

I N T R O D U C T I O N

This project is a study of the changes in Bridgeport neighborhoods from the viewpoint of selected Black residents during the historical periods of World War I, the Depression, World War II, and the 1960's.

By means of interviews, we have investigated the social and economic effects of each period on Black Bridgeporters. All persons interviewed have resided in Bridgeport during at least three of the targeted periods. We attempted to explore how their families, friends, and neighbors were affected during those turbulent times. We discovered the changes that occurred on their jobs, in their neighborhoods and in the city as a whole.

This kit contains a transcript and a tape recording of the interview along with suggested activities that are best suited for grades 5-8 and adaptable for high school students.

AAEA Education Committee Members:

Demise Foster-Bey
Susan Golson
David Hicks
Gwendolyn Johnson
James Johnson
Juanita Wright
Frances Judson, Chairman

Consultants:

John Sutherland, Ph. D.
David Palmquist, Curator

PERSONAL DATA

William A. Allen
P. O. Box 6291, Bridgeport

Born: November 29, 1911 - Washington, N. C. to
Annie and Albert Allen

Spouse: Sybil O. Allen

Children: Ten

Education: High School

Profession: Bail Bondsman, Real Estate

Travel: Continental United States

Church: New Hope Baptist

Organizations: New Era Lodge #190, Elks

"A Study of Bridgeport Neighborhoods:
A Black Perspective, 1900 -- Present"

Interview by: Juanita Wright
Interview with: William Allen
Date: Fall 1983

JW: Mr. Allen, we are really interested in the place where you were born, your date of birth, when you came to Bridgeport, and the neighborhood you lived in. Could you tell me some of those things?

WA: Neighborhood -- you mean of different cities?

JW: Of Bridgeport, really. Your early life. Where were you born?

WA: I was born in Washington, North Carolina, on November the 9th, 1911.

JW: When did you come to Bridgeport, Mr. Allen?

WA: 1920. I come here from Portsmouth, Virginia. I left North Carolina when I was three years old. We came to [unclear] in Portsmouth.

JW: When you came to Bridgeport, did you come with your mother and father?

WA: I came with my mother.

JW: With your mother. Could you tell me something about where you lived when you first came here?

WA: Yes, I lived on the East Side of town. The number was 87 Clarence Street, the address.

JW: Did you go to school when you first came here?

WA: Oh, yes. I went to Waltersville School. [That] was the first school I went to.

JW: Could you tell me something about the Blacks that were in school with you at that time?

WA: Honestly, at Waltersville at that time I didn't know any Blacks.

JW: You were just about the only Black that was in the

school in the early age?

WA: That's all I can recall -- my sister and I.

JW: That was about what -- 1920?

WA: 1921.

JW: In your neighborhood itself, were there many Blacks?

WA: Mostly Portuguese. My step-father's Portuguese, too.

JW: What was your step-father's name?

WA: John DeMathis Gonzalez.

JW: How far in school did you go when you were in?

WA: I went to eighth grade at Barnum School.

JW: So you left Waltersville and went directly to Barnum?

WA: No, I was in plenty schools.

JW: Would you give me some of them?

WA: Sure. I went to Waltersville, I went to Prospect, and there's the one on Wheeler Avenue --

JW: Wheeler Avenue School?

WA: Wheeler Avenue, yes. That's Shelton School. Then to Barnum School, to Felix School, and back to Barnum.

JW: During all those years that you were in school there, there were very few Blacks?

WA: No, I was speaking of Waltersville, the first one I went to. But thereafter I was with Black students.

JW: What kind of activities did you have in school that you took part in?

WA: Most things that were active: sports, soccer, basketball, baseball.

JW: You did take a part in those things?

WA: Sure.

JW: As a Black in school during that time, you were able to take a part in most of the activities that were in the school?

WA: Yes, parades and such.

JW: You went to school until you were in the eighth grade and you graduated from Barnum at the eighth grade?

WA: I quit.

JW: You quit in the eighth grade. Then after you quit school, what did you actually do? What did you go into individually?

WA: I went to work, went to the Brass shop. Then I got laid off from there and then I just traveled throughout the country.

JW: About how old were you when you left eighth grade?

WA: I was fifteen years old.

JW: Fifteen and you were able to get a job?

WA: Well, I didn't come right out of school then go right to work. I was looking for work but I worked like on ice trucks, coal trucks, and such.

JW: Let's go back and talk about your mother for a moment. What did she do? What was her position? Did she work or was she --?

WA: No, she was a housewife.

JW: She was a housewife. What church did she attend when she was here? What church did she go to?

WA: I think it was Mount Aery, then she went to Bethel.
When she passed, she was a member over to First Baptist.

JW: First Baptist. Now, you said Mount Aery -- about
what year was that?

WA: That was back like '22. Reverend Wilson was the
pastor.

JW: Of Mount Aery?

WA: He was the founder of the church.

JW: Where was Mount Aery located during that time?

WA: Over on Wallace Street.

JW: It was on Wallace Street, just as it has been for
years?

WA: Well, it wasn't -- it was across the street from
the new one.

JW: It was across the street?

WA: Yes.

JW: Because they've built another church now, a newer
church. So the old church is the one where they
were across the street from?

WA: There's a lot there now.

JW: But the original church?

WA: Was across from the new church that they built
across the street.

JW: So your mother was a member of Mount Aery during
that year. Were you active in the church during
that time?

WA: I've always been active in the church to a certain
extent in my younger years.

JW: In having the church as a part of your home life, is that where most of the activity for the Black community surrounded, by the church?

WA: Well, I'll tell you, in Bridgeport there was no such thing as that -- to my knowledge -- as a Black community. They were spread out all over Bridgeport just like they are now.

JW: Let's go into the World War II period and see what you remember about that. Were you married at a early age or did you do your courting and whatnot during that time?

WA: [unclear] I was first married when I was twenty-four. It was '34.

JW: Back in 1934. Did you have any children from that marriage?

WA: No.

JW: Could you tell me something about the war period? Or even the Depression, I'd be interested in that.

WA: Yes, during the war period there was nothing happening other than the things that I know [unclear] But during the Depression, those were the tight years. I was in the C.C.C. camp during that time. There was the camp in East Lyme, 1077th Company it was called and it was in East Lyme. I did my time there. It was first year and then I re-enlist and I had a little misfortune there in my second year I spent there. I was thrown out. So, I went to traveling. I was called a -- I was

riding trains -- I was hoboing. Yes, a hobo. Just for a couple a years. But I always came back to Bridgeport when it was cold season.

JW: During the time you were in C.C. camp, was that to help your family? Were you able to help your parents?

WA: Yes, the government sent help. You got a dollar a day. That's thirty dollars a month. They'd send twenty-five dollars home.

JW: To your family?

WA: Yes. And they gave us five dollars.

JW: Yes. Were you still living, your family still living in the same place on the East Side?

WA: No, they lived on Wallace Street, across the street from the church.

JW: You did live on Wallace Street. During the Depression years, you went to C.C. camp, but do you remember anything about being at home and people getting together to have their meals together or anything like that?

WA: Yes. [unclear]

JW: Did anybody come in -- other people come in to eat with your family or anything?

WA: Mostly like on weekends. Sunday evening when we'd come from church, some men from outside. We didn't have many relatives.

JW: You had no relatives in Bridgeport?

WA: No.

JW: So you didn't have any extended family to have to

come in and eat and live with you?

WA: That's right.

JW: You say there was ten members, ten children -- of your children. So, what about your brothers and sisters? Did you have any others?

WA: I only had one sister. She passed.

JW: It was just the two of you.

WA: She passed on at an early age, I think she was twenty-seven. [unclear]

JW: What about your mother? How long was she with you?

WA: My mother passed in '59.

JW: Could you explain anything about Blacks in World War II and during that time? Do you remember what it was like for Blacks in this area?

WA: Yes, I know what it was like to an extent because I tried to join the Army during the Depression before I started traveling. I started to join the Army and couldn't make it. I was going to enlist in the Coast Guard in New London. The lady at the Black Y.W.C.A. there advised me against it. [unclear]

I didn't get to join. She got me a job on the train as a fourth cook, as you might call a dishwasher. I was trained to become a short-order cook on the train. That was on the Columbia Express they called it -- from Boston to Washington at that time. I quit. I stayed on there for about six months then I quit in New York. New York -- the bright lights

-- and I stayed there. Went to work on the railroad in June. From time to time, I was working on the railroad -- jumping steel, we called taking up tracks -- replacing new ones, taking up -- alter tracks. Then, this lady in New York, she -- since I was staying with her, she decided she didn't want me working there so I had to pull out from there and I just left. I couldn't, I didn't want anybody just -- It was a friend, you know.

So I left there and that's when I start to traveling. I'd travel west then back to South. Then I came back -- look for a job. Couldn't get no job. I was looking to find a job there -- the Armed Forces. The Black man, in those days they had certain areas and a certain quota for Blacks -- like Boston only needed a certain area that we could join. Then they'll pitch it to Chicago or maybe eight or ten could join. They'll pitch it to Richmond. They just kept on picking it up. That's why I started traveling -- trying to catch up to an opportunity to enlist. It never did occur. Kept traveling trying to catch them and kept on traveling.

JW: So by World War II, then you weren't able to get into the Army in World War II either?

WA: No, there was no Blacks could enlist at that time. During the war, Blacks could be drafted but they wouldn't take them to join. Certain ones, they'd

pick that one, you know, status, where they want to go. Just like Joe Louis.-- they didn't even take Joe Louis. He wanted to join the Navy and they wouldn't take him. They took him in the Infantry.

JW: What did you actually do during the war since you were not in the Army?

WA: During the war, I was in business. I had accumulated a few pennies and I opened up a little store. During the war I think I started this.

JW: Where was this store, Mr. Allen?

WA: Down South Main Street. It was 272 Main Street. It wasn't, it was 276 Main Street.

JW: How long were you in business there? How long did you stay in business?

WA: Since the year of the war. Up until right after we opened up the Brass.

JW: Do you remember the neighborhoods and how they might have changed over the years? Could you tell me something -- like you were on Main Street, what kind of changes did you see?

WA: A lot of changes and things. In what respect?

JW: How your neighborhood's changed, your community's changed -- you lived on the East Side for a while, you lived on Wallace Street for a while --

WA: Well, you see, the East Side I'm referring to is East Side; that is between the first bridge up here -- what you call the Stratford Avenue Bridge -- then there's another the Yellow Mill Bridge. But this the East Side is between those two bridges.

It runs all the way from what they call Steel Point, down to the harbor, all the way up to Boston Avenue and beyond. But I was speaking of between Pleasant Avenue and Stratford Avenue and between those two bridges -- that was our East Side. That's where we lived.

Now, north of the railroad on the East Side there mostly lived Polish and Hungarians. In my district, down where we lived was Italians and Portuguese, mostly Italians. Then when you get across the East Main Street going to the school, there was all them Jews and Italians and whatever. East Main Street and Pembroke Street was the Jewish and Italian neighborhood store district. That went on for a long time, up until the war when they ripped down over there to build Father Panik Village. They knocked down a lot of the buildings in what they called neighborhood businesses -- tenement houses and things when they built Father Panik Village.

JW: When they built Father Panik, is that what they were doing? They were tearing down the old tenement buildings?

WA: Oh, yes. They tore down all the old tenement buildings.

JW: Was it in this time, during the war and during the --

WA: No, that was before the war.

JW: During the war, was that when you had a great influx of Blacks come into the city?

WA: That's right. The war brought a great majority of them. They started coming during the Depression --

for relief, they started getting on welfare and whatnot. They could get it here and couldn't get it elsewhere. But the more successful or Blacks that was able to do something and had something, they come right on after the war, during the war. But during the Depression, Blacks come to get on relief.

JW: So you had a great number of Blacks came in then to try to survive?

WA: Yes.

JW: Is this when the Black communities began to be established?

WA: When your speaking of the Black communities, you'd catch occasional Blacks now. They come after the war. It was during the war but after the war to the great extent the Blacks of means and education, they really brought in a lot of good to the Blacks that were here, because they was very apathetic to the situation up until that time. Anything they could get, they was satisfied. They just thought that they were -- easy to please. You used to have to sit upstairs in the movies and all that kind of stuff. They accepted it. Some restaurants and many bars -- that was after the Prohibition was pulled off -- just didn't cater -- They didn't give business to Blacks. [Blacks] couldn't go in there. They'd just pick restaurants to go into [unclear].

JW: I guess this is when Blacks began to establish their

own places to go to, since they had no place to socialize?

WA: Well, that's true. Most of the places had been established then was what we called after-hours places. It wasn't much of a license problem or matters of that type. If they did they'd let Blacks come in. It was operated and owned by whites.

JW: Do you remember -- say Stratford Avenue -- any movies of any kind that was over in that area?

WA: Oh, yes. The Hippodrome was over there. As I was going to say when I was speaking about the East Side, when you passed the Yellow Mill Bridge going over [unclear] that's the East End. We used to go over there to Pleasure Beach. But Blacks over there had a little better standards. They were more affluent.

JW: The Blacks in the East End were what you would call your upper [class] Blacks -- people that have --

WA: Beardsley Street, Newfield Street --

JW: Do you know any of the old Black families that probably were here when you came?

WA: Oh, yes. Ballou's, the Buster's, the Ferrar's, the Lockett's -- but they weren't over there --, the Ballou's and the Ferrar's was over there and up in the Trumbull. But the Lockett's was the ones in the hollow, the other side. Now, you know you try to think of them, offhand -- it's not easy.

JW: It's kind of hard to go back and I'm asking you to

go way back. You mentioned the movies and people having to sit upstairs in the movies.

WA: Yes. I'm speaking of downtown movies. Now the Hippodrome and the old one that used to be on East Main Street -- they were the nickel movies. Naturally, we'd want to sit upstairs because that's where you paid a nickel. You has to pay a dime to sit downstairs. [unclear]

JW: So there were other movies besides the ones downtown? For Black -- for people to attend?

WA: Yes, you could go to all of them. But as I say, those were the popular ones downtown, the Palace, the Globe. The Globe was the original Poli's. Then they built the Poli Palace that went on the corner of Congress and Main Street. Then they built the Majestic. Those are all Poli Theaters. The old Poli was where the Globe's parking lot is now. Then they built the Palace on the corner. Then the Majestic next to it. Then they went to work and built the Lyric. They all was Poli's. Then they eliminated the old Poli and made it the Globe and the Palace became Poli's Palace. The Poli's found it and the Poli's kept it. The Lyric came up further by the Strand Theaters.

JW: Do you remember anything about possibly Black entertainers ever coming into Bridgeport?

WA: Sure, but I'm not able to recall their names. I was never much for that. But the Big Bands used to come in. Sunshine Sandy used to come here.

Jimmy Plasteer used to play in the Black/White Band. Matter of fact, he originated it. He was from the Hollow.

JW: Do you remember when employment began to change for Blacks in Bridgeport?

WA: After the war. Prior to that, only jobs that Blacks got was these here factories was in the foundries, the casting and the hard and the hot foot.

JW: Do you remember anything about any factory in the city -- one of the foundries? Do you remember the name of any of them? Could you recall any of the names of them?

WA: You mean during the war?

JW: Yes.

WA: The Metropolitan, Remington's, Singer Sewing Machine, you got General Electric, Remington, and all them factories. Blacks couldn't get a job there before the war. It took a government order it. When the government ordered it, [unclear] . Now there was only two shops that I knew that hired Blacks to any extent. That was the Acme Shear that is now Carpentar Steel. Not Acme Shear. Acme Shear was a shear shop. [rest of statement is very unclear]

And the Brass and up there in the new shop [unclear] . They only hired them in the casting department. But these other shops,

they wouldn't hire them. Except there was one down here, there's another casting shop that's still on Housatonic Avenue. Didn't know what that one is.

There was a lot of shops, but none for Blacks.

JW: None for Blacks.

WA: No, not before the war. The war opened the door.

JW: So what mostly did Blacks do? What jobs did they do? What jobs could they get? How did they survive?

WA: Well, I'll tell you, the Black man had to hustle.

The women got jobs in homes as -- you know, we're talking about before the war now. The war changed a lot of things. But prior to that, the women they worked in services and most men worked like coal yards. I was a longshoreman. I worked on the boats and I worked in coal and coalyards. In the summer time, it's nice. But just to get a job like any other man would do -- no, indeed.

JW: Couldn't get them. It was just tough.

WA: It's not tough. It just didn't exist.

JW: We were just barely surviving, really. Just did survival work.

WA: We had to hustle. We wrote numbers and sold liquor.

We gave weekend parties, what they call house rent parties. That's what we did all over town --

we played . I couldn't pay the rent.

My mother didn't want us to do those kinds of things.

JW: What I want to talk to you about is the civil

rights movement in the 1960's? Do you have any feelings about that or what happened during the Sixties?

WA: I was glad to see Martin Luther King's movement and his passive way in proportion to the Black Muslim movement, so-called militant. And it wasn't in my opinion militant, it was just a upright, honest man type of movement.

But I felt like it was very good for both of them when the government started to loosen up and gave Martin Luther [King] a lot of consideration -- in my opinion, to offset the militant of the Black Muslims and all that kind of that. The speaker for them Muslims, the one called down by the head Muslim, when he said, the chicken come home to roost --

JW: You talking about Malcolm X?

WA: Malcolm X. Now those characters did a whole lot. They helped a whole lot. Each one of them -- every one of them played a part -- [unclear]

JW: Did you see the effects of it in Bridgeport at all?

WA: Yes. To the point that so many of our people were disgusted with the fact they wasn't doing us no good for them to be doing this movement. But, hell, they wasn't -- they was doing a lot of good. Every little bit helps.

It kind of scared me -- my daughter went to the civil right movement. She went down South. It

happened to register voters --
and they dream. She was with what they called this
outfit. But anyway, the Black guy, he got promoted
to a good job.

I was scared but she said -- young people have to be
daring and adventuresome and she didn't mind.

JW: She went down for the Voter's Rights Movement?

WA: Yes, she did. She got caught out there in the mud,
and the wind, and in the fields miles and miles
away from nowhere. But they really was going to
get to it -- She was saying that she was better
received [unclear] by the whites than
she did by the Blacks. The Blacks were saying we
didn't send for them -- we don't want them here.

JW: That was mostly fear, I think.

WA: It was.

JW: In the Sixties, do you think that that's when the
jobs really began to improve in the Bridgeport area
for Blacks?

WA: We had improvement before that but today there seems
-- We had a different influx of Blacks in Bridgeport.
After the war, they began to really show results
and a lot of these "old-timers" had been here maybe
since yesterday and they felt they was the upper
crust between the Blacks [unclear]
But after getting in here, [unclear]
I'm sorry they were. They began really going to
school and doing something for theirselves. Because

I remember before that, they didn't go to high-schools --

[end of side one]

[break in taped conversation occurs here]

WA: That was -- hardly, there's no need to go any farther than that. At the same time, my mother did need some help. I really liked school. I didn't have no ability, no background. There was nothing to offer us in high school. I just didn't go. I went to work around here. I went to work in New Haven. Odd jobs and everything else, hustling and everything else.

But those days -- the Black went to high school, that was equivalent to going to college. So many of them went to college and got a job driving elevators. They thought they had -- you know, hit the top rungs. They were satisfied with it. Look at Albert Finn, John Lancaster -- he's a lawyer -- they enjoy it. But you get them a job collecting tolls, you know what I mean?

JW: Did he never really practice law until --

WA: After this whole thing, just before he passed.

The only big thing he did in law was and real estate, going searching real estate problems for different lawyer's offices. He never did --

JW: No, because of the prejudice.

WA: He never did get past the Bar [exam]. [unclear]

JW: And I think you had to have it from so many lawyers

in order to even take the test. That's real sad about us -- about how hard it has been for us.

Was any of your family or your children in the Viet Nam war at any time?

WA: No. Most of my relatives was girls. We had a couple boys but they were not in the war.

JW: You say you had ten children. Would you just name them for --

WA: Not by the same [woman]. They're really illegit.

JW: So let's not even talk about them.

Is there anything, anything at all, that you would like to talk about that we did not cover? Anything that you'd just like to talk about something, I'd like to have it on the tape. Anything that you would like to tell us.

WA: I would say this now. My first daughter -- Gloria. She's Gloria Davis now. At the time that she finished school, she finished Norwalk High, when I say finished school. I was not in any position to send her further than that. In fact, [unclear] She went to Balcus. She was in Business School. The first year she went there was summer time. She --

They was giving other people jobs, other students were getting jobs for the summer. She went out and she tried to get a job herself. When the school opened up, they called for us. She went back to school. Modern Tobacco called the

house and said that she had put an application in. They wanted her to come in. I went up to the school and told her she had this -- they accepted her application at Modern Tobacco. They was over on River Street at the time. She picked her books up and left the school and went to Modern Tobacco. She quit and she worked there until she got married. Then she picking up and doing and carrying on. She got more adept at it. Then she worked for Bishop Manufacturing, she worked for the and now she's with the Hall Neighborhood doing the timekeeping over there. Doing the payroll taxes --

JW: With George Pipkin?

WA: Pipkin. So this is one thing that I found that bothers her. She wouldn't hear it. She's doing like I had to do. She had to get out and do for herself. Now at that time that I was saying, the Blacks didn't get the opportunity. So she went out and did for herself.

JW: What she had to.

WA: [unclear] This last -- she's been there a couple of times. And now she has been there about ten years. But there she go --

That was one of the funny things about

. Then, the other two that I raised up -- one is a doctor and one is a consultant -- for industrial, consultant for big companies.

JW: So those are things that happened later on?

WA: These are things that are different from the time I come around. I see the change from my kids -- as I say, with Gloria. Now she had to go out and do things that she didn't even know, didn't realize what's out there. But that's the change from back there. That's very obvious at this particular time.

JW: Is there anything else that you'd like to tell us about? Anything that went on in Bridgeport with Blacks, or anything that might be helpful.

WA: I'll say this. I think the influx of Puerto Ricans helped us a lot. That's my opinion. I know when I first come in here, I was raised with Portuguese and Italians and they was just getting off the boat too. It was tough. Then, as soon as they was getting elevated, and they started doing things for themselves, like Tedesco, Mandanici

--

They made their way the hard way. But then us Blacks -- we was conspicuous for our color. They was conspicuous by their accents and by their names. At first, they'll change their names for a while and then try to alter everything, until they got a good foothold. Then they're accepted. And the Puerto Ricans are doing the same thing. Now, the Black is going to have to just accept themselves and be proud of their own and do things. We're just beginning to -- realize we have a

heritage and a culture and to accept it. I remember when Blacks -- you couldn't even say "Black". You call me colored, Negro, anything else but black. Don't call me black, you know?

This is one of the happiest days in my life, to realize that the Blacks are not ashamed of being Black.

JW: Yes, that is wonderful.

WA: The funniest thing happened to me once, I was out to list a house from a lady when I was in real estate. She was saying to me about her son. She had a son out in Oklahoma who was a half-breed. His father was an Indian and she was white. Her son had killed a man out there for calling him a "damned half-breed." That was just about as bad as calling a Black man a "nigger." This man had called him a "damned half-breed" and he killed this man. He was doing time -- I don't know, like ten, twelve years or something. But he was getting ready to come out. She had moved here she said, because in the East he would be considered white and there wouldn't be any problems for him.

But she still wouldn't let me in that house to list that house because she couldn't sell to it to colored people up in that neighborhood -- Lafayette Street. It was all Polish around there and she said she didn't want to offend those people. But she was so upset about it, she didn't want to do it; but

she just couldn't bring herself to do this. I talked to her so frankly, like I'm talking to you -- more so at that time than I'm talking to you. She says to me, "You don't mind being colored, do you?" I said -- I don't know how it popped in my mind -- I said, "Miss, listen, I've got just as much right being Black as you have to be white. And I've never been ashamed of being Black." She was so amazed, she didn't know what to do. She invited me in the house, gave me a cup of tea, and we get on --

But you know she didn't list that house.

JW: Wouldn't list it, would she?

WA: She would have listed with me if I'd have sworn to her that I would not sell it to Blacks. I had white people ready to buy the house. But I would not condescend to accept this sort of arrangement with her -- to say I wouldn't.

During the war, I had the same thing happened to me with a Jewish lady, too. She had a house over on Beardsley Street she had listed with me.

[unclear] She didn't mind us selling that to Blacks. You know, because you're Black they think [unclear]. But that wasn't so, we dealt with everybody.

She had a house on Barnes Street. It was all white there. She was saying she couldn't list it with us because she says, "Some Jewish people living there, and they would severely offended."

She was Jewish. It was during the war when they were just killing and annihilating the Jews. And she cried. She lived on Hanover Street. And she cried. She'd be on the bus, and she'd sit down and some people would get up and say they smelled something -- call it "kike" or something. Said they'd insult her every which way. But still she could not bring herself to what she called offend these people by letting a Black sell her property.

But you know that's not the end of it. I've had Blacks doing the same thing. Blacks do the same thing. There's a fellow in real estate then downtown on Stratford Avenue told me about when he went to list a house, he'd put up a sign over on this house over on DeForest Avenue. He said a Black lady came out the door next door and spoke to him in Italian, "Mister, please don't sell this to Black people."

JW: Really?

WA: That's what he said. So, discrimination ain't just discriminating in this [unclear] . Discrimination is flared all over. And he laughed when he told me this. And I know it's true.

I know another Black lady that was a friend of mine. I had my sign on a house over there on Whitmore Street on the East Side. She looked and seen my sign and she went to these here same people I was telling

you -- mentioned down here on [unclear] , she went to the same people to buy the house. I owned the house. I had bought the house strictly so they came to me. [laughs] She seen my sign, she know me.

JW: And wouldn't call you.

WA: She went to them to buy the house. So they told me all about it. Now, Buddy, all you got to do-- I said well, I've got to pay commission, she'll have to pay the commission. And you know, she paid five hundred over what it would have cost her through me.

JW: Rather than to come to you to buy it?

WA: She didn't know to. She knew it, I suppose, she got so mad she --

JW: [Laughs.]

WA: This ain't a one-way street, Miss Wright.

JW: No. Well, listen, Mr. Allen, I really thank you so much. If there's anything else you'd like to say, we'll be glad to hear it.

But we want to thank you so much for doing this interview. I think we're going to have a lot of good things for the children to hear on this.

[End of Interview]