The Civil Rights Movement on Long Island:

A Local History Curriculum Guide for Middle School and High School

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Teaching about the Civil Rights Movement on Long Island

by Alan Singer

Most middle school and high school students see history as something that happened in the distant past (defined as before they were born) and in far away places, that has little impact on their lives. A study of the civil rights movement on Long Island during the 1960's provides social studies teachers with a powerful tool for challenging these conceptions. These events happened here, happened during the life time of their parents, defined currently exisiting institutions and communities, and continue to shape the attitudes of Long Islanders (including our students) about issues like race relations and social justice. In addition, they illustrate the interplay of local and national forces.

The same qualities that make this topic contemporary, interesting and valuable for students, also make it controversial and potentially explosive for the classroom. Because racial conflicts during the 1960's were not resolved on Long Island or in the United States, racial tension simmers below the surface in many communities and students still live with prejudices and stereotypes about other racial and ethnic groups. Teaching the material in this curriculum guide requires careful preparation and sensitivity. It also offers tremendous potential rewards as students begin to question their assumptions about the importance of understanding history and their ideas about and relationships with people whose cultures and experiences are different from theirs.

As social studies teachers examine this curriculum guide, they will quickly discover that the authors of the explanatory essays in this collection are not "neutral" in their summaries of the articles and issues they researched. In general, the guide presents the view that racial injustice was a major factor in life on Long Island during the 1960's, and that it continues to influence the ways that Black, white, Latino, and Asian people in Nassau and Suffolk Counties live today. However, instead of presenting our conclusions to middle school and high school students as historical fact, the curriculum guide attempts to provide students with documents that will allow them to draw their own historical conclusions. Key to this effort are interviews with Dr. Eugene Reed, a civil rights activists who spearheaded drives to challenge racial discrimination on Long Island, Frank Phillips and Emil Cianciulli, who discuss efforts to integrate Great Neck public schools, and former State Senator and Congressman Norman Lent, who represented white homeowners in their battle to preserve neighborhood schools in Malverne. The interviews allow advocates for different positions to discuss events as they experienced and understood them and provide students with multiple perspectives on major controversies. Social studies themes woven throughout this curriculum guide include the idea that in a democratic society like the United States, the "rights" and aspirations of different social groups and individuals frequently conflict and that these conflicts are not easily resolved.

The curriculum guide committee shortened and edited most of the newspaper articles to eliminate street addresses and focus attention on particular topics. However, language was not changed and the committee believes that the editing leaves both the meaning and tone of the articles intact. For example, the word "nigger" was not removed from an article that appeared in the New York Times on September 23, 1963.

The committee recommends that prior to beginning the study of this material in class, teachers and students agree to basic guidelines for discussions. For example, articles use the terms "colored", Negro, and Black, to describe African Americans. Also, Black is used as a group name and is capitalized, while white is used as a collective term to describe people and is written in lower case. Students need to understand that both language and the way that people identify themselves individually and collectively changes over time. They also need to discuss the way that language impacts on people and the importance of individual sensitivity and respect for groups within their classroom community.

How to Use this Curriculum Guide

This curriculum guide on the struggle for civil rights on Long Island is intended as a local history supplement to a broader unit on the civil rights movement in the 1950's and 1960's. It can be adapted for use in either 8th or 11th grade United States history classes or for a 12th grade Government class. Below are a number of possible ways to include this material in a curriculum.

Thematic unit - The entire package can be used as the basis for a thematic unit on the civil rights movement on Long Island encouraging students to view local events in a national context and from multiple perspectives.

Lesson materials that focus on local events - Individual documents provide local material for lessons on school integration, racial discrimination, and responses to the civil rights movement.

Individual research reports - Students can use the document packages as source materials to write research reports on the civil rights struggle on Long Island.

Material for a sample DBQ essay - Teachers can select documents for students to use to write practice DBQ essays in preparation for the American history AP test.

Evaluating historical essays - Students can use the historical essays in this package and the document collections to learn how to take notes and to evaluate the ways that historians use sources to construct history understanding. Students can decide whether they draw similar conclusions from the documents.

Oral history projects - Students can read the oral histories, design questionnaires, conduct interviews, and write oral history reports on their town during the civil rights movement or another historical period. Oral histories can be assembled into a local history magazine or placed on a world wide web site.

Local history projects - The reports drawn from the documents can provide models for local history research papers on other topics or towns.

Guest Speakers - Adults who lived through this era can examine the documents with a class and discuss their experience and memories with students.

Cooperative learning teams - Document packages on different topics are assigned to cooperative learning teams to read and evaluate. Teams report their findings to the rest of the class.

Expert groups - In classes that regularly employ cooperative learning teams, students can be reassigned to "experts groups" to study the different topics in this package. After completing research, "experts" return to their home teams and teach other team members about what they discovered.

Classroom dialogues - The class is divided into two or more teams. The teams use the document package as supporting evidence to discuss a broad issue like the conflict between civil rights for African Americans and property rights and freedom of choice for white families, or whether government should challenge individual prejudice or group racism.

1- The Origins of the Long Island Civil Rights Movement

by Severin Cornelius

Social studies curricula generally portray the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's as a struggle to end racial segregation in the southern part of the United States, especially the deep southern states of Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. However, an important part of the civil rights struggle was fought in the north, including in several Long Island communities where terrorism and discrimination were used to maintain racial segregation. Many of the problems that confront Long Island today are a result of the inability of Nassau and Suffolk counties to resolve issues related to racism and social justice over twenty-five years ago.

Historians tend to identify organizations like the Ku Klux Klan with the south, but clandestine racist groups existed on Long Island from the 1920's through the 1960's. In the decade after World War I, Long Island was a major site of a resurgent Klan that tried to intimidate recent Catholic and Jewish immigrants to the United States. Some local historians estimate that in the mid-1920's, over 20,000 Long Island residents were Klan members, including the Freeport chief of police and three Suffolk County Republican Party chairmen. In 1922, the Klan burned a cross in a Catholic and Jewish neighborhood of Freeport and in 1924, 6,000 Klansmen marched through the town. In 1928, an estimated 8,000 people were at a cross-burning in Wantagh.[1]

Paul W. F. Linder, a real estate developer from Malverne who was President of the Homeland Corporation, was also the Great Titan of the New York State Klan. Because of his role in the development of Malverne, a street and an elementary school were named after him. In July 1926, a Klan fair called a Klorero was held in Mineola and it was attended by thousands of Long Island residents. A fund-raising journal published in conjunction with the festivities recorded donations from hundreds of Long Island businesses, organizations, and individuals, including the Women's Welfare League of Suffolk County, The Bellmore Press, The Northport Observer, The Hempstead Sentinel, the Oceanside National Bank, the Lindenhurst Police Department, and the First Reformed Church of West Sayville.[2]

Even though the Klan fell into eclipse in the 1930's, racial intimidation continued, and it was increasingly aimed at Long Island's Black population. In towns like Amityville, Central Islip, East Meadow, and Setauket, groups tried to intimidate African American residents by defacing property with hate symbols and through cross burnings.[3] African American groups countered these attacks by intensifying their campaigns against racism and by demanding increased police protection.[4]

Frequently during the 1960's, Black residents of Long Island felt that police officers were more inclined to harass than to protect them. In January 1966, Newsday reported charges by CORE that alleged police brutality in the arrest of a man from Hempstead. On July 29, 1966, The New York Times documented an incident in North Amityville where Suffolk police blocked the main roads leading into this predominantly African American community after a series of incidents following an outdoor rally whose aim was to improve community-police relations. At the rally and in the article, African Americans accused police officers of regularly using abusive language, including the term "nigger."[5] Actions by white officials often frustrated young Blacks and incited rioting. In an unusually violent episode in 1966, Black youths in the Carleton Park section of Central Islip responded to what they considered police harassment of an African American man by assaulting the two police officers.[6]

Much of the racial conflict on Long Island had economic roots. Real-estate brokers exacerbated racism for their own economic gain. Brokers profited from the fears of white people. According to the New York Times, in the early 1960's they began "a strong campaign of 'block-busting' or inducing scare selling" in Port Jefferson, Freeport and East Meadow.[7]

In many towns, white residents opposed racially integrating schools or allowing Black teachers to teach their children. In 1957, the N.A.A.C.P. charged that many Black education

students from New York City public colleges were being discouraged from applying for jobs on Long Island.[8]

Efforts to expose discrimination against African American teacher candidates was part of a larger struggle against job discrimination. Throughout this period, civil rights groups pressured large businesses on Long Island to hire African Americans. According to a Newsday article from January, 1963, "The Long Island effort to combat discrimination in hiring practices is part of a large-scale campaign by C.O.R.E. in the Metropolitan area. The organization is currently organizing a boycott by shoppers against the products produced by Sealtest Foods, a large dairy firm."[9]

Campaigns by the Congress of Racial Equality against job discrimination set off sharp conflict on Long Island and stirred up opposition in the white community. When Lincoln Lynch, the head of the Nassau County chapter of CORE, targeted the Franklin National Bank for its failure to hire employees from minority groups, he was charged with forcing companies to hire employees based on their race. A Newsday editorial accused Lynch of "sowing the seeds of disunity" and provoked an exchange of letters involving Lynch and other community activists. Despite these criticisms, CORE's activism successfully forced companies to end discriminatory hiring practices.[10] Four years later, Lynch and CORE were again in the news as they led the campaign to integrate the all-white Hempstead Volunteer Fire Department.[11]

While the leading proponents of the civil rights movement on Long Island during the 1960's were CORE and the NAACP, churches, either acting independently or in coalition with these groups, also played a major role in the struggle. Local religious leaders were influential as mediators between civil rights activists and opponents of racial integration, organized groups like the Huntington Township Committee on Human Rights and the Freeport Community Relations Council, appealed to the individual morality of members of their congregations, brought together people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and participated in protests and meetings.[12]

An important figure on Long Island during this period was the Reverend Walter P. Kellenberg, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Rockville Centre. In an article in the Hempstead Beacon, Kellenberg declared, "The principle and most difficult problem facing our country and each of its citizens today is the struggle for Civil Rights . . . .The Declaration of Independence states what is also an incontrovertible fact of Christian teaching, that all men are created equal. . . . But the problem of unequal treatment amongst men is really a moral one. . . . (F)or this reason it is necessary that each individual examine his own conscience in matters of interracial and social justice."[13]

Despite gains during the Civil Rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's, most African American children in the United States continue to attend segregated and unequal schools. "Nationally, . . . (t)hree-fourths of all Black children attend schools that are 90% minority, and this situation is acute in the nation's 26 largest cities."[14] This pattern is replicated in Long Island's public schools, where the failure to create stable, racially integrated communities during the 1960's, has produced a checkerboard pattern of racial segregation and unequal school funding. In Nassau and Suffolk Counties, residents of poorer, predominantly minority communities often pay higher property tax rates, but because of an unequal distribution of commercial establishments and differences in property values, less money is spent on the education of their children. For example, in primarily white, relatively affluent, Hauppauge, residents pay an average of $2,100 in school taxes on houses assessed at $60,000, while the district spends $13,300 to educate each child. However in Brentwood, where 65% of students are either African American or Latino/a, residents pay an average of $3,000 in school taxes on houses assessed at $35,000, but the district spends only $9,700 per child.[15]

In his book, Out of Our Past: The Forces That Shaped Modern America, historian Carl Degler described the post-Civil War era in the United States as a "Dawn Without Noon" for African Americans. The end of slavery promised so much, but Reconstruction delivered so little. In many ways, the struggle for civil rights on Long Island in the 1950's and 1960's repeated this pattern.

High hopes for change were dashed by stiff opposition from white opponents of integration and the deep roots and tenacity of institutional segregation and racism.[16]

Documents: 1A) The Ku Klux Klan on Long Island

Helpful Vocabulary

Ku Klux Klan - A whites-only organization that started in the South after the Civil War. It used violence to prevent African Americans from receiving equal rights. It also opposed political rights for Catholics, Jews, and immigrants. A Kleagle was a high ranking official in the Klan.

Hooded and White-Robed Representatives Hold Meeting in Freeport
Speakers Attack Jews In Part Of The Meeting To Which Reporters Were Admitted
Newspaper Men Told To "Write What You Like" But To Be "Fair To Us"
Nassau Daily Review, September 9, 1922

Freeport residents were startled last night by the appearance on Railroad Avenue of several members of the Ku Klux Klan entering Mechanics Hall, robed in the regalia of the order. About 150 prospective members met at Mechanics Hall and seven delegates of the Klan were in charge.

Crowd Sees Klan Give Gold Purse and Flag, *Nassau Daily Review, January 12, 1925*

East Rockaway -- More than 300 people crowded into the little Church of the Nazarene last night, to watch the presentation of a silk American flag and a purse of gold to the church by the men and women of the Ku Klux Klan of Lynbrook. About forty members of the order in full regalia but without masks marched into the church and took places in the front pews. The Rev. Paul Hill received the gift and thanked the Klan for its generosity.

K.K.K. Gives Church Flags and Purse , *Nassau Daily Review, March 9, 1925*

Hempstead-- Led by Paul Linder of Malverne, of the Ku Klux Klan in Nassau County, 189 members of the Klan, including 85 women members, marched in the First Baptist Church at the Sunday evening service, and presented two flags and a purse of gold to Pastor Rundle. There was a big crowd of people on hand, which filled the church to overflowing. After the congregation had sung a hymn, the martial strains of "Onward, Christian Soldiers" were struck up on the organ, and the file of Klansmen began, down the center aisle, led by the cross of the Klan and flags. The members of the Klan wore hoods and robes, but were not masked. Pastor Rundle expressed the appreciation of his congregation and himself. The Kleagle then gave a stirring address, telling of the ideals of the Ku Klux Klan and denying that the Klan is against any religion or class. He said that the Klan has as much right to exist as various other orders.

Long Island Klan Initiates 1,000 at Holiday Fete, *N.Y. Herald Tribune, July 5, 1927*

Lindenhurst -- More than 10,000 members of the Ku Klux Klan of Queens, Nassau and Suffolk counties, who had been prevented by the New York police from marching in parades, celebrated the Fourth of July in a ten acre field east of this town. More than 1,000 persons, about 400 hundred of them children, were received into the order. During the evening there were patriotic speeches, fireworks and the burning of a forty-foot cross.

Klan Celebration Scares Residents of Valley Stream,
Nassau Daily Review, February 23, 1928

Three flaming crosses in three different sections of Valley Stream lighted up the sky at midnight yesterday to bring out the entire fire department of the village in a general alarm. Each cross was set in the woods around the village, one near the South drive, another in the eastern section near Cochran place, and the third in the woods to the west of the village. The police believe the crosses were a part of the celebration of Washington's birthday by members of the Ku Klux Klan.

Questions

1- How did the Ku Klux Klan win support from some Long Island churches?
2- In your opinion, why did Klan members burn crosses and parade in "full regalia"?
3- According to Klan leaders, they had the same rights as any other group. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

1B) Long Islanders Recognize the Problem of Racial Discrimination

80 LIers Will Parade For Integration Unit, *Newsday, November 7, 1958*

Huntington -- More than 80 Long Islanders are expected to take part in the Oct. 25 "Youth March for Integrated Schools" in Washington D.C. Mrs. Richard L. Rhodes of Tall Tree Ct., Huntington, said yesterday that at least two bus loads of Long Island residents would join 41 bus loads from New York City for the afternoon march past the Capitol. She said the marchers "will demonstrate our unity with the embattled children of the south who strive heroically to defend democracy in education."

Nassau Sets Up Rights Unit, *New York Times, May 10, 1962*

Mineola, L.I., May 9 -- The formation of a twenty-seven member Nassau County Committee on Human Rights "to guard against conflicts arising from discriminatory practices," was announced today by County Executive Eugene H. Nickerson. He said the advisory committee, which will serve without pay, would survey existing and anticipated conflicts in the county and make recommendations.

Long Beach Pledges Fight On Race Bias, *New York Times, June 1, 1963*

Long Beach, L.I., May 31 -- City officials here declared their intention today to "work unstintingly and constructively to remove all forms of racial discrimination from the City of Long Beach." The statement was issued after a three-hour meeting with representatives of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Congress of Racial Equality. The meeting had been called in an attempt to ease tensions that grew out of sit-ins started last March by the civil rights groups to protest sub-standards housing.

The Struggle for Civil Rights, *Hempstead Beacon, August 14, 1963*

Pastoral letter of the most Reverend Walter P. Kellenberg, D.D., Bishop of Rockville Centre, read at all the masses throughout the diocese (Nassau and Suffolk Counties) on Sunday, August 11, 1963.

Dearly Beloved:

The principal and most difficult problem facing our Country and each of its citizens today is the struggle for civil rights. As your Bishop, it is my duty to remind you of certain facts that sometimes become obscured with the rapidly changing news of the day. The Declaration of Independence states what is also an incontrovertible fact of Christian teaching--that all men are created equal. All men come from God, and all are equally called by God to salvation.

Because pride, prejudice and selfishness have closed the minds and hearts of so many to the truth, efforts have been made to pass legislation which will help make men equal. Law is a necessary cure of those evils which for so long have deprived minority groups of the their rights in American life and society.

But the problem of unequal treatment amongst men is really a moral one, and each individual conscience must recognize it as such. For this reason it is necessary that each individual examine his own conscience in matters of interracial and social justice. It means also, that each individual must study and acquaint himself with the facts about discrimination and the harm it does to all. It is further necessary that each of us by private and public prayer beg the Good God, unceasingly, to teach Americans that only equal opportunity for all can make the American dream of justice a reality for all of our citizens.

Questions:

1- Why was the Nassau County Committee on Human Rights established?
2- Which organizations led the campaign against racial discrimination in Long Beach?
3- Why does Reverend Kellenberg believe he must challenge racial discrimination?
4- Write a letter to Reverend Kellenberg explaining your reaction to his statement.

1C) Is there a wrong way to challenge discrimination?

LI Negroes Let Race Down, *Newsday, January 2, 1963*

Garden City -- Lincoln Lynch, Long Island chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), described Long Island last night as a place where the Negro is subject at all levels to the discrimination and segregation. And he heaped the bulk of the blame on the Negro himself for accepting the situation. "Here in Nassau County," Lynch said, ". . . racial discrimination and segregation cry out loud for correction. . . .

Lynch startled the predominantly Negro audience . . . by asserting that the Negro was engaged in a "mad scramble to. . . acquire the trappings and false values dictated by the same society which holds him in contempt." He said, "that in such strivings, the Negro has forgotten that he cannot attain freedom until all Negroes have freedom." He urged Long Island Negroes to prepare and finance lawsuits, to badger elective officials for legislation, to picket or sit-in or boycott, if necessary, to win equal rights.

Right Way, Wrong Way: Editorial, *Newsday, January 3, 1963*

That a subtle form of discrimination against Negroes exists on Long Island cannot be denied. But the way to remedy situations is not, so to speak, by crying "Fire!" in a crowded theater. That appears to be the solution espoused by Lincoln Lynch, Long Island chairman of . . . CORE.

When Lynch urges as a remedy a barrage of lawsuits, an unrelenting pressure on public officials, along with pickets, sit-ins and boycotts, he is crying "Fire!" That is not the way to win equality in the North, which is acutely aware of its own shortcomings and equally aware that its soldiers freed the slaves. The solution in the future as in the immediate past is the continuously accelerating but patient movement toward interracial understanding that has already gained a foothold in some communities and should be extended to all.

The answer is not to call to arms. The answer is the gradual absorption of the Negro into the American community on every level. . . . Time, and not very much of it, is a far better catalyst, a far better solution to an acknowledged problem that is rapidly working out anyway.

The Negro and "White Ghettos" on Long Island: Letter to the Editor
Newsday, January 10, 1963

West Hempstead -- Like many white liberals, the main thrust of your editorial is the tired, hackneyed (usual) and limpid (weak) plea for time. You ought to know better. Time is neutral; it is no assurance of anything. Time permitted Hitler to murder 6,000,000 Jews. Time permitted the South between 1865 and 1919 to lynch more than one hundred Negroes each year. Time has permitted real estate brokers in Nassau to perpetuate white ghettos and Negro slums.

The Plight of the Negro on Long Island: Letter to the Editor
Newsday, January 15, 1963

Levittown -- I feel it is necessary to point out certain of your misinterpretations of my remarks before the NAACP dinner in Garden City on New Year's Day. First of all, what Long Island CORE, the NAACP, and other organizations are doing about discrimination on Long Island is a far cry from yelling "'fire' in a crowded theater." Calling "help" while sinking in a morass (swamp) of quicksand would be more accurate. We are trying not to inflame, but to arouse. The Negro in America feels that too much time has elapsed and that his "absorption ... into the American community" has been all too gradual. To quote Martin Luther King, "Time unused is the ally of no man." Long Island CORE rejects categorically this theory of gradualism. The Negro himself must realize that he has the opportunity, the responsibility, and the means to change this second-class status which has been forced upon him for over 100 years of "freedom." - Lincoln O. Lynch

Questions:

1- What methods did Lincoln Lynch advocate to challenge racial discrimination on Long Island?
2- Why does the Newsday editorial criticize Lincoln Lynch?
3- Which view or views in this controversy do you agree with? Why?

1D) Combating Job Bias - Can we overcome past discrimination?

LI Schools Biased In Teacher Hiring, NAACP Aide Says, *Newsday, February 11, 1957*

Hempstead -- An official of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People charged yesterday that a "near-conspiracy" between college placement agencies and local school authorities cheats qualified Negroes out of teaching jobs in Nassau, and Suffolk. Jawn A. Sandifer, the NAACP's state legal redress commissioner, said his association had checked more than 150 Negro education students at New York City colleges. He said the survey found that all had been told it would be "useless" for them to apply for jobs. Although there are now several Negro teachers in Nassau, Sandifer claimed that placement divisions at New York City schools such as City, Queens, Brooklyn, and Hunter Colleges and at Columbia and New York Universities discourage Negroes from applying for Long Island teaching jobs.

School Aides Hit Charge Of LI Hiring Bias, *Newsday, February 12, 1957*

College placement bureaus and Long Island school officials vigorously denied yesterday that racial bias is cheating qualified Negro teachers out of jobs in Nassau and Suffolk. But their denials came in the face of admissions by two leading New York City teachers colleges that "it's tough for Negroes to get jobs in Long Island." The teacher placement directors at both Columbia Teachers College and City College acknowledged that the odds are heavily against Negro applicants for jobs in Long Island schools. Both, however, joined other school officials in denying charges by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People that a "near conspiracy" between placement bureaus and school boards had created the racial barrier.

CORE Wins Job Agreement at LI Bank, *Newsday, January 17, 1963*

Franklin Square -- The Franklin National Bank and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) announced agreement yesterday on a hiring system by the bank that calls for the employment of at least 50 non-white permanent and at least 12 non-white temporary employees. The agreement, which did not specify the types of jobs to filled, is the first of its kind between a Long Island firm and the militant rights organization. . . The bank currently employees 1,200 persons, 16 of whom are Negroes. The Long Island effort to combat discrimination in hiring practices is part of a large-scale campaign by CORE in the metropolitan area.

CORE and More Jobs: Editorial, *Newsday, January 17, 1963.*

It wasn't necessary for the militant Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to spell out what would happen to the Franklin National Bank if it did not sign an agreement to hire more Negroes and Puerto Ricans. CORE is currently conducting a boycott by shoppers against Sealtest Foods, a large dairy firm, where its members seek to impose a figure or a percentage for the hiring of non-whites during 1963. Franklin quickly realized the implications and fell into line: at least ten non-whites will be hired in "non-menial" jobs during the next 30 days.

This is a thoroughly unpleasant effort to achieve a good end, the abolition of racial discrimination in business houses. That end is sought through the Fair Employment Practices Act, which bars such discrimination, and through a presidential proclamation aiming for the same worthy result. However, CORE does not want to wait for patient progress. In the words of Lincoln Lynch, president of its Long Island chapter, "We want action, immediate action." Action through boycott should always be a last resort, and more times than not is reprehensible. In this instance, it smacks of discrimination in reverse.

We don't like this sort of blackjack approach to a grave national problem. CORE is sowing the seeds of disunity and this country may rather reap the whirlwind.

Hempstead Group Lists Bias Demands, *Newsday, February 17, 1967*

Hempstead -- A committee of civil rights and civic groups announced yesterday a list of demands to the village government involving housing employment and municipal services. The organization, calling itself the Hempstead Committee for Action Now, has been backing a campaign to desegregate the Hempstead Volunteer Fire Department. Their statement also set forth alleged grievances of Negroes on other matters. The committee includes representatives of churches, civic associations and social groups in addition to the Long Island Congress of Racial Equality and youth and adult branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The committee also demanded that more Negroes be hired in all branches of village government. Local officials have said that they cannot find qualified Negroes for the police department and other jobs. The demands also included greater police protection in Negro sections and an end to alleged inferior garbage collection in these areas. Village officials have denied that discrimination exists in these services.

Hempstead Office Puts 125 Negroes in Jobs, *Newsday, September 1, 1967*

Hempstead -- An official of the newly formed Village of Hempstead Employment Opportunity Corp, hailing the agency's progress, said that it has found jobs for about 125 persons. Clarence Newallo, chairman of the board of the agency, said that more than 180 persons have been sent out as job candidates, "but demand has been great that these people, in their excitement haven't called back to confirm they have the jobs."

The job finding organization was formed last month as a private undertaking of Hempstead businessmen to find at least 400 new jobs for village Negroes. The $36,000 program is operating without government help of any kind, depending completely upon money contributed by local business leaders.

Newallo said Negroes were placed in scores of firms including the Long Island Lighting Co., Abraham and Strauss and the New York Telephone Company. He added that the reaction of the Negro community to the plan was skeptical at first, but "now they are getting confidence in the program."

Questions:

1- Why did the NAACP protest against actions by New York City colleges?
2- How did colleges and school officials respond to these accusations?
3- Why did civil rights groups charge the town of Hempstead with racial bias?
4- The Newsday editorial describes CORE as "militant"? In your opinion, is this meant as a compliment or a criticism? Explain your answer.
5- According to these articles, what jobs were successfully integrated by CORE?
6- In your opinion, were the protests organized by CORE justified? Explain your answer.

1E) Racial Tension Builds on Long Island

L.I. Cross-Burning Attacks N.A.A.C.P., *New York Times, September 23, 1963*

Amittyville, L.I., September 22 -- A cross was burned here early today in front of the office of Dr. Eugene T. Reed, president of the state conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The Suffolk County police said the charred remains were discovered about 1 A.M. in front of Dr. Reed's office. A note tacked to the front door said: "We ain't going to your nigger school - down with the N.A.A.C.P." Dr. Reed, a dentist who lives in Islip, said he had ignored thousands of crank letters and calls in his three years as president of the state conference. "I cannot ignore this, however," he said. He said he would seek police protection. Dr. Reed said the note probably stemmed from recent protests by the N.A.A.C.P. of de facto segregation of the North Amityville schools.

A Negro Questions White Americans: Letter to the Editor, *Newsday, January 4, 1964*

Hewlett -- Why is it that most white Americans refuse to . . . understand what it means to be a Negro in this country? Though you treat us with the injustice of a Hitler for a Jew, we give you the respect of a fellow citizen. Though you rob us of our resources, culture and history, we treat you like a human being and brother. You the white man are very quick to point out the advancements of other ethnic groups who have experienced discrimination in one form or another. Somehow you always leave out the basic difference between the two groups - color. Some ethnic groups are discriminated against because of religion, the spelling of one's name and so on, most of which can be changed if desired. The Negro enjoys no such privileges. One's color can never be changed.

Racism, Money Hot Hempstead Issues, *Newsday, March 12, 1965*

Hempstead -- Voters here will elect a mayor, two trustees, and a police justice Tuesday after a three-way campaign in which sporadic charges of racism and financial bungling have been hurled at the incumbents. Murray Chanin of the Village Improvement Party, Herbert Mirschel of the Fusion Party and Walter B. Ryan of the Taxpayers Protective Party are running for mayor. The campaign has been marked by verbal blasts from Chanin and Mirschel at Ryan and the Taxpayers Party. . . . Mirschel has accused the incumbents of excluding Negroes and Jews from the village board because of prejudice and of downsizing Negro residential areas. . . . Ryan has offered to donate $1,000 to charity if anyone can prove he had acted with prejudice as a village official.

Negroes New Setauket House Marked Twice by Klan's 'KKK', *Newsday, May 3, 1965*

Setauket -- A home purchased by a Negro couple in a new housing development was defaced over the weekend by "KKK" lettering. Residents of Bobcat Lane in the Heatherwood housing development said that the symbol of the Ku Klux Klan had been painted in red, three-foot-high letters on the side of the $15,000 home at No. 21 and in eight-inch letters on a front shutter of the unoccupied house.

Probe Asked on Bircher School Talk, *Newsday, April, 1, 1966*

East Meadow -- The chairman of two groups opposing the East Meadow School Board said last night they are asking the State Education Department to investigate why a member of the John Birch Society is being allowed to speak today at W. Tresper Clark High School. . . . Joseph Malone, a social studies teacher at the school and sponsor of the student club, said Werner was invited to speak because students felt they would like to hear a conservative view on civil rights. He added that a civil rights worker . . . appeared before the club last fall and that a speaker from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was scheduled later this year.

Cause of Trouble Eludes L.I. Area, *New York Times, May 3, 1966*

Central Islip, L.I., May 2 -- On Saturday, at 1 A.M., . . . Nathaniel Ford, a 30-year old Negro, was arrested for speeding at Beech and McKinney Streets by two Suffolk County policemen. Nearby, a party was in progress. Several of those at the party said they had heard the policemen

call Mr. Ford a "black so-and-so," and they rushed out. One 17-year-old boy said the police were pushing Mr. Ford around. Both charges were denied by the police. The crowd that gathered grabbed revolvers from the policemen and started shooting. Patrolman Edward Michael, 24, was hit three times in the leg with slugs from his own .38-caliber revolver. Patrolman George Forrester, 23, of Bellport, was beaten.

A Half-Million Whites Left City From 1960-1964, Figures Show,
New York Times, May 5, 1966

An exodus of about half a million white persons from New York City between 1960 and 1964 was disclosed in population estimates released yesterday by the City Health Department. The exodus was only partly offset by an increase of less then 400,000 in non-whites and Puerto Ricans during the period. What actually is happening, population experts say, is that the middle-class fight to the suburbs is continuing and non-whites and Puerto Ricans are taking part in it. Similar movements are taking place in every metropolis and large city of the country.

Negroes Slam 2 LI Parties, *Newsday, February 6, 1967*

Mineola -- The Nassau Democratic Party called on top Negro civil rights and church leaders last night to help in a bipartisan voter registration drive only to hear the Negroes issue a bipartisan threat to boycott both major parties unless Negroes are placed on the ballots. Mel Jackson, chairman of the Long Island Congress of Racial Equity, said he was "sick and tired of having Democrats and Republicans alike ask us to register black people and ask us to get out the vote, when neither party is dong anything to help us." Using the meeting in county Democratic headquarters as a forum to express their grievances against both Democrats and Republicans, Negro leaders said they would work to register Negroes all right, but as independents.

Oceanside Residents Jeer Civil-Rights Unit, *Newsday, July 16, 1967*

Oceanside -- The Oceanside Committee for Human Rights drew a clapping, whistling, jeering audience of 275 last night at its first public meeting. Angry exchanges between speakers and the audience punctuated the meeting. Ray Klein, moderator for the meeting, announced that a tentative steering committee had suggested three projects for prospective members - to seek active recruitment of Negro school teachers and hospital and professional workers, to seek the cooperation of the business district in hiring more Negroes and to engage in education programs for the "inevitability of local and nationwide integration."

Some residents of Oceanside, a community of 30,000 white persons and five Negro families, questioned the "inevitability." The atmosphere was tense from the start of the sessions. Some audience members said they wanted their children to get to know Negroes, to have Negro teachers and attend classes with Negro children. Others said qualified Negro teachers were now becoming accepted when they applied. Some thought Negroes should be sought out for the school system. One man said: "If there are no colored children in Oceanside, we don't have to have any (Negro teachers). Colored teachers should go up to Harlem and teach those children." The statement was met with yells of "yeah" and enthusiastic applause.

Questions:

1- What major demographic change is affecting race relations on Long Island?
2- What tactics were used to intimidate African Americans who challenged racial segregation?
3- What is the author of "A Negro Questions White Americans" trying to explain?
4- Why are some African Americans suspicious that whites will not support racial justice?
5- If you attended the meeting in Oceanside, how would you have responded to the man who said: "Colored teachers should go up to Harlem and teach those children"? Why?

1F) Martin Luther King, Jr. Speaks at Hofstra University

sources: *Newsday*, June 14, 1965; *The New York Times*, January 19, 1986. Tape of the 1965 Hofstra University commencement, Hofstra University archives.

On June 13, 1965, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. received an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity at the Hofstra University graduation ceremony. University President Dr. Clifford Lord praised Dr. King's "courageous leadership in the struggle to uphold the principles of a true democracy of all men -- whatever their race or belief -- and for unflagging devotion to the principles of love and reconciliation." The theme of Dr. King's acceptance speech was, "We have inherited a big house, a great world house, in which we have to live together, black and white, Easterners and Westerners, gentiles and Jews, Protestants and Catholics."

Dr. King's address received a standing ovation from the audience of almost 7,000 parents, students, and faculty members. According to John Rawlinson, a professor of history and director of the university's archives, "it was an inspirational speech." James Drayton of Bethpage, a member of the Hofstra class of 1965, remembers being "awed by the whole thing. He was a very dynamic man." A small group of demonstrators from a group called Long Island Committee to Preserve Our Freedom picketed the ceremony. They accused Dr. King of being un-American and a Communist. One demonstrator disrupted the ceremony and was removed by campus police.

Read the excerpts from the speech by Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and answer the questions that follow.

A) "Racial injustice is still the Negroes' burden and America's shame. While we have made strides in solving this problem, while we have seen progress here and there, we must honestly face the fact that we still have a long long way to go before the problem is solved. No section of our country can boast of clean hands in the area of brotherhood....Every individual of good will must work passionately and unrelentingly to get rid of racial injustice. We must start in our individual lives, we must work through various movements, and we must develop powerful and creative action programs to rid our nation of the last vestiges of segregation and discrimination. For in a real sense, if democracy is to live, segregation must die...."

B) "It is one thing for the white person of good will in the north....to rise up with righteous indignation when a bus is burned with freedom riders in Alabama, or when a church is bombed....., but it is just as important for the white person of good will in the north to rise up with righteous indignation when a Negro cannot live in your neighborhood or when a Negro cannot get a job in your particular firm, or when a Negro cannot join your particular professional or academic society, your fraternity or sorority. If this problem is to be solved, there must be a sort of divine discontent and a determination to work with all of the strength that we can muster until we can remove racial injustice from the body politic, realizing that it is a cancer in the body politic that must be removed before our moral and democratic health can be realized. Segregation is morally wrong and sinful."

Questions

1- According to President Lord, why was Martin Luther King, Jr. honored by Hofstra University?
2- In your opinion, should protesters have been allowed at the graduation ceremony? Why?
3- Do you agree with the decision to honor Dr. King? Explain your answer.
4- What did Dr. King mean when he said, "Racial injustice is still the Negroes' burden and America's shame"? Do you think this statement is still true today? Why?
5- How does Dr. King challenge white people in the north?
6- Pretend you were graduating from Hofstra University on June 13, 1965. Write a letter to Dr. King. In your letter, explain your reactions to his speech.

Oral History - Dr. Eugene Reed is a dentist who has lived in the Amityville area since the 1950's. He was the chairman of both the Suffolk and New York State National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Doris and Don Shaffer were active in the civil rights movement in Great Neck. Read the interviews with Dr. Reed and the Shaffers and answer the questions that follow them.

Dr. Eugene Reed and the Battle for Civil Rights on Long Island

by Clinton Grant and John Syffrard

During the 1960's, CORE and the NAACP were the strongest civil rights organizations on Long Island. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference worked more to the south. They weren't involved on Long Island. The student non-violent movement wasn't involved that much either.

I used to travel around upstate New York State as NAACP state president. In many places you had a substantial number of whites who were involved in the civil rights movement. But from whites on Long Island, we had minimal support. Most of the branches were all Black. Politically, we were ignored by both parties. The Republicans controlled most things at the time and they pretended as if we didn't even exist. The Democrats had no power. We got lip service from them. We didn't have Blacks holding any significant positions in county or town government.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was started to eliminate racism so that people would be judged like Martin Luther King said, by their character as opposed to the color of their skin. My mother was the first President of the first branch of the NAACP on Long Island. That goes back to the 1930's. My mother started the local NAACP when they had a showing of the Ku Klux Klan movie, "Birth of a Nation," in Glen Cove.

Once my mother took my sister, brother, and me to the movie house in Glen Cove. We were little kids. She told us where to sit so she could find us. When we got in there, they told us we had to sit in the balcony, because all colored people had to sit in the balcony. We said, "Mama wants us to sit here where she can find us." My sister got on the phone and called my mother. I remember my mother coming down and raising all kinds of threats and that broke that up.

On Long Island, people who were racists got away with many things when I was growing up. I remember once when I took my girl friend to a restaurant, we went in and sat down. After a while we noticed that we were not being served. When we asked what was happening, they told us that we were under age. We left, but I knew it was not the real reason. I had been there before with white kids and at those times we were served. It was because we were Black.

I remember in my earlier days, my father took us out for a Sunday ride into Hicksville. When we got there, the road was blocked off for a parade. It was a march of the KKK. They were marching down the streets in their sheets. This was not some place down in Georgia. This was right here.

I attended a high school where I was the only Black. I was subject to the usual things in that kind of atmosphere. When I finished high school, I determined that I wanted to go to a Black college. I went to Howard University in Washington DC. It had a whole different atmosphere.

Entering the Army

There was a big shortage of dentists in the army. They sent a telegram from the president of the United States saying that if I volunteered to join the army, I could go into any sphere of operation I wanted. I wanted to go to Europe and see what Europe was like. I got orders to go to New Jersey and an officer said they would cut orders for me to go to Japan, because "we can't send colored boys to Europe." I said, "I have a telegram from the President of the United States that says that I can go to Europe if I want to." I said, "I am going to file suit on this." The officer said, "Wait a minute. Be patient. Let me see what I can do for you!" Shortly, I got orders to go to Europe.

When I got to Europe, they had this great big clinic in Munich. But one of the officers took me in his jeep and brought me to an old bombed out building where there was a Black trucking battalion. He told me that this was where they were going to place me. It took them six week before they got anything done. When I left the service, I had built up a lot of resentment.

When I came out of the army, I didn't want to live in Glen Cove. I wanted to go someplace where there was a large Black community, where I could get involved. I heard about Amityville and I came here. I bought a house and immediately got involved with the local branch of the NAACP.

Long Island in the 1960's

On Long Island in the 1960's we used the courts and direct action to challenge racism. We did it with suits in court and appeals to Albany. There was a lot of picketing and boycotting and that sort of thing. The major problems were in education and housing. As Blacks, we faced all kinds of obstacles and we still do today. Education for Blacks was different from the education for the whites on Long Island. There was not a single Black teacher in either Nassau or Suffolk county until the fifties. It was a big fight to get districts to hire Black teachers. We overcame that, but still the Black teachers were treated differently from the white teachers.

On Long Island we had de facto school segregation; de facto means that racial segregation wasn't the law like in the south. But de facto segregation means that communities constructed schools according to the district lines and housing patterns. Black children lived in the same areas so they went to all Black schools.

In Amityville, the Board of Education decided that they would build two new schools in North Amityville. At that time the eastern part of North Amityville was all Black and the western side was white. Instead of building a school in North Amityville for everyone, they built two schools, one on the extreme eastern border of the district and one on the extreme western border. The district in North Amityville is only about a mile wide. It was obvious what the situation was. So we went to court and the Board of Regents finally forced the school board to open one of the schools for kindergarten to 3, I think, and the other for grades 4 to 6. This way all the kids went to school in North Amityville together, the schools were integrated. But we still had the problem of the principals and the staff and how they treated the children. Every year it gets harder. Today racism is not as clearly defined as it used to be so it becomes more difficult to deal with.

In the 1960's, a big health spa had a reputation for not accepting any Blacks. There was one in Massapequa, which is right next to Amityville, so we set up a trap. I went down with a white lawyer. I went in first. They said they had a long list of applicants and they were going to put me the top of the list. I walked out and the white guy walked in. They signed him up on the spot. We filed suit and they settled. They made a public statement that they would not discriminate against anyone anymore and offered me a free membership.

One of the big things we dealt with were the volunteer fire departments. At that time, the volunteer fire departments refused to accept Black applicants. They operated like private clubs or fraternities --as whites only clubs. They had to vote you in, but if you were Black, you didn't get voted in. In North Amityville and Wyandanch we were paying taxes to support the so-called volunteer fire departments. These were financed by the taxpayers of the towns and still Blacks could not participate. The fire department in North Amityville is now completely integrated. They even have a Black fire chief. But Wyandanch is still very resistant to integration. It is a Black community but I think they only have four Blacks in a fire department of almost 70 people.

Today, Blacks have achieved a much greater role in politics, though not as much as it should be. Some of that has to be attributed to affirmative action. Local governments were required to have an affirmative action program. They were supposed to, but many didn't until they were pressured by the N.A.A.C.P. I became the affirmative action officer for Suffolk County.

Some issues are still unresolved, like police brutality and the different way that police treat Black and white people. I remember once I was driving my sister-in-law, who looks like she is white. I was going to my summer home for the weekend. There is a little stretch of Sunrise Highway near Brightwater that many people didn't realize was a speed trap. You would be going 55 mph and suddenly you had to drop to 25 mph. I knew it because I was down there a few times. Once, a cop pulled me over for a ticket, even though I was not exceeding the speed limit. He wanted to know who was that woman in my car. I told him that I was the state president of the N.A.A.C.P. I said, "If you want to give me a ticket, do so, but who is in my car is none of your business." He decided to let me go. For years now, I haven't been pulled over to the side of the road, but young Black men are still pulled over all the time.

I think the major problem in America is denial. White people live in a state of hypocrisy. They deny that there is a color line. They claim that everything is rosy and they don't understand why Blacks are objecting and why Blacks are protesting. They feel that Blacks have equality, which we don't. Unless something happens to pull whites out of this denial, problems are going to

get bad. We have a rage within the Black community. This is difficult to explain. I think our youth have given up on striving to become a part of the whole system. They don't feel comfortable or that it is possible for them. It just does not look good.

Questions:
1- What childhood experiences influenced Dr. Reed to become a civil rights activist?
2- In your opinion, how did his experience in the army shape Dr. Reed's philosophy?
3- Dr. Reed describes a number of issues he was involved with on Long Island during the 1960's. Which do you consider the most important? Why?
4- How does Dr. Reed explain differences in racial discrimination in the past and today?
5- What are the major racial problems that Dr. Reed sees today?
6- If you could ask Dr. Reed a question about the Civil Rights movement on Long Island during the 1960's, what would you ask him? Why?
7- If Dr. Reed had asked you to join him in a protest march during the 1960's, would you have participated? Explain the reasons for your answer.

Doris and Donald Shaffer, Civil Rights Activists

by Robert Gault and Paul Henning

Doris and Don Shaffer have been political activists their entire lives. While students at Brooklyn College in the late 1940's, they helped organize protests when President Truman announced a peacetime military draft. After Don completed graduate courses at the University of Chicago, he returned to New York City and became a shop steward for District Council 65. During that period he became involved in protests at the Stuyvesant Town houses in Manhattan because this tax-subsidized housing development discriminated against racial minority groups in the selection of tenants.

When they moved to Great Neck in 1960, Don and Doris Shaffer helped found the Great Neck Committee for Human Rights. Many people in this organization had been involved in earlier progressive political causes. The Great Neck Committee for Human Rights published a newsletter and issued an anti-discrimination pledge that asked people not to discriminate against any racial or ethnic groups if they rented or sold their homes. Despite the widely held belief that property values would decline if Blacks moved into the community, approximately 1,000 Great Neck residents signed the pledge. To promote housing integration and combat "white flight" on Long Island, the Great Neck Committee also organized meetings in many other towns, including Rockville Centre, Roslyn, and East Meadow. In 1961, Jackie Robinson participated in a meeting sponsored by the committee at the Saddle Rock School in Great Neck. Robinson's support for housing equality on Long Island helped to give their cause respectability among the general public. At one point there were approximately thirty local human rights committees on Long Island.

Doris and Don Shaffer were active in the Mississippi Bail Fund. The group sponsored meetings to raise money to bail out northern college students and other civil rights activists who were challenging racial segregation laws in the south. The Shaffers take pride in the fact that two of the most successful fund-raising meetings in the United States, both attended by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., were held in Great Neck and Garden City. As a faculty member at Nassau County Community College, Doris also campaigned for non-discriminatory hiring practices and brought speakers like James Farmer to the campus.

Questions:
1- How did Doris and Don Shaffer support the civil rights movement?
2- Why was the Great Neck Committee for Human Rights concerned with "white flight"?

Political Cartoons

Town Meeting

2- Housing Discrimination on Long Island

by Stavros Kilimitzoglou

Racial bias was a major problem in the United States during the 1950's and 1960's. Examples of racial discrimination on Long Island were less dramatic than they were in many parts of the south and some urban centers. However, as events unfolded during the 1960's, it became apparent that they were deep seated and widespread. Among the more significant problems on Long Island was housing discrimination.

Many post-World War II suburban housing developments on Long Island were exclusively white. The best known of these developments was Levittown. Between 1946 and 1951, Levitt and Sons constructed 17,447 low-cost two and three bedroom homes in the region. Ninety percent of the units were purchased by the families of World War II veterans. Initially, Levitt and Sons included a clause in mortgage and rental agreements that restricted occupancy to "Caucasians," except for "domestic servants." Even after the clause was removed, the company still refused to sell or rent to African Americans. Of the 65,276 residents of Levittown in 1960, only 57 were Black, less than .1% of the population.[17]

Other Nassau communities that were virtually all white in 1960 included Massapequa Park (28 Black residents out of a total population of 19,904 people), Bellmore (8 Black residents out of a total population of 12,784 people), Massapequa (50 Black residents out of a total population of 32,900 people), and Plainedge (28 Black residents out of a total population of 21,933 people). A large percentage of the Black residents of these communities were women and probably served as domestic workers.[18]

The various federal and state civil rights acts of this period, including the Civil Rights Act of 1968 which banned discrimination in the sale, lease or rental of property, made racial discrimination less open, but did not successfully end it. According to the 1970 federal census, African Americans continued to be less than .1% of the population in Bethpage, Levittown, Massapequa Park, Franklin Square, Massapequa, and Wantagh. In other predominately white towns, including East Meadow, Oceanside, Hicksville, Merrick, Plainview, and Rockville Centre, the number of African American residents actually declined during the decade.[19] As a result of the pervasiveness of racial discrimination and segregation, African Americans remained deeply suspicious of Long Island governmental and legal institutions.

During the 1960's, the red-lining of certain communities by banks and mortgage agencies and blockbusting by real estate brokers contributed to housing segregation. In order to insure the continued profitability of their investments, lenders would refuse to issue mortgages to Black families who wanted to purchase homes in traditionally white communities. As a result or red-lining, Black buyers were only shown houses in specific neighborhoods.[20]

Blockbusting was an effort by real estate interests to play on racial prejudice to frighten white families into selling their homes at below market value. Agencies would purchase their homes and resell them to Black clients at inflated prices. According to a March, 1963 article in Newsday, when the housing market was slow, real estate brokers "would put a scare into white neighborhoods that a Black family was moving in" and would try to convince a white home owner "to sell out of fear that the house would drop in value." Blockbusting contributed to the rapid transformation of communities like Roosevelt and parts of Hempstead from predominately white in 1960 to predominately African American in 1970.[21]

The fight against blockbusting was a major part of the civil rights struggle to build stable interracial communities on Long Island. According to articles in the Roosevelt Press and the Hempstead Beacon, clergy and citizen groups in both communities actively challenged blockbusting.[22] As a result of their activities, New York State agreed to investigate charges against real estate interests and to suspend or revoke the license of any firm using scare tactics.[23]

Racial discrimination also affected the ability of Black families to rent housing on Long Island. In January, 1963, Newsday reported that a landlord refused to rent a three room apartment to a Black woman who wanted to move from Queens to Roosevelt The landlord claimed he rejected her application because he feared that she would ruin his house.[24] In March, 1965 the New York State Human Rights Commission ruled that owners of a Freeport apartment house had discriminated against a Black woman when she attempted to rent an apartment on Merrick Road.[25]

Even when African American families were able to purchase homes in predominately white areas of Long Island, their problems were not resolved. In a 1969 article titled "Black Family Fights L.I. Housing Bias," The New York Times described the experience of a family that moved into a virtually all-white south shore community. Neighbors protested their arrival and "Nigger Go Home" was painted on the wall of their house.[26]

Racial prejudice was so intense in some parts of Long Island that a white family whose members looked "too dark" was the subject of harassment. In Copaigue, a dark-skinned Caucasian man and his family were "hounded from their new home by numerous threatening phone calls because somebody mistook them for Negroes. The man said nothing like that ever happened to him in the many years he lived in the South; and even if I were colored wouldn't I have the right to live?"[27]

Not only were attempts made to keep new Black families from moving into communities, but Long Island's Black leadership suspected that many towns were using urban renewal projects designed to clean up substandard housing as an excuse to drive out Black families who were long time residents. In January, 1963, Newsday reported that Rockville Centre's urban renewal office had contributed to an exodus of over sixty African American families who had lived and owned property in the village's urban renewal area. Between the 1960 and 1970 censuses, the African American populations of Rockville Centre and East Meadow declined by approximately 21% and Oceanside by nearly 50%. Black organizations including the NAACP and CORE found themselves battling the discriminatory effects of urban renewal policies throughout the decade.[28]

Documents:
2A) Racial Exclusion at Levittown

At 45, Levittown's Legacy Is Unclear, *New York Times, June 28, 1992*

Eugene Burnett, a retired sergeant in the Suffolk County Police Department who is black, enlisted in the Army two days before his 17th birthday. After his discharge in 1949 he read advertisements in The Daily News and The New York Mirror for Levittown, and he and his fiancée borrowed a friend's car and drove to Long Island.

"We were taken to a model house, never thinking there was any kind of problem," Mr. Burnett recounted. When he asked the agent at the rental office for an application, the agent seemed to go into shock, Mr. Burnett recalled, adding: "'It's not me,' the agent said. 'The builders have not at this time decided to sell to Negroes.' I was devastated. I'll never forget the ride back to East Harlem."

FHA Asked to Curb Negro Housing Ban, *New York Times, March 12, 1949*

The Federal Housing Administration was asked yesterday to forbid exclusion of Negroes from any housing insured by that agency. Specific target of a delegation that called at the FHA offices was William J. Levitt, whose organization has built thousands of small homes for veterans on Long Island.

Besides members of the American Labor party, National Association for the Advancement of colored People, Civil Rights Congress, and Nassau-Suffolk Consumers Council, the group of eleven persons included James Mayweathers. Mr. Mayweathers said that although he is a veteran, he has been excluded, as a Negro, from a group of perspective purchasers of homes Mr. Levitt's organization is building under FHA commitments.

Mr. Mayweather conducts a floor-polishing service from his home in East Williston. He said he had applied for one of 350 houses, the first of 4,000 to be built in Roslyn, L.I. To do this he had stood in line outside the model home there from 7 A.M. Saturday until 7:30 o'clock the following morning. On Sunday morning, he said, Mr. Levitt told him that a Negro could not buy one of the houses. This statement was confirmed by John S. Fells, a real estate broker of Great Neck.

Henry Doliner, executive secretary of the ALP in Nassau and Suffolk Counties said that speedy action was urgent. He requested that the FHA hold up processing of sales of the 350 houses in Roslyn, pending determination of the right of Negro veterans to be considered equally with white veterans.

FHA Can't Prevent Negro Housing Ban, *New York Times, March 19, 1949*

The Federal Housing Administration lacks the powers to bring builders to terms with Negro buyers on FHA-backed projects., Thomas G. Grace, state director, told a protesting group yesterday in a discussion of the Levittown, L.I. race discrimination problem. He said that in August, 1947, he had gone to some length to have William J. Levitt, Long Island builder, eliminate from a prospectus an objectionable clause barring Negroes. The clause read:

"No dwelling shall be used or occupied except by members of the Caucasian race, but the employment and maintenance of other than Caucasian domestic servants shall be permitted."

Mr. Grace said that on more than one occasion his office had approved "interracial" projects seeking Federal loans.

Housing Bias Ended, *New York Times, May 29, 1949*

Levittown -- The clause in the lease of the houses built by William Levitt, Nassau County mass-production builder, barring Negroes from the use of the premises, has been deleted, Commissioner Franklin D. Richards of the Federal Housing Administration has informed the Committee to End Discrimination in Levittown.

4 Say Levittown Refuses Leases After Children Play With Negroes
New York Times, December 5, 1950

Mineola-- Two Levittown couples made the charge in Supreme Court here today that their civil liberties had been violated by the refusal of Levitt & Sons to allow them to renew their leases. They said they were requested to vacate their houses at the expiration of their current leases because of objections to their having Negro children play with their own children on lawns adjoining their rented homes.

Levittown Upheld in Discrimination Case, *Newsday, October 31, 1951*

Brooklyn -- An earlier decision upholding Levitt and Sons in its refusal to renew the lease of a tenant who charged the firm with discrimination was upheld yesterday in a unanimous decision of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

The Levittown Decade, *Newsday, September 2, 1957*

William J. Levitt doesn't like to discuss discrimination. . . In a statement he made in June, 1954, . . . said Levitt on discrimination: "The plain fact is that most whites prefer not to live in mixed communities. This attitude may be wrong morally, and some day it may change. I hope it will. But as matters now stand, it is unfair to charge an individual with the blame for creating this attitude or saddle him with the sole responsibility for correcting it. The responsibility is society's. So far society has not been willing to cope with it. Until it does, it is not reasonable to expect that any builder should or could undertake to absorb the entire risk and burden of conducting such a vast experiment."

Levitt made no bones about the fact he would not rent or sell directly to Negroes. In 1948 and 1949 a Committee to end Discrimination fought Levitt's policies regarding non-Caucasians, who were not allowed tenancy in Levittown. It should also be stated that some of the volleys against Levitt appeared to have been deliberate agitation stirred up by left-wing groups. The committee was successful in deleting a "Caucasian only" clause from Levitt's leases, but unsuccessful in changing his rental and purchase policies.

Actually, a Negro family bought a Levitt house from a private owner in 1950 and moved in without fanfare or demonstration. And two years later another Negro family purchased a home and one sublet a Levitt house. In neither case was Levitt involved. But in 1953, when William Cotter was refused a new lease on the house he had sublet, the racial issue in Levittown was out in the open. Cotter was evicted, and the courts upheld the landlord's right to rent to whom he pleased.

Questions:

1- What happened to Eugene Burnett and James Mayweathers when they tried to move into Levittown? Why?
2- What did protesters demand from the FHA and Levitt & Sons?
3- How did William Levitt try to justify efforts to bar Black families from Levittown?
4- In your opinion, was Levitt & Sons contributing to racial segregation on Long Island or only accepting an existing situation? Explain your answer.
5- Write a "Letter to the Editor" explaining your views on Levittown's racial exclusion practices.

2B) Housing Discrimination- The Issues Become Clear

Negroes Facing Test In Suburbs
Major Shift From the City Poses Housing Question - Progress is Noted

New York Times, May 21, 1961

One of the major, although quieter, phases in the battle for racial equality, in housing appears to be shaping up in the New York suburbs. There are indications the contest will grow in intensity and possibly bitterness for many years. However, there are many hopeful signs. On September 1, New York State's new law against discrimination in housing goes into effect.

In 1950, the non-white population of the New York suburban area was 5.3 percent of the total; in 1960, it was 6.8 percent. There were nearly 250,000 more Negroes in the suburban area in 1960 than in 1950. The total now is approximately 550,000. With favorable economic conditions, the increase may be expected to continue. Already portents have begun to appear. There has been some panic selling by white property owners in at least two communities, Freeport, L.I., and Teaneck, N.J.

The Negro housing problem in the suburbs, as in the city, has two general aspects. One is the problem of the lower income, with fewer advantages. This group's housing aspirations may not be high, but it nevertheless requires accommodations that meet reasonable standards of health and safety and are not grossly overpriced. The other problem is that of the upper-income Negroes, the skilled or professional worker whose income and other attributes impel him to seek the same kind of accommodations that a white person of similar situation would desire.

The lower-income suburban Negroes - employed as domestics and laborers - live mostly in the older Negro communities where housing is overcrowded and, many times, substandard. These are usually the first areas to be considered for urban renewal projects. This poses the problem of finding housing for the relocation of the Negroes to be evicted. For the upper-income Negro, the problem is that homes in desirable areas have been closed to him. Without heroic effort and more than a bit of luck, he has been obliged to live in the Negro quarter or on the fringes of it.

For both groups, the problems have been intensified by the dramatic growth in the suburban Negro population during the last ten years. The growth has been of two kinds; a migration for the most part directly from the south to join friends and relatives who had found employment n the Northern suburbs, and a movement outward from New York and other cities of the region by Negroes of middle or upper income. Numerically, the first group has been by far the larger, but the second has been substantial.

There was such a problem in the northeast section of Freeport, L.I. Middle and upper-income Negro families had been moving in there before World War II, but their number did not become considerable until the middle Nineteen Fifties. At this point, real estate operators began a strong campaign of "block busting" or inducing scare selling. The seriousness of the problem aroused community leaders. . . .They organized a Community Relations Council. Pamphlets were distributed assuring the neighborhood that the presence of Negro neighbors would not lower property values. Meetings were held. New white families were encouraged to move into houses offered for sale.

Leaders in the move for integrated housing in the suburbs are frequently persons with strong religious ties. In Huntington, L.I., such a group formed the Huntington Township Committee on Human Relations. It collected 1,000 pledges from local residents that they would welcome Negro neighbors. The effort was inspired not only because Huntington's population of lower-income Negroes had grown greatly, but because the town had wished to engage a high school music teacher of exceptional qualifications. But he was a Negro and Huntington discovered to its chagrin that no suitable housing accommodations were available to him.

Questions:

1- According to this article, what major change is taking place in New York City suburbs?
2- How are conditions different for lower income and upper income African American families?
3- In your opinion, does this article present a hopeful or pessimistic view of the future? Explain your answer.

2C) Combating Blockbusting and Red-Lining

Helpful Vocabulary

Blockbusting- efforts by real estate brokers to take advantage of racial prejudice to frighten white families into selling their homes at below market value so that the brokers can resell them to Black families and make high profits.

Red-Lining- efforts by banks and real estate brokers to restrict African American home buyers and renters to specific communities.

State Will Air Charges of Blockbusting, *Newsday, September 1, 1962*

North Bellport -- A blockbusting charge by a local civic group is slated to get a hearing in the near future by the state agency empowered to suspend or revoke the real estate license of any firm found forcing scare selling. New York Secretary of State Caroline K. Simon said yesterday that she plans to order the hearing although the exact date is not set. . . An investigator from her office has been doing field work here this month in response to a charge by the North Bellport Taxpayers Association that two real estate firms had tried to force quick turnovers of homes from white to Negro families by warning that a Negro influx was descending on the area anyway.

LI Group Finds Realty Bias, *Newsday, January 21, 1963*

Huntington -- A civil-rights committee, which sent Negro and white members posing as prospective home buyers to real estate brokers in this township over the weekend, charged yesterday that 19 of the 20 brokers tested discriminated against Negroes. The group said it would send its findings to state officials to seek interdisciplinary action. The Huntington Township Committee on Human Relations said about 35 Negro and white members visited 21 Huntington brokers Saturday. Mrs. Joyce Insolia, co-chairman of the committee, said the prospective white buyers were shown numerous homes by brokers who had told Negro customers that they had no houses to show or had taken them on tours of homes in substantially Negro neighborhoods.

Roosevelt Clergymen Unite To Halt Alleged 'Fast Sales'
"Block Busting' in Real Estate
Roosevelt Press, March 29, 1963

The eight clergymen serving the various congregations in Roosevelt have organized the Roosevelt Community Relations Council to fight what they consider illegal practices in promoting the sale of real estate in the community such as the "fast sell" and "block busting." They have been discussing the real estate situation for a couple of months, and have issued "A Message of Vital Importance from the Clergyman of Your Community."

"The Block Buster is a dealer in real estate who gets people scared about property values by promoting rumors of invasion by minority groups such as Negroes. He buys up their property for a song and resells for a large profit. He tries to panic a great number of families into listing their homes. He charges unethically high commissions and fees. His tools are ignorance, fear, falsehoods, and rumors."

"It is our feeling that if you are part of our churches and are aware that the clergymen and community leaders are concerned with the problem of unethical real estate companies, together we can discourage their activities in Roosevelt."

Hub Neighbors Group Fights Block Busters , *Hempstead Beacon, October 30, 1963*

The Hempstead Neighbors Committee added another facet to their campaign of maintaining residential property values in the village, as they lashed out in rebuttal of rumors that tend to depreciate property values and picture Hempstead as not being a desirable community.

The group, whose spokesman is frequently the Rev. Richard R. Rangoon, has been hard at work on an anti-block busting campaign. They are waging a war on real estate brokers who use either unethical or illegal practices. Their attempts to reverse the white to Negro residential pattern in order to maintain a racial mixture in the area have met with considerable success.

Negro Pastor "Rakes" Hemp. Neighbors Com., *Hempstead Beacon, October 30, 1963*

The Rev. Dr. V. Loma St. Clair, pastor of the Jackson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church of Hempstead, . . ."raked over the coals" the Hempstead Neighbors Committee, headed by the Rev. R.R. Rangoon, . . . for making restrictive covenants and gentlemen's agreements for the purpose of keeping Negroes and other minorities out of their residential area.

Dr. St. Clair stated, "that the Committee's charges of blockbusting and panic selling against the local real estate brokers is nothing more than a farce and a smoke screen to hide their real motives and intentions, which are to keep more Negroes from moving into the community and to restrict, contain and to fence into certain sections, those that are already living in the village." The pastor stated, "that every person should be able to live where his heart desires . . .without regard to his race, color or national origin."

State Aims at Block-Busters, *Hempstead Beacon, November 20, 1963*

New York Secretary of State John Lomenzo told a group of local civic leaders last week that he would start mailing out letters to nearly 100 real estate brokers in the Hempstead area warning them to stop unwanted solicitation of homes. He has already taken similar action with Queens brokers in connection with block-busting tactics.

Court Backs State Unit in Freeport Apt. Bias, *Newsday, March 30, 1965*

Mineola -- State Supreme Court Justice Daniel Albert upheld yesterday a State Human Rights Commission finding that the owners of a Freeport apartment house had discriminated against a Negro woman. Albert said that there was sufficient evidence for the commission's finding that Mrs. Catherine Crum had been the victim of discrimination. Albert said in his written opinion that there was no point in ordering the owners to rent the apartment to Mrs. Crum now because she and her family had already taken another apartment.

Black Family Fights L.I. Housing Bias, *New York Times, September 30, 1970*

Massapequa, L.I., Sept. 30 -- The house looked like almost any other being built, but large chunks of concrete had been broken out of the foundation, the chimney flue had been knocked down and a newspaper story had been nailed to the frame. The story told of the troubles encountered by the owners of the partially built house--Mr. and Mrs. Willie Early of Jamaica, Queens. The black family had been subjected to vilification (slander and abusive statements) and their new $40,000 brick-and-shingle ranch home . . . had been vandalized since it became known that they were going to move into this virtually all-white South Shore area.

After construction started last spring, the Early family and their three daughters ranging in age from 3 to 11, visited the site to take photographs for their album of the house in its construction stages. To their dismay, they found painted on the foundation such epithets as "Nigger Go Home."

Because the area is largely Roman Catholic, the Human Rights Commission sought the intercession of the Catholic Interracial Council to help ease the problem. The Commission on Interracial Affairs for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockville Centre then brought the matter to the attention of local parishes. After the matter was brought to the attention of the community in a local newspaper, homeowners outside the immediate neighborhood rallied to the support of the black family. Parishioners in local Catholic and Lutheran churches pledged their aid for the Earlys and the Massapequa Coalition of Racial Concern is considering having its members patrol the house site in the evening hours.

Questions :

1- How did real estate agencies profit from blockbusting?
2- What evidence is provided of housing discrimination by real estate agents and landlords?
3- What problem did the Early family face in Massapequa? How did the community respond to these problems?
4- In your opinion, should government agencies become involved with who a real estate agent or a homeowner sells or rents property to? Explain your answer.

2D) Great Neck Human Rights Committee

(Newspaper clippings are from the committee's files)

Rights Group to Picket Apartment , *Long Island Press, May 16, 1963*

The Great Neck Committee for Human Rights last night announced plans to picket the Barstow Road apartment building of the first local landlord to be cited for "probable" discrimination by the State Commission for Human Rights.

The landlord has been given until Sunday to reply to an offer of conciliation. The conciliation terms include offering the next available apartment to the turned-away Negro applicant, Herman Colar, and an agreement not to discriminate against prospective tenants in the future. The Great Neck committee has three other suits against local landlords pending before the State commission.

Herman Colar, who brought suit against the Barstow Road landlord, said he had been denied several vacant apartments in his two-month search. Colar, a Negro, is a taxicab company owner who has lived in Great Neck for 15 years.

Colar and his wife, who is now pregnant, were evicted from rented rooms in the Spiney Hills section of Great Neck. In an effort to upgrade the area, a town zoning ordinance was passed to prohibit rooming houses.

Spotlight Turned on Landlord , *Newsday, May 1963*

Great Neck-- The identity of a Great Neck landlord accused of discrimination was made public last night at a meeting of the Committee for Human Rights. The landlord denied the charges. The landlord, identified as Jacob Skoblow, has until May 19 to comply with a discrimination ruling.

According to the committee, Herman Colar was turned away by the superintendent of Skoblow's Barstow-Grace apartment building, despite the fact that the superintendent had just told a white female member of the committee that an apartment was avilable.

The Black Man Next Door , *Community, March, 1964*

Great Neck--The door of a beautifully maintained brick and shingle house on Wooleys Lane in Great Neck conceals one of the most timely tales of our generation. This is where Edward and Mary Simmons live with their two-year old daughter, Christine.

They are members of the "new breed" of colored people who are emerging as living pioneers of the nation's struggle for civil liberties. Yet they are one among thousands of couples who are quietly moving into white neighborhoods -- often with the aid of local human rights organizations -- and undramatically joining the main social stream.

An article in the New York Times dealing with the housing placement of the Great Neck Committee for Human Rights in select areas of that community brought them to the North Shore.

The committee had several houses to show them where the owner had indicated no aversion to selling to someone of another race. The arrival of Negroes in the previously white section came as no surprise to the neighbors. They had been appraised of the impending move by the committee, and in a neighborhood meeting, had talked out their fears.

Questions:

1- In your opinion, should a landlord be allowed to discriminate when they rent an apartment? Why or why not?

2- Would you have joined a picket line organized by the Great Neck Human Rights Committee? Why or why not?

3- Do you agree or disagree with efforts by the Great Neck Human Rights Committee to help African-American families buy homes in previously all white communities? Why?

2E) Were Zoning Laws Discriminatory?

Helpful Vocabulary

Zoning- local laws that restrict the way that property can be used. For example, limiting construction in a neighborhood to one family homes.

Housing Laws Are NAACP Target, *Newsday, Feb. 27, 1969*

Oyster Bay -- The director of housing programs of the national office of the NAACP charged yesterday that Oyster Bay's zoning ordinances deprive low-income families of equal opportunity in obtaining housing. William R. Morris of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People said that the civil rights group, in reviewing the town's zoning laws, has found "a very strong pattern of economic discrimination." Morris said that current ordinances "restrict people of low and moderate income (from receiving) the same equal opportunity to gain housing achieved for middle and upper income families." Town officials said the ordinances are consistent with those in other municipalities.

The NAACP official said that the targets of the association's drive are zoning rules which require all housing to be single, detached structures situated on a fixed amount of land. Morris said that the town laws are aimed at discouraging two-family and multi-family dwellings and that "we feel there is a strong constitutional question of denying a complete class of people the same opportunity as is given other people in the town."

NAACP Facing Fight on Zoning, *Newsday, October 24, 1969*

Woodbury -- A local civic group is raising money and mapping strategy to oppose an NAACP plan to force the Oyster Bay Town Board to downzone half the available vacant residential land in the town. Dr. Gerard Bomse, a Woodbury psychoanalyst and president of the Greater Woodbury Civil Association, said yesterday that this group was collecting money for legal help in fighting the plan. Opening a nationwide campaign last week, officials of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People gave the town board a choice of either downzoning the land by Jan. 1 or facing the possibility of becoming the defendants in a test case against what the civil rights organization called "restrictive suburban zoning." Bomse said that at this organization's latest meeting, "We made it clear that this is not a black-vs.-white issue." He said, "It's just a case of trying to knock local zoning ... which should be strenuously maintained." He said that the group was committed to the town's right to control local zoning.

Pickets Ask State Urban Agency to Override L.I. Zoning Laws

New York Times, May 7, 1970

The State Urban Development Corporation encountered its first demonstrators yesterday when 60 welfare mothers and college students from Suffolk County picketed and occupied the agency's Fifth Avenue offices. The protestors are demanding that the agency exercise its authority to override suburban zoning laws and build low income housing in predominantly white Long Island areas. The protest, the demonstrators said, marked the beginning of rising pressure on the two-year-old corporation to use its considerable and controversial powers. But the pressure is likely to be met by counterpressure from property owners' groups, who earlier this year supported 15 bills in the State Legislature that would have diluted the corporation's power. None passed. Many suburban zoning laws have come under increased attack recently by planners and civil rights groups.

About half the protestors quietly occupied a hallway in the corporation's offices. The rest picketed outside the building. They presented petitions, which they said bore 4,000 signatures, asking the corporation to build subsidized housing in Brookhaven-Town.

Questions:

1- Why did the NAACP and other civil rights protestors believe that Long Island zoning laws discriminated against low income and Black families?

2- In your opinion, were these laws discriminatory? Why?

2F) Did Urban Renewal Mean "Negro" Removal?

Helpful Vocabulary-
Urban Renewal- government programs to tear down and rebuild older or poorer sections of towns.

Claim RVC Renewal Edges Negroes Out, *Newsday, January 15, 1963*

Rockville Centre -- The NAACP's national housing secretary charged last night that Rockville Centre's urban renewal office had contributed to an exodus of Negro families who had lived and owned property in the village's urban renewal area. Jack Wood Jr. said that about 60 to 72 Negro families who had owned property in the 36-acre area had left Rockville Centre.

Speaking in Watson Elementary School at a meeting sponsored by the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Wood said: "If ever I saw an urban renewal program that contravened the State of New York's policy of promoting racial and economic integration in such projects, the program in Rockville Centre is it."

Babylon Will Condemn 5 Slum Shacks Today, *Newsday, January 31, 1963*

Babylon -- Five slum shacks housing 14 welfare recipients will be condemned today by the Babylon building inspector. Welfare officials said they will immediately seek new housing for the persons to be moved. Herbert Zirk, Babylon Town building inspector, said the five shacks, all occupied by Negroes, were discovered as inspectors made a check of 30 welfare homes in Babylon. He said the five structures were all converted garages or accessory buildings "never intended for use by human beings."

Nassau Negroes Stage Joint Protests, *Newsday, May 5, 1966*

Residents of Rockville Centre and Long Beach joined forces yesterday to protest urban renewal policies in both areas. Members of the Long Island Congress of Racial Equality and of NAACP chapters in Rockville Centre and Long Beach held joint rallies and conducted a 20-car motorcade to draw attention to their grievances concerning housing and job opportunities. In Rockville Centre, about 80 persons gathered on an empty lot strewn with pebbles and broken glass. A succession of speakers called on the village's mayor to provide better homes for West End residents, and signs pasted on the brick veneer of a decrepit building were printed: "Let's end indecent housing," "We want justice," "Houses for all, eviction for none," "We shall not be moved." Civil rights groups have been complaining that urban renewal in Rockville Centre has meant Negro removal. Joseph Kern, a CORE leader in the village, citing a report of the Nassau Commission of Human Rights, said: "About 40 percent of the Negro population of Rockville Centre has been moved out to other slums."

Rockville Centre: Racial 'Stalemate', *Newsday, June 20, 1966*

Rockville Centre -- For the financial comfortable majority of the 27,000 residents of Rockville Centre, the peeling, crumbling Negro neighborhood in the village's West End is the servants' quarters. Here in the aging ghetto of the community selected this month as the Long Island CORE summer target area, about one of every three Negro women earn a living by cooking for their white neighbors and cleaning their homes. More than one quarter of the men who have escaped the area's 12 percent unemployment rate are the unskilled laborers who loiter in front of a rickety bar on Banks Avenue by night and wait for a construction truck to arrive for a morning shape-up.

CORE decided to come to the aid of the Tenants Association--composed of Negro residents of the urban renewal area--according to Jackson, out of simple mercy as well as a realization that CORE could apply itself more effectively in a community already marked by grass roots activism.

Questions:

1- Why did the NAACP and CORE protest against urban renewal plans?
2- You are a local government official during the 1960's. Propose a compromise solution that could satisfy both civil rights advocates and supporters of urban renewal.

Oral Histories - African Americans Remember Life on Long Island

In these interviews Jacqueline Collins, LeRoy M. Collins, and Marguerite Golden Rhodes, discuss their experiences on Long island during the 1950's and 1960's. Read the interviews and answer the questions that follow them.

An Interview with Jacqueline Collins

by Denise Del Valle and Stephanie Hunte

I was raised in New Rochelle but my husband was born and grew up on Long Island. A couple of months after we were married, he was sent to Korea, so I stayed with my family until after he got out of the service. After he got out, we moved to Long Island.

I was teaching in Valley Stream, so we moved to Lakeview. We lived in Lakeview for about nine years. When I moved to Lakeview it was a community that was basically Black. In 1954, the only houses that real estate agents would show a Black couple were shacks or in a solidly Black area. There were hardly any mixed neighborhoods at that time out here.

I guess what happened to Lakeview was that most people were victims of blockbusting. That was a big issue in the 1950's and 1960's. Unscrupulous real estate people would go ring bells in a white area and tell homeowners that Negroes were moving next door. At that time, we weren't Black people, we were Negroes. They would say, "Do you know what they will do to your property?" They were afraid if they waited too long to sell their home would depreciate. They wouldn't get their price when they tried to sell. So, white people would run; they would sell their houses real fast, and more Black people would come in.

My street was mostly middle class. The family across from us was from Sierra Leone. He was working for the United Nations. When Sierra Leone became independent, he got a big title and a car longer than this room. It would pick him up every morning and he would come out dressed up in his black suit. It was very exciting. The people on one side of me were both people with master's degrees and good jobs. On the other side was a New York City policeman and his wife. Most of the kids that came out of this neighborhood at that time have all done well.

At that time my husband was teaching in Lawrence and there was a teacher he was friendly with who told him about a house on her block that we might like to see. It was within walking distance of their school. We ran over to see that house. The next thing I know we were moving to Cedarhurst.

When we moved to Cedarhurst it was about a 90% Jewish neighborhood. Some people had a petition. They went through the neighborhood to try to keep us out of the home and to keep us from getting a mortgage, but they really couldn't do very much. Mrs. Hensler, a former teacher of my husband, refused to sign it. She told them, "Mr. Collins would be a role model for your children. You should be anxious to have him. He would be an asset to the community."

It was kind of hard to bring my children into that area. There were very few young children. When they got into the schools there were no other Black children for them. When we moved to the neighborhood, we used to be harassed by cops. They asked what we were doing on Barnard Avenue. They still stop you around this area. Recently my daughters fiancé was stopped and asked where he was going.

When my son got to junior high school he had a terrible time. They would beat him up and throw his books away. He had to eat by himself. There was one little girl that he was friendly with and they scared her. They threatened her if she stayed friendly with him or continued to eat with him. My son made friends with a Black child from Inwood. When they were together they had a great time, but when they were in school, the other boy would not stand up for him. My son was not a street fighter. Maybe his father should have made him tougher or I should have made him tougher, but he wasn't. I guess there are some kids like my daughter, no one would mess with her because she was a girl and she had that mouth. Finally, we sent my son to Woodmere Academy.

The Valley Stream school district was basically white, blue collar, lower middle class, lower kinds of professionals, office administrators, etc. I went into an all-white situation. At the end of the year, the principal would give the teachers a personal evaluation. He called me in and he told me that "your success here has been a personal triumph." I said, "Thank you very much, but I

disagree. I came here as a teacher to teach children and children are children regardless of what color they are. I just did my job." The principal was always outside the door peeking in and there were always different people peeking in. I don't know what they thought.

Somehow in the north, when schools become predominantly Black, everything goes down. They have no equipment, the teachers attitudes are terrible. There is nothing equal about it. I worked in an all Black school and I know what it is like. Roosevelt was about 75% Black when I went there. When I left it was about 99.5% Black. The schools kept going down and there was constant fighting to get things that you needed. There is something in the north; the kind of prejudice here is really insidious. It is there even if you don't know it, but it has harmful ways of manifesting itself.

I was not personally involved in any protest movement or boycotts during the 60's. I really was not politically active. I was busy running around with the kids. I worked for the EOC (Educational Opportunities Center) for two summers. It was part of the war on poverty. That was the height of my involvement.

I didn't even go to the March on Washington. I didn't go for two reasons. I could not picture myself down there with all those people and I didn't know what to expect. I couldn't imagine that it would be civil. I never dreamed it would be the beautiful demonstration that it was. The second reason was that my kids were so young. So that's why I didn't go. I have regretted it ever since.

Questions:

1- According to Ms. Collins, how did Lakeview become an African American community?
2- In your opinion, should real estate brokers and home owners have the right to decide not to sell a home to a family from a particular race or ethnic background? Explain your answer.
3- What was life like for the Collins family in Cedarhurst?
4- In your opinion, was Ms. Collins a civil rights activist? Explain your answer.

An Interview with LeRoy M. Collins

by Laurie Collins-Thomas and Jennifer Palacio

After LeRoy Collins graduated from Lawrence High School in 1945 he entered a segregated Army training program which sent him to Texas and Alabama. As a veteran of World War II, the G.I. Bill made it possible for him to attend Syracuse University where he received a B.A. in Physical Education in 1951. In September, 1951, he became the first African American welfare case worker in Nassau County. He married Jacqueline Wight in July, 1952 and served in the army in Korea as a First Lieutenant from 1952-1953.

In 1954, LeRoy and Jacqueline Collins purchased their first home in Lakeview, Long Island. They were directed to this community by local real estate brokers because they were Black. That year, his wife was hired as the first African American teacher in the Valley Stream school district.

In Lakeview, LeRoy Collins was President of the Pinebrook Civic Association. The group was founded by upwardly mobile African American professionals. They wanted to maintain Lakeview as a neighborhood of single family homes and to preserve education for their children. They became involved in campaigns to prevent Malverne from creating racially segregated schools, against rezoning that would allow both industry and multi-family dwellings in their community, and a boycott of the Woolworth in Hempstead because of discriminatory employment practices. After a number of years, conditions in Lakeview began to deteriorate. The brake line on LeRoy Collins' car was cut when he continued to oppose multi-family dwellings in the community. This incident prompted the Collins family to move to Cedarhurst in 1963.

From 1955 until 1958, LeRoy Collins worked as a probation officer in Nassau County and in 1958 he was hired as a physical education teacher in Lawrence. He was the first African American teacher in the district. In the fall of 1961, he became the first African American student in the Master's degree program for Guidance and Counseling at Hofstra University and he became a guidance counselor in Lawrence in 1966.

LeRoy Collins believes that by becoming a homeowner in Cedarhurst his family made a political statement in support of civil rights. He was able to purchase the home in this all white

community because of the help of white colleagues from work who lived on the block. He also believes that during the early years of his career he was often used as a token, but that his activities helped to pave the way for other African American professionals.

LeRoy Collins feels that as a Black man living and working on Long Island he always had to be careful or he would place his family risk his family or lose his job. For these reasons, he did not attend the 1963 March on Washington. LeRoy Collins has always tried to be a role model for African American youth and to challenge injustice by working within the system.

Questions:

1- What was the purpose of the Pinebrook Civic Association?
2- Why did the Collins family move to Cedarhurst?
3- Why does Mr. Collins believe he always had to be "careful"? How did this belief shape his life?

An Interview with Marguerite Golden Rhodes

by Karen Lewis

Marguerite Golden Rhodes was an elementary school teacher and principal. Currently she is an administrator at Hofstra University. Marguerite Golden Rhodes and her husband moved from Manhattan to Hempstead in 1961. They moved to Long Island because her husband's family lived here. At that time, white families in Hempstead were starting to move out. Mrs. Rhodes bought her house from a white couple. When they moved in, the neighborhood was still about half white.

On Marguerite's block there were few racial incidents because so many Black families already lived there. However, there were troubles in other parts of Hempstead. Once, while she was going into a store on Front Street and she heard a white man holler, "Nigger, go back where you came from, we moved to Long Island to get away from your kind of people." On another occasion, young white teenagers drove by her in a car and shouted out racial names. Mrs. Rhodes was very hurt by these incidents. She grew up in the south, but these things had never happened to her before.

When Mrs. Rhodes moved to Hempstead, she was a consultant on Early Childhood Education for New York City. She later became a guidance counselor in Hempstead, an assistant principal and a principal. When she retired, the Washington School was renamed for her.

Marguerite Golden Rhodes was active in the civil rights movement on Long Island. During the 1960's she participated in many local marches and protests and she helped to recruit more Black teachers for the Hempstead schools. She believes that the rapid change in Hempstead's population during the 1960's is a classic example of "white flight." There are almost no white students attending Hempstead public schools today. "It seemed as soon as the whites heard that Blacks were moving in, they all decided to move out."

Questions:

1- What was happening in Hempstead during the 1960's?
2- What evidence does Ms. Rhodes offer of racial tension in Hempstead?
3- In your opinion, why was a Hempstead school named after Marguerite Golden Rhodes?

3- The Battle Over School Integration

by Joyce Kenny

During the 1960's, many Long Island communities were strongly divided over the issue of racial integration of public schools. This issue was particularly heated because many white residents of Long Island had moved to the suburbs from New York City as urban communities and public schools became increasingly non-white.[29] The battle over Long Island schools intensified in response to the national debate over racial integration and because of concern among many white Long Islanders that the New York State Department of Education would require either the consolidation of largely Black and white school districts or inter-district school busing to end school segregation.

Because of the importance of education for families with children and because of the impact of school systems on tax rates and property values, battles over racial integration on Long Island frequently focused on schools. During the 1960's, Freeport's school board tried to end racial segregation within the district's schools by transferring Black pupils between neighboring schools.[30] In Amityville, civil rights advocates picketed racially segregated schools and threatened economic and school boycotts unless the district's schools were integrated.[31] In Hempstead, with a rapidly expanding African American population, parents and the local school board supported a proposal to prevent racial segregation by merging the Hempstead school district with the neighboring, predominately white, Garden City and Uniondale school districts. However both Uniondale and Garden City resisted the plan.[32] From 1967 to 1969, Great Neck debated whether to bus a small number of African American students from Queens into the district. When large numbers of Great Neck parents organized to block the integration plan, it was abandoned.[33]

Across Long Island, school budget votes were influenced by battles over racial integration. The Glen Cove school board told the State Commissioner of Education that the school busing costs would have to be covered by increased state funds.[34] In Oceanside, racial issues were so charged that unsubstantiated rumors about the possibility of integrating the district's schools led to the defeat of the local school budget in 1966.[35]

One of the sharpest battles on Long Island over school integration in the 1960's was fought in Malverne. It pitted a group of largely African American parents, the Tri-Community Council for Intergroup Relations (later known as the United Committee for Action Now), committed to school integration as a step towards racial equality, against a group of overwhelmingly white parents, Taxpayers and Parents Association, who argued that the primary issue was the right of parents to send their children to neighborhood schools.[36]

On June 13, 1963, a New York Times headline read, "Integration Plan for L.I. is Urged." According to the article, Robert Carter, a lawyer for the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), was representing a group of parents from the Malverne school district who wanted the New York State Commissioner of Education to "order the Malverne School District to reorganize attendance areas to end what is called de facto segregation." This request set off a storm in Malverne and across Long Island. An editorial in the Hempstead Beacon reported that the effort to challenge racial segregation in Malverne "appears to have raised more questions than provided answers."[37]

The Malverne school district, with three local elementary schools, presented a perfect example of the problem of racial segregation in Long Island schools and an ideal opportunity to challenge it. Students in one Malverne elementary school, Woodfield Road School, were from the predominately African-American neighborhood of Lakeview. Students in the two other schools were predominately white. Parents of Woodfield Road students spearheaded the school integration campaign out of concern that their children were receiving an inferior education.

Acting on the recommendation of a statewide advisory panel, Dr. James E. Allen, Jr., the New York State Commissioner of Education, approved a plan to integrate Malverne's elementary schools

by assigning Malverne children to each of the three schools for different grades.[38] In August, 1963, the school board's request to reopen the case was denied, however, a white parent secured a temporary restraining order from the New York State Supreme Court that blocked implementation of the school integration plan.[39] This court decision established a pattern that continued for the next three years as white parents and the Malverne school board sought to either overturn the plan through the courts or to circumvent the intent of the state imposed integration plan.

The Malverne school board was countered at each turn by pro-civil rights, predominately Black, groups. In September, 1963, pro-integration groups boycotted the Malverne public schools in an attempt to force the school board to end racial imbalance. About 250 children attended temporary "Freedom Schools" schools set up in community churches and a Jewish Center.[40]

Meanwhile, with support from State Senator Norman Lent (Republican/East Rockaway) and Assemblyman John E. Kingston (Republican/Westbury) the battle against school integration in Malverne became an issue in the New York State legislature. In February, 1964, Senator Lent proposed a law that would prevent the State Commissioner of Education from busing students to another school "based on race, color, religion, or national origin." Assemblyman Kingston complained that it was not integration, or money that was the issue, "but the philosophy of government the Education Commissioner is trying to impose on us." The bill was eventually defeated in the Democratic controlled State Assembly.[41]

When their legal resistance to integration faltered, white parents tried direct action patterned on the civil rights campaign. They tried to enroll their children in their local schools and organized boycotts and picketing in front of schools. During one demonstration, nine women were arrested.[42] White parents also established their own home schools and private tutoring plans, claiming that they were necessary to protect the "physical and psychological aspects of the children."[43] Pro-integration forces countered these moves with their own demonstrations and boycotts.[44] They also accused the Taxpayers and Parents Association of sacrificing the needs of the community's children to satisfy their own political agenda. William Moody, a member of the Malverne school board charged the group was teaching confusion and racism to children; "To say, 'I'm for neighborhood schools, but I'm not against integration'--possibly an adult can separate those thoughts, but a child can't."[45]

In May, 1966, opponents of school integration elected a majority to the Malverne school board. The group pledged to establish a "'free choice plan' under which parents would be permitted to choose which of the districts three elementary schools they wished their children to attend."[46] In September, 1966, the new Malverne school board refused state dollars intended to help the integration process. The board also threatened that parents would "remove their children from the public schools and send them to private schools" if integration efforts were not abandoned.[47] In response to this resistance, State Education Commissioner Allen blocked the school board's "free choice plan" and sent an advisory panel into the district to "evaluate its education and integration progress."[48]

Finally, in August, 1967, the Malverne School Board and the State Education Department agreed on a new "4-4-4" plan. When the plan was finally implemented for the 1967-1968 school year, students were divided between two kindergarten through 4th grade schools and then assigned to a district-wide middle school and high school.[49]

The battle over school integration in Malverne and in other Long Island communities paralleled the broader struggles being fought in the United States in the 1960's. On February 23, 1966, a Newsday article tried to explain the tensions and apprehension experienced by people in both camps. Both Black and white families were concerned for the future and safety of their children. Both groups felt they were being denied fundamental rights and the ability to live according to the "American way." Their disagreement was over what the American way represents.[50]

Document:
3A) Hempstead Proposes a School District Consolidation Plan

Hempstead Asks Schools Mergers, *New York Times, August 24, 1963*

Hempstead, L.I., Aug. 23--The Hempstead School Board has unanimously proposed that its school district be merged with those of Garden City and part of Uniondale to end racial imbalances here. The plan also called for the closing of one of its six elementary schools because it is 89 percent Negro.

The board added that it did not seem consistent to expect Hempstead residents "to struggle alone with the insoluble local problems within a racially imbalanced school district while the larger over-all issue can be approached through elimination of arbitrary district boundary lines separating our schools from those enrolling virtually all white pupils."

Neither the Garden City nor the Union School Districts, which are contiguous with Hempstead, have problems of racial imbalance. A spokesman for the Garden City School Board refused to comment. A Uniondale spokesman said the proposed merger would be opposed.

Racial Imbalance Problem - Editorial , *Hempstead Beacon, July 24, 1963*

State Education Commissioner James E. Allen's recent directive on correcting racial imbalance in our schools appears to have raised more questions than provided answers . . . . Because of the number and location of Negro residents in both the Malverne and the Hempstead School Districts, particular attention is spotlighted on possible action to be taken by the boards of education of these two districts. It is only a matter of time before other school boards in the area will have to face similar problems. The answers are not easy.

Basically Allen's directive appears to completely upset the "neighborhood" school concept, which has been the basis for enrollment in the public schools, a principal which until now has been accepted as the best sociologically and educationally by the experts.

Uniondale School Official Doubts Merger Backing, *Hempstead Beacon, November 20, 1963*

Uniondale School Board President Alvin Howard, speaking at a meeting of the board, said that he seriously doubted that officials of the State Education Department would give serious consideration to the proposal of the Hempstead School Board to merge the Hempstead district with the Hempstead village boundaries as a means of relieving racial imbalance in Hempstead schools.

Howard said that after talks with Crewson and State Education Commissioner James E. Allen during the Syracuse convention that he didn't feel the proposal was getting much support. He indicated that it could be "political suicide" for state legislatures to support the legislation that would be necessary to put the proposal into effect.

The Taxpayers and Parents of Uniondale, that had asked the Uniondale School Board to take a stand on the Hempstead proposal, presented petitions with more than 3,600 asking for the preservation of neighborhood schools in Uniondale.

Questions:
1- Why does the Hempstead School Board want to merge with Garden City and Uniondale?
2- Why does the article say that Garden City and Uniondale have no "racial imbalance" problem?
3- How does the *Hempstead Beacon* editorial view proposals by the State Education Commissioner?
4- Why does the Uniondale School Board President doubt that the state will give "serious consideration" to the Hempstead School Board proposal?
5- In your opinion, if this plan had been implemented in 1963, how would Long Island be different today?

3B) Amityville Split By School Integration Protests

Demonstrators March Over Racial Issue, *Amityville Herald, September 5, 1963*

The opening of Amityville's' public school system was marked yesterday by picketing demonstrations in front of the Northeast School. Pickets carried signs protesting racial segregation at the building. . . . Richard W. Hasgill, president of the Central Long Island branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, estimated that from 40 to 50 pickets had turned out.

Boycott of Stores Now Looms in School Dispute, *Amityville Herald, September 12, 1963*

An economic boycott has been threatened by Negro leaders in their dispute with the Amityville Board of Education over racial imbalance at the Northeast School. A meeting was called to discuss the move last night at the Hunter-Squires-Jackson American Legion Post on Dixon Avenue. Meanwhile, a boycott against the schools in the District is scheduled for tomorrow. Richard W. Hasgill urged parents of both Negro and White children to support it. . . . Mr. Hasgill said, "Our demonstrations have been peaceful. I don't think anyone can criticize the way the demonstrators have conducted themselves. But we intend to carry on. A boycott will hurt."

85% Out in Boycott , *New York Times, September 14, 1963*

Amityville, L.I., Sept. 13-- Leaders of the civil rights movement said that a one-day boycott today of the district's schools was more successful than they had expected. . . . Mrs. Betty Brown, a member of the N.A.A.C.P. unit's strategy committee, said that 85 percent of the kindergarten through third grade pupils at the predominantly Negro Northeast School had been kept home by parents.

300 Hear Board Stress Its Stand on School Issue, *Amityville Herald, September 19, 1963*

A more or less subdued auditorium crowd of some 300 persons in the Amityville Memorial High School heard the Board of Education reiterate a stand Monday night in favor of keeping the Northeast School the way it is until the law is either changed or clarified. The attendance at Northeast, which accommodates kindergarten to third grade, is more than 90 percent Negro.

Mrs. Kersey reviewed the 1954 Supreme Court decision involving a case against the Board of Education of Topeka, Kan., involving a youngster forbidden to attend a school close to home because of color. "Now," said Mrs. Kersey, "the Negro community and some of our White citizens in Amityville are pressuring for us to duplicate this situation by transporting white children out of their neighborhoods and assigning them to a school on basis of color."

"The issue of de facto segregation and whether or not it is unconstitutional was not answered by the 1954 decision. This question can only be answered in the court room, and this board will again respect the decision of the courts," Mrs. Kersey declared.

Questions:

1- Why is the NAACP demanding a plan to racially integrate Amityville schools?
2- Does the NAACP have community support? What evidence do you have?
3- Why does Mrs. Kersey of the Amityville School Board oppose the NAACP demands?
4- Does the Amityville school board have community support? What evidence do you have?
5- If you were invited to Amityville to help resolve this conflict, what would you propose? Why?

3C) L.I. Districts Grapple with Racial Integration Plans

L.I. Board to Shift Pupils from School, *New York Times, July 3, 1963*

Freeport, L.I., July 2--The Freeport Board of Education voted unanimously tonight to transfer all pupils from the Cleveland Avenue elementary school, whose enrollment is 90 percent Negro, to five other schools. Clifton B. Smith, the president of the board, said the action "was in the spirit" of a directive issued last month by Dr. James E. Allen, Jr., the State Commissioner of Education, calling for greater speed in the elimination of racial imbalance in public schools.

Glen Cove Offers a Plan to End Racial Imbalance, *New York Times, August 7, 1963*

Glen Cove, L.I., Aug. 6--The Board of Education recommended last night that an elementary school in a Negro neighborhood be eliminated and that a $750,000 school be built in another part of the school district. It said that this plan would provide the only "permanent" solution to an end of racial imbalance in the district.

Nyquist Would Dissolve 2 Districts, *Newsday, October 9, 1969*

Albany -- Acting State Education Commissioner Ewald Nyquist recommended yesterday the dissolution of the predominantly black Roosevelt and Wyandanch school districts and their merger with surrounding white districts on Long Island. Nyquist, while admitting that he has no power to order such a dissolution, noted that both districts have a large number of disadvantaged students and poor financial resources.

It was the first time a state official had raised the possibility of dissolving the Roosevelt district, which is about 80 per cent black. But last year, former State Education Commissioner James E. Allen, Jr. refused to dissolve the Wyandanch district after proponents of the move argued that the district, where more than 90 per cent of the 2,5000 students are non-white, would never have the tax base to support quality education.

Officials from the districts around Roosevelt were cool to the merger idea.

L.I. School District Is Ordered to Admit 27 at Mitchel Field

New York Times, September 4, 1970

Mineola, L.I., Sept. 3--The children of welfare families living in barracks buildings at the former Mitchel Air Force Base were ordered admitted to the local public schools today by a State Supreme Court justice. The Uniondale School District refused last week to admit the 27 children for the term starting this month on the ground that they were not residents of the district.

During the summer the 15 families moved into Mitchel from motels, where they had been housed by the Nassau Department of Social Services. They are living in barracks buildings at the abandoned Air Force field, which is now owned by the county. Most of the families are black, while the population of the school district is predominantly white.

The Republican majority on the County Board of Supervisors termed the families "squatters" and refused to allow the county to lease the buildings to them through intermediaries. The Democratic administration of County Executive Eugene H. Nickerson then issued occupancy permits to the families, renewable every 30 days.

Questions:

1- How did Freeport and Glen Cove respond to racial imbalance in their districts?
2- Why did acting State Education Commissioner Nyquist want to dissolve the Roosevelt and Wyandanch school districts?
3- Based on the history of racial integration on Long Island, what response would you expect to this proposal?
4- In your opinion, why was there controversy over admitting children from families living at Mitchel Field into Uniondale schools?

3D) The Malverne School Integration Plan - Racial justice or a violation of the rights of citizens?

1963- The Malverne School Integration Controversy Begins

Integration Plan for L.I. is Urged
Allen Asked to End School Segregation in Malverne
New York Times, June 13, 1963

Albany, June 12--Dr. James E. Allen, Jr., State commissioner of Education, was urged today to order the Malverne School District to reorganize attendance areas to end what was called de facto segregation. Robert L. Carter, a lawyer for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and counsel for a group of parents in the district, urged the adoption of a plan under which all pupils, white and Negro, in kindergarten through third grade, would attend two of the district's elementary schools. All pupils in the fourth and fifth grades would attend the third elementary school.

Malverne Sit-In Continues Over School Imbalance, *New York Times, August 9, 1963*

A sit-in demonstration that started in the Malverne Junior High School last night to protest racial imbalance in the school district was expected today to continue indefinitely. The sit-in followed a board meeting in the school attended by more than 700 residents, about a third of them Negroes. The meeting had been preceded by picketing by about 175 members of the United Committee for Action Now, a group made up of members of the Congress of Racial Equality, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and religious and civic organizations.

During the two-hour meeting Floyd Hazel, chairman of the Lakeview Chapter of the N.A.A.C.P., read a statement asking . . . the School Board to halt further legal action to delay the correction of racial imbalance in the schools. Taxpayers and Parents, a group favoring the neighborhood school concept, warned of hostile demonstrations if the district was forced to integrate the schools.

Malverne Plan Put Off, *New York Times, August 24, 1963*

Albany, Aug. 23--A Supreme Court action was brought here today to prevent the State Commissioner of Education from carrying out a program to correct racial imbalance in the Malverne, L.I., public schools. The father of a white girl slated to be transferred to the previously heavily Negro Woodfield Road School got a temporary stay halting the program. The immediate effect of the stay will be to prevent the reorganization from being carried out in time for the opening of school on Sept. 4.

'Freedom School' on L.I. Enlarged
Jewish Center and Church Donate Classrooms
New York Times, September 12, 1963

Malverne, L.I. Sept. 11--A "freedom school" that had been set up in a church in Garden City has been expanded to include classrooms in a Jewish center and a Protestant Episcopal church here. . . . The 250 children attending the temporary school are boycotting the Malverne school district's Woodfield Road School, which is about 80 percent Negro, in an attempt to force the school board to end racial imbalance.

Questions:
1- How does the NAACP propose to end de facto segregation in Malverne?
2- How did Malverne respond to the State Education Commissioner's school integration plan?
3- What happened when a state court blocked the plan?
4- How do you think you would have responded to this controversy if you were a white parent living in the Malverne School District? A Black parent? Why?

1964 - 1965 - The Malverne School Integration Controversy Continues

Fights Shifts Based on Race, *Newsday, February 20, 1964*

Albany--State Sen. Norman F. Lent, Jr. (R.-East Rockaway), whose constituency includes the embattled Malverne School District, introduced two amendments to the state education law yesterday that would bar the transporting of school children to achieve integration. Lent's measures would outlaw the assignment of pupils to schools on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin.

A provision of the existing law prohibits the exclusion of a child from a public school on racial or religious grounds. In a precedent-setting decision last month, the State Supreme Court ruled in a case brought by Malverne citizens that this provision also barred the assignment of pupils to specific schools on such grounds. Lent's amendments would, in effect, make this decision part of the state education law.

"The purpose of this bill," Lent said, "is to prevent the commissioner of education from forcing local school districts to transport pupils out of their neighborhoods to distant schools solely for the purpose of achieving racial balance. It has become crystal clear that an overwhelmingly large majority of the public including a substantial portion of those who are sympathetic to the aims of desegregation, are opposed to dismantling the neighborhood school system in favor of mass transportation of Negro children to white area schools and vice versa, where the standard of education is found to be equal in all schools."

Malverne in Shift; Some Defy It , *Newsday, May 23, 1965*

Malverne--The long-delayed plan to end racial imbalance in this district's elementary schools went stumblingly into effect this morning as a number of unreconciled parents defied transfer of their children and played havoc with attendance figures at one elementary school.

About 140 white pupils and many of their parents confronted the principals at their old schools at school opening time and then went home, with many parents believing they will continue to defy the transfer to the Woodfield Road school for the rest of the week, then start sending their children to private classes they are organizing.

The protest and boycott were orderly but many children appeared confused by the unusual number of policemen and adults at the Woodfield school. One Negro 8-year-old first-grader, not accompanied by any adult, stood confusedly by the front door of the school for 15 minutes before the class-starting bell rang, then ran home. She has been attending the school regularly and was not transferred, but she apparently did not know what she was supposed to do today.

At the Davison school, about 55 parents and 20 fourth and fifth grade pupils reassigned to the Woodfield school confronted the principal, Ray T. Blank, in the gym-auditorium. He told them, "It is my responsibility to tell all of you here that it is the mandate of the commissioner of education that your children be transferred. We do not have either the teachers, the facilities or the equipment to handle your children . . . . your children should be in attendance at the Woodfield Road school." A resounding "No" chorused from the parents when he asked them to go to the other school.

On Day of Reckoning, 4 Points of View, Newsday, May 23, 1965

Here are some of the things being said of today's pupil-transfer plan to end racial imbalance in Malverne schools.

State Education Commissioner James E. Allen, Jr.: This whole action is in the interests of the young people and their future. . . . I deplore any action which is designed to prevent the full implementation of the plan and the achievement of the objectives behind the plan, namely, the achievement of educational opportunities for all the children.

School Board President, Fred A. Hook: It means a reduced education program for grades four and five. . . . The Negro children are hurt more than the white children. They're the ones that have to travel the farthest and they cross the most dangerous highways in the community.

Ewell Finely, chairman of the United Committee for Action Now: What has happened here is that the Negroes have won the case and the . . . convenience of the Negroes is not being served.

Howard Williams, an official of Taxpayers and Parents: We are fighting fascism. . . . By the time it gets all done, we'll have nice little children, . . . but they'll just be things. . . . next year he'll (Allen) indoctrinate some kind of coloring device so everybody'll be the same color.

Questions:

1- Do you agree with involving children in the protests? Why or why not?
2- How do supporters of the Malverne school integration plan explain their position?
3- How do opponents of the Malverne school integration plan explain their position? Who do you agree with? Why?
4- If you had lived in Malverne during this period, would you have joined the protests? Why?
5- Write a short speech presenting your ideas.
6- Design a leaflet or poster that shows your position.

1966- Was the Battle Resolved?

Malverne Schools Boycotted For Day, *New York Times, February 1, 1966*

Malverne, L.I. Jan. 31--Civil rights groups picketed schools today and students boycotted classes to protest a delay in a state-ordered plan to end racial discrimination in the school district. The State Education Commissioner, Dr. James E. Allen Jr., had originally ordered the school district to implement a plan today to end racial imbalance in the district's three elementary schools. Last Monday he postponed the date until March 1 or until five days after a case is decided in Federal Court in Brooklyn.

In Blockade to Slow Integration, *Newsday, February 21, 1966*

Malverne--Police arrested nine members of a mothers' group who blocked moving men readying the Davison Avenue School for integration today as some 60 white parents and children staged last-ditch demonstrations at two schools to preserve neighborhood schools in Malverne.

No arrests were made by policemen, however, at the Lindner Place School where some 40 demonstrators--who call themselves Mothers to Protect Neighborhood Schools--jammed a doorway. They sat on desks and prevented movers from getting classroom supplies into a van.

The arrests came at the Davison school after Assistant Superintendent Clement Wolff failed to talk the nine women and their children from getting down from the back of a van. "We sympathize with your feelings," said Wolff, "but the Commissioner of Education has ordered it. You have the right to picket but you do not have the right to interfere. If you interfere, you will be arrested."

At the Davison school, the signs read: "Schools Closed, Minds Closed, Education Is Dead;" "Van Plus Movers Equals O Classes;" "We Need ABCs--Not moving(*sic*)." Eight children carried small American flags at the Lindner school. The mothers stood their ground during the cold and sunny morning. . . .A mother said of the demonstration, "We feel that our freedom and liberty are being ignored in this experimentation. We're here as a protest and the children are here to learn about liberty and freedom."

L.I. Parents Open Secret Schools for White Pupils

New York Times, March 1, 1966

Malverne, L.I. Feb. 28--A group of white parents began operating secret private schools here today so their children would not have to go to an integrated school assigned to them by the Board of Education. Richard Cummings of 15 Lynn Court, a spokesman for Mothers to Protect Neighborhood Schools, said 132 fourth and fifth graders have been registered to attend the private classes. Mr. Cummings explained that the parents of the children and the owners of the 12 homes where classes are being held had agreed not to make public the locations of the temporary schools to protect the "physical and psychological aspects" of the children. He said: the children were taught by qualified tutors either former teachers, retired teachers, or regular substitute teachers --and that all requirements of the State Education Department were expected to be fulfilled.

800 Pupils Boycott Malverne Schools, *New York Times, March 18, 1966*

Malverne, L.I., March 17--The public schools here were boycotted today in the latest of a series of protests against the state's order to end racial imbalances in the school district. White parents affiliated with Neighbors United to Save Our Schools kept their children out of the high school, junior high school and three elementary schools. About 100 pickets marched in front of the district's headquarters for two hours this morning and again tonight.

Tutoring Is Rejected in Malverne, *Newsday, March 12, 1966*

Malverne--School Superintendent Howard T. Herber said last night that private tutoring classes in 12 homes for children of parents protesting the racial balance plan are unauthorized and raised the possibility of legal action if they do not return to Malverne district public schools. Sponsors of the current tutoring classes say they will continue the classes at least until the end of the semester in June.

Malverne Candidates Give Allen Plan Views, *Newsday, April 27, 1966*

Malverne--A three-man slate of school board candidates pledged to abolishing the state-ordered integration plan here called last night in effect for defeat of the district's proposed budget because it contains "Allen-oriented monies."

Malverne Elects School Plan Foes
Backs Neighborhood Policy--Vote in Other Areas
New York Times, May 5, 1966

Three candidates opposed to a state plan to end racial imbalance in the public schools were elected to the Malverne, L.I., school board Tuesday night. . . . The winning Malverne candidates, who are pledged to restore the neighborhood school policy, made a majority of the five. . . . The winners said they would set up a "free choice plan" under which parents would be permitted to choose which of the district's three elementary schools they wished their children to attend.

Malverne School Board Asserts State Formula Aids Segregation
New York Times, July 24, 1966

Malverne, L.I., July 23--The Malverne School Board has complained that a state-ordered plan to reduce racial imbalance in the district's elementary schools has brought an increase instead. The board said that more and more children were being sent to private schools and that Negro enrollment in September would be 59.4 percent.

Malverne School Board Votes To End Last Segregated Class
New York Times, August 12, 1966

Malverne, L.I. Aug. 11--The Malverne School Board, acting against a midnight deadline, voted last night to complete integration of the community's elementary schools by ending de facto segregation on the kindergarten level. The board acted with the knowledge that Dr. James E. Allen, Jr., the State Education Commissioner, was empowered to withhold financial aid to the school district and remove members of the board and act in their place if they did not comply with an integration order.

Malverne School Board Alters State-Ordered Racial Program
New York Times, October 20, 1966

Malverne, L.I., Oct. 19--The school board announced tonight what it called a "freedom-of-choice" plan under which parents may request transfers of children in kindergarten through the fifth grade to any of the three schools in the Malverne district. The new plan, which changes a state-ordered program designed to integrate elementary grades, will start Nov. 1.

Malverne: The Long Fight, *Newsday, May 3, 1966*

Malverne--Mrs. Joyce McCray, Negro mother of four, didn't recall the exact date of the meeting that started it all back in August 1962. "But I do remember it was a Sunday and the weather was cool for the middle of August," said Mrs. McCray, education director of the Lakeview Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The purpose of the session was to plan a way of bringing racial balance to the Malverne School District's three elementary schools, and the chief strategist was Miss Shagaloff, special educational assistant for the NAACP.

By the time the meeting ended three hours later, the group had chose a course that was to split the community into two militant camps assailing each other for the next three years with lawsuits, picket lines, sitdown demonstrations, school boycotts and a general flurry of angry

charges and countercharges. The group . . . decided to petition State Education Commissioner James E. Allen, Jr. to issued an order making Malverne the first school district in the state to be ordered to end de facto segregation in the elementary schools.

The appeal against the Malverne district charged the school board with promoting racial imbalance by refusing to build a new elementary school in a white neighborhood and by gerrymandering the district so that almost all Negro pupil were assigned to the Woodfield Road School, leaving the Davison Avenue and Lindner Place Schools with mostly white enrollment. It also accused the board of failing to equalize educational standards at the Woodfield Road School.

On June 18, 1963, Allen issued his far-reaching order for the Malverne district to end racial imbalance in its elementary schools by assigning pupils by grades instead of by neighborhoods. Allen order placing the kindergarten through third grades in the Lindner Place and Davison Avenue schools and the fourth through sixth in the Woodfield Road School.

By August, many residents in the district had mobilized into two major groups to wage war over the Allen plan. Much of the Negro community formed the Tri-Community Council for Intergroup Relations, which later became known as the United Committee for Action Now (UCAN). White parents with strong feelings on preserving the neighborhood school concept created the Taxpayers and Parents Association (TAP). Neighborhood districting remained in effect in 1964 and 1965 while a legal battle kept the plan in the courts. Judge John R. Bartels dismissed the case Feb. 11, and the board finally had to proceed with implementation of the plan.

Although the Allen Plan has finally been implemented in Malverne, the fighting seems far from over. Only last week, some women calling themselves Mothers to Protect Neighborhood Schools, called, their first meeting to plan further opposition to Allen's program.

Assembly Is Tense In Busing Dispute
Negro Leader and Nassau Member in Angry Exchange
New York Times, March 18, 1966

Albany, March 17--The school integration issue, which has been seething out of public sight for the entire current session of the Legislature, boiled into the open today in an angry debate in the Assembly. The leader of the Negro bloc, Assemblyman Percy E. Sutton, normally a poised, controlled speaker no matter how emotional the issue, became so incensed that his voice almost broke as he replied to an argument against school busing by a Nassau Republican. "It sounds to me," Mr. Sutton said, glaring at Assemblyman John E. Kingston, "as though someone is saying that in chipping away at segregation and discrimination, we are intruding on the rights of others."

Accusing the Education Commissioner, Dr. James. E. Allen, Jr. of trying to establish a "racial quota system" in the schools, the Nassau Republican said: "It's not an issue of money but of the philosophy of government the Education Commissioner is trying to impose on us." All session long a small but tenacious group of legislators opposed to busing has been trying to get the issue to the floor. The group has both Democrats and Republicans and represents several areas, but the hard-core nucleus is the Nassau County bloc.

Questions:

1- Both Black and white residents of Malverne used protests and boycotts to win support for their positions. Do you agree with these types of protests? Why or why not?
2- Some white residents of Malverne argued that public officials unfairly favored Black groups. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
3- A white majority voted to oppose the school integration plans, but the State Education Commissioner imposed them anyway. In your opinion, should majority rule have been respected in Malverne or were other principles more important? Why?

Oral History - The Battle Over School Integration in Malverne

by Joyce Kenny

Norman Lent Defends Neighborhood Schools

Norman F. Lent, Jr. was born in Oceanside, NY in 1931 and graduated from Malverne High School in 1948. At that time, according to Lent, Malverne had some Black students and the school was "integrated with no problems." In 1952, Lent received a B.A. from Hofstra University. He earned his law degree from Cornell University in 1957.

In 1962, Norman Lent was elected to the New York State Senate as a Republican. He served in the State Senate until 1970, when he was elected to the United States House of Representatives from the 5th district. Congressman Lent represented Long Island residents in Washington until 1993. Currently, he is a partner in the government relations and consulting firm of Lent and Scrivner in Washington, DC.

When he served in the State Senate, Norman Lent's constituency included the Malverne school district. This included the village of Malverne, part of the village of Lynbrook, and the community of Lakeview.

In the mid-1960's, Malverne parents were divided over a state imposed school integration plan. According to Senator Lent, many white families had moved to Malverne from New York City because it was a comfortable suburban area where their children could attend "nice neighborhood elementary schools" that were near their homes.

However, in 1963, the New York State Education Commissioner responded to complaints by the NAACP and Black parents living in Lakeview that the Malverne School District was racially segregated. He ordered the reorganization of all of the district's elementary schools to insure that they were integrated. The proposed plan assigned different grades to each of the district's three elementary schools and required that children be bused away from their neighborhood schools.

As the local representative in state government, Senator Lent supported the parents who opposed the dismantling of neighborhood schools in order to achieve racial balance. He stood up for Malverne's citizens and spoke at rallies and Parent-Teacher Association meetings. Lent believed that "the white people of Malverne were not racists." They opposed busing because "they were upset that they would have to send their kids into a strange neighborhood. Some of these kids had not even crossed the street without holding their mother's hand and now they were told they had to go miles away from home to school in Lakeview."

As an example of the problem created by the state's school integration plan, Lent told the story of a white mother with three children, one in kindergarten, one in second grade, and one in fourth grade. "Her kids used to be able to go to the same school hand-in-hand. Now they were going to be bused to different schools. The mother would have to join three PTA's. This was not fair and not what that family had in mind when they bought their house in Malverne."

Lent explained that because of the threat of forced busing "white parents started pulling their kids out of public schools and sending them to Catholic or other religious schools. They also protested by electing school board candidates who took their side and voted down school budgets which included money to fund busing." Lent believes that because of continued community opposition from both whites and Blacks, busing funds were always voted down. As a result of this activism "no child ever took a bus in Malverne."

In 1964, Senator Lent introduced amendments to the New York State Education Law to outlaw the busing of students on the basis of race in order to achieve integration. Lent believed that his views were consistent with the United States Supreme Court decision in Brown v. the Topeka, Kansas Board of Education case of 1954. According to Lent, "the Supreme Court case stated that Ms. Brown could not be bused outside of her neighborhood because of her color." Lent argued that this same idea should prevent the busing of white students out of their neighborhoods for the purpose of creating racial balance. However, this proposal was defeated several times in the Democratic-controlled State Assembly after having passed in the State Senate. The New York State Legislature eventually approved a Neighborhood School Law that Norman Lent introduced in 1969,

but the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the law violated the United States Constitution and was "unconstitutional."[51]

In Congress, Norman Lent continued his campaign to defend neighborhood schools and outlaw busing to promote racial integration. He proposed an amendment to the United States Constitution stating: "No public school student shall, because of his race, creed or color, be assigned to or required to attend a particular school." Congressman Lent argued that the amendment was necessary because "communities throughout this nation are in a state of disarray or are being threatened with educational turmoil because of numerous court orders calling for the achievement of 'racial balance' or racial quotas in our public schools." Despite Congressman Lent's efforts, this amendment was never passed by Congress.[52]

Questions:

1- Why did Norman Lent become involved in the Malverne school integration controversy?
2- You are a constituent living in the district represented by State Senator (or Congressman) Lent. Write him a letter expressing your views on his role in the school integration controversy.
3- If you were Supreme Court Justice and the Malverne case was argued in court, how would you have ruled? Write a statement explaining your views.
4- In the battle over school integration in Malverne, different "rights" and principles were in conflict. On one side of the controversy, people argued for equal education and racial justice. On the other side, people demanded local control over community schools and democratic decision-making. In your opinion, can these kind of conflicts be resolved in a way that is satisfactory to all parties? Explain your views.

Roland Cook - Teacher, Malverne Schools

Roland Cook worked in Malverne's junior and senior high school from 1958 until 1969. He started as an English teacher in the junior high school and eventually moved to the high school. He left Malverne to become the director of guidance at Half Hollows Hill West High School in Dix Hills. Cook believes that the campaign to integrate Malverne schools was so bitter because of white prejudice.

When Roland Cook started teaching in Malverne, there were three elementary schools, Woodfield Road, Linder Place, and Davidson Avenue. The Woodfield Road School was already predominately Black. According to Cook, "the powers-that-be on the school board claimed that the schools were equal. They all had the same books." But Cook feels that there was something different about the all-Black school. It was after the Supreme Court's Brown vs. the Board of Education decision and he argues that the way the elementary schools were divided definitely was not right.

According to Roland Cook, "the Malverne school district let segregation go until it was ordered to change by State Education Commissioner James Allen. Allen was hated in Malverne. When he later died in a plane crash, people in the community were actually happy."

Roland Cook was not involved in the school board debates over racial integration, but he remembers that most of the teachers were on the side of the white parents. He feels that "the old-timers were set in their ways" and some of the teachers were openly prejudiced. "During a fire drill, a teacher told one of the Black students to 'shut those thick lips.' When I confronted the teacher, I became very unpopular."

Roland Cook explained that "to promote racial integration, the Woodfield Road school was closed. One of the other elementary schools in the district became a K-3 school. The other was designated for fourth and fifth graders. Sixth grade students were sent to the middle school. Many children were bused to their school. He feels that "one thing that helped the integration movement was the involvement of Black students on school teams. The teams were successful and this built school spirit. Malverne had the first Black basketball team in Nassau County and it always won sportsmanship awards."

For the most part, during this period the mood of the community was very tense. According to Roland Cook, "the Black parents weren't as vocal as the protesting whites. State Senator Norman

Lent was from Malverne and he stood firmly with the white majority. He certainly was not a friend of the Black parents. But the Blacks had leaders from CORE and the NAACP. Lincoln Lynch, the head of Nassau CORE was from Malverne. These were interesting and powerful people. The white people feared them."

In 1968, there was a student strike in Malverne High School that was led by both white and Black students. According to Roland Cook, "They had many demands, including a Black studies program." He remembers that they were among the smartest students in the school. "Sal Zaccaro and I went outside because the kids were there and there were no adults present. We got into a confrontation with the police and Sal was arrested. The police broke up a demonstration by the students, arrested them, put them into vans, and took them to Mineola. They began to strip search the kids, even the girls. Sal called the Superintendent. The district sent vans to pick up the students and all charges were dropped. The next year they had the Black studies program and a class in Swahili. The kids went back to being students and pocketed this small victory."

Questions :

1- According the Roland Cook, why was there controversy over school integration in Malverne?
2- Do you agree with the decision by Roland Cook and Sal Zaccaro to support the striking students? Why or why not?
3- If you were a student at Malverne High School at that time, would you have participated in the strike? Explain your reasons.

Sal Zaccaro - Social Studies Teacher, Malverne High School

I started working in Malverne in 1961. I did my student teaching here the year before. When I started teaching it was a mostly white school. There were a handful of Black students, but no Black staff members. Lakeview, however, was in a period of racial transition. White flight had already begun.

I was teaching world history at the time. This included African history the way the Europeans had seen the Africans, as inferiors. The course had nothing to do with Black history, Black culture, Black hopes, or dreams. The kids only got more from me because of my personal interest. I never had any courses in African history in college so I studied it on my own. I found it fascinating.

I was a grade advisor to the class of 1964. A lot of bad things happened at that time in this building. We had a Black student who was a super personality student. One day, I saw him outside my classroom with a very sad face; and this kid was never without a smile. I went out to talk to him. He told me that he had just come from his guidance counselor. The counselor said to him, "So Henry, do you think you would like to be a painter?" Henry had a pretty good view of himself and personal dignity. He said, "No, I'm not really that artistic." But the counselor said, "No, I meant a house painter." The guidance counselor thought he was saying a perfectly innocent thing. This is an example of the low expectations the guidance staff and the district had for Black kids.

That same year, I received a phone call one night from the brother of one of my students. The student, an extraordinary athlete, received many scholarship offers. The brothers told me that the coach was no help with the scholarships. Every time a letter came from a new school, the coach would say, "Oh, take that one, take that one." The young man was confused and didn't know what to do. I advised him to be very careful where he went to school. In 1964, there were very hard racial attitudes in many parts of the country. I told him that he needed to go to a school that would give him extra time, extra courses, would pay for summer school, and would guarantee him a degree. Otherwise, if something happened to his knee, his football and college careers would be over.

Once, when we were fighting to integrate the Malverne schools, I was told that my certification was in doubt. How could that be? I was teaching for a while then. I knew that they were playing dirty. I called the wife of Ewell Finley, the head of the United Committee for Action Now. I wanted to let them know that I was being harassed because of my political views. I later received a letter

from the State Education Commissioner stating that my certification was not at risk and it was permanent. That was some of the dirty tricks that were played.

During the 1960s there was a terrible war going on in Vietnam. People tried to get out of going into the army and they protested against the war. People also protested for civil rights. I was arrested several times in my life for civil disobedience during the Vietnam and civil rights era.

The kids at Malverne got involved in protests because they wanted Black history and Swahili classes. The school board in Malverne was retrogressive about racial issues and any change, so the kids and the school board had a confrontation.

In 1969-70, things got worse. The school board election was racial in every sense of the word. One candidate put out a letter that went to houses in Lynbrook and Malverne, but not to Black families living in Lakeview. It said, "Do you want your kids to go through the dark streets of Lakeview?" I was very active in school affairs. There was an extraordinary African American fellow named Ewell Finley, who was a candidate for the school board, and I supported him.

One day I went to my car and there was paint all over it. Another night I come to my car and it was egged. The night of the election, I found a watermelon in my car with the words "Nigger lover" written in black magic marker. I had to change my phone number twice because people were harassing my family. At the election, a little girl said to me, "We're going to get you now you nigger lover." Right here in this school, and I was a teacher! One woman spit in the face of Mr. Finley. I was standing so close that she got spittle on my face. She said to me, "Why don't you go back to where you came from?"

When the kids became active in the school things got really bad. One day, 139 of us were arrested. The kids were taken to Mineola. They had things done to them that were illegal. At that time, only known drug offenders were strip searched. That wasn't the case with these kids. They were humiliated. Some of the kids told me what happened. They said they were going to tear the place apart. I began to be frightened. I knew that the institutions were much more powerful than they were.

There were two meeting going on that night to discuss what was going on. One was a parents' meeting in a church in Lakeview. Meanwhile, the kids were meeting at Mr. Finley's house. I went to the parent's meeting, but all that was happening was bickering. I didn't want to waste my time so I said that I was going to talk to the kids. One of the parents got offended and said that the kids didn't want to see me. They didn't want to see any adults. So I said fine, they can tell me if they want to.

I went to see the kids. The mood at their meeting was very ugly and I was very scared. I asked them to listen to me for a minute. I told them that some of them could lose their lives if they rioted and that there is no more powerful weapon than silence. I told them to make signs, as they were planning to, and to march on the curb with their parents behind them. They agreed to do it. There really was a good mix of students at the meeting. They were Black and white. The kids had found a common ground.

That night I went home and contacted everyone that I knew in the media because media coverage would protect the students. The next day I stood there with them. I couldn't believe that no other teacher had enough courage to stand up for what is right and stand with these kids. To me that was the greatest betrayal of these kids. How dare they teach these kids and not stand up for them! The kids stood outside the school for three days until the school board met with their representatives.

This was the beginning of a few token changes. However, some horrible things were still done. The principal of the high school wrote letters to colleges where the students who demonstrated had applied. He told the college that these students were troublemakers.

Over the years, more and more Black families moved into Lakeview, and more and more white families moved out. Today, two-thirds of the students in Malverne schools are Black, but two-thirds of the taxpayers and voters are white, so racial conflict continues. We have had school board members and superintendents send their kids to private schools. I bet you did't know that this district used to be called the Birmingham of the North.

Questions

1- Why do you think Malverne was called the Birmingham of the North? Do you agree or disagree with this nickname? Why?
2- Do you think the way that the guidance counselor treated the Black student was an example of racism? Explain the reasons for your answer.
3- Sal Zaccaro was arrested at a demonstration along with his students. Do you agree or disagree with his actions? Why? Do you think he should have been fired? Why or why not?
4- If you were on the Malverne School Board, would you have voted in favor of, or opposed to, classes in Black history and Swahili? Why?
5- Imagine you were a high school in Malverne and were attending the planning meeting at Mr. Finley's house. How would you have responded to the statements by Mr. Zaccaro. Why?

Oral History - The Battle Over School Integration in Great Neck

Frank Phillips and the Great Neck School Integration Controversy

by Denise Del Valle and Stephanie Hunte

Frank Phillips was a member of the Great Neck school board from 1964 until 1976. This was a period of intense controversy in the struggle to integrate Long Island public schools. In December, 1967, the Center for Urban Education recommended to the Great Neck school board that it participate in an urban-suburban school integration program with New York City. The proposal involved enrolling between 45 and 60 African American children from New York City in Great Neck schools.

Great Neck had a reputation as an enlightened and progressive community. Although its population was over 95% white, the community was a leader in the fight for civil rights. When Martin Luther King, Jr. visited Great Neck, over 2,000 citizens filled Temple Israel hall to meet him. Great Neck seemed an ideal place for a voluntary urban-suburban school integration program.

As a member of the Great Neck school board, Frank Phillips was a strong supporter of this school integration plan. He was impressed with positive evaluations of similar programs in other communities. He was also concerned that rejection of the plan would provide Black separatists with evidence that white communities would not voluntarily support racial integration and white segregationists with an example of liberal hypocrisy.

Shortly after the plan was made public, the school board and local newspapers began receiving letters that either strongly opposed or strongly supported it. In April, 1968, one thousand residents attended a public meeting to discuss the plan. No other topic had ever drawn half that number of people to a school meeting.

According to Frank Phillips, many opponents of the plan were young parents. They had moved out of New York City thinking that Great Neck was a "Shangri-La." The suggestion that the school board allow a bit of New York City into Great Neck shattered this illusion and they responded with fear and hostility. A month after the public meeting, the school budget was defeated for the third time in nine years. Some people attributed the defeat to anti-busing sentiment. The school board was also presented with a petition signed by over eight hundred residents from the southern end of the school district. The petition urged the board to hold a public referendum on the busing plan.

On December 9, 1968, the Great Neck Record carried an advertisement by the "Parents Committee Against New York City to Great Neck School Busing". The ad charged that the school integration plan was being "railroaded through without community knowledge." Board members began to receive threats. One member was threatened with physical violence. Frank Phillips and another member were told that their businesses would be affected.

Instead of retreating, Frank Phillips decided to organize supporters of the integration plan into a "Committee for Conscience and Reason." The committee placed an ad in the Great Neck Record that called for community support of the urban-suburban school integration initiative and was signed by over 180 people.

Opponents of school integration launched a counter-attacked at the next school board meeting. They disrupted the proceedings and insisted on speaking even though the integration plan was not on the agenda. As a result of pressure on the school board, its members unanimously agreed to a public "advisory" referendum on the integration plan.

Frank Phillips believes that the referendum inflamed the controversy even further. Supporters and opponents initiated intensive publicity and advertising campaigns. Numerous organizations in the community came out in support of the school integration plan, including a group of Great Neck secondary school students. Two thousand students signed an ad in the local press. It was headed: "Do Not Make Us Be Ashamed of Growing Up in Great Neck". Students also held a parade and filled the 1000 seat auditorium of the North Senior High School for a rally.

The "Committee Against New York City to Great Neck School Busing" published ads claiming that the integration plan would increase the taxes of the local property owners and the rents of the apartment dwellers; that it would mean sending Great Neck children into ghetto schools; and that children would be transferred out of their neighborhood schools to make room for more than 200 incoming city children. According to Frank Phillips, while none of these claims were true, they inflamed the community and were difficult to counter.

On February 6, 1969, the school integration plan appeared to be defeated in an advisory referendum that was marred by voting irregularities. But because people voted in such high numbers, the voting machines could not record all of the ballots, and the results were declared invalid. At its next meeting, the Great Neck school board voted 3 to 2 to continue to pursue the plan. When the fifth board member cast the deciding vote, he said: "I vote my conscience. I vote yes." The auditorium went into an uproar and security guards had to escort board members from the meeting.

Initially the New York City Board of Education was anxious to participate, but after the advisory referendum and the election of two anti-busing candidates to the Great Neck school board, New York declared that it did not want to send children into a hostile environment. Frank Phillips and other supporters of the integration plan tried to convince New York City to implement the plan, but it never was put into operation.

Frank Phillips was the only pro-integration school board member to run for reelection and despite efforts by an opposition group called VOCAL, he was reelected. In 1975, he helped defeat the two board members who had opposed the integration plan. Frank Phillips still believes that compared to other communities, Great Neck is one of the most enlightened school districts.

Questions:

1- What was Frank Phillips' role in the Great Neck School integration controversy?
2- Why did Frank Phillips believe that Great Neck was an "ideal place" for a voluntary school integration plan?
3- The Great Neck school integration plan only involved a small number of children. Why did it become a major "symbolic" issue in the community?
4- Do you agree or disagree with the way the Great Neck School Board handled this issue? Why?
5- In your opinion, how did local, regional, and national events contribute to the defeat of the Great Neck school integration plan?

An interview with Emil "Al" Cianciulli

By Jennifer Palacio and Denise Del Valle

Al Cianciulli, a lawyer, is currently the legal counsel for Hofstra University. From 1966-1969 he served on the Great Neck, New York Board of Education. According to Al Cianciulli, the United States in the 1960's was "a more stratified society than it is now." In Great Neck, where he had grown up and still lived, Black people lived in isolated places like Spinney Hill and an area around Steamboat Road. They generally held low-paying menial jobs, often working as domestics for white families in the community.

"Many white families in Great Neck participated in the national Civil Rights movement and this had a positive affect on the way people saw things. At the same time, there was growing resentment over the Vietnam War and development of the peace movement. The Civil Rights movement and the peace movement made this an era of great militancy. Young people were more rebellious than they are now. That was the general flavor of the time when Frank Phillips and I became active on the Great Neck School Board. We saw injustice reflected in education, housing, and employment opportunities and we wanted to change these conditions.

I went to high school in Great Neck, and then I attended Hofstra University and Fordham Law School. Later, I was elected to the local school board. Great Neck was a very wealthy community. It spent more per student than any other district on the Island and had a well endowed school system. It had high property values and the community taxed itself to support its schools. The town had a large number of college graduates, so education was valued.

At that time, my wife and I had a daughter attending a parochial elementary school and a son in a Great Neck public elementary school. In addition, we "adopted" a Black child from South Carolina as part of an Urban League program called "STEP" (Student Transfer Education Program). The program was designed to assist Black youngsters with strong academic potential who were attending sub-standard schools in the South. The young person we "adopted" shared my daughter's bedroom and attended Great Neck High School during her sophmore, junior and senior years. Later, she graduated from Hofstra University under the NOAH program and went on to earn a Masters degree. She now heads daycare centers in South Carolina. All three of these young people were significantly affected by the controversy over school integration in Great Neck. I believe it had a lasting effect in shaping their values and their attitudes as they grew to maturity.

In the middle 1960's the school age population of Great Neck was beginning to diminish. Someone in the community suggested that, since we had empty seats and elementary classrooms in nearby Queens schools were overcrowded, we bring some of those students into our school system. I felt we had a social obligation to try to help these children, whether they were Black or white.

This idea led to a lot of turmoil in what was a relatively liberal community. You would think that there was a threat from a hoard of warriors. These were just small children and a small number of them. But busing was a "buzz word" in the 1960's. This was a very modest proposal, but I guess it brought out the worst racial fears and prejudices in people. The tension level was hard to describe. People felt that "I don't want my child in a class with these people." There were angry and enormously disruptive public meetings that led to a referendum where the community voted not to do it.

Because it was an advisory referendum, the school board still had to vote on the plan. In this very hostile atmosphere, the board was split and I caste the deciding vote in favor of doing it. I voted this way as a matter of conscience. However, in the long run the plan never went into operation.

Because of my vote for the school integration plan, I became a symbol that divided our community in a very bitter way. I got a lot of hate mail and people signed petitions asking me to leave town, even people that I knew and with whom I attended high school. After all of this controversy, it didn't take a rocket scientist to tell me that I should not run for reelection to the school board. I was not electable. In any event, I was very disappointed by what happened in the community and the failure to implement this plan. Perhaps the board, including myself, did not handle the question properly. But I never regretted taking a principled stand on this position.

In the next election, Great Neck residents chose a much more conservative school board. The new board tried to fire the superintendent of schools because he had supported the school busing plan. There was a series of circus-like hearings in the auditorium of one of the elementary schools. My law firm represented the school superintendent before the Great Neck Board of Education and the New York State Department of Education. We won the case and the superintendent went on to finish his career in Great Neck.

The issue of busing was never introduced again because everyone in the community was deadly afraid of the whole idea. Ultimately, the bruises from that time began to fade. Great Neck had had a wonderful history of social and educational innovation. However, I don't think people ever recovered from that period.

After I left the school board, I stayed in Great Neck because I was not going to let anyone drive me out of town. Eventually, eight years later, I did move. I still have many friends in Great Neck, but I remember this battle for school integration as a very bruising experience."

Questions:

1- Why did Al Cianciulli become an advocate for civil rights?
2- What evidence is there that the Great Neck community strongly valued education?
3- Why does Al Cianciulli believe many people opposed the school integration plan?
4- Why did Al Cianciulli decide not to run for reelection?
5- If you were in Al Cianciulli's position, how would you have voted on the school integration plan? Why?
6- Would you question the decision to send Al Cianciulli's daughter to a parochial school instead of a public school? Why?

Racial Discrimination and Volunteer Fire Departments

by Stavros Kilimitzoglou

A particularly bitter issue was the existence of all-white volunteer fire departments in many communities. In February, 1967, Newsday described how a single individual could "blackball" a prospective African American candidate, insuring the continued racial segregation of the departments.[53] In an April, 1967 article, Newsday reported that "the Hempstead Human Rights Commission charged that the volunteer fire department has not negotiated in good faith in meetings aimed at desegregating the all-while department. The Mayor Walter Ryan and village board members have said they favor getting Negroes on the fire department but do not have the power to compel it."[54]

The volunteer fire departments were also notorious for promoting racist ideas to justify their segregated membership policies. An editorial in the Hempstead Beacon protested against the attitude in many Long Island volunteer fire departments that African Americans were "dull, backward and not having the capacity to fulfill the requirements and the responsibilities of such a heavy job as is a policeman or a fireman."[55] Newsday quoted opponents of racial integration who argued that the departments could only admit "people with wits."[56]

Documents: Racial Discrimination and Volunteer Fire Departments

Helpful Vocabulary
blackball- to exclude someone from membership because of a single negative vote.

Plan Fire Department Integration Try, *Newsday, January 27, 1964*

Wyandanch--A Negro real estate agent who had previously charged the Wyandanch Fire Department with negligence and prejudice announced last night a drive to integrate the all-white department. The agent, James M. Ellison, who is also president of the Wyandanch Republican Club, announced the drive after meeting for an hour . . . with 10 other Negro residents of the predominantly Negro area. Ellison said that he was not interested in joining the department, but that the 10 men were and that two of them previously had been told there were not vacancies.

LI Fire Officials Deny Department Bias, *Newsday, January 30, 1964*

Long Island fire department officials denied yesterday that they are refusing to admit Negro members. But civil rights leaders contend that discrimination exists and said they would work to have it ended. In a survey of 15 fire department officials throughout Long Island, all said their departments did not discriminate though none of the departments had a Negro member. Each of the chiefs said no Negro had ever applied to his department.

Fireman Quits; Racial Dispute Called Cause, *Newsday, April 6, 1966*

Westbury--A veteran fireman resigned from the Westbury department yesterday, claiming he was forced out because he advocated the admission of Negroes. The fireman, Theodore P. Conlin, 37, of Westbury, said he had been given the silent treatment by his fellow firemen for about a year. Westbury Fire chief Frank DiGaetano said, however, that there was no discrimination in the all-white fire department and that no Negroes had ever applied for membership. Conlin has been a member of the 150-member Westbury Fire Department since Oct. 28, 1952. He has been active in civil rights movements on Long Island, has served as a treasurer of the Long Island Coordinating Committee for Civil Rights and has worked in other civil rights organizations. On June 13, 1965, he participated in a demonstration against the all-white Wyandanch Fire Department in Suffolk County. He said he began receiving the silent treatment from then on in his own fire department.

Firemen's Unit Is Picketed By Rights Group, *Newsday, May 19, 1966*

East Norwich--A meeting of the Nassau Firemen's Association was picketed by about 15 civil rights demonstrators last night. Pickets began forming outside the East Norwich firehouse shortly after 8 p.m., greeting delegates to the Firemen's Association annual meeting with signs that said "Extinguish Racial Bigotry" and "Stamp Out Fires and Bias." They were led by Alvin Dorfman, chairman of the Long Island Coordinating Committee for Civil Rights. He said the demonstration was to call attention to discrimination against Negro volunteers by volunteer fire departments. "This is a problem statewide," said Ben Watford of Smithtown as he marched in the picket line. "I'm seeking to make the point that if I weren't black I could get into a fire department."

LI CORE Chief Ousted From Village Meeting, *Newsday, January 18, 1967*

Hempstead--Police ousted the chairman of Long Island CORE from a turbulent village board meeting last night after he and other civil rights leaders exchanged charges and threats with the mayor over integration in the Hempstead Volunteer Fire Department. Mel Jackson, the chairman of the Long Island chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality, was escorted from the room by a policeman after he and Mayor Walter B. Ryan engaged in a shouting match and Jackson refused to sit down when ordered to by the mayor. Gerald Taylor, the state president of the NAACP Youth Division, then threatened to bring 400 people into the village to "tie up Hempstead in boycotts and demonstrations." Ryan challenged him to do so, and warned that any disorder would be put down with "guns, if we have to."

Fault Firemen On Bias Talks, *Newsday, January 24, 1967*

Hempstead--The Hempstead Human Rights Commission charged yesterday that the volunteer fire department has not negotiated in good faith in meetings aimed at desegregating the all-white department. The commission said in a statement that the Fire Council, in meetings first with the commission and then with a special committee, "has shown disregard for the concerns and recommendations of the village leadership or what, in the opinion of many, is in the best interests of the village." Mayor Walter B. Ryan and village board members have said they favor getting Negroes' on the fire department, but do not have the power to compel it.

Fire Departments And Discrimination - Beacon Editorial

Hempstead Beacon, February 8, 1967

The Long Island volunteer fire departments and in the process the individuals who are members, are taking a walloping in the press and over the airways with the charge of discrimination. In view of the long and outstanding record of service performed by the volunteers in the service of the communities they serve, it is surprising that so few have come to their defense. The writer has been a volunteer firemen and company officer and knows something of how the vamps function. The critics may have some grounds for criticism of membership application practices but they have failed to produce any evidence of a positive incident where a person was denied membership on the grounds of race, creed, or origin. The truth is that many men from minority groups have won the right to wear the blue uniform of a volunteer. The County commission in its report only discussed Negroes and failed to mention any other minority groups.

We feel the protesters do the community a disservice when they attack the volunteer fire department organization because they are not sincere candidates for membership. We also feel that the volunteer fire departments need some self appraisal, should take their collective heads out of a basket, and look to what is in their immediate future. Threats of economic reprisals against community business people to blackjack (threaten) the community are not the solution. The long record of dedication and service by our volunteers, in some cases for more than a century, deserves better treatment.

Hempstead Vamps May End Blackball, *Newsday, February 16, 1967*

Hempstead--The Hempstead Volunteer Fire department, which has been the target of a heated integration campaign, is considering proposed changes in its membership selection procedures which include abandoning the much criticized blackball system.

A four-point set of recommendations, now under consideration by the membership of the 10 individual companies of the fire department, was agreed upon in recent negotiations between a committee representing the fire department and a special citizens committee named by the village administration to discuss the problem of integration of the all-white fire department. There is no specific mention in the proposed changes of inducting a Negro into the department. Civil Rights leaders, who have been conducting demonstrations urging integration of the department, said last night they felt the proposed changes in membership procedures meant little unless a specific commitment was made to take in Negro firemen.

The blackball system, which allows one or a few members of a company to reject an applicant for membership, was among fire department membership practices criticized recently in a Nassau Human Rights Commission report as secretive and subjective.

Questions:

1- Why did civil rights activists protest against the membership practices of volunteer fire departments?
2- How did fire department officials explain why they had no African American members?
3- Was there evidence of racial discrimination by voluteer fire departments? Explain your answer.
4- How did the "blackball" system work?
5- Write a "Letter to the Editor" responding to the Hempstead Beacon editorial of Feb. 8, 1967.

What Happens to a Dream Deferred?

by Deon Gordon

During the summer of 1967, there were approximately 150 racial "disorders" reported in predominately Black communities across the United States. They ranged from "minor disturbances to major outbursts involving sustained and widespread looting and destruction of property.[57] There was violence in Boston, Massachusetts, Buffalo, New York, Cincinnati, Ohio, Detroit, Michigan, New Haven, Connecticut, Newark, New Jersey, Providence, Rhode Island, and Wilmington, Delaware.

Initially most Long Islanders believed that their communities would be immune to these kinds of social disorders. Despite significant African American population centers in Hempstead, Lakeview, Roosevelt, Westbury and Amityville, Long Island was basically a region of suburban and rural small towns and villages, not the large densely populated urban ghettoes that seemed destined to explode. A Newsday article on March 1, 1968, reported that "a number of local officials and civil rights experts agreed. . . that Long Island does have some of the ingredients for trouble but can head it off through increased public awareness and action."[58]

Newspaper headlines during the next few years show that racial tension on Long Island, both Black unrest and the white backlash that accompanied it, were more intense and extensive than officials anticipated. In 1969 and 1970 headlines in Newsday and the New York Times reported:
"Shots Quell Central Islip Race Fight."
"Three Beaten As Students Disrupt School in Freeport."
"Bellport School Shut After Scuffles."
"Racially Torn Hempstead High To Reopen With Talks on Strife."
"Blacks, Whites in Hofstra Melee."
"Four Hurt in Roosevelt Disorder."
"Six Hundred Anger Whites Demand Law And Order in Schools."[59]

By the end of the 1960's, African Americans on Long Island, particularly young people, no longer would quietly accept second-class citizenship, discrimination, or what they perceived as harassment by police officers or school officials. As a result, racial conflicts frequently mushroomed from seemingly minor issues. In October, 1967, African American groups in Manhasset appealed to the state highway department asking that a traffic light be installed at an accident prone intersection. When the request was denied, a spokesperson told a public meeting, "we are black people, they don't intend to give us anything unless we show we demand it. Tonight this community is waking up, we are sick and tired of all the foolishness, we are not going to take NO for an answer."[60]

Across Long Island, Black high school students took leadership in campaigns that challenged perceived injustices and community officials committed to maintaining the status quo. For example, in May 1969, Newsday reported that in "Central Islip about 40 Black youth appeared at a meeting of the Central Islip Task Force. . . to demand quicker solutions to racial problems."[61] Students wanted Black teachers and guidance counselors added to the school staff and African history and culture included in the curriculum. Some students also demanded that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday be recognized as a holiday. When these demands were not met, a student group protested by boycotting classes.

African American parents frequently supported the demands presented by their children. Newsday reported that in Freeport Black parents were "concerned for the safety and education of their children. The environment of Freeport has not been conducive to these things in recent months."[62] When "a group of twenty Black youths disrupted Amityville High School . . . in a demonstration against a white teacher whose dismissal the group has demanded," Black community groups in this Suffolk County village supported the students and added demands for an investigation into employment and housing discrimination.[63]

In many Long Island communities tension escalated when white residents responded to Black protests by demanding increased police protection from "disorderly blacks" and stiffer penalties for protesters who broke the law. On April 29, 1969 Newsday reported that at a meeting in Freeport a group of white parents and community residents "passed almost unanimously a list of demands that included suspension of any student who leaves school premises without permission, carries a weapon or participates in an unauthorized meeting during school hours; arrest of any student found in the halls without permission who refuses to return to class; patrol of the halls during school hours; and public review of demands made by black students." They also opposed a plan that would bring additional African American children into their community schools.[64] In "Central Islip about six hundred whites turned out for a rally. . . in support of a drive to have Soul Village closed or moved" because it was a hangout for Black youth and considered dangerous.[65]

Escalating rhetoric in both white and Black camps on Long Island, eventually generated violence. On April 26, 1969, The New York Times reported that youths in Roosevelt "threw rocks and broke several windows in the school, scuffled among themselves, beat three persons, including a woman who was pulled from her car when she stopped for a red light, and lowered the American flag in front of the school and tore it to shreds."[66] Newsday reported that "four white persons were hospitalized, three of them with stab wounds and one with a pellet gun wound, after a group of Black youth roamed through parts of the business section here last night."[67]

In May, 1969, Central Islip High School exploded. According to Newsday, "Fighting among a number of white and Negro students broke out at the Central Islip high school yesterday for the second time this month. Warning shots fired by a patrolman dispersed the crowd, but the tension continued into the night, and there was a firebombing that caused minor damage to the home of a white resident."[68]

In Westbury, the junior and senior high schools were closed in response to reports of racial tension among youngsters in the district. According to Westbury's school board president, "there had been an argument in the high school. . . between a white boy and a Negro youth. Rumors had spread throughout the school and created a tense racial atmosphere. Friction had been building up for the last two months. We are trying to head off a summer of rioting here."[69]

It is important to recognize that even as racial hostility grew, some Long Islanders remained committed to racial integration. For example, white members of the Great Neck school board explored a plan to bring Black students from New York City into its community's largely white schools. However, as a result of organized community resistance and the general political climate on Long Island, the New York City Board of Education ultimately withdrew from the plan rather than risk placing students in a hostile setting.

Documents:
5A) Can Long Island Avoid Racial Turmoil?

LI Confident on Racial Problems, *Newsday, March 1, 1968*

Based on the findings of the presidential riot study commission, a number of local officials and civil rights experts agreed today that Long Island does have some of the ingredients for trouble but can head it off through increased public awareness and action.

Among the gains that can be made, officials said, were greater freedom for Negroes in choosing where they can live on Long Island, improved methods of bringing non-white children into the education pattern such as the new integration plans in Malverne and in Bellport-Brookhaven-East Patchogue; more emphasis on job training via government and industry for work above the $1.50 hourly minimum; improved relations with various government agencies and greater absorption of Negroes into the political structure.

Perhaps the core problem on Long Island, officials said, is housing discrimination, an area where civil rights leaders have found only token success. The Nassau-Suffolk Regional Planning Board, in a report issued last September, noted that there were about 25,000 substandard housing units on Long Island housing 100,000 persons, most of them nonwhites.

Newsday noted in a series, "the Negro on Long Island in 1962," that with about three percent of the population in Nassau and about five percent in Suffolk, Negroes had a median income 60 percent more than the national median; the buying power of the Long Island Negro in 1966 was about $100,000,000 and more than half the Negro families owned their own homes.

"The figures may show that Negroes out here are relatively better off," one official said last night, "but in terms of applying the broad problems of housing, jobs, etc. you have to remember that there is some ghettoization and so there is area-wide discontent in some cases. Sure, there could be trouble anytime. The seeds are there, but not like in the city. The problem on Long Island at least is manageable."

The problem of ghetto growth was pointed up by a Nassau Council of Churches study that predicts that five of the 15 communities in which most Negroes live will become 75 percent Negro by 1985 and four others will then be just under the 40 percent mark, which the council uses in establishing what constitutes a ghetto.

Most experts believed that it would be difficult to stem the growth of Long Island ghettos in the next two decades simply because of population trends. The estimate is that by 1985 the Negro population will double to about 200,000. Between now and then, they agreed, the public would have to take firm action to prevent the small disturbances that, as the presidential commission noted, can suddenly "spill over into violence ... because of the racial-attitude and behavior of white Americans toward black Americans."

Questions:
1- What gains did African Americans on Long Island make during the 1960's?
2- According to this article, what major racial problems remained on Long Island?
3- Why did Long Island official consider racial problems on Long Island "manageable"?
4- Do you agree with their conclusion? Why?
5- The 1968 presidential commission concluded that the major racial problem in the United States was "the racial-attitude and behavior of white Americans toward black Americans." Do you agree or disagree with this conclusion? Why?

5B) Protest Intensifies, But Hope Continues

Rights Group Blocked In Traffic Light Quest, *Newsday, October 27, 1967*

Manhasset--Engineers of the State Highway Department met in public last night with the Invincible Black Militia, but at the end of the session the Negro civil rights group appeared no closer to its goal of a traffic light at the Spinney Hill section on Northern Boulevard. The group has been pressing for a traffic light at Allen Drive and Northern Boulevard where there have been several fatalities. The meeting was set up by the highway department after receiving a letter from the group. The group's vice president, Benny Beck, said, "We are black people. They don't intend to give us nothing unless we show we demand it." As some in the group shook their fists and one waved a white plastic skull, Beck continued, "Tonight this community is waking up. We are sick and tired of all this foolishness. We aren't going to take 'no' for an answer."

LI Negroes Recall JFK, Mourn King, *Newsday, April 5, 1968*

Mrs. Josie Ward, a Negro, sat in a front pew of the Holy Spirit Baptist Church in North Amityville, and her voice seemed to crack as she talked and tears were visible in her eyes. "It shook me up, it's terrible," she said. "It's like when President Kennedy died, yes like President Kennedy." John Head, 23, a Hofstra University student, said: "King had a lot planned for the summer. I would look to him when I felt I was being wronged and he would hold me back from violence. The same thing was true of Kennedy. They were killed because they did not believe in white supremacy." Mel Jackson, Chairman of the Long Island Chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality called for a general work stoppage by both the black and white communities on Long Island starting tomorrow and lasting until the Rev. Dr. King's funeral. Jackson also called for the closing of all schools on the day of the funeral and for special memorial services in churches of all faiths this weekend.

LI Pupils Remember King, *Newsday, Jan. 16, 1969*

Vivian Washington, a senior at Manhasset High School, walked slowly down the aisle of Mount Olive Baptist Church in Manhasset yesterday carrying a large basket of white funeral flowers and softly reciting the 23rd Psalm. When she reached the front of the church, she placed the flowers at the foot of a rostrum and turned away. There were tears on her cheeks. On the campus of Hofstra University, students dressed in colorful robes performed African dances while others beat out rhythms on large drums. And at the Martin Luther King Youth Center in Long Beach, a Negro girl who attends Long Beach High School gave a 30 minute lecture as about 400 students of whom at least two-thirds were white, listened attentively.

Many schools excused students from classes to attend special observances for the Rev. Dr. King held outside school. But in two districts, Manhasset and Long Beach, students walked out of classes without permission from school officials. The walkout in Long Beach was staged by about 200 white students who were angered by a school board decision that only Negro students could be excused to attend memorial services at the youth center. The students later went to the youth center where black students put on a two hour memorial program honoring the Rev. Dr. King. In Manhasset, 220 students, about half of them white, walked out of the high school's planned 40-minute ceremony honoring the Rev. Dr. King yesterday morning. Louis Washington, a 16 year old junior who said he spoke for the black students, said that the black students were unhappy because they had not been given enough of a role in planning the memorial program. The Manhasset students marched down Northern Boulevard to Community Drive, linking up with about 100 Great Neck South High School students, most of whom were white, who had left classes with permission to attend the services at Mount Olive Baptist Church.

Questions:

1- Why did demonstrators believe the State Highway Department refused to install a street light?
2- Why did mourners compare Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. with President John F. Kennedy?
3- Do you agree or disagree with the decision by students to walk out of school on Rev. Martin Luther King's birthday? Why?

5C) Westbury High School Erupts

"Tense" Westbury Schools Closed , *Newsday, April 1, 1968*

Westbury-- School officials closed Westbury High School and Westbury Junior High School this morning in apparent attempt to ease racial tension. A spokesman for District Superintendent Cecil L. Rice said the high school was closed at 10:30 AM and students sent home after Rice and School Board President Carl Lundborg spoke at an assembly in an attempt to tune down the unrest. Nassau Police Commissioner Francis B. Looney, who sent reinforcements to the area, said, "Tensions have been building up." He added that precincts throughout the county had been alerted in the event of anything happening."

Lundborg said that there had been an argument in the high school last Friday between a white boy and a Negro youth. He said rumors had spread throughout the school and created a tense racial atmosphere. He said, "friction had been building up for the last two months," but he declined to give further details. "We are trying to head off a summer of rioting here," said Lundborg.

According to police . . . about 20 white youths were playing ball in the Westbury Junior High School field at about 4:20 PM. Six or seven Negroes walked across the field, threatening the white boys and arguing with them. Third Squad Det. Anthony Visslailli said one of them started arguing with Patrick Barchi, 17, who was there with his brother, James, 20. According to the police, one of the Negroes drew a knife and slashed Patrick across the chest and James on the hand.

Racial Tension Reports Cited, *Newsday, April 2, 1968*

Westbury-- The junior and senior high schools were closed for the second day today as a result of reports of racial tension among youngsters in the district. District Superintendent Cecil L. Rice said that classes in the junior and senior high schools would not be held today "to allow community leaders to meet with the students to cool off some tempers." At a special assembly in the high school yesterday before the schools were closed, School Board President Carl Lundborg and Rice told the students that the board had decided on several courses of action after a meeting with community groups on Sunday. They said that the steps included: (1) seeking qualified Negro teachers (there are now about 30 in the district); (2) creation of two additional posts, dean of students and guidance counselor, jobs which the board hopes can be filled by Negroes; (3) plans to be made to expand vocational training and to provide more guidance counseling for those students not bound for college; (4) as previously decided, a course in Afro-American history next fall.

High School Is Still Closed; Work to Ease Race Tension, *Newsday, April 3, 1968*

Westbury-- The junior high school reopened today, but the senior high remained closed for the third day as efforts continued to ease reported racial tensions among district youngsters. Police in patrol cars parked near the junior high school watched as pupils went to classes this morning, but there were no incidents.

In yesterday's meetings, the youth center run by the Westbury Community Council for Economic and Educational Opportunity was attacked as a contributor to the tensions by the head of the Westbury National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and parents. School board president Carl Lundborg said that a mother's group in New Cassel voiced concern over the center to Rice in early March. They maintained that it was a breeding ground for racial tension, which would directly affect the district's educational system.

When parents and administration members met yesterday, Mrs. Susan Potter, a member of the youth center's advisory board, said, "What is preached at that youth center is nothing but black power, black power, black power ..." James Wortham, the youth center's director, denied the charges. There is no black power being taught at this center, whoever thinks that just ought to come around and see for himself," he said.

Westbury HS Open; See Tension Eased , *Newsday, April 4, 1968*

Westbury-- All classes resumed at Westbury High School today after a three days shutdown aimed at easing reported racial tension among students.

There were no incidents as students trooped into the high school today for the first time since Monday. At least four Nassau Country detectives stood by in unmarked cars. There were no uniformed police at the school. The day opened with an assembly at which the new Biracial Student Organization made up of 11 Negro and 11 white students, plus seven faculty advisers held its first meeting last night in an atmosphere of apparent good will. The group will serve as a liaison between the student body and the school administration. John Menghini, who said he was spokesman for the group, said "I don't think you could have formed an organization like this a few days ago."

Mrs. Doris Webber, a Negro teacher at the Park Avenue Intermediate School, was named dean of girls for the district, with exact dates yet to be spelled out. A dean of boys also will be named.

Faculty members meeting yesterday at the high school agreed to a school board plan that included the biracial student group and the new deans. The plan worked out in the last three days to help ameliorate the reported tensions, includes the following mentioned moves: (1) addition of a Negro guidance counselor to the present staff of four white counselors and increased emphasis by the staff on the problems of the 25 percent of the student body, mostly Negro, that does not go on to college; (2) proposed curriculum changes to offer courses aimed toward students not college bound; (3) a direct effort to seek more Negro teachers. Presently the high school has three Negro and 57 white teachers; about 1,066 students, 285 of whom are Negro.

Questions:

1- Why were Westbury schools closed?
2- What changes did the Westbury School Board agree to implement?
3- The Westbury African American community was divided in its reaction to a youth center in New Cassel. According to these articles, why was the youth center a source of controversy?
4- Write a letter to the Westbury school board explaining your plan to ease racial tension in Westbury schools.

5D) Teenagers Search for Answers

Students Meet to Trade Views in Plainview, *Newsday, February 4, 1969*

Plainview-- Students from the predominantly black Wyandanch Junior High School, who met last night with students from the John F. Kennedy High School here to discuss candidly the racial situation in America, found that they agreed on so many issues that by the time the meetings had ended, little had been accomplished. During the discussion period, the 10 students from each of the two schools went over several issues that were raised in "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," the black leader who was slain in 1965. They discussed integration, and all agreed that they were in favor of it. They also agreed that most people today are not yet ready for integration. They discussed black people, and all conceded that there are many misconceptions about the race. But they did not discuss the misconceptions. The students are part of two exchange groups from the 95 percent black Wyandanch school and from the Plainview school, which has only one black student. The groups are meeting twice monthly to discuss books related to the racial situation and to talk about what they as individuals can do to foster better understanding and relations between black and white communities.

Let's Talk About Us, Blacks, Whites Say, *Newsday, February 18, 1969*

Wyandanch-- A group of black and white high school students discussed a book on Malcolm X last night in the second session of a series of meetings designed to foster better race relations. Then they agreed that wasn't what they really wanted to talk about at all. "We should talk about us; we should talk about records, about school, about sex," Elizabeth Kaplan, a white student from Plainview's John F. Kennedy High School, said. Dorys Taylor, a black student from Wyandanch High School, agreed, "I want to talk not about what Malcolm X thought; I want to talk about what I think," she said.

Freeport Youth Council Plan Program to Alleviate Community Racial Tension

The Leader, Freeport, Baldwin, February 6, 1969

The Youth Council meeting on January 28 revolved around the issue of racism in the community. Council members, all of whom attend Freeport High School discussed racial tension and how to alleviate it among students and adult members of the community. Black and white members of the Council agreed that militants of both races were to be blamed for the disturbances and at the suggestion of a member, the group debated the merits of inviting both black and white militants from the High School to attend the next Council meeting. White students suggested the invitation of white fraternity members and black members suggested the invitation of more militant blacks.

About Racial Incidents, *The Leader, Freeport, Baldwin, March 20, 1969*

About eight weeks ago local newspapers reported that hundreds of Freeporters had attended a school board meeting to voice their concern over reports of inter-racial incidents in the high school. Many expressed the view that they sensed a rising tide of racial tension and polarization in the community, which had come into the open in the overt actions of some of the youth of the village. To stem that tide of racial tension several hundred people met at the Atkinson School to discuss the problem. They disagreed vigorously on many aspects of the problem, but agreed to go on meeting in an effort to clear the air and to get some definite action going. Further meetings were held at the Columbus Avenue School, which were followed by meetings of a steering committee, composed of members of the group.

Out of those meetings has come a new and unique Experiment in Community Understanding." Through the cooperation of the Village Human Rights Commission and the Board of Education a series of programs will be conducted by Prof. LeRoy Ramsey, of Hofstra University, the Education Chairman of the Nassau County Human Relations Commission.

White Student Endorsed , *Newsday, April 1, 1969*

Freeport-- Almost 100 persons at Freeport High School, including about 17 faculty members, endorsed yesterday the goals of a white student attempting to enlist whites in securing the goals of black students. The new program, called All-White Action for Racial Equality, was begun by Eugene Goldman, an 18-year-old white senior, who said that after several months of participating on a biracial student committee he believed that the black students did not really want to work together with the whites and had finally walked out, convinced that they were getting nowhere. He said, "When the whites ask the black students what we can do, they tell us to leave them alone and just do our own thing. So we will. Maybe this way we can really show them that we do care" The statement signed yesterday by students and faculty supported the demands of the black students, issued several months ago. The demands included requests for additional black personnel in the school, more black literature, a black history course for a four-year period, and the instruction of African languages.

Questions:

1- How did Plainedge, Wyandanch and Freeport schools try to ease racial tension?
2- If you were a student in Freeport, would you have supported the "All-White Action for Racial Equality"? Explain your views.
3- In your opinion, why did efforts to address racial tension on Long Island focus on schools?

5E) Racial Violence Erupts in Freeport High School

3 Beaten as Students Disrupt School in Freeport, *New York Times April 26, 1969*

Freeport, L.I., April 25--Negro students beat three persons today after overturning furniture in the Freeport High School cafeteria and shouting and marching through the corridors of the school. The disturbance came in the aftermath of fights last night in which three students were stabbed. One of the youths was reported in critical condition today. More than 80 village and Nassau County policemen, many of them wearing riot helmets and carrying clubs, were posted at the school and throughout the village before classes restore calm to this tense community.

The police said 70 Negro students gathered in the school cafeteria before 8 AM, overturned tables and chairs, and then marched through the corridors of the two-story building. The youths finally left the building within an hour after they had been warned by the police that they would be arrested if they refused to go to homerooms or leave the building.

When word of the trouble at the high school spread through this South Shore village, hundreds of parents went to the school and took their children home. By noon, only 300 to 400 students were left in classes out of a total enrollment of 2,200. The fight last night and the outbreak this morning came as a surprise to village and school officials, who have been working for several months to ease tensions in this community of 42,000 people, 14 percent of whom are Negroes. Last Friday, school officials granted nine of 12 demands made by black students at the high school. Among the demands agreed to by the school board were the hiring of more black personnel, Yoruba and Swahili courses, and "soul food" in the cafeteria.

The fights last night occurred after a meeting of the high school student council at the village community center. The students were trying to resolve racial tensions at the school and had adopted a resolution requesting "all students to refrain from any violent and antagonistic conduct, which can only lead to further polarization between the races." During the meeting a white student, Robert Kelly, addressed the predominantly Negro crowd with a list of five requests by white students at the school to "keep tensions down in the school." He was booed by the audience and two teacher counselors adjourned the meeting and told the students to go home. After the meeting, 200 students Negroes and whites, started milling around and several fights broke out. Two Negroes were stabbed and the Kelly youth was beaten.

Freeport High Disrupted But Will Reopen Monday, *Newsday, April 26, 1969*

Freeport--Demonstrations, student walkouts and scattered incidents of violence disrupted Freeport High School yesterday, but village and school officials announced early today that the school would be open for classes Monday, with police protection if required. The decision came at the end of a five-hour joint meeting of the Freeport village and school boards in the village hall.

The unrest was blamed partially on the presence of six "teacher aides" by Camille Smith, associate executive director of the Long Island Council of Churches and one of about five black adults who met with school officials during the day. Removal of the aides was one of the demands recently submitted to the school administration by black students. The spokesman for the joint board meeting said, however, that the aides would continue to be on the job Monday, acting "strictly as observers" in hallways and lavatories. "They will not restrain anyone, only keep aware of anything that happens." Smith said that the students regard the aides, some of whom are moonlighting New York City policemen, as a "peacekeeping force."

Once-Quiet Village Perplexed, *Newsday, April 26, 1969*

Freeport--This is a neat and tidy village, middle class, peaceful. Although its citizens have tended to be politically and socially conservative, it had not been hit by the racial strife and tension that so often marks middle-class white communities with substantial black populations. But though the village has avoided racial confrontation and tension, the series of racial incidents and bitterness that in recent days has spilled over into stabbings, fights and ugly disorders. Just why is the question in the minds of Freeport residents today. The answer, or answers, was sought among a variety of points of view.

Mayor Robert Sweeney sat in his office in the village hall and rattled off a list of the village's accomplishments in racial understanding. We were the first village in the state to set up a human relations commission," he said, "and now we have a Negro who is serving as a community relations consultant. "When I took office, the only Negroes employed by the village were in the highway and sanitation departments," Sweeney added. "Now we have Negroes on the board of zoning appeals, on the parks and recreation commission and on the ethics board."

School officials also are quick to recount all that they have done to ensure integration: human relations courses for teachers, revised curriculums including black contributions to culture, community workers visiting homes to help problem students, special class visits to colleges, work with dropouts. But despite all the efforts, the schools have suffered racial disruptions: Fist fights in December; fire bombings in January, then relative peace in February and March as a biracial student committee sought to calm the tensions that are strong enough to be felt by a casual visitor. Then this month, a quickly escalating series of scuffles and fights that resulted in two stabbings and free-for-alls yesterday.

Christopher Warrell, school superintendent, and School Board President Joseph McAndrews put the blame for the strife on two separate but related conditions. The presence of what they term a hard core of about 50 black students who would not be satisfied even if all black student demands were granted and, opposing it, an embittered group of about 50 extremist white students. A theory that racial antagonism between the student groups was the direct result of racial antagonism felt by parents in the community.

Parents Picket in Freeport, *New York Times, April 29, 1969*

Freeport, L.I., April 28-- A group of about 25 white parents concerned with the safety of their children in this racially tense village picketed Freeport High School this morning. The group, which calls itself the Concerned Parents of Freeport, was formed over the weekend as a result of racial troubles involving high school students last week. The pickets carried placards demanding the "strict enforcement of the law both in the school and on the street, and the arrest of all violators."

Whites Ask School Law, Order; In Freeport, Anger, *Newsday, April 29, 1969*

Freeport-- About 600 white adults met here last night and angrily demanded stern "law and order" measures in the village schools in the wake of racial violence that has resulted in the posting of police in Freeport High School. Calling themselves the Concerned Parents of Freeport, the participants crowded into the sons of Italy Hall to hear speakers berate the school board and Mayor Robert J. Sweeney. "Our problem is not with the black community," said Jomer Rand, temporary chairman of the group, explaining why blacks were not admitted to the meeting. "We just want to see that our children have adequate police protection."

In a voice vote, the group passed almost unanimously a list of demands that included suspension of any student who leaves school premises without permission, carries a weapon or participates in an unauthorized meeting during school hours; arrest of any student found in the halls without permission who refuses to return to class; patrol of the halls during school hours, and "public review" of demands made by black students.

As the whites met, a group of Negro Parents and students gathered at the Second Baptist Church nearby. After their meeting, they issued a statement that said: "The black parents of Freeport are deeply concerned for the safety and education of their children. The environment of Freeport has not been conducive to these things in the recent months."

Questions:

1- What explanations are offered for the eruption of racial violence in Freeport High School?
2- In your opinion, why did racial violence erupt in Freeport High School?
3- If you were a local school official in Freeport, how would you have responded to increasing racial tension in the schools? Why?

5F) Trouble in Amityville

LI Rally Ends in Riot, *Newsday, August, 1969*

North Amityville-- Minutes after the end of a peaceful rally aimed at improving police community relations, bands of young Negroes chanting "black power" began hurling rocks and bottles at police last night and continued sporadic acts of violence for several hours. The youths broke the plate glass window of a supermarket, hurled Molotov cocktails, tossed bottles in the direction of Suffolk Police Commissioner John L. Barry, overturned a car, and damaged others, with rocks and chains. Several policemen were struck by rocks, but one was injured seriously. Police arrested eight persons, one on assault charges, five on disorderly conduct charges and two others on charges of public intoxication.

The violence began less than 15 minutes after a rally at which the Suffolk County Executive and Babylon Town Supervisor Gilbert C. Hanse and Barry had addressed a crowd of about 350 Negroes and then listened to their grievances. The three officials left before the disturbances began, but Barry later returned to direct about 150 police rushed to the scene to restore order.

Before the trouble started, Barry had told the crowd at the rally: "Yes, there have been some misunderstandings (with the police department.) But sincere people interested in solving any problem can do so by sitting down. The word 'police' at times has been terrifying, but we're interested in community relations." The rally was held at the same spot where between 400 and 500 angry Negroes gathered earlier this month during a police investigation of a disturbance in one of the stores in the shopping center.

When the officials finished speaking, about 15 Negroes approached the microphone on a wooden speaker's platform, one after another, and expressed their grievances. Most talked about lack of jobs, poor housing, lack of recreation, and police brutality. "We can't go out in the street and have a conversation, because they just move us along," Hardy said. Merryweather Aiken of Amityville, said: "A Negro has to be a superman to get an ordinary job." As the rally ended, the platform was torn down and the violence began.

A 'Harlem' Hidden in North Amityville, *Newsday*

North Amityville-- On the surface, this 90 percent Negro community looks like many other low price developments on Long Island, yet among the tight packed lines of bungalows civil rights workers say they have found living conditions as bad as those in Harlem or East New York.

It is one of several inconsistencies which mark this community, which has more Negroes than any other in Suffolk. Another is the lack of sharp boundaries marking it off. The heart of the community is North Amityville itself where trouble flared last night, an area bounded roughly by Southern State Parkway on the north, Sunrise Highway on the South, Route 110 on the west and Lindenhurst on the east. But the Negro community extends into neighboring Copiague and East Farmingdale. The general area has about 11,000 persons and only about 10 percent are white.

It is a sprawling neighborhood of 10 to 15 year old development homes, small, asbestos-shingled bungalows, Capes and flat-topped ranches. It is spotted with factories and abandoned warehouses. There are no parks, few theaters. Grocery stores sell ham hocks, grits and blackeyed peas. At night, North Amityville is a poorly-lit place; it is rare to see more than one street light in any one block.

In some of the homes there is no lighting and residents use kerosene lamps. In others there is no plumbing and residents go to neighbors to secure water for drinking or washing. An official of the Federal Office of Economic Opportunity said he has found up to 25 persons living in some homes. "I've seen some bad areas in Harlem and Brooklyn," he said. "But conditions inside these homes were as frightful as anything I ran across in New York."

As early as 1947, before the housing boom, it was called a "shanty town" by the town supervisor. Negro leaders don't feel there has been any real progress since. "If you want to portray this place," said one, "Think of a lack: a lack of facilities, a lack of jobs, a lack of something to do."

Black Students Disrupt School, *Newsday October 9, 1969*

Amityville-- A group of 20 black youths disrupted Amityville High School yesterday in a demonstration against a white teacher whose dismissal the group has demanded. Three village police cars were called to the school. But by the time police arrived, the incident had subsided and no immediate arrests were made. Ten of the youths, all high school students, were suspended. The other 10 had been previously suspended, a school official said. School sources said that the charge of trespass and harassment would probably be filed against the youths. The disruption reportedly consisted of an attempt by students to confront the teacher and a commotion in the halls.

About the time the disturbance was taking place, the automobile of school Principal Edward Cap was vandalized in the school parking lot. Windows were broken, tires were slashed and the antenna was broken off. No damage was done to the school, and classes went on as scheduled. One school official said that most of the high school was unaware that a disturbance had taken place.

Judge Bars 26 From Protesting, *Newsday, October 10, 1969*

Amityville-- A State Supreme Court justice issued an injunction yesterday barring Suffolk CORE leader Irwin Quintyne, 20 suspended Amityville High School students and five parents from going on school property to "demonstrate, picket or interfere with the administration of the school." Quintyne, chairman of the Congress of Racial Equality, and the parents, all black were not at the school at the time of the disturbance, but Conlon said that they had instigated it. "These people are disrupting the educational process in the district and this cannot be tolerated," Conlon said.

Criminal summonses were also issued yesterday to 10 suspended black students who reportedly participated in the disturbance. They were charged with trespassing, loitering and disorderly conduct. Ten other black students were suspended after the incident. No trouble was reported a the school yesterday.

Mrs. Jean Dember, one of the parents named in the court order, said that she was served with the papers last night. "This is a dirty tactic. I've never intimidated anyone. I've never done anything illegal. The power structure is just telling us we have no recourse."

Mrs. Dember, who is on the governing board of the local anti-poverty center, and other parents have led picketing outside the high school to press for the dismissal of social studies teacher Kerry Doran, who was involved in a scuffle with a student on Sept. 11. Doran is white and the student, Ronald Welden, is black.

Questions:

1- According to the first article, what happened at the rally to improve police-community relations in North Amityville?
2- Based on these articles, why is there racial tension in Amityville and North Amityville?
3- Why did Black youths protest at Amityville High School?
4- Do you agree or disagree with the judges decision to bar further protests? Why?

5G) Blacks and Whites Disagree About the Causes of Racial Violence

Shots Quell Central Islip Race Fight, *Newsday, May 28, 1969*

Central Islip-- Fighting among a number of white and Negro students broke out at the Central Islip High School yesterday for the second time this month. Warning shots fired by a patrolman dispersed the crowd, but the tension continued into the night, and there was a firebombing that caused minor damage to the home of a white resident. The new troubles at the school, according to police, apparently were the outgrowth of a confrontation between whites and blacks outside a bowling alley on Carleton Avenue Monday night. Yesterday morning, black and white students squared off at the school armed with tire irons, chains and sticks, and police were called.

Suffolk Blacks Quite Racial Strife Session, *Newsday, May 28, 1969*

Central Islip-- About 40 black youths appeared at a meeting of the Central Islip Task Force last night to demand quicker solutions to racial problems, but the meeting turned into a heated argument and the youths walked out shortly after they were told by the chairman that he knew nothing of violence Sunday in which four white persons were hospitalized. After the task force meeting, the black youths went to their youth center, where a window had been shattered Sunday, apparently by a gunshot. While they met inside, at least 20 white youths congregated about a block away. They left after being asked to do so by policemen in the area. A few minutes later, Lt. Robert Sommer asked the black youths to leave the center and go home to avoid trouble.

600 Whites Hold Rally in Central Islip, *Newsday, August 26, 1969*

Central Islip-- About 600 white residents turned out for a rally last night in support of a drive to have Soul Village closed or moved. Leaders of the drive told the crowd that the success of their campaign against the youth center, used chiefly by Negro youngsters, lies in political action. Like most of the speakers, he did not identify himself "because it's not fair to announce our names after the fire-bombings by the black militants." About halfway through the two-hour meeting. Ralph Watkins, a Negro who is the chairman of the Suffolk County Human Relations Commission, made his way through the crowd and was helped onto the flatbed truck from which the speakers addressed the group. Although he was interrupted by boos, he said, "You better dig what I'm saying. You feel that the police force doesn't effectively enforce the law for whites. Well, the black people don't feel the police enforce the laws for them either."

Black Gains OK'd At Central Islip School, *Newsday, August 29, 1969*

Central Islip-- The Central Islip Task Force and the school board have agreed to start a black studies program and to hire more black teachers to head off any renewal of racial tension when school opens next month. The agreements were made during the summer by the school board, the Central Islip High School administration and the Task Force, a group composed of representatives from 40 community organizations to deal with racial tension. The Task Force was set up in May to ease racial problems after the high school was closed for two days that month because of scuffles between black and white students. The scuffles came after black requests which included the black studies program and more black teachers.

Bellport School Shut After Scuffles, *Newsday, October, 1969*

Bellport-- The Bellport-Brookhaven-East Patchogue School Board ordered the closing of the high school today for the announced purpose of permitting faculty members to discuss curriculum changes following scuffling between black and white students in the school yesterday.

School officials said that the outbreak started in the school corridors at about 1:45 PM when white students removed posters that blacks had pasted on the walls. The posters said: "Black ... Black ... Black ... History Time" and "Correct History." About 10 blacks and whites scuffled and about 50 milled around as school principal Thomas Feeney told them over the loudspeaker to return to their classes. He then notified police. Approximately six policemen entered the building and several waited in cars outside while students left the school a half hour later under Feeney's orders.

State Education Report Finds Bellport Still Divided by Bias, *Newsday, January 6, 1970*

Bellport-- A special study conducted by the State Education Department contends that polarization and antagonism between those of different races and socio-economic backgrounds are considerable factors in Bellport community life. The study said that rigid de facto segregation was Bellport's most critical problem. Of 4,300 pupils in the district, about one-fourth are black. Two years ago, the state ordered the district to end racial imbalance in its schools. "Black, Puerto Rican and poor residents live in North Bellport," said the report, "while the rest of the district is composed of more affluent middle class whites."

Racially Torn Hempstead High To Reopen With Talks on Strife

New York Times March 9, 1970

Hempstead, L.I., March 8-- Hempstead High School, closed all day Friday after two days of racial disturbances, will not open until Tuesday, giving the teachers an additional day to prepare to discuss the incidents with their students. The 1,500 pupil school, 70 percent black, closed an hour early Thursday after several small fires were set in the auditorium and washrooms, and did not reopen on Friday. School officials have indicated that 15 students might be suspended. The school's 108 teachers spent Friday discussing the incidents that began on Wednesday and led to the school's closing.

Racial Problems: In School and Out, *Newsday, October 2, 1970*

Glen Cove-- The late September afternoon had been hot and sticky, but in early evening a refreshing breeze started blowing in across Long Island Sound. It ruffled the lawns of the expensive waterfront homes and stirred up ripples on nearby Dosoris Pond, where two white youths were lying on the bank, watching their fishing lines and talking about the recent trouble at their high school. "It's a bad situation," one said. "Some white kids are talking about being armed for self-defense. If the blacks start any more fights, if they try to shake down any white kids for money, it could blow up even worse. Nothings settled, not at all."

The breeze died before it reached Mason Drive, a dead-end street in Glen Cove's predominantly Negro "back hill" neighborhood, and two black teenagers gave up trying to play basketball in the heat. They were sitting on the steps of a housing project swearing at the mosquitoes, and saying with equal bitterness, essentially the same thing as the white youths. "Sure, some of the brothers and sisters ask the white kids for money," the taller youth said. "We don't have any money ourselves. That's a big part of the trouble. This town gives us nothing because the whites want it that way. They blame the blacks for the fighting, but some of the whites are looking for trouble, too. A lot of black kids are scared. Everybody's sticking close to their own kind."

After the disturbances, the school board called an open meeting Sept. 21 to explore causes and possible solutions for the racial friction. The audience of 600 was almost entirely white, and nearly every speaker discussed the problem as a law-and-order matter, not a social problem. "Our kids are good kids," one white father declared to thunderous applause. "There are about 35 or 40 others who have no interest in learning, and they should be kicked out. What we need is strict discipline."

Questions:

1- According to these articles, what happened in Central Islip from May-August 1969?
2- In your opinion, who or what was responsible for these problems? Explain your answer.
3- A pattern of protest emerged in many Long Island communities at the end of the 1960's. What is the pattern? In your opinion, was does it occur?
4- In the article on Glen Cove, Black children, white children, and a white parent discuss the same incidents. In your opinion, why do they view the situation so differently?
5- An African American speaker is quoted as saying, "You better dig what I'm saying." In your opinion, why did the newspaper use this quote?

The Civil Rights Struggle on Long Island in a National Context

by Alan Singer

On July 27, 1967, President Lyndon Johnson addressed the American public about the causes of violent uprisings by Black residents of U.S. inner cities. In his speech, Johnson, declared that "the only genuine, long-range solution for what has happened lies in an attack . . upon the conditions that breed despair and violence. All of us know what those conditions are: ignorance, discrimination, slums, poverty, disease, not enough jobs. . . We should attack them because there is simply no other way to achieve a decent and orderly society in America." Two days later Johnson issued Executive Order 11365 creating a bipartisan advisory commission to examine the causes of urban unrest and to propose solutions. Otto Kerner, the Governor of Illinois was appointed chairman of the commission. John Lindsay, the Mayor of New York City, was appointed as the committee's Vice Chairman.[70]

A report issued by the Kerner Commission in the spring of 1968 declared that the riots in Black communities during the second half of the 1960's were a "culmination of 300 years of racial prejudice." The commissioners concluded that "today's problems can only be solved if white Americans comprehend the rigid social, economic, and educational barriers that have prevented Negroes from participating in the mainstream of American life."[71]

Within weeks after the report was made public, Lyndon Johnson announced his decision not to seek reelection as President because of growing public dissatisfaction with the war in Vietnam and Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. King's murder was followed by an eruption of rioting in nearly 130 urban Black communities. Army units in full battle gear were mobilized to protect the Capital building and the White House in Washington DC. By the end of a week, 55,000 soldiers had been dispatched to over 100 cities, 46 people were dead, more than 3,000 were injured, approximately 27,000 people were arrested, and there was over $45 million in property damage. In Chicago, Mayor Richard Daley ordered police to "shoot to kill."[72]

In the 1968 Presidential election, Republican candidate Richard Nixon campaigned against open housing legislation and busing to promote school integration. He also promised to appoint "conservative" federal judges who would slow the judicial push for civil rights. Nixon's successful election strategy effectively mobilized white opposition to the Civil Rights movement, anger at urban Black uprisings, and disenchantment with Democratic support for social welfare programs that were perceived of as primarily benefiting the African American population. In addition to the vote for Nixon, approximately 14% of the electorate supported the blatantly anti-Black candidacy of Alabama Governor George Wallace.

On Long Island, voters tended to follow the national trends. In 1964, 58.7% of the voters in traditionally Republican Nassau and Suffolk Counties preferred Democrat Lyndon Johnson over Barry Goldwater. But in 1968, Richard Nixon received 54% of the Long Island vote, Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey got only 40%, and George Wallace, 6%.[73]

Once in office, Nixon recruited Wallace supporters to the Republican Party with a "Southern Strategy" that appealed to white voters in the south, suburbanites, and white ethnic voters who opposed federal programs promoting racial integration. Nixon's strategy apparently attracted Long Island residents. In 1972, 65% of the Long Island electorate supported Nixon for reelection.[74] With the retirement of Lyndon Johnson, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the election of Richard Nixon as President in 1968 and 1972, the Kerner Commission's report about the causes of racial unrest in the United States and its recommendations for creating a more just society were effectively shelved.[75]

In many ways the history of race relations on Long Island during the 1960's and 1970's paralleled the national retreat from a commitment to racial integration as a way to achieve greater social justice. Long Island State Senator Norman Lent, who rose to prominence as an opponent of busing during the battle over school integration in Malverne, was elected to Congress from the 5th district in 1970. In Congress, he introduced a constitutional amendment that would have effectively banned school integration efforts. Lent argued that the purpose of the proposed

amendment was "to return control of education to local school boards, to preserve the neighborhood school system and to eliminate forced busing and the threat of school district consolidation imposed to achieve purely arbitrary racial balances."[76]

Today Nassau and Suffolk Counties remain a checkerboard of racially segregated communities. While the overall public school student population of Nassau County in 1994-95 was 73.1% white, 12.7% African American, 8.6% Latino/a, and 5.6% other (primarily Asian), most of the county's 180,827 public school students attended racially segregated schools. In eighteen of the county's 56 school districts, with a total population of 57,050 students (32% of the Nassau County public school population), fewer than five percent of the student body was either African American of Latino/a. In four districts, Uniondale, Westbury, Roosevelt, and Hempstead, over 90% of the students were African American or Latino/a. These four districts alone had 41% of the African American and Latino/a students in Nassau County. If you include the African American and Latino/a student population of four other largely minority districts, Elmont, Glen Cove, Long Beach, and Malverne, eight school districts out of 56 (14%) had over 55% of the African American and Latino/a students in Nassau County.[77]

In his speech at the 1963 March on Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr. envisioned a world where "little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and girls and walk together as sisters and brothers."[78] As the world approaches the year 2,000, King's dream has still not been achieved in most parts of Long Island.

Documents:
6A) Civil Rights Timeline

National Events

1947 - Jackie Robinson joins Brooklyn Dodgers.
1948 - U.S. armed forces are desegregated.
1954 - In Brown v. Topeka, Kansas Board of Education, the Supreme Court rules that separate is not equal.
1955-56 - Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott.
1957 - Federal troops enforce school integration in Little Rock, Arkansas.
1960 - Civil rights activists launch sit-in campaign in the south.
1962 - James Meredith desegregates University of Mississippi.
1963 - Anti-discrimination campaign in Birmingham, Alabama.
- Medgar Evers killed in Mississippi.
- 250,000 people March on Washington, DC.
- Alabama churches bombed.
- Boycott forces integration of Chicago schools.
1964 - "Mississippi Summer" campaign registers southern Black voters. Three civil rights workers murdered.
- Southern Blacks demand seats at 1964 Democratic National Convention
- Congress passes civil rights legislation.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. awarded Nobel Prize.
1965 - Malcolm X assassinated in Harlem.
- Alabama police attack Selma civil rights marchers demanding voting rights.
- Congress approves voting rights law.
- Six day race riot in Watts, California. 34 die.
1966 - Marchers demand "Black power". Militants and nationalists gain prominence.
1967 - Race riots in northern cities.
1968 - Kerner Commission report describes racial divisions in the United States.
- Lyndon Johnson will not seek reelection.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. assassinated.
- Wave of race riots in Black communities.
- Poor People's campaign in Washington, DC.
- George Wallace and southern whites bolt Democratic Party.
- Richard Nixon elected President.
- New York City racially divided over plan for community control over public schools.

Long Island Events

1947 - Levittown bars African American homeowners and renters.
1949 - Levittown drops racial exclusion clause from lease but continues discrimination.
1957 - NAACP charges that Long Island schools discriminate in the hiring of teachers.
1961 - Census shows African Americans moving to New York City suburbs.
- Huntington Human Relations group welcomes African American residents.
1962 - Nassau County establishes Committee on Human Rights.
- NY state investigates charges of blockbusting.
1963 - NAACP charges urban renewal used to drive out Black families.
- CORE campaigns for job opportunties for African Americans.
- State orders Malverne school integration.
- Hempstead calls for regional school integration plan.
- Struggle for school integration in Amityville.
- Cross burning in Amityville
1964 - State Senator Lent introduces bill to block busing for integration.
1964-66 - White parents in Malverne defy integration plan.
1966 - Opponents of school integration win control over Malverne school board.
1967 - Protests against white-only volunteer fire departments.
- School integration plan implemented in Malverne.
- Proposal to bus NYC children to Great Neck schools.
1968 - Racial tension in Westbury schools.
- Long Island mourns Martin Luther King, Jr.
1969-70 - Students demand King birthday observance.
- NAACP challenges unfair zoning practices.
- Great Neck school integration plan defeated in advisory referendum.
- Racial incidents in Freeport, Roosevelt, Central Islip, Amityville, Bellport, Hempstead, and Glen Cove.

Questions:
1- Select three events from the civil rights movement that you consider most important. Explain your choices.
2- In your opinion, how did national events influence events on Long Island?

6B) Local Presidential Election Voting, 1960-1972

1960	Nassau County	Suffolk County	Total, Long Island
Richard Nixon, Republican	323,799	166,568	490,367 (56.5%)
John Kennedy, Democrat	263,375	114,096	377,471 (43.5%)
1964			
Barry Goldwater, Republican	226,187	131,522	357,709 (41.3%)
Lyndon Johnson, Democrat	345,242	162,672	507,914 (58.7%)
1968			
Richard Nixon, Republican	329,739	208,483	538,222 (54%)
Hubert Humphrey, Democrat	279,631	117,002	396,633 (40%)
George Wallace, Independent	30,220	29,976	60,196 (6%)
1972			
Richard Nixon, Republican	440,219	174,700	614,919 (65%)
George McGovern, Democrat	253,095	73,923	327,018 (35%)

Questions:

1- Which presidential candidate had the most votes on Long Island in each election?
2- How did Long Island voters compare to the rest of nation in these elections?
3- Which political party did Long Island voters usually support?
4- In your opinion, do events in the local civil rights movement affect these voting patterns? Explain the reasons for your answer.

6C) Civil Rights of African Americans in the Post-Civil United States
Selected Documents, edited by Alan Singer

1. The Fourteenth Amendment, 1868: No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

2. Supreme Court decision, Civil Rights Cases, 1883: The court holds that the 14th Amendment applies only to state action. Individual invasion of individual rights is not the subject of the Amendment. The wrongful act of an individual, unsupported by any such state authority, is simply a private wrong.

3. Justice Harlan Dissents, 1883: "In every material sense, railroad corporations, keepers of inns, and managers of public amusement are agents or instrumentalities of the state, because they are charged with public duties ... a denial to the citizen, because of his race, of that equality of civil rights secured to him by law, is a denial by the state."

4. Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896: "The underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument consists in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it ... The argument also assumes that social prejudice may be overcome by legislation, and that equal rights cannot be secured to the Negro except by an enforced commingling of the two races. We cannot accept this proposition ... If one race be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane."

5. Justice Harlan dissents, 1896: "It seems that we have yet, in some of the states, a dominant race, a superior class of citizens, which assumes to regulate the enjoyment of civil rights, common to all citizens, upon the basis of race ... We boast of the freedom enjoyed by our people ... but it is difficult to reconcile that boast with a state of the law which, practically, put the brand of servitude and degradation upon a large class of our fellow citizens."

6. Chief Justice Warren, Brown v. Topeka, Kansas Board of Education, 1954: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other tangible factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational activities? We believe that it does ... To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely to be undone."

7. President Eisenhower, 1957: "The federal law and orders of a United States District Court, implementing that law, cannot be flouted with impunity by any individual or any mob of extremists ... I will use the full power of the United States, including whatever force may be necessary to prevent any obstruction of the law ... Such obstruction of justice constitutes a denial of the equal protection of the laws secured by the Constitution of the United States."

8. Civil Rights Act of 1964: "An act to enforce the constitutional right to vote, to confer jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations, to authorize the Attorney General to institute suits to protect constitutional rights in public facilities and public education, to extend the Commission on Civil Rights, to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs, to establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunities, and for other purposes."

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