

- 000 Gwen is a housewife, mother of three boys all college graduates. She has several degrees: a bachelors from Presbyterian College, a Master's from South Carolina State and from Roosevelt University, a Doctorate of Education from Nova University. She also attended Juilliard School of Music and is soloist and choir member at Evanshire Presbyterian Church here in Skokie. She was recently guest preacher there. She is originally from South Carolina and is a third generation Presbyterian. Gwen comes highly qualified and will speak from the vantage point of being the second black family in Skokie. (She taught at Oakton College for many years.) (Mrs. Fortune was introduced by Lovadore 'Mickey' Bode. Mrs. Bode was Corresponding Secretary of the Skokie Historical Society at the time of this recording which was made at one of the regular membership meetings of the Society.)
- 023 Gwen corrected introduction. Born in Texas. An umpteenth generation Presbyterian. (They were 5th black family, not 2nd.)
- 043 Mentioned Father Sauer's presence at the meeting and a picture from the National Catholic Magazine 'The Sign' about the first Afro-American Family in Skokie, Martha and David Jones. Prefers 'Afro*American' to 'Black'.
- 065 'Hysteria, Paranoia, Fear and Reality'.
- 105 Teaches history and social science so the period of the early sixties is kept vivid for her.
- 117 Speaks of interviews with the two remaining of the first Afro-American families here.
- 118 The 'move into' Skokie as opposed to 'move to' Skokie.
- 142 Ordinances such as the one passed in Deerfield in the 1950's.
- 151 Skokie had a key part to play in this new phase in American history.
- 156 January 1, 1961, the first two Afro-Americans to move in. Martha Jones job moved from the south side and the family decided that they would locate near her work as an industrial chemist.
- 179 Interviewed Martha Jones to get her remembrances of the event. She and husband knew Dr. Warren Spencer, a black Evanston physician. He put them in touch with various home seeker groups. The Unitarians, the Friends- the Quakers, Don Frym attorney, League of Women Voters, Carol Kleiman of the Tribune, Doris Conant of Signode Steel,
- 202 Deerfield matter. The paranoia period after a builder from the east coast had planned to build a tract of homes in that community and decided to make ten or twelve of those homes available to black families. Panic ensued resulting in the condemnation of the property for park purposes.
- 212 The Joneses went through a nominee buyer arrangement. Mortgage institutions avoided mortgaging property, regardless of a black's credit rating. That meant two lawyer's fees: the nominee buyer's lawyer and their own lawyer.
- 223 What impressed the Joneses was the hours and hours that volunteers spent on their behalf. Searching, reporting to them, taking no money. That is their most vivid memory of the experience.
- 228 Jones had 3 daughters born to them in '66, 68, and '71.
- 231 They had maps of neighborhoods with friendly allies in them in case there was a problem so that they would have a place to turn to.

- 235 It was the personal problems of immediate neighbors that caused them to use the Jones as scapegoats. Heightened community atmosphere of fear fueled the situation.
- 240 Recent meetings with remnants of early supporters who have moved on but still maintain commitment.
- 252 Intense need for serving people with this need no longer exists.
- 254 Second black family was a family of three. Lester Brownleigh, a Northwestern graduate and reporter for the Chicago's American. Brownleigh was born in Evanston. Father was minister there. "anted a newer house. Inadvertently selected a house that ~~had~~ near the house that had been selected by the Jones family! They were approached by Skokie officials who found out about it and were requested to not move in so as to not fan the flames of fear and ignorance. Their money was returned and they were lodged free at a hotel in Evanston for 8 months, their own house having been sold while a friend who was an architect looked for a house for them. A nominee buyer was used to purchase the house at 4100 Grove. They lived there from 1962 until the early 1970's. Vera Brownleigh died of cancer in 1966. Lester later remarried and his wife and he adopted twin boys. they recently moved back to Evanston into a Frank Lloyd Wright house on Ashbury in Evanston.
- 292 A third family lived here briefly in the downtown area but she never was able to contact them.
- 298 Next family was Mr. and Mrs. Leon Henderson and infant son Bernard. They had smoothest entrance of all. In 1962. Found house for sale by owner on Golf. Owner went out to Maywood to meet Mrs. Henderson's parents. (!)
- 324 Reminded of similar experience she had. Taught in Chicago and put her name on a list waiting to be transferred to a school closer to where her children went to school. They were in Hyde Park. She was in Chinatown. Principal came to her house to check her out. It's laughable after the fact. It's painful earlier.
- 340 Spoke of Mrs. Henderson's lack of confrontation in her neighborhood and her son's similar acceptance through local schools. Said she was unaware of discrimination on a personal basis.
- 354 There was trauma for neighbors.
- 365 The Fortune's experience. Decided not to contribute to the development of a ghetto on Golf. They were 5th black family. Moved here in 1964. Were subjected to much discrimination in their housing search.
- 383 HOME, a Quaker based group, helped them. Spoke of an experience in Morton Grove where a delegation approached the owner and convinced him not to buy. Other horror stories.
- 418 Dr. and Mrs. Blanche Hersh and their meeting with the Human Relations Council and finally a successful sale. Showed photograph. Kilbourn and Church. Letter sent to all neighbors to soften them up.
- 440 Moving day, Evanshire Church people had provided food for their first dinner. She taught at OO Junior High.

- 450 Spoke of the Jones children, the Browleigh's, the Henderson boy and her own boys (3). All had good growing up experiences and have had considerable success in adult life. Her oldest son resented being separated from his friends when they moved to the suburbs. He was 12 at the time. Had severe problems adjusting to public school and after a year was put in private school. "as come to terms with the transplant with the passage of time.
- 465 The problem for a black family is maintaining cultural identity for the children. Attitude of fear of blackness, forces blacks to maintain an isolated perspective.
- 475 The fact of class. Lumped into one group.
- 482 Experience at Oakton College shows that young people are willing to behave differently and to accept people without rejection if elders permit them to do so. (At Oakton since 1970.)
- 491: Was the move worth it to us? Present moving in of orientals. Two stories about discrimination of orientals.
- 520 Afro-Americans tend to resent the way Americans tend to accept other ethnic groups before them. Black skinned Indians are accepted. Japanese, our former enemies, are accepted.
- 534 If you are white, you're right, If you're brown, stick around.
If you are black, get back.
- 537 To recapitulate. Joneses were told by real estate man, 'I have a problem.'
- 545 Skokie still not home free.
- Questions: Father's family, the Youngs. Mulatto family. Spoke of segregated youth. Segregated early married life. Lived in Anderson in North Carolina.
- 617 Add first move in to time line in fire house: 1/31/60.
- 620 There was a black family renting here, quadroon, octaroon. Lived on Skokie Boulevard, between Church and Niles Center.

SIDE 2

Mrs. Fortune's remarks were not continued on side 2. The tape itself was an old one that had been used by the Skokie-Lincolnwood Newstaper, a volunteer project that made tapes of local news for the blind once a week. This is side 2 of the Newstaper for 9/30/82, reader is Joe Beaver.