation does seem much nearer than ever before. It may be a good year.