

**Sally Davage - With taped excerpts of William Davage - 3/10/76, 4/5/76 and 4/6/76.**  
**This is the library oral history project. My name is Janet Franklin and I'm interviewing Mrs. Davage at her home which is 7 Lucinda Lane, Middletown, Connecticut. This interview took place on March 10th, April 5th and April 6, 1976.**

Mrs: A recording that my husband made prior to his death on his views of first coming to Middletown: "In 1948, after being appointed pastor of the Cross Street AME Zion Church by Bishop William Jacob Waldman, New England Conference, I came via Route 17 in my old Studebaker. I first stopped at the service station on the corner of Warwick and William Street to get directions to the Cross Street Church. While waiting for gas I asked the attendant what kind of a town this was. This, of course, was my first trip to New England. He assured me that the people were friendly and that I would find no discrimination here. I was very happy to be given this assurance and journeyed on to Cross Street AME Zion Church where a goodly group of church members were awaiting my arrival for Sunday morning service. Enroute to the church I passed by the Jerome Dress Factory, the building I had seen in a dream one week before coming here. But in four weeks' time I learned that there was as much discrimination in Middletown as there was in any other city in America. Many of my members were living in the worst dilapidated housing on the waterfront down by the railroad tracks in horrible, filthy, sub-human conditions. I also learned that many of my church members, and others who had come up from the South during WWII to work in the factories, were being denied public assistance but being offered funds to be shipped back to the Carolinas. These conditions brought on my first fight in the City of Middletown. I immediately informed the city fathers that these people who were now citizens of Middletown could not be shipped back to the South, nor anywhere else, against their will. One of my many encounters with the city fathers erupted one night at the old City Hall building, at a town meeting, when I informed the officials gathered there that something had to be done for the black people who were being evicted. One response came from Congressman (Citron) when I told him as much in an angry voice. He then asked, "Do you know to whom you are speaking? I'M Congressman (Citron)!" My rejoinder was, "I don't give a DAMN WHO you are! All that I know is that someone has to house these people!" This protest resulted in more assistance for those in need. This concession did not in any way alleviate the conditions under which they had to live. Whenever the river flooded many of these people had to leave their homes. Those who stayed were marooned on the second floors of their homes. Boats had to be used to get through to them. This is what the South End was like between William, South and Sumner Streets in those days. Many of these homes were in the direct path of what was to become Acheson Drive. When the city decided to clear this area for the highway, tenants were evicted with no place to go. To make it impossible for them to return at any time, the houses were set afire. Rats scurried up as far as Main Street. They were huge rodents! As pastor of the church I appealed to the members and friends to try and house these families until homes could be found for them. At the church we had three families lodging in the basement, separated only by curtains, two families in the Parsonage and one in the attic. Any others were taken in by families and friends. This was to have been only temporary shelter until the city fathers could find places for these dislocated people. At that time there was a Mr. (Wamester), formerly of the Armed Services, who was First Selectman. He decided that

all the Negro families would be housed in tents in Hubbard Park. I adamantly opposed this move and asked the people not to go into these tents, and none did. The very same night those tents were erected they were slashed by persons unknown even to this day. Seeing as this was the year of the 1950 elections which were coming up, and having done some research on the elections, I found that a small plurality of some 250 votes could swing the course of an election in Middletown. I then set about informing Negroes, as they were known in those days, what we had to do. There was a place known as the Brown Derby at the corner of South and Sumner Streets which the Democrats had used previously to solicit the black vote. There were a few cases of beer, a few quarts of whiskey. I contacted the owner, Mr. (Busten), and asked him to work with me to beware of this kind of vote buying. He cooperated fully and informed others to do the same. I then went to see the Republican candidate for the mayoralty, the late Savatore Cubeta. I sat down with him and his wife, Marion, and explained the plight of the black people and their needs in this town. I made a proposition that if he were to open up the houses that had been boarded up on Veterans Terrace so that blacks could move in, and if the Supernumerary, Officer Jackson, would be made a regular policeman, the people and I would support him one hundred per cent. He accepted the proposition and we sealed the agreement with a highball and then went about informing the black community that we had to support the Republican Party to secure our needs. At that time Bill Sneed had a club on Main Street across from the old City Hall which we used for meetings, educating the people on how to vote. Then came Election Day. We had enough cars to bring groups of blacks into the club rooms where they were given final instructions. The greatest sight was to see groups of fifteen and twenty blacks at one time entering the voting booths. All this time I had been working in close contact with Don Cambria, Republican Town Chairman, who had befriended me in many ways and many times. When the results of the election came in at headquarters, Don, Sal Cubeta and I were three of the happiest men in Middletown, for this was the first time that the Republicans had won an election in twelve years. Needless to say, the next morning no Democrat in Middletown was speaking to the Reverend William M. Davage! Within three days of Mayor Cubeta's victory he called me to his office and informed me that Jackson, who had been a Supernumerary for many years, would be named a regular police officer and he began to initiate the rehabilitation plan to house black people into Veterans Terrace. Within a few months black people had decent homes to live in. There was yet another obstacle we had to face: Long River Village, a low rent project which housed 95% whites and which only one short street, State Terrace, was open to blacks. I immediately contacted the director of this project, Louis Johnson, informed him that because this was a Federally financed project the anti-black policy would have to cease. He informed me later that he had talked with some of the tenants who told him that there would be bloodshed if any blacks moved into this predominantly white project. I responded in like tone, "Then there will be bloodshed!" After a few days we finally agreed to take the issue to the authorities in Boston who handed down the decision that the project had to be integrated. Gradually, blacks moved into Roosevelt Drive and McArthur Court--and there was NO bloodshed. In the meantime, through the efforts of Art Carson and Don Cambria, I was appointed by Governor John Lodge to serve on the State Commission for the Aged, with nine other members from various towns in Connecticut. I learned a lot, I certainly learned lots from it. Gradually I resumed what had become a normal pace of

hectic activity, a lot of church work, back to the jails, early morning and late at night; out to the hospitals, to Long Lane, to Christian Endeavor, wherever there was a call for service. Perhaps one of my most rewarding experiences as pastor of the Cross Street Church was the happy faces of the many young people who attended Christian Endeavor each Sunday afternoon. During Mayor Cubeta's administration I was selected to serve as a social investigator in the Middletown Welfare Department under Mrs. Eastman who was the director at that time. When she retired I was then given the job by my superior, Mr. Jack O'Brien, who was the First Selectman. I held this position until the Democratic Administration took over, at which time I knew that I would have to go. It was not more than six months later that they had a meeting with Mr. Scamporino and others and they decided there were not enough cases in the Welfare Department and I was forced out, even though I fought the case, it was to no avail. I had to leave and Mrs. Carmelita Pound, Mr. O'Brien's secretary, took over the office from there on. My first-hand experience with building my own home led me to believe that others could and should follow my example. Black property ownership in Middletown was few and far between. I had begun my home with the grand nest-egg of \$500.00. The final result was a six-room cape on Cross Street. As early as 1953 four pieces of property on William Street and William Place had been offered to members of the Cross Street AME Zion Church but because a substantial down payment was required, there were no takers. Two years later, the same lady, Miss Rose Marino, called and offered the properties to me. She wanted a \$1,000.00 down payment and offered to take the mortgage. I told her I did not have \$1,000.00 but, just the same, an agreement was worked out and I became the owner of rental properties that would accommodate many of Middletown's blacks who were in dire need of housing. These former homes were converted into one and two-bedroom apartments. There was a total of fifteen units. Later, two properties on Maple Place and one in Portland were purchased, adding six more units to the total. Although a few whites were housed from time to time, the units were primarily used to house black people throughout their occupancy. Huntington Store and Color Mart now occupy the site. It was formerly 188 William Street, four four-room apartments. Since the early 1960's Middletown had talked about redevelopment of the downtown area. The very word "redevelopment" sent shock waves through the black community, reminding these people of the past insensitivity's where their lives were concerned. They had been especially hard-hit by the City's earlier renewal effort at Riverview Center. They remembered how they had been evicted, with no place to go. When a Redevelopment Commission was later named by the mayor it contained not a single black, despite the fact that many of these people to be affected and relocated were black. We then called a special meeting down in the South End with Mr. Joseph Haze and Mr. Aaron Kaplan, Redevelopment officials, to express our concern for black representation in the Redevelopment Agency. As always, Sally was at my side in the heat of battle. After the appointment of two white Relocation officers and months of resistance by the agency, the response to our demand by blacks was the appointment for a black field worker. This we did not ask for. This we did not want. Through continued protests and expressions of dissatisfaction and satisfaction, all of the whites were moved to another position and a black was named Relocation Officer. Still to come was the appointment of two blacks to the Redevelopment Commission, a direct result of the black support by the election of Mayor Anthony Sbona who received virtually total support from the black electorate. This

election was an especially interesting one. The regular Democratic Party had been challenged in a primary. They won. A group of Democrats, Independents and a few Republicans had united under the banner of Jack (O'Day) for Mayor. Among them was Trumbull Huntington, Betty Matteo, Reverend Alan Barry and others. I was the candidate on the Insurgent Ticket for Councilman. Long days and late nights of hard work; we garnered 1,700 votes. This strong showing almost made a victory out of defeat. While the defeated challengers were trying to decide whether to give or to withhold their support and to whom it should go, other developments were surfacing. Councilman Anthony Sbona was the Republican candidate for Mayor. The (Kowaleski) faction on the Independent slate was another factor to be considered in the upcoming election. After being unable to get any concessions from the Democratic party, I met with Sbona and Max Corvo, his campaign manager. They expressed their interest in the black vote and the necessity of this for victory. I expressed to them the concern of the black community and the demands to be met for their support. An accommodation was reached. A letter telling why Sbona should be supported, headed "Sbona this time", was mailed to every black registered voter. In the period of about two weeks, blacks who had largely supported insurgent Democrats in a primary were converted to the Republican ticket. Few believed that it could be accomplished, but it was. Sally and I formed an unbeatable team at this time. Sbona won the election with a solid black vote. He kept his commitments. His appointments to city agencies included William Sneed, Sr., and John Davis to the Redevelopment Commission and Mrs. Louise Nelson to the Health Commission. The Human Relations Commission that had been created by ordinance under Mayor Dooley was operating on a piece-meal basis with a \$500.00 budget. Mayor Sbona kept his promise to fund the Commission for full-time operation with the sum of \$17,000.00 which permitted the hiring of a full-time director and a full-time secretary. The office was housed in the Redevelopment Building at 179 Main Street. I had been a member of the Human Relations Commission since its inception. I had served as chairman for a number of years. I was asked to set up the new office while a director was being sought. A six-months' interim of service culminated in my being named Director of Human Relations on the Human Relations Commission, a position I held for three years; that is, until I retired in September, 1973. Later, Mayor Sbona named William Sneed, Jr., to the Housing Authority and named the first black to the Fire Department. I married again in 1960. Together, Sally and I built a home at 7 Lucinda Lane in 1963. We did much of the work ourselves. We shared mutual interests in everything: sports, politics, education, religion and travel. It was our common interest in the education of black children that the Greater Middletown Youth Scholarship Fund was organized. We were concerned at the small number of black children that went on to college. Through this fund many more continued to go to college. Through this organization some remarkable friendships were developed. After many weeks this was accomplished. Eager to get going again, Sally and I met with the City Council to question why nothing was being done regarding the Affirmative Action Plan for the City of Middletown. Boston authorities had warned the Mayor and others concerned that Middletown was in danger of losing Federal funds unless there was a plan that would address itself to the hiring of more minorities and, therefore, informed the Mayor and the Council that unless work was begun on this plan I would contact the Federal authorities. A commission was named by the Mayor. They are now working out an Affirmative Action Plan for the City.

**Q: Mrs. Davage, when did you first come to Middletown? Under what circumstances, and what were your first impressions when you came here?**

A: I came to Middletown for the first time in 1956 as a candidate for the Master of Arts and Liberal Studies at Wesleyan University. It had been through an announcement in (READ) Magazine that I had seen the program available at Wesleyan. It appealed to me in the nature of its content and its economy at that time and I decided to come and begin working on the degree.

**Q: What were your first impressions of your experiences at Wesleyan when you came for the Master's Program?**

A: One of my first impressions was the typicality of the New England scene as evidenced in Middletown. I was especially impressed with the campus, of our beautiful campus; the small city. The hustle and bustle was not evident on my arrival that Sunday, late afternoon. I remember that my first night in Middletown was spent at the Alumni House on High Street which still holds for me very fond memories. My first year in the program of studies was spent at John Wesley House on the corner of High and Washington Terrace. The registration on the first morning was very well organized. All one had to do was simply follow the guide that had been mailed to the students. The low student ratio to teacher or staff personnel was especially impressive and I thought a very effective weapon for teaching. The depth, the content versus the pedagogy to which I had been exposed was another impressive feature of Wesleyan. I was later to find out that activities did abound but there were few moments of leisure for making oneself available to participate in these activities. The performance requirements left little time for such indulgence. In trying to retain the school's academic standards of excellence, one found that the exciting and challenging ventures were not always conducive to one's studying patterns. There were about nine blacks enrolled that summer. The total enrollment was rather small, which was conducive to a family-type relationship--everybody knew everybody. Many of the students with whom I became very close would assemble in my room over at John Wesley on Saturday afternoons after we had completed the assignments for the week; and each night about eight o'clock a square dance would begin which was a lot of fun and then, later, there was a swimming party for those who were interested. And the night would sometimes be capped off down at the Garden Restaurant which no longer exists, it was later burned down, on the corner of Washington and Main. There was an intimate and rather compact group of teachers. There were weekend tours that provided an opportunity to savor the life in New England. The milieu of history and of the panorama of New England was highlighted in tours to Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts, the White Mountains in New Hampshire, Plymouth, Boston, Concord, Lexington. One very good experience I remember having was going to see the presentation of Verdi's Faust at Wellesly in Massachusetts. It was difficult not to become impressed with the alleged wealth of Wesleyan as evidenced by the physical plant and the opportunities for scholastic ventures. An introduction to the (Cutter) System made the library a fun place to go and a very rewarding experience. Of course, we needed that full day's orientation to be able to find our way through it. Another interesting feature of the library at Wesleyan was its volume of works on black writers in the historical as well as the literary field. Some very interesting and warm relationships

were developed during those years with faculty members and with students, many of which have been retained over the years. One of my very special teachers was, and is, Mr. (Kreiger), a very able teacher, a very warm individual. I see him often and we reminisce about the days of the early part of the Wesleyan program for the masters of arts and liberal studies. Perhaps one of my most interesting academic ventures during the first three years at Wesleyan was the introduction to Greek drama. The fascination still lingers and I found myself then, as now, relating sculpture as well as (advertisement) on the American scene to origins in Greek drama. The Bard of Avon, the American and English romanticist, left indelible imprints. The Stratford Theater at the confluence of the Housatonic River and Long Island Sound, then in its infancy, was both entertaining and educational. The fascination that this theater held for me then has been retained. My interest has not wavered over the years. My husband and I made it a yearly pilgrimage to go back to Stratford and see the very fine presentations at the Stratford Theater. It troubles me now to know that that theater which has so very much meaning in the Western tradition is now facing financial difficulties and may have a delayed or a shortened season this year. Even if the \$300,000.00 are raised, the program for the students throughout Connecticut high schools will be eliminated and that, to me, is a very terrible loss. In response to an earlier question that you asked, in all fairness I think I should express it as the SUBTLE acts of racism as opposed to the OVERT acts that were observed from time to time. I never PERSONALLY was confronted with any overt acts of racism at Wesleyan but, on the same hand, I was aware of some of the subtleties that did have their roots in racism. I must say that, by and large, the staff and many of the students made a deliberate effort to be considerate and kind without being condescending. I think that might have been too blatantly objectionable if such an act had occurred. There was a very peculiar arrangement that many of us noticed in the assignment of room mates. In my case that was no problem because I always requested and was given a private room or a single room. There were other students who requested double accommodations. Invariably, those students, male and female, who could be identified by the name of their school were assigned the same room. If there were a student who was an alumnus or alumna of Spellman and one who had graduated from Tuskegee, it would be easy enough to identify that these two persons would be black or non-white. On the other hand, there were what we considered a few difficulties when a student from Syracuse had been assigned a white room mate, another student who had gone to a school in New York, where the identification was not as obvious, had been assigned to a white student and not aware of any friction that developed because of these assignments. But we found it quite amusing that all the black students, by and large, were assigned to black room mates and all the white students had white room mates. I certainly would have had no objection to that. I don't necessarily choose room mates in any instance. I had had enough room mates as an undergraduate, so I felt entitled to some privacy which I cherished then as I cherish it now.

**Q: Mrs. Davage, Since you've been in Middletown, what type of an impact or image has Wesleyan held for the black community or, perhaps, Middletown as a whole?**

A: The contribution that Wesleyan has made to Middletown is an enormous one. I think even its worst critics would have to agree that there has been, and continues to this day, a diversity of community involvement by the staff and students at Wesleyan. I have been

aware of many of their volunteer efforts in the civic, health and educational fields. The tutorial programs of the late '50's or, perhaps, the early '60's, has had a very GOOD influence on students in the community and especially on black students. The earlier effort, I believe, was a coordination of the then active NAACP and certain staff members and students at Wesleyan. There has been some coordination of Wesleyan activities in the high school program. A Mrs. Marjorie (Daltry) who is the widow of the early director of the Wesleyan summer school program, Mr. (Daltry), has had a very active role in bringing about activities that benefited both the college and the community. By the way, I would like to add that that is a relationship that was developed in the early years at Wesleyan that has continued. I see Mrs. (Daltry) all too infrequently but whenever I do, we tend to reminisce about the glorious days that were. And the role of her husband was a very impressive and a very significant one. We often would kid him about his English origins because the summer school program would usually open sometime near early July and during that first week was the great Independence Day celebration. And we always said we knew Mr. (Daltry) had to be of English origin because he had no respect for our great holiday. While everybody else was picnicking we were bowed with our heads in books trying to get through that day. But that was a very good relationship that we had. Another contribution that Wesleyan has made in recent years has been its involvement and support of the Upward Bound Program that is designed primarily to try and get those disadvantaged students, both black and white, into programs that will lead them towards college enrollment. Another benefit in which I have been involved in Middletown has been the beginning of the Greater Middletown Negro Youth Scholarship Fund and, through that organization my husband and I started in the early '60's, we've had tremendous support from the community and we have kept rather close ties with Upward Bound because of the nature of the students with whom they were working. The involvement of Wesleyan has not been all academic, as I referred to earlier instances. There was once a Halloween party for as many as 3,000 of the community's children who would be entertained, and that was a very wholesome experience. I understand that relationships were developed between students and community children that continued through the years. The availability of Wesleyan's facilities and many of its programs have always been free to the community. The community's utilization of those opportunities has sometimes come through the use of the hockey rink or the use of the football field, or the use of the gymnasium, or the use of certain buildings for meetings, and the volunteering of staff and student time. That, I think, is a tremendous benefit whether it comes in terms of recreation or in terms of academic use. The recruitment of black students and staff evidenced some comprehension and some commitment on Wesleyan's part during the '60's when the clarion call was "Get Involved. Help us now. Get out of your ivory-towered buildings and come down to the city to see what the real needs are". The record speaks for itself in many areas of Wesleyan's involvement in this regard. There have been programs by and for non-white children and non-white people in the community. Perhaps one of the most tangent benefits of Wesleyan to the community has come through the massive expansion of the physical plant at the college, credits of which Middletown is the beneficiary in its redevelopment program. Accounts vary on the real financial impact that the Wesleyan community has on the city's financial base. Estimates have ranged from three million-up as the kind of financial support that the students, the faculty, their parents through visits, and their friends, bring to the downtown



area. While mine has been a very good and wholesome relationship with Wesleyan; I like the school very much. I admire many of its values. I must admit that this is not a unanimous view in the greater community. There have been voices of antagonism on Wesleyan's lack of concern for discipline in the traditional sense. Even in the days of the 60's when she was making many innovative efforts to try and express her commitment through deeds to the cause of freedom for all people, there were voices in the community that thought that there was too much permissiveness and not enough regard for the values of the town and the real needs of black people. While there may have been some abuse by donor and recipient, I think the overall commitment was a genuine one and, perhaps, all of us could quarrel about the technique of the methods that were used to implement that concern. The "in quote" "coup d'etat" of (Fisk Hall) and, later, a homecoming football game, two of the incidents that left bitter tastes in the minds of many people. Incidents such as these are used to support the vilification that often ensues.

**Q: Since 1956 when you first came to Middletown, what other changes have you noted in the city?**

A: One of the obvious changes that has been noted has been the increase in the minority group population. It has more than doubled since I first came. There has been a remarkable upsurge in the number of black children who have enrolled in college. There has been an increase in the number of black families that have purchased homes. This is an area that, perhaps, evidences some of the benefits of Civil Rights legislation at both the State and Federal levels. Buying a home is not now as difficult for black people as it once was. Of course, the economic factor has become the great discriminator. Now while there is still evidence of subtle discrimination as to dispersion of housing, for instance, there has been an effort under way to provide the resources, the information, the buyers and the markets for blacks and other disadvantaged people. These are very distinct benefits. It is with dismay, and sometimes despair, that I often reflect that this increase in population has not always manifested itself with increased participation in the political process. Voter registration among these new immigrants has not always kept pace with other advancements that are noted from time to time.

**Q: When interviewing another individual, he expressed having to adjust to life in Middletown because he came from New York City, Brooklyn, in particular, and I was wondering if you had similar experiences?**

A: Adjustment for me was not that great a problem. I am a small town girl. The provincialism of New England has appealed to me since the early days of fifth grade geography. So, coming here into a typical small-town New England setting was a rather easy experience. While the lifestyles varied, there was a striking similarity. The patterns of dress in the South and the Midwest, where I had spent much of my childhood, were different from those of New England. There is no strict adherence to formal dress among professionals as it is found in many other parts of the country. The absence of black people at the center of community activities, the absence of their concentration in much of the service-oriented employment, were obvious differences between the South and New England as I had come to know it. I attended and worked in a segregated school system in the South. When I came to Middletown, though, the system was not OFFICIALLY segregated. Few black children were found in the college program in the



high schools and few black teachers were found on the staffs of the schools. I am happy to report that the number of black teachers in the school system has increased and the number of black children who are pursuing a college education has also increased. Under visual strain, if one looks very closely, from time-to-time a black face may be found in public employment. One may be found at City Hall, another may be found in an agency of government where none existed before. The number is far too few and more effort has to be made by the black community and the white community for greater representation of all citizens in all levels of city government. I would not have you believe, however, that the "European" mentality or the "Archie Bunker" mentality, as I often combine the two, cannot be found here in Middletown. While it may not be as blatant as it was in the South, it is still evident and people at many stations are still judged by the color of their skin and not the quality of their person or their potential for performance. Perhaps one of the greatest impediments to greater utilization of minority group personnel in this city is the REFUSAL to admit that inequities exist. At many meetings when these issues are raised there is an outright denial. The problem is focused in terms of unionism or seniority or educational background or job requirement, all of which surface in the selection process. Excluding the municipal school system, the greatest concentration of black people in city government is on the garbage truck.

**Q: Mrs. Davage, what type of obstacles would you cite that need to be removed or eliminated, or lessened to some degree, to allow blacks to have a total involvement in Middletown or Wesleyan?**

A: The barriers to city employment and college employment for qualified minorities must be removed through, perhaps, a very effective affirmative action plan. There are many people in the city who would quarrel with Wesleyan's total commitment to a meaningful affirmative action plan. For almost two years now, the city has been grappling with the concepts of an affirmative action plan and we seem little closer today than we were two years ago when the proposals were first made. There remain inhibitive factors that could make Middletown and Wesleyan viable communities providing decent and adequate housing, a suitable environment and expanded economic opportunities for the citizens of low and moderate income especially. Large parts of the slums of the South Street locale have been transplanted to Traverse Square and Maplewood Terrace. One wonders if this heavy ethnic concentration is deliberate or coincidental. Not that the city needed the admonition from Patrick Moynihan, but there operates a policy of benign neglect towards minorities, especially poor and black people, in the city.

**Q: Are there any other barriers that you are aware of?**

A: Yes. Some of the other barriers that must be eliminated include poor health and nutrition, the inability to communicate in English, the absence of marketable skills, inadequate or the absence of transportation facilities, limited day care, labor union monopoly, basic (mathematical) languages and discrimination. As we implied earlier, Wesleyan, like Middletown, has been a microcosm of the nation. Tokenism is still the rule rather than the exception. The half-hearted commitment is often more shadowy than substantive. The absence of the will is what I call it, and that remains a major deterrent to full equality. Discrimination, racism, racial prejudice are endemic to the system. Wesleyan is viewed by many people as the epitome of the establishment in its values and

in its modus operandi. America remains, by and large, a nation of, by and for white people, and the priorities of racial equality are not necessarily given the front-burner treatment. Since its introduction in Andrew Jackson's administration, the "spoils" system has been deemed as a necessary evil in the political process. One who observes local politics will have no difficulty identifying the fruits of party patronage by ethnic distribution. The powers that garner the vote, however, are not so magnanimous in the division of the spoils among their black supporters. Of course, blacks must share some of the reproach for not developing and using their political clout to greater advantage. There still remains in this city a callous disregard for the sensibilities of black people. No other ethnic group in the city would have been asked to acquiesce to the indignities of the recent Elks episode. The most tragic phase of the whole debacle was that the Democratic Party and the community, except for a few decent consciences, accepted it as a part of the established order. When one or two of the officials were questioned about the episode with the Elks, I thought the most tragic phase of the whole incident was his response that it was "unfortunate". That was the most that they could give in terms of a response. This incident, perhaps, tells us as much about Middletown as it does about the Elks. Elected officials, men of the establishment, financiers, educators, lawyers, doctors and the news media, all who call themselves law-abiding citizens, men and people who believe in the "American Dream", were most conspicuous by their silence. Another indication of the lack of commitment in the city, and perhaps of the college, is that when the call is made for austere budgets, either at Wesleyan or at City Hall, it is not difficult to gauge the intensity of commitment. The last hired, first fired syndrome of industry becomes operative.

**Q: Earlier in our conversations we talked about housing problems of blacks in Middletown. When you and your husband bought your home, did you experience any problems?**

A: Oh, did we ever! Our search for a home was thwarted by overt and covert acts of discrimination. Our determination prevailed, however. There are still unwritten codes of housing quotas and steering. Much of it is done by the "Gentlemen's Agreement".

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