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The Impact of Migration on the African American:

a study of families that migrated from the States of Virginia and South Carolina to Brooklyn, New York.

by

Christopher Lee Coleman

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

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Abstract

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Adviser: Dr. William Kornblum

The internal migration of the African American in the United States has had an impact on the social and economic structure of the United States. This impact was especially felt in this century. The migration was from the rural communities in the Southern States to the urban communities in the South, and to the urban communities in the Northern and Western States. The African American responded to both pull and push factors in motivating the migration from their home communities. These factors were the macro factors pertinent to this dissertation.

This internal migration experience also changed the lives of the African American individual. The rural African American population became an urban population. The extended family structure that was common in the southern rural communities did not survive the migration for many African Americans, and this put added pressure on the African American Family. Other factors also made the integration of the

African American into the their new homes difficult. These are some of the micro factors that are pertinent to this dissertation.

This research studies the effects of the macro factors of migration as they impacted on the micro situation of the families in this study.

The concept of "Incorporated Racism" has been introduced in this dissertation. The author argues that "incorporated" into the families of some of these migrants is the results of the racism that they have experienced. This situation seems to cause the African American family that is effected by "Incorporated Racism" not to succeed even when the racist institutions and policies have been removed. One of the families in this dissertation seems to have experienced this phenomena.

Two families have been studied in this dissertation, they are the Allen and the Wenger families. Three generations were interviewed, and their story is told in these pages. Their story explains how the migration to the Northern States changed their lives. These two families have also been compared in order to find some factors in determining their success or failure in social and economic mobility. Finally, the anti-poverty programs that assisted them in adjusting to their new environment were analyzed.

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Chapter One: The Extended African American Family in Migration and Resettlement

In recent years the status of the African American has become a topic of great interest among African Americans themselves. There are several reasons for this. There are more African Americans among scholars in academic fields, and educated African Americans in general expect more work to be done on their history. Also, there are scholars who are concerned with the advent of a population of African Americans that seems to be caught in poverty even when there seem to be avenues for their mobility.

The effect of the migration north on the African American seems to be an important factor in analyzing their present situation. However, the reason this researcher is concerned with the study of the migration of the African American from the southern states to Brooklyn, New York is the possible insight that this will provide for establishing programs to assist this population. Of course, the study of two families can not provide a definitive work on what needs to be done to improve the lives of others who experience the African American Migration. However, it does reveal how two families experienced the migration in their lives and it shows how this experience shaped who they are. This, in turn, opens the discussion of this social movement, and its effects on the people involved. The appreciation of the experience of the African American from the South to Brooklyn, New York is a key

part of this dissertation. This is a study of the macro factors related to the African American migration and how they impacted on the micro situation of these two families. The scholarly literature in the social sciences has given an academic base for this research. Key works that have been essential in this dissertation are to follow.

Appreciation of the Literature:

The groundwork for this dissertation has been laid by many scholars interested in the African American, a work that is not specifically about African American migration has been of great importance in developing the base for this research. The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom: 1750-1925, was wriiten by Herbert G. Gutman. Gutman, in his work, requires the researcher to look more carefully at the situation of the African American socialization into the greater society. He is critical of the school of thought on the African American Family that bases the dysfunction of the African American family on socialization factors that are rooted in the experience of slavery in the United States. This view has been held by several prominent sociologists e.g.: E. Franklin Frazier, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan. The evidence that Gutman uses in The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom shows that the African American family was intact immediately after the Civil War and in the migration of World War I. This should force the researcher to look for other reasons for the dysfunction of the African American family that seem to be

prevalent today. One of the key purposes of this research project is to understand the forces at work during the migration and immediately after the migration that appear to have taken intact families and created families that failed to be supportive of their members, and did not lead to social mobility. This project was inspired, in part, by the work of Gutman.

There is a growing library of work that, either in part or in full, has dealt with the African American migration experience, and is discussed here. Daniel M. Johnson and Rex R. Campbell, in: Black Migration in America: A social demographic history. The authors provide an overview of the African American experience of migration in the United States since the forced migration from Africa. The book ends with its presentation on the 1960s. Johnson and Campbell reveal the basic information that is necessary for this dissertation on the trends of the migration of the African American. This information is located specifically in chapter eight about the effects of World War II. In this chapter the authors deal directly with the time period when the families in this dissertation migrated from their southern communities to the Brooklyn, New York. The authors write:

> To study black migration, it is necessary to view it in context--chiefly the economic context of the area involved. In this respect, 1940 was a signal year since significant changes in the southern economy would point to population redistribution of perhaps substantial proportions. Since 1940 the economic structure of the South has been changing at a pace more rapid than that of the rest

> of the nation. One writer called the war years a 'watershed' in recent black history. Certainly, as writers expressed at the time, the war years were a turning point. 'There is bound to be,' said one, 'a redefinition of the Negro's status in America as a result of this war.' (Johnson and Campbell 103)

The authors provide important data on the demographic setting, the volume of the migration, the causes of the migration, and the consequences of the migration. Also, statistical information on the economic status and the migration status (male vs. female) is provided and was useful in the development of this dissertation.

Robert Staples: The Urban Plantation is also useful. He proposes his theory on the "Fourth World" created by the white social structure in the United States. However, what is key for this dissertation is Professor Staples' discussion of racism, and what he calls the "colonialism and the crisis of the black family". The argument could be made that the African American was not provided with the tools to be successful in society. Mr. Staples writes in his chapter "the Crisis of the Black Family":

> ...such historical accounts of slavery have misled us into thinking that the family as a unit did not exist or was not a viable institution. While it must be conceded that specific tribal languages and culture were extinguished by slave owners, the African ethos was not. Due to their own instincts for survival, members of separate, and often warring, tribes reorganized as a collective community. They formed a solidified group based on the African principle of contiguity and unity. Within the context of slavery and the limited options open to them, slaves developed a new sense of family and redefined their roles and relationships between them. (Staples 152)

With the assistance of Mr. Staples work I would like to show in my thesis that the African American family can be discussed from the perspective that there is such an entity as the African American family and that it has developed in the United States as a separate structure, with its own culture and mores. It is important because it has been the base of the African American people. It developed as a means to survive in a society that was often hostile to it. This family structure developed as a matriarchal organization. As a social structure it can be healthy and nourishing to all its members or it can be unhealthy and destructive. In the chapter "The Crisis of the African American Family," Staples deals with topics important to this research, for example: the family life- cycle, marital stability, female-headed households, childbearing and socialization. Staples' analysis is also useful in preparation for the analysis of the African American Family in the United States by Andrew Billingsley.

Black Families in White America by Andrew Billingsley is another sound work. In this work, Professor Billingsley created a sociological study of the African American family. Several chapters in the work have been of great help. Three examples are: "Historical Backgrounds of the Negro Family", "Shadows of the Plantation: Contemporary Social Forces Affecting Negro Family life",and "Screens of Opportunity: Sources of Achievement in the Negro Family". The material

provided in these chapters aids in understanding the dynamics of the African American family during the period to be studied in this research. Specifically, the chapter on the historical backgrounds of the African American Family provided data useful in chapter three of this dissertation. Information was provided on the types of matriarchal family structures that seem to have as their roots family structures existent in West Africa.

Because of the elements mentioned by Billingsley the African American Family can be discussed as a family structure somewhat distinct from the European model. This is the approach used in this dissertation.

Billingsley writes:

> ...the Negro people constitute in some important respects an ethnic subsociety with a distinct history, what are the essential elements of this history? Three facts stand out above all others. The first is that the Negro people came to this country from Africa and not from Europe. The second is that they came in chains and were consequently uprooted from their cultural and family moorings. The third is that they have been subjected to systematic exclusion from participation and influence in the major institutions of this society even to the present time. (Billingsley 37)

Black Rage, by William H. Grier and Price M. Cobbs studied the conflict that African American males experience. It helps explain why some successful African American males destroy themselves. What is important to this dissertation is the impact that living in the southern states as a second class citizen had on the socialization of the African American

male. There are many elements to the situation of the African American male and this discussion in the work of Grier and Cobbs has been very useful in the trying to understand the life-situations of the Wenger men used in this dissertation. The authors write:

> The racist tradition is pervasive and envelopes every American. For black men it constitutes a heavy psychological burden. From the unemployed, illiterate ghetto dweller to the urbanized man living in an integrated setting, careful examination shows psychological scars. Black men fight one another, do violence to property, do hurtful things to themselves while nursing growing hatred for the system which oppresses and humiliates them. Their manhood is tested daily. As one patient expressed it: 'The black man in this country fights the main event in Madison Square Garden every day'. (Grier and Cobbs 71)

Many of the African American men in my study had to deal with the fact that they are African American males who live in a society that treats them as different. This is especially the case with the Wenger men. This is a male issue; Grier and Cobbs are helpful in understanding this as a male issue, and useful in discussing how this has impacted on the social status and mobility of the Wenger men.

Incorporated Racism: Based on my reading of existing literature and from my knowledge of the fate of individual members of the families in question my argument in the dissertation is that part of the problem that has kept some African Americans from improving their social status, or maintaining their social position, is "incorporated racism". Incorporated racism refers to the situation in which a person

believes that she/he is unable to succeed, and therefore she/he does not succeed, even where the opportunities are provided for success. In addition to all the negative effects of changes in the economy, of lingering patterns of racial discrimination, and other more macro-social factors, preliminary review of the individual cases within my families suggests that the degree to which the individual has internalized a sense of fatalism and personal defeat explains much of the individual level differences in outcome. To help understand incorporated racism we need to look at the two families used in this study. These families dealt differently with the external and internal pressures that existed in the African American Family. How they responded to these pressures did not necessarily speak about the totality of the African American migration experience, but they did speak about how these families dealt with these pressures and from that data possibilities for further research. One family seems to have allowed the internalized racism to keep them from up-ward mobility, whereas the other family had the social resources to overcome these pressures.

The concept of Incorporated Racism is a term that is original to this dissertation; it comes out of a heritage of several social scientists. I will refer to some of these social scientists here. To quote Daniel Patrick Moynihan from his article "Employment, Income and the Ordeal of the Negro family":

> A more sophisticated but less pressing question is whether the impact of economic disadvantage on the Negro community has gone so long that genuine structural damage has occurred, so that reversal in the course of economic events will no longer produce the expected response in social areas (Parsons 1967 p.155).

Though I disagree with Moynihan on the issue of the importance of the situation that leads to the failure of certain sectors of the African American to be socially mobile, we do agree that just changing the job market, and providing for equal opportunity will not be sufficient. Moynihan goes further with his argument:

> It would be troubling indeed to learn that until several years ago employment opportunity made a great deal of difference in the rate of Negro dependency and family disorganization, but that the situation has so deteriorated that the problem is now feeding on itself- that measures which once would have worked will henceforth not work so well, or work at all (157).

What I find interesting in Moynihan's argument is his statement that for sectors of the African American population their inability to advance is self-feeding. This seems to be clear in comparing the two families in this dissertation. The Wenger Family seems to have more involved in their situation than external forces can explain. The fact that the social programs that were available to improve their situation did not have the success that was hoped for provides some indication that there were internal family disorders that needed to be dealt with. The results of these anti-poverty programs, at

least in the case of the Wenger Family are very disappointing.

How does one explain the difference between the social mobility of the two families used in this study? Obviously, there are no simple answers to the question. However, the social scientist, Lee Rainwater, provides at least a partial explanation:

> To be sure, many Negro families live in the slum ghetto, but are not of its culture (though even they, and particularly their children, can be deeply affected by what happens there). However, it is the individuals who succumb to the distinctive family lifestyle of the slum who experience the greatest weight of deprivation and who have the greatest difficulty responding to the few self-improvement resources that make their way into the ghetto (Parsons 161).

The works of Rainwater and Moynihan have been very useful in developing the definition of Incorporated Racism as is used in this dissertation. The issue of segregation specifically plays a part in the concept of Incorporated Racism.

The segregation of the African American from the mainstream of the society-at-large has produced institutional patterns and behaviors that challenge the success of present efforts to ameliorate the forces that keep this population from social mobility. The behaviors are expressed as deviations of certain African Americans from what could be called normative in the United States. This segregation and the cultural patterns that were born out of it must be dealt with if reconciliation, rather than the maintenance of the status quo, is to be accomplished. A useful work on the segregation of the African American is <u>American Apartheid</u> by Douglas Massey

and Nancy Denton. These authors argue that the segregation of the African American has effected the African American adversely. I quote from this book here:

> To the extent that white prejudice and discrimination restricts the residential mobility of Blacks and confines them to areas with poor schools, low home values, inferior services, high crime, low educational aspirations, segregation undermines their social and economic well being...The central issue is not whether African Americans 'prefer' to live near white people or whether integration is a desirable social goal, but the restrictions on individual liberty implied by severe segregation undermine the social and economic well-being of individuals (Massey 150-151).

Massey and Denton introduce a concept that is important to my understanding of Incorporated Racism, the Culture of Segregation (Massey 1993).

> The Culture of Segregation arises from the coincidence of racial isolation and high poverty, which inevitably occurs when a poor minority group is residentially segregated. By concentrating poverty, segregation simultaneously concentrates male joblessness, teenage motherhood, single parenthood, alcoholism, and drug abuse, thus creating an entirely black social world in which these oppositional states are normative. Given the racial isolation and concentrated poverty of the ghetto, it is hardly surprising that black street culture has drifted steadily away from middle-class American values (Massey 171).

This reality, the Culture of Segregation, helps in understanding how a family like the Wengers could get caught in such a cycle of poverty and dysfunction. The Allen Family developed certain protections from this culture of survival. The Church as a buffer seems to have protected the Allen Family from

getting consumed by the cycle of poverty. It seems to have given them the tools for upward social mobility.

In understanding the protection against this type of consuming poverty which occurs in the Allen Family and others like it, I found very useful the work of St. Clair Drake and his understanding of the African American Middle-class.

> The Negro Middle Class covers a very wide income range, and what cohesion it has comes from the network of Churches and social clubs to which many of its members devote a great deal of their time and money. What sociologists call the Negro Middle Class is merely a collection of people who have similar lifestyles and aspirations, whose basic goals are 'living well', being 'respectable', and not being crude. Middle-class Negroes, by and large, are not concerned about mobility into the Negro upper class or integration with whites. They want their 'rights' and 'good jobs', as well as enough money to get those goods and services which make life comfortable. They want to expand continuously their level of consumption. But they also desire 'decent' schools for their children, and here the degree of victimization experienced by Negroes is most clear and the ambivalence toward policies of change most sharp. Ghetto schools are on the whole inferior (Meier 453).

Drake's understanding of the African American Middle-class and the effects that victimization can have on it can be used to understand how poor people from the South could advance up the social and economic ladder, and how a family with more education and wealth can decline. What seems to be key is the connections that they have or do not have with support agencies and the motivations that are present in their lives. Victimization can lead to helplessness. "...Not lack of knowledge but a sense of powerlessness is the key to the Negro

reaction to the caste-class system (Meier 454)."

The final work used in this dissertation to understand from which I draw my concept of Incorporated Racism is the work of Abram Kardiner and Lionel Oversey, "Psychodynamic Inventory of the Negro Personality"(Williams 1962). What is useful about their analysis is that it reveals the internal pressures that the people in their study experienced. These internal pressures were created by external stimuli and are incorporated into their daily functioning. Kardiner and Oversey write:

> It is a consistent feature of human personality that it tends to become organized about the main problems of adaptation, and this main problem tends to polarize all other aspects of adaptation toward itself. This central problem of Negro adaptation is oriented toward the discrimination he suffers and the consequences of the discrimination for the self-referential aspects of his social orientation. In simple words, it means that his self-esteem suffers (which is self-referential) because he is constantly receiving an unpleasant image of himself from the behavior of others toward him. This is the subjective impact of social discrimination and it sounds as though its effects ought to be localized and limited in influence. This is not the case. It seems to be an ever-present and unrelieved irritant. Its influence is not alone due to the fact that it is painful in its intensity, but also because the individual, in order to maintain internal balance, and to protect himself from being overwhelmed by it, must initiate restitutive maneuvers in order to keep functioning--all quite automatic and unconscious. In addition to maintaining an internal balance, the individual must continue to maintain a social facade and some kind of adaptation to the offending stimuli so that he can preserve some social effectiveness. All of this requires a constant preoccupation nothwithstanding the fact that these adaptational processes all take place on a low level order of awareness (Williams 1962 82-83).

It is important to note that social movements have been organized to fight this Incorporated Racism. In recent memory, the Million Men March on Washington attempted to replaced this internal destructive attitude with the attitude that something can be done to improve the lives of the African American Male.

Economic discrimination: The State Against Blacks, this book was researched and written by the economist Walter E. Williams. In this book, the author furnishes a study of the various types of obstacles presented by the northern industrial communities that kept the African American at the lowest functional level. Williams examines the racial effects of occupational and business licensing (particularly those of the taxi industry, the electrical and the plumbing occupations) on the African American. Also, of great importance to the researcher is Walter Williams' study of the reception of labor unions to African American laborers during the period of the great migration to the industrial urban areas.

The Brooklyn Ghetto Community: The geographic study by Harold X. Connolly: A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn (1977)(his doctoral dissertation), is very useful in assisting the researcher in locating the types of institutions that will yield the greatest abundance of information. It is an historical study that reviews the development and changes of the communities in Brooklyn as they relate to the influx of the African American. Dr. Connolly creates a qualitative

account of the experience of the African American adjusting to her/his environs.

A doctoral dissertation written by George Alfred Devlin, South Carolina and Black Migration 1865-1940: In Search of the Promise Land (1984) has the demographic facts that provides the background material of the history of the push and pull factors of the African American migration from the perspectives of South Carolina. It has saved this researcher hours of work going through the files of the government offices of the State of South Carolina. This proposal for dissertation is viewed by this researcher as a natural extension of the work of Dr. Devlin.

Nicholas Lemann's: The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How it changed America (1991). This book fits into the popular literature on the African American migration in the United States, but uses a format that is appropriate for sociology. It is a qualitative analysis of a family that migrated from rural Mississippi to Chicago and studies the causes and the results of this migration as it related to this family. From this vantage point Mr. Lemann attempts to further develop his theory of the underclass in the African American community. He argues that it is a product of the already existent dysfunction in the African American society produced by the southern sharecropping/tenant farming economy. Nicholas Lemann uses his research as a backdrop in writing an "apology" for the "Great Society" programs. However, what is

key for this researcher are the questions composed by Mr. Lemann and the style of the narrative. Both of these factors helped shape the form of this research.

I argue that the African American was forced into an underclass by the "welcoming" industrial centers of the North. Further, that the institutions existent in these areas failed to grant the essential supports necessary to alleviate the shortcomings that existed in the migration population as a result of the prejudice that African Americans experienced in their source communities. Furthermore, that the Great Society Program's attack on poverty, though it had a positive effect on the disadvantaged, deprived members of society, did not go far enough in correcting the structural problems that kept certain members of the African American in a type of poverty that seems to be circular and cross-generational. Finally, it is these same institutions that continue to fail to offer an avenue for the African American to enter the mainstream of the United States economy.

Another work by Nicholas Lemann has been helpful for this dissertation. In an article entitled:"The Myth of Community Development,"(January 1994) Lemann critiques the Federally funded anti-poverty programs in the United States, especially those that were aimed at the urban poor. He provides a history of the these programs in a summary fashion, and what is key in the history was the evolution of these programs from "social uplift", that is, providing education, counseling,

improvement of housing stock, and crime control, to the creation of a "spirit of self-reliance" (28). This issue of self-reliance most recently has been championed by the President Clinton's administration in the form of "Economic Enterprise Zones". Lemann's analysis is helpful in this dissertation because it helps clarify some of the problems I have with the anti-poverty programs from President Truman's Urban Renewal policies (nicknamed "Negro Removal") (29) to present day endeavors. Lemann groups the most recent attempts as the "Bottom-up" basis for the war on poverty. To quote Lemann directly:

> The people who know the most about the needs of poor neighborhoods are the residents; therefore, poverty programs should be designed and implemented by them, not imposed from above by mayors, members of Congress, social workers, intellectuals, Federal bureaucrats, or other authority figures. (29)

This approach became the paradigm for anti-poverty programs, even though as it was put into practice in Federally funded anti-poverty programs, they would not be successful. According to Lemann, in general, anti-poverty programs failed (Lemann 1994).

Following Lehmann's line of argument, the anti-poverty programs were not realistic. The programs seemed to be aimed at keeping the "Inner-city" populated. "It's no tragedy when people leave the ghetto. They're just following the standard American pattern by moving to the outer city- places like Queens--or the suburbs. Today, minorities are suburbanizing

more rapidly than whites (30)."

The more realisitic approach, at least argued by Lehmann, is to try to replicate those programs that were successful. These programs were based on providing decent housing and the protection that would keep them safe. These, for the most part were not Federally funded, but foundation funded projects. Lehmann argues that political requirements often doom the possible successful anti-poverty programs, he uses the failure of Model-Cities to illustrate this point.

> The Model Cities program, to cite a famous example was in early discussions supposed to be a demonstration project in a handful of cities. But in order to get it through Congress the Johnson Administration expanded it to 150 sites (and thus vastly diluted its chances of success)-which gave the program an automatic base of 150 votes in the House (30).

The community development corporations that are descendants of a movement established by Robert F. Kennedy are viewed by Lehmann as the most successful anti-poverty programs. He cites the New Community Corporation in Newark as the most successful of this group.

> ...Founded a year after the 1967 Newark riots, New Community became a substantial enterprise during the 1980's under the direction of a rumpled, unassuming Catholic priest, William J. Linder. Today it operates 2,500 housing units that are home to 6,000 people, seven day-care centers; an elementary school; a shopping center anchored by a new Pathmark Supermarket; a nursing home; a job-placement center; a newspaper and a restaurant. It has 1,266 employees and a $95 million annual budget. The neighborhood where New Community operates feels organized and safe. Right next to it, a private developer has built marketplace housing, which is a vote of confidence in the New Community's ability

to stabilize the area. (54)

This particular work of Lehmann was very useful in the concluding chapter of this dissertation where anti-poverty programs are dealt with in some detail.

"A Family Case Study" by Robin L. Jarrett(1992) gave support for the research approach that I used in writing this dissertation. Robin Jarrett criticizes some of the research on poor African American Families. Jarrett refers specifically to the use of census data, which Robin argues does not give the whole picture of the situation. From the data obtained in the use of census data, a picture is painted of the situation of the families that live in poverty that is incomplete. Use of such data without other methodologies fails to look at strategies that some families employ to ameliorate the effects of poverty (Jarrett 1992). Jarrett explains that the use of the case study methodology in conjunction with other methodologies create a fuller picture.

Gerald Handel (1991) in "Case study in Family Research," an article in the work: A Case for the Case Study, provides a useful analysis of how he used the case study approach with Robert Hess. Handel also provides material on other seminal research works that incorporated the case study methodology. In his discussion on the methodology he writes: "The view required could not be attained by lifting a few precut variables off the shelf and confining the study to those prechosen aspects." (Handel 1991 p. 261) The type of work that

this dissertation has done uses the case study methodology. Families like the ones studied in this dissertation need a voice, and that voice can not be provided strictly in using a quantitative approach. The case study methology provides a qualitative analytic approach that allows for these families to speak from their situations.

This dissertation has two research phases along with the first chapter that contains the methodology used in the research, and the purpose for the dissertation.

Chapters two and three contain the two phases of the research intertwined based on the time units they pertain to. Chapter two will deal with the beginning of the World War II Migration and conclude with the 70's (the early years). Chapter three will cover the 80's to the present. The first phase of the research is a "social historiography" of the African American Migration north. Here a general analysis of the data available on the African American migration will be done. A source for this data is the Museum of American History-Smithsonian Institution, where the "Field to Factory" exhibit on African American migration has created a wealth of primary source materials on the causes and the results of the African American migration north. My experience at the Smithsonian as a researcher/intern at the Museum of American History gave me the idea of using oral histories to view the migration of the African American. The stories of the people in migration are helpful in understanding how the great social

and economic forces that are at work during a migration impact on the people involved. There is value in doing a study of specific families and seeing how these forces contributed to their social mobility. It is also useful to see how the structure of these family units dealt with these forces, successfully or not so successfully. The techniques used in developing this dissertation were acquired at the Museum of American History under the mentorship of Dr. Crew, the curator of the "Field to Factory" Exhibition.

A second source is the collection at the National Archives on the African American. A third source is the document collection and microfilm collection of the Amsterdam Newspaper held at the Schomburg Collection of New York Public Library. Lastly, the Brooklyn Historical Society has a collection of primary source materials that treat the first reaction to the entrance of the African American into the communities of Brooklyn, New York.

The second phase of the research is a qualitative analysis of two families that experienced the migration from southern states to Brooklyn, New York. The primary questions to be asked of these family members are found in Appendix I. It is a cross-generational study including the matriarch of each clan, their children and their grandchildren. As previously stated, the two phases will be composed into one narrative divided into two chapters (2 and 3), based on two time units. The framework follows the primary questions that

are in Appendix I that is at the end of this dissertation.

This dissertation: The Impact of the Migration on the African American adds to the field of Sociology the study of two African American families who experienced the effects of the Great Migration on their lives over four decades. This study examines on the micro-level the impact of migration and settlement in Brooklyn, New York. Each family had a unique experience in adjusting to their northern homes. The research helps evaluate what was successful and not so successful in the social programs that were developed to assist African Americans in advancing socially in their new environs.

METHODOLOGY: Comparative Family Histories

This section describes the data collecting methods employed in this migration study. This study relies primarily on interviewing and historical research.

Interviewing: The interview method permits the researcher to question a wide range and number of individuals in a short time- span so as to obtain and present the broadest range of settings, situations, and viewpoints of key people (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). The literature maintains that interviewing is a highly useful methodology, because it yields more and better data at less cost than other research tools (Borg & Gall, 1983; Dexter, 1970; Kerlinger, 1986).

It is understood, however, that research efforts can be undermined if interviewing is used as a single-faceted approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Rarely does a researcher

proceed from an original idea to the completion of a study using one method alone (Richard, Dohrenwend, & Klein, 1965). Dexter (1970) warns against expecting to plan an entire study in advance by relying mainly on interviews for data, unless the interviewer has enough relevant background to "make sense out of interview conversations or unless there is a reasonable hope of being able to hang around or in some way observe so as to learn what is meaningful and significant to ask" (p. 17). Accordingly, a contingency plan, or "escape hatch" as Dexter (1970) refers to it, should be available to substitute in any study relying heavily upon interviews if such interviews prove uninformative. At every stage of the study, Richardson et al. (1965) advise the researcher to weigh "one method against another in terms of four basic criteria: accessibility, economy of his resources, accuracy, and relevance" (p. 21). Clearly, triangulation best guarantees the reliability of data collected through interviews (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

The Interviewing centers around two African American families that have migrated to the City of New York or to metropolitan area of New York City. These families are originally from southern rural communities, and are from two different states: South Carolina, and Virginia. Therefore, this migration study is an eastern corridor study. These two families I have studied in my research efforts for the Smithsonian Museum of American History. I have studied these families since 1984. The families in this study were connected

to the Parish of All Saints' Roman Catholic Church in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. I was the Director of Religious Education for this parish during the time that I selected these families. They represent two differing examples of how people of similar family backgrounds but differing degrees of incorporated racism have differing rates of success or failure. This research was limited to two families because of the time that I have worked with these families, and because of my deep knowledge of their situations.

It is also desired that the interviews will include at least two generations of the families in this study. The first generation will be with those who made the migration, and the other generation will provide data on the adjustment of these families into the society of the migration destination.

In the the first generation, Mrs. Blanche Gibes -Wenger is the matriarch of the Wenger family. Mrs. Barbara Sanders-Allen is the matriarch of the Allen Family. Both were selected to be interviewed as part of this research because they were the key migrants from the South. They also had a key role in shaping the futures of their families.

In the interview of the second generation two were selected from each family. For the Wenger Family the two selected were Eddie and Albert. These two were selected because they were cooperative. The amount of time that was

needed to do the interviews was demanding on those willing to be interviewed, Eddie and Albert made time for these interviews.

In the Allen Family the two to be interviewed in the second generation were Betty and Jean. Betty was selected because she is one of the older siblings and represents the early period of the family after the migration north. Jean represents a later time in the development of the family. Both were also selected because they showed interest in the project.

Though many others in the second generation were interviewed, their interviews were primarily used in helping fill-out the background history of the two families.

The interviews were conducted in the homes of the matriarchs themselves. I repeatedly visited the families for interviews and observations over a three year period, 1990 to 1993, and interviews were often conducted on holidays like Christmas and Thanksgiving because on these days most of the family members returned to their parents' home.

Interviews, in general, can be structured or "focused" (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1956) and unstructured, "elite," "specialized," or "exploratory" (Dexter, 1970; Richardson et al., 1965). In the structured interview, an interviewer has defined the problem and developed questions prior to the interview. Answers are then obtained within a specific framework and definition of the problem. To avoid standard-

ized or "normative" answers, an interviewer can use an unstructured format. The unstructured format allows an interviewee to respond to a broad(er) issue and, thereby, establish the problem of interest for the interview (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). This interview-format permits greater interviewee involvement by emphasizing his or her definition of the problem, encouraging him or her to shape the description of the problem, and introducing what he or she regards as relevant to the problem (Dexter, 1970).

Planning, setting up, and executing the interview is important for this study, and is widely addressed in the literature on interviewing (Bailey, 1978; Dexter, 1970; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Richardson, et al., 1965). The planning and setting up phase of interviews for this study will be facilitated by contact with the first generation of the families selected for this study.

The execution of the interview is a potentially troublesome area of concern for the researcher. But, based on the strategies of Guba and Lincoln (1981), interviews are an invaluable source of information, insights, and other areas of inquiry. For example, interviews took place in comfortable surroundings which allowed face-to-face contact without observers and listeners. Privacy ensured confidentiality and candid responses.

With the interviewee's permission prior to the interview, a cassette tape recorder was used to preserve the interview

data. Recording the interview verbatim during an open-ended session is far better than note-taking, in that the tape-recorded data could be played back repeatedly and studied much more thoroughly (Borg & Gall, 1983). Although potentially detrimental in interviews involving personal or confidential information (Sherwood, 1972), the researcher argues that tape recording does not ruin the interview mood. Indeed, the tape recorder is vital in order to obtain detailed and lengthy information, and a permanent primary source record. Besides reducing interviewer bias, recorded data increase the reliability coefficient of the interview data by permitting interviewer reevaluations as well as another researcher's evaluation (Sherwood, 1972). Also, the tape recorded interviews increase the collected data's reliability and objectivity (Borg & Gall, 1983). Guba and Lincoln (1981) note that the pace of the interview is very important and will vary with the interviewee from a lively to leisurely pace. The researcher believes that a blending of pace will be needed to avoid alienating the interviewee. Regarding the interview's "rhythm," the researcher found Dexter's (1970) advice on this matter is well-founded:

> [Many elite interviewees dislike a steady flow of questions . . . . They would prefer a discussion, or still more, perhaps, something which sounds like a discussion, but is really a quasi-monologue stimulated by understanding comments . . . [much like] the less informed and experienced one (the interviewer) deferring to the wiser one and learning from him. (p. 56)

Measor (1985), a researcher who relied heavily on an

unstructured, in-depth interviewing strategy to collect data, reexamined her own interviewing practices. She stresses, in part, building relationships with interviewee and being sensitive to their answers. Also, in order to build rapport and put the interviewee at ease, she notes, an interviewer could share and talk about common interests. As Sherwood (1969) suggested, putting the interviewee at ease is probably helpful, if not necessary, to produce better responses, but it should not be overdone. Interviewees become resentful when they sense that time is being wasted.

Although it is necessary to be aware of the flow and types of questions, the most crucial strategy or tactic for an interviewer is the skill or ability to listen. Guba and Lincoln (1981) place great emphasis on this area:

> [T]he best notes in the world will never achieve the same results as the listener who is able to immerse himself in the respondent's frame of reference; who is able to hear on most--if not all--of the levels on which the respondent is speaking . . . . The ability to 'hear' accurately and clearly what another is saying, without overlays of values, attitudes, preconceptions, stereotypes, beliefs, or prejudices is perhaps the hardest 'skill' for the inquirer to come by. (p. 176)

While it is important to listen during the interview, it is more important how one listens. By observing "the nods of the head, the winks of the eye, and the gestures of the hand," the interviewer can discover the true reactions of the interviewee as opposed to what he is saying (Sherwood, 1972).

In addition to being able to listen and to hear, a

researcher must be able to frame questions in order to pursue interesting and intriguing points (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). In framing and constructing questions, the researcher referred to considerations raised by Gatz and Hoagland (1978) (cited in Guba & Lincoln,

1981):

1. How necessary is the question? How will the answer be used and analyzed?
2. Is the question complete, or are additional questions needed?
3. Is the question interpretable, requiring more information before the answer makes sense?
4. Are the respondents able to answer the question, which may require interviewer flexibility.
5. How valid and adequate are the answers for the interviewer? Were the questions leading, or value-neutral in terms of assumptions, frames of reference, and respondent willingness to respond? (p. 177)

As Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest, this study employs some open-ended questions to get the interviewee to respond freely, uninhibited by interviewer bias. In this way concerns will be raised in order to elicit nonstandardized respondent answers. This type of question is invaluable when dealing with a complicated issue. Answers or explanations from the individual's unique perspective are usually helpful in unraveling thorny issues or problems. Here we speak of the migration phenomena. This type of question also helps to elicit unanticipated responses which will hopefully provide vital information. Questions developed prior to interviewing served as a guide and checklist for discussions. The role of the interviewee dictated the specific order of questions.

Questions were designed to tap into the experience of the migrant, utilizing the migrant's value and belief frameworks (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The exact wording or order of questions vary with each interview, enabling the researcher to adjust to the interview situation, to the respondent's perspective, and to new information or ideas about the problem (Merriam, 1988). However, a "funnel sequence," that is, questions proceeding from the more general to the more specific, is employed in this study (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

An important maxim for the researcher was "never lose control of the interview" (Sherwood, 1972, p. 89). Even though the researcher has a set of thematic areas to cover, digressions inevitably will creep into the interview. Interview digressions, though, are immensely beneficial, because they delve into areas of greater personal interest to the interviewee. Measor (1985) contends that by losing some control over the interview in this way, a researcher can obtain data that is central to the respondent. As Sherwood (1972) suggests, when confronted by a verbose individual, or a dynamic, take charge personality, the researcher simply restated the question or proceeded to the next one.

The historical context. In addition to interviewing, this study will also collect data through historical research. History studies the record of human experience (Handlin et al., 1970). Specifically, historical research, or historiog-

raphy, critically examines past events, developments, and experiences; carefully weighs data from valid sources of information; and interprets the weighed data. In the field of social sciences, historical research is of particular value and covers a broad area of subject matter (Kerlinger, 1986).

The role of interpretation is a major consideration for contemporary social historians. Because historical research deals with recorded events which have been interpreted, the historian adds further interpretation in the way facts are emphasized or ignored, or fit into categories and patterns. However, in contrast to popular 19th century historians who stressed a voluminous collection of objective and irrefutable facts, contemporary social historians stress the interpretative framework within which historical facts are given meaning and significance.

Although history means interpretation (Carr, 1964), bias is not necessarily irreconcilable with scientific research. In a series of lectures delivered at the University of Chicago in December 1938, on the nature of history and social sciences, Salvemini addressed the problem of bias:

> [C]an the historian or the social scientist divest himself of his own prejudices? If not, what becomes of his so-called scientific knowledge? Many historians and social scientists are haunted by the fear of being accused of bias. In order to avoid this danger they stifle their opinions as if they were unmentionable diseases and confine themselves to accumulating facts without any attempt at coordination. Since they say nothing, they do not run the risk of falling into error. Others, . . . set forth all the interpretations of which a given group of facts is capable and . . . [then] wash their hands

> of the matter . . . and leave the reader to answer for himself the question, 'What is truth?'. (pp. 74-75)

The historian must strive to tell the whole truth. Hockett (1955) writes:

> [W]ith the most honest intentions he will find it difficult to be impartial because of his own preconceptions, party, sectarian, racial, national, or group associations and resulting bias. It is not given to man to escape bias altogether. (p. 10)

Similarly, a researcher must be aware of the context in which events happened and were recorded. The biases and beliefs of participants and individuals recording events can color a study's results. The social and political climate in which events occur must be kept in mind when evaluating data and writing a study (Best & Kahn, 1986).

A potential interpretative concern in historical research is the distinction between criticism and exposition. Critical judgment must be exercised with respect to what a document means as well as when and by whom it was written. Clearly, the exposition of historical facts is affected by the interpretation placed upon them. To avoid a mere recital of events, the historian must adhere to one rule: "no interpretation, no history" (Garraghan, 1946, p. 330). According to Fortescue (1926), "the function of history is not merely to ascertain facts, but to interpret them aright . . . It is certain that if a historian be not an interpreter, he is no more than a chronologist" (p. 30, cited in Garraghan, 1946, p. 30).

Historians used to let the facts speak for themselves.

Just giving the facts can have serious drawbacks, however, since there is no totally acceptable definition of historical fact (Garraghan, 1946; Shafer, 1980). For Garraghan (1946), "normal historical writing is, therefore, necessarily both factual and interpretative" (p. 337). He emphasized that "facts must be substantial, the major element of the blend, but interpretation, though supplementary and accessory, is none the less [sic] indispensable" (p. 337). Because there is disagreement over the facts as they actually happened, a greater emphasis must therefore be placed on historical scholarship (Clark, 1971).

Since a major portion of this research involves the historical records of locales in the rural south and the urban north, primary sources are vital in acquiring a historical perspective. The use of primary sources is basic and vital in any historical study (Garraghan, 1946; Kerlinger, 1986). In historical research, primary sources are generally distinguished from secondary sources as documents containing the words of the witnesses or first recorders of an event. While this study predominantly used primary sources, it also will produce a secondary source (Barzun & Graff, 1977).

Public documents are the primary source of information to be used in this study, since they are the most useful sources of information involving African American migration. These documents are generally reliable because they are public. Thus, any concern over falsification or forgery was obviated

(Handlin, et al., 1970).

In looking at primary source materials on the African American migration north, certain places are extremely helpful because they have kept these materials. First, the Schomburg Library Collection provides materials in the form of flyers that encouraged people to migrate and documents that expressed the impressions of those who did. Flyers from the collection at the Schomberg were used for background material. The years researched were the 1940's, and comprised mostly materials that contained advertisements encouraging people to come north. These flyers represented data on the migration pull factor. Secondly, the Brooklyn Historical Society has records of the neighborhood associations that tried to keep African Americans from moving into their neighborhoods. Though these records were not quoted directly, they were referred to in establishing background history of the time. The above, along with the Amsterdam Newspaper of the time period in this study, that is the 40's, 50's, and 60's, provides the framework on which the case studies fit. This newspaper was especially useful because it contained current events of the time written, hence it provided information on how the people involved saw their situation. The Amsterdam Newspaper is an African American weekly newspaper that has published continuously through the time of the migration north, and is still in publication today. The micro-form materials used to read the issues are housed as part of the Schomberg Library Collection.

In using internal criticism, the researcher also realized his own biases, values, and interests with respect to this study. According to Borg and Gall (1983), "biases, values, and personal interests allow you to 'see' certain aspect of past events, but not others" (p. 819). A greater awareness of one's own interpretive framework is likely to make one more sensitive to the biases of other researchers covering the same topic. As Carr (1964) noted:

> [W]hen you read a work of history, always listen out for the buzzing. If you can detect none, either you are tone deaf or your historian is a dull dog. The facts are really not at all like fish on the fishmonger's slab. They are like fish swimming about in a vast and sometimes inaccessible ocean; and what the historian catches will depend partly on chance, but mainly on what part of the ocean he chooses to fish in and what tackle he chooses to use--these two factors being, of course, determined by the kind of fish he wants to catch. By and large, the historian will get the kind of facts he wants. (p. 26)

Finally, the researcher evaluated the evidence gathered and validated by external and internal criticism. One should not be content with having generated vast amounts of evidence. Rather, "he must relentlessly subject himself to the question: what is this 'evidence' evidence of?" (Handlin et al., 1970, p. 23). The argument is made that each generation rewrites its own history. Mink (1987) notes that

> [while] historical truth is relative to the point of view of the historian together, perhaps, with his primary evidence, . . , it is seldom added that each generation gives its own reasons for rewriting its own history . . . . (p. 89)

This study employs the research technique of triangulation through a multimethod approach in order to increase the

reliability and validity of collected data. Cohen and Manion (1985) define triangulation "as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behavior" (p. 254). Historical research and interviewing, two basic research

methodologies, are invaluable (Babbie, 1983) in this study, in that each methodology has particular strengths and weaknesses as stated above.

Conclusion

The dissertation concludes with a paper that has studied programs created to alleviate some of the predicaments that this research has investigated in studying the two families.

The paper that is the last chapter (chapter 6) of this research consists of a review of two programs established to help African Americans and other disadvantaged groups that have been successful and those that have not been so. The goal in this section of the research is to determine what elements of the programs should have been developed and maintained. It is those elements that attack the root of the problems that create the negative situation for the section of the African American population that seem to be incapable of social mobility. These elements can be applied to the situation that exists today so that self-help organizations can be developed to help ameliorate a situation where so many lives are wasted.

Chapter two: The Two Families

> "My life in the South had no future, no present, but only the past. I would be on my family's mountain and living off the land. But there wasn't freedom. There wasn't hope for a better life. The North was something new. I could be myself, my children could go to school without the problems that I had goin' to school. Goin' north was a new beginnin' for me. It was not easy. I had my problems. But, it was better for me and my children. I never regret (sic) the move." Mrs. Blanche Wenger (Matriarch of the Wenger family).

This dissertation seeks to determine how the migration experience of two African American extended families affected the children and the grandchildren of these families. The dissertation links the micro-world families to the macro-social forces of the Great Migration. The families in this study experienced the forces that led to the migration of the African American population from the rural and the urban Southern States of the U. S. to the industrialized regions of the North and the West. The macro-social forces are important to understand and much has been written on these forces. Yet, also important is how these forces touched the lives of the individual families in the social movement. The macro-social facts are important in the research, but the micro-social facts, and the analysis of them are salient to this research effort.

The primary questions are:

1. What were the push and the pull factors that led to the migration?

2. What type of employment, education, and church affiliation did the migrants have before they undertook the migration?
3. How were they received by the communities they entered? In other words, what did these communities do or not do to provide for transition of the migrants into their new environs?
4. What type of employment opportunities were available for the newly arrived migrant? What were the long-term possibilities?
5. How successful have the particular families studied been in achieving middle class status?
6. What type of educational opportunities were available?
7. What level of education was achieved by the children and the grandchildren?
8. What type of job opportunities are open to children and the grandchildren?
9. How would they evaluate the effect of the migration on their family? Was it a positive experience?

The above questions are important in understanding the contemporary situation of African Americans who live in the northeast urban centers. Many of them, either directly or indirectly, have been influenced by the migration experience.

The two families selected for the study represent two divergent aspects of the African American migration North.

The Wenger Family migrated from Portmouth, Virginia where they were members of the landowning class (see family tree below, figure 1). The Allen Family the second family in this study, (see second family tree, figure 2) migrated from Greenville, South Carolina where they were sharecroppers. It is interesting to note that they had different starting points, both geographically and economically yet their experiences in the North may or may not be related to the social class position that they held in their respective originating points. The Wenger Family came from a landowning family, and the matriarch had a better education (completed four years of high school) than her counterpart in the Allen Family. The Wenger Family is also have a lighter skin complexion than the Allen Family. These factors should have placed them at a higher advantage than the Allen Family in relation to social mobility. There are other factors that must be explored. For instance, "What impact did substance abuse, religious affiliation, and/or racism have on the social mobility and adjustment of these two families?" Incorporated racism becomes important in the analysis of the situation of these two families. The difficulties that they both experienced, and especially the Wenger Men experienced, can not be explained solely by refering to external societal forces. Incorporated racism points toward an internal attitude that leads to failure. If that attitude is not dealt with failure seems to be the end result.

Figure #1

Gibes- Wenger Family Genealogy

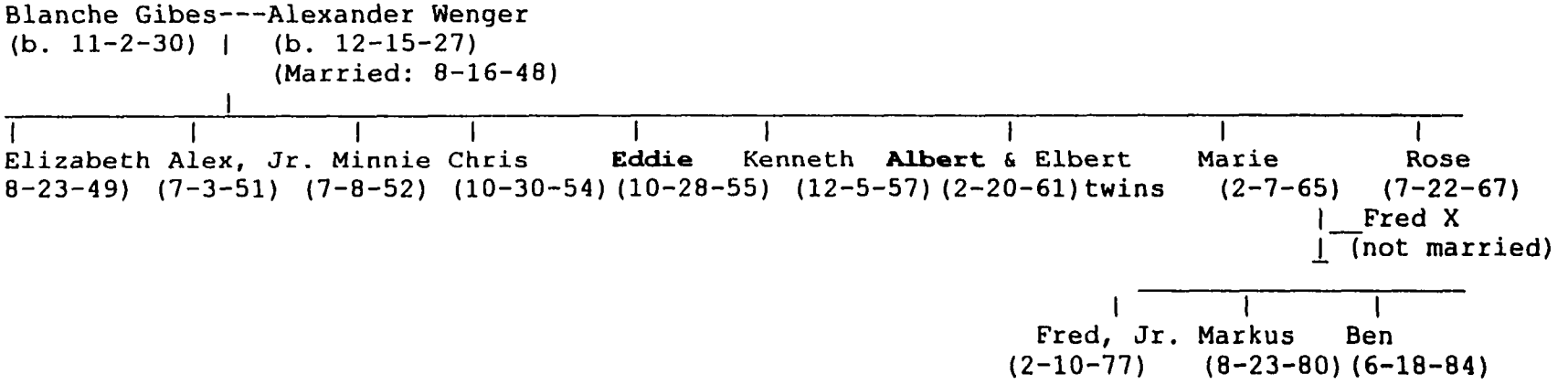
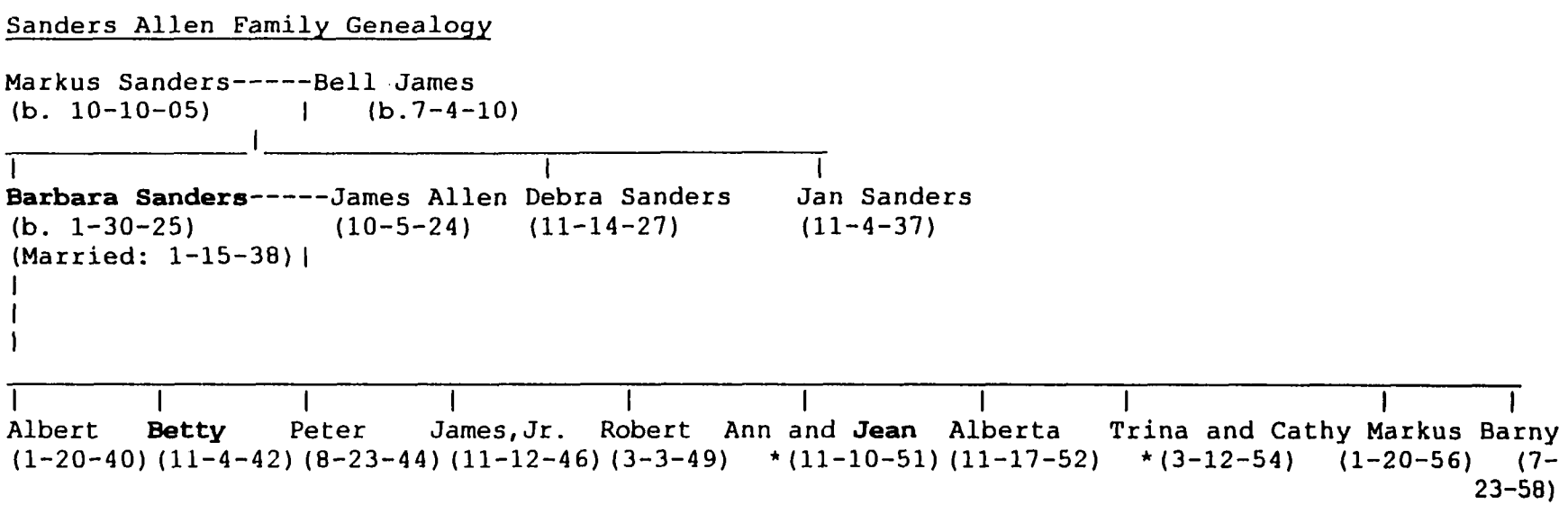
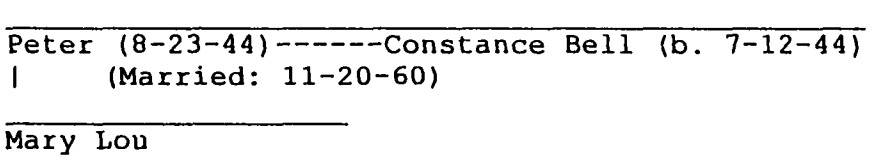


Figure 2



Third Generation



*Denotes twins

The Southern Situation

The Southern milieu caused great difficulty for the African American. It was the social, economic, and political spheres that caused the migration of the African Americans from their homes in the Southern States to the Northern and Western communities. The attitudes of politicians like the Governor of South Carolina between 1919-1920, Robert A. Cooper, explains part of the corpus of reasons why the African American migrated in such great numbers in the first decade of the twentieth century: "...wished to continue a policy that kept blacks in a position of second-class citizenship."

Efforts to stop the migration led to increased migration

The authorities in the South lived in a reality that violated reason in human relationships. They had a population that was their work-force, and in certain states like South Carolina, was the majority sector of the population, that they did not seem to appreciate. It is this population, the African American population, that they seemed to be repulsed but yet would fight to keep as their work-force.

In response to earlier migrations laws were passed to keep the African Americans in the South without improving their situation. Some of these laws were tested in the Courts. A few examples of these court-cases follow.

In the State v Reeves Case (1919), the South Carolina State Supreme Court ruled that requiring licenses for emigrant agents was legal because the State made proper use of its

police power to protect the State's laborers as well as the agricultural and industrial interests. (Court papers) The Court added that the State could legally disband any occupation that it deemed necessary by virtue of its police power.

The same year as the above decision a second case overruled this decision. The State v Bates Case decision was based on the premise that agents of the railroad companies were exempted from having to secure a license because they did not fit under the auspices of the authority of the State government. However, the court also ruled that these employees of the railroad companies (i.e.: the emigrant agents) were required to follow the laws of the state that they were working in.

In general, the key provision in most of these legislations that were formulated to keep the African American in the South used the argument of police power. That is, police power allowed for the governments to regulate business activities as the government saw fit. Though these legislations referred to here were from the South Carolina Legislature, these types of legislations were being promulgated in other southern states as well. None of these legislations were successful in keeping the African American in the South. Those mentioned here, however, show that though the African American was not treated properly (i.e.: Constitutional Rights were violated) their presence was still desired.

The First World War and its impact on the migration trend

The First World War had an effect on all sectors of the southern society. It also set a pattern that would impact on the future waves of migration of the African American. The social fabric of the South had gone through a change during the war. The isolation of the African American from the European American had changed. Many of the servicemen who returned after the war to their homes found their communities were now including African Americans as their neighbors and working in the jobs that they had heretofore dominated. However, because of the job availability due to the entrance of the men into the military services, the African American could make economic advances in the South. This trend also occurred in the northern cities. This two-fold trend led to the migration of the African American from the Rural South to the Urban South and to the Urban North. In the southern section of this migration, the net result was the end of the days of accommodation of the African Americans by the European American population and it would be replaced by the feeling that a war for survival would be waged, and that the European American was determined to win in this war.

There was also a fear in the European American community in relation to the returning home of the African American soldier. These fears, for the most part were unfounded in reality. However, an African American historian, Asa Gordon, stated that there was a new note of dissatisfaction within the African American population in relation to racial relations

between the races in the South, and the now apparent racial prejudice that was practiced(Devlin 1984). In other words, the African American was "spoiled" by their presence in the war and this would not allow them to fit neatly back into the social structures that they were raised in.

This dissatisfaction of the African Americans with their social conditions and the beginning of racial integration caused a volatile situation. The African American soldier in the South had a very difficult situation. According to Asa Gordon, more than seventy African American men, returning home from the war, were lynched during the first year that they were back in their homes. Of this number, ten were lynched in their uniforms. The lynching did not occur in every southern state, yet the knowledge that this situation existed had an impact on the lives of all African Americans because of the presence of this information in the media.

There is an interesting relationship between the migration of the African American from the Southern States and the lynching of African American males in the Southern States. There are several variables involved in this relationship. First, the migration from hostile territory was the obvious result of the fear that one would lose his life because of certain members of the European American population that found the African American to be a threat to their well-being. Secondly, the migration of the African American from the South reduced the number of that population in the Southern States

and in doing so, reduced the tension between the races. States like South Carolina had an African American majority before the waves of migration that followed the World Wars. In essence, the migration worked as a safety valve that released some of the tension that existed in the South. Lastly, the propertied class in the South fought against the practice of lynching in the South because it reduced their labor force. These three variables resulted in a net reduction of lynching of the African American male.

The tension of the racial relationship in the South also manifested itself in the possibility of a race war at least in the mind of some of the Southern European American leadership. There were rumors that a certain sector of the African American population was armed. To protect themselves, men like Philip of Summerville went to the National Guard and put in a request that Army rifles be stored in the local armory so that the European American population could defend themselves in the event of an armed uprising of the African American population. (Devlin, 245)

These elements help to explain the push factor for the Great Migration of the African American. One result of the Great Migration was the losing of majority status of the African American population in South Carolina by the first part of the 1920s.

Other factors in the social situation of the South contributed to the migration of the African American.

However, because these factors were not immediately life-threatening their impact would be experienced over a longer time-span.

A key factor in leading to the migration of the African Americans of the type mentioned above is in the area of education. African Americans became dissatisfied with the education that was available to them in the South. The African American leadership became aware of the higher expenditure of funds for the children of all races in the northern states. Some of the data of the expenditures help illustrate this reality. In 1923, New York State spent $45.32 per capita for the student, regardless of race, in their state. During the same year, South Carolina spent $10.00 for children of European descent, whereas, for children of African descent the amount per capita was $1.44. (Devlin 253) Funding was only one of the problems of the segregated school-system that the African American would attend. What was also at issue were the poorly managed academic programs and inadequate facilities. Though the schools in the northern states were not necessarily more integrated, the facilities and the academic programs were a great improvement from what was available to the majority of the children of African American descent.

> The educational system of the State (Carolina) affected the migratory process in two ways. First, the more educated black desired to leave according to Dr. Joseph O'Brien of Bishop England High School

> in Charleston. He felt that more educated blacks rebelled against the conditions in which they found themselves.
>
> On the otherhand, the inadequacies of the educational system caused other blacks to leave the State. (Devlin, 349-350)

The two families in the study had differing experiences in the school system of their location in the South. The states of the South organized their schools differently.

Mrs. Blanche Wenger was pleased with her education in Virginia. Segregation was not as pervasive as experienced in other sections of the South. Her economic class may have had something to do with this. (She owned a mountain that provided wood for sale). However, Mrs. Bell Sanders remembers the fear that she had when her children went to school. School buses were not provided for her children which meant walking a great distance to school. The elementary school building was much too small for the population served, and the textbooks were not sufficient. By the time that her two oldest daughters entered secondary school, the situation became worse. The distance from the home was greater. Mrs. Sanders argues that this was the key reason that Barbara Allen did not continue in secondary school. With the break-up of the marriage of Markus and Bell, the opportunity arose for Bell to move to Harlem, New York and stay with her distant relative who lived there. After establishing herself, she sent for two younger daughters: Debra, who was at that time 15 years old, and Jan, who was at that time 5 years old. A key consideration in moving

was that safe education was available in the public schools, both in Harlem and later in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.

Another factor that had an effect on the migration of the African American to the Northern States was that of segregation. Separate accommodations for European Americans and African Americans in transportation and in all social interacting situations was the law in the South. Though there were instances of segregation in the Northern cities, it was usually the result of de facto situations.

"It was a very strange feeling when you and your white friends could not go and sit in the same seats in the movie theater. I would have to sit in the balcony. It was insulting." (Mrs. Gibes-Wenger)

(Mrs. Wenger had friends and relatives who were white, and because she was of light brown complexion there were places that she could not go with them. This made here feel uncomfortable.)

The more African Americans moved to the North, the more attractive the North became for the African American. The existence of transplanted African Americans in the Northern Cities became a key factor for the migration of African Americans to the Northern Cities. Those who were left in the South saw hope in the lives that their friends and relatives in the North were experiencing.

The Beginning of the Gibes-Wenger Migration North. Mrs. Gibes-Wenger had the experience of migrating North to Brooklyn

first as a child with her brother Timothy. Tina Gibes, her mother, had already migrated to Brooklyn from the family homestead in the rural area near Portmouth, Virginia. She found work as a domestic with her husband who worked as a chauffeur with an upper-middle class family in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn. In 1940, Tina Gibes sent for her children. They were living up to this time with their grandparents, Oliver and Clara Gibes. They were the owners of the Gibes Mountain. The northern living arrangement continued for only two years. The demands of the employment situation of Mrs. Gibes and her husband were great. Both Blanche and Timothy were sent back to live with their grandparents and Blanche would finish her education during this period in Virginia.

Another reason for the African American exodus to the urban areas, and subsequently to the northern industrial areas lies in the advent of the infestation of the boll weevil. This cotton eating insect had a great effect on the Southern States and the African American in particular. This infestation would impact on the African American migration because of the dire situation caused by the loss of the cotton crops in the states of the South. The boll weevil entered the State of South Carolina in 1917. By the agricultural season of 1918 it had infested much of the State, and by 1921 the entire state was infested by this insect. In the beginning of the infestation poor farms of all ethnic groups did not have the knowl-

edge on how to deal with this insect so they would leave their farmers and go to the urban areas to find work. In their reality there was nothing they could do; hence, the rural to urban migration was the only available recourse. As a result of this migration, the southern urban areas could not sustain the increase in the population, therefore this migration trend led to a second migration to the northern industrial areas where there was a need for workers.

The severity of this infestation made the rural agricultural work for a great part of the African American laborer an impossibility and led to the migration of the population by necessity. This migration increased the number of the African American in the northern industrial areas which created the centers of reception for the future migration of African Americans from the South.

Another interesting factor is related to this phenomena of the boll weevil. The rural areas where cotton was the dominant feature of the state's economy made rural living an impossibility. This created urban socialized individuals that would make the urban areas in the Northern States more amiable. This factor aided in the easing of the pressures of migrating from a rural to an urban environment.

The Beginning of the Sanders' (Allen) Migration North. Mrs. Bell Sanders' cousin lived in Harlem in 1922. Her family migrated because they could not find work due to the destruction of the cotton economy. Mrs. Sanders' cousin, Mary

Coleman, stayed on their farm while her husband went North in 1921 to Harlem to establish himself as a laborer in a lumberyard.

The economic reason for migration to the urban areas was not only because of the boll weevil infestation. There was a strictly monetary factor involved in the migration. What needs to be remembered is that a great part of the migrating African Americans were employed as "sharecropping" tenant farmers. First, this means of employment was often unreliable. Both the land owner's treatment of the sharecropper and the problems that were caused by the unpredictable nature of agriculture made this economic means of making a living undesirable. The pull to the urban areas was chiefly the availability of wages that were greater and more reliable. The southern rural worker might do 'day-labor' in the towns to supplement the income that was received from farming. If these jobs became permanent the farmer became a wage earner. The next step in the economic life of the individual would be to move to the North because the wages would be two or three times greater than what was provided in the South for similar work. A cycle was created as African Americans left from the southern towns to better their economic conditions in the North and the rural African American migrated into those towns to replace the workers who migrated north. This cycle continued for both of the major migrations from the South in the first half of the twentieth century.

Another factor that led to the migration of the African American was the effect of the migration of the upper-socio-economic African American to the northern urban areas. Though this was not a significant number in size, the reality of this migration seemed to show that even financial security did not make a difference as far as treatment by the greater society in the South. Case in point, in 1922 in Edgefield, South Carolina, two landowning African Americans were forced to migrate out of the State of South Carolina because of their political activities in the Republic Party Convention in that state. This forced migration led to more members of this elite African American community to leave the state on a voluntary basis, and the masses of the African American followed them also.

Nativist movements had their effect on African American migration out of the Southern States. This was especially the case with the re-emergence of the Ku Klux Klan. This nativist group did much to encourage the African American to leave the South because of the acts of cruelty done against the African American population. This group encouraged the migration of the African American out of the South to further the goal of getting rid of the "black menace" and furthering the advancement of "white supremacy".

> And herein lay the problems of black migration, race relations, segregation and discrimination...the defense of the principles of 1876 in 1936. (326)

The discrimination was accomplished by the legitimate government officials of the South. For example, in the fall of 1937, the Sheriff of Greenville County, South Carolina (the County in which the Allen Family lived) ordered all African Americans who did not have a job to go to work for the farmers in the County to pick cotton. These individuals were to work for whatever price the landowner wanted to pay. This order occurred in period of the Great Depression and so it did not lead to immediate migration. At least for the Allen Family, it was another reason to leave their homes.

The Migration Network

What was key in both the Sanders-Allen and the Gibes-Wenger migration was the availability of friends and family members that made migration possible. This migration network was very significant. First, community and family ties encouraged the African American to make this migration. The pioneers who established homes in areas like Harlem and various communities in Brooklyn functioned as first stops in the northern urban areas until the additional family-unit found appropriate housing. This was further encouraged by the reality that those who left the South did not completely leave. At least the first generation of those who moved to new homes in the North would continue to "go down South" as often as was financially feasible. Those who were property owners in the South could keep their property and still have the advantages of northern living.

In the northern cities organizations were developed by people who had migrated from a particular state in the South. For instance, in the 1940's an organization called "The South Carolina League" was formed. Organizations like this helped keep the ties between the southern areas of origin and the destination-area tied together.

This network was supported by more than families and friends. There were relationships that involved entire 'faith communities'. Relationships existed between "mother" churches in the South and "daughter" churches in the North. Ministers of these faith communities would travel between these churches. This relationship allowed for another means of migrating successfully into a northern community.

Impact of Women on the Migration

"I could not raise a child in the South, Virginia was not a safe place to raise a boy." (Mrs. Wenger)

What Mrs. Wenger mentioned summarizes what many African American women were concerned about, the possibility of losing a male child to a lynching mob. African American women played a major role in the exodus of the African American from the South. They had a very reasonable fear that their children or potential children were in danger, and for those who were married they were concerned for the safety of their husbands. The males of these families were affected psychologically by the stress that living in the South caused for them, this situation had a net effect on the entire family-group. This

would shade the African American male through the process of socialization into their new environs. Richard Wright, the African American author, would reflect on this in his experience of migration:

> ...this Richard Wright also brought with him the scars, visible and invisible, of his southern boyhood. He, too, was both fascinated and intimidated. 'I was seized by doubt,' he recalled of the moment he walked out of the railroad station in Chicago. 'Should I have come here? But going back was impossible. I had fled a known terror, and perhaps I could cope with the unknown terror that lay ahead.' For along with the 'unknown terror' of the big city came the liberating realization that a white man sitting beside him on the streetcar seemed unconscious of his blackness...For in the South, an ambitious black American could find even less nourishment for hopes and dreams then in the North. (Grossman 1987 2)

The migration of the Gibes-Wenger Family was led by Mrs. Blanche Wenger. This is also the case in the migration of the James-Sanders Family. Grandmother Sanders led the migration that brought her three daughters North. Grandmother Sanders was the first to settle in the New York area. She moved in with a cousin in Harlem and then when she was employed and had enough money saved she rented an apartment in Brooklyn. Her two younger daughts settled with her.

The oldest daughter of Mrs. Bell Sanders, Barbara, was the last to leave Greenville, South Carolina. After leaving secondary school she met James Allen. Barbara had started a family, and had two children already in 1945 when she followed her mother and two sisters to Brooklyn.

There were many factors encouraging the African American to migrate to the North. In this study the key concern is the migration to Brooklyn. Why did the James-Sanders and the Gibes-Wenger Families settle in Brooklyn New York in the 40s and 50s? It seems that this region of the urban north was open for an influx of a new population because there was already the beginning of an exodus of a population from the area. However, the new migrants had particular needs for which no one seemed to be prepared.

Chapter Three

The Northern Experience, a Brooklyn Story

The reception of the African American in the Industrial North was complicated for the nation as a whole and particularly complicated for the African American in particular. The families in this study both experienced the process of entering this new environment, yet had vastly different results in achievements as a result of this process.

> Of all the major urban American immigrant communities of whatever ethnic or racial background, none faced the kind of systematic and restrictive measures upon urban adaptation as did the American black. (Grossman, 1987, 15)

The two families in this study dealt differently with the reality of social disorganization. The approach used has much to say about the different results the generations that follow the migration generation.

The Sanders family came from the town of Greenville, South Carolina. They were sharecroppers on a farm that was close to the town. When Mrs. Bell James decided to leave her husband (this was the third and final separation of the couple), she brought her two younger daughters (Debra and Jan) to Harlem, New York City. The cousin who lived there paid for the fare. She arrived in the New York area in 1942. Eventually Mrs. James moved to Bedford-Stuyvesant Brooklyn because this is where she found a job working in a laundry. At this time Bedford Stuyvesant, had become a transition neigh-

borhood. African American professionals had already made inroads into that region of Brooklyn and they were followed by the working poor of that group. Her two younger daughters went to school. In 1945, with three children, Barbara and James Allen arrived in Brooklyn, and stayed with Mrs. Bell Sanders.

> I couldn't do anything in the South. I worked long days, and didn't have enough money to cloth my children right. I couldn't stay there any longer. My husband had went north to find work but he could not save any money, so he did not send me any. I told him to come home. Together we saved enough money to get on the train going North.
>
> Money was important, but I guess the real reason I moved North was to be with my family. I was so lonesome in the South without my mother and my sisters. I could handle the long hours and little pay, but the loneliness was driving me crazy. (Barbara Sanders)

The importance in family connectedness is essential in understanding the basic order utilized by the Sanders Family in dealing with their new environment. It seems essential that the entire family would be together regardless of the situation, and they would pull each other through difficult times. They had created their own safety net that no one could easily destroy. They would pool their resources so that they would all prosper. Though three family-units would be formed, they would still function as one family unit with the oldest set of cousins being more like the older brothers and sisters for the 'Sanders Clan'. It seems that the husbands married into this big family-unit. It is reminiscent of the West African matrilocal family grouping (Andrew Billingsley

42). This is a healthy approach to family life and appropriate for this particular family because this generation of men seem to be too weak to direct a family. If we look at the father of this family, for example, James Allen, here is a person who has difficulty being responsible. His lack of responsibility seems to point to the situation that I call Incorporated Racism. James is defeated before he gets started. Barbara Sanders Allen says some key things about the character of her husband.

> "I am in love with my husband, but I can't allow him to be in charge. Remember, I sent him to New York City to make a home for me and my children. But he couldn't save money for us to join him. I had to tell him to come home and then we could save the money together to move north."

The couple at this writing are in the seventies, and have celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary, yet the story seems to be the same.

> "My husband is now up stairs, he has been on his "tea" again, after he gives me the money I expect from him he gets drunk, and is always falling and hurting himself. Just recently one of my grandkids came running to me yelling:'Grandma! Grandpa is dead, he fell down the basement stairs'. Luckily, he was just knocked out. James keeps going off and on the 'tea'. Someday it will kill him. My children are used to his behavior, it is just the way things are with our family. Only one of my children favored him, his namesake, James, Jr. He is one of the two children that I buried (the other was Peter who died of a heart attack when he was in his thirties after becoming a Methodist Minister. James, Jr. seems to have died from a heart attack due to his alcoholism)."

This example of matrilocal family-structure seems to have been necessary for the Sanders Family. Even with its examples of dysfunctions, it is still a functional family that has seen all of the grandchildren, who have stayed connected to the clan, become successful. This is, with the appearance of the social problems that appear in other African Americans, instead of these occurrences destroying the family and the person involved (one of the daughters of Albert Sanders Allen had a child out of wedlock, and this daughter 14 years old, continued her education and has already received her B. A. degree. This was accomplished at the usual age of 22 years.) The family usually pulled together under the matriarch to plan a course of action. Though the children of Barbara and James were reared in Brooklyn, some of the next generations have migrated to the suburbs of New York City. This union provided the social structure necessary for the next generation to adapt to their environment. It also provided a network of support that the provided for the individual when they would experience some crisis. For example, when Peter died suddenly, he was raising his children without he help of his wife. His parents and the unmarried women who lived in the family-house in Brooklyn took over the rearing of the children.

The migration of the James family reveals that a strong family structure can keep a family intact through the migration and resettlement in a new region. The following account of the Gibes migration shows how they dealt with the pressures

of migration.

The Gibes Family Migration

The Gibes Family came from the family-home in the rural area near Newport, Virginia. Blanche left her home to join her mother who had been living in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, New York. She arrived in New York in 1949. In New York she met her husband, Alexander Wenger (a World War Two veteran who received a purple heart due to a war injury that required a metal plate being placed in his head), and they settled in a "cold-water" flat in Bedford-Stuyvesant and began their family. This new life began for her in 1950.

> I left Virginia because I was tired of the life there. It was the same old thing day after day. There wasn't anyone I wanted to marry there. The men who stayed seemed to have no ambition. And I wouldn't raise a family there anyway. When I was sixteen I told Daddy (her grandfather) that it was time to go live with my mother. My mother sent me money for the train fare to New York City and there I went. (Blanche Gibes,1990)

The situation of Brooklyn, New York had gone through many changes during the period between the two World Wars. This was especially the case for the neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant. There are many reasons for this change. In the beginning of 1930's there were only about 69,000 African Americans living in Brooklyn. There was a lack of unity in the population, and as a force to promote social change their presence did not seem to matter. However, by the beginning of the 1960's there were nearly 380,000 African Americans living in the Central Brooklyn area, with the greater part living in

the neighborhood called Bedford-Stuyvesant. (Connolly, 145)

The growth of the African American population in the Central Brooklyn area can be traced to the migration that occurred in the period of the Second World War and the period immediately after it. There was a resurgence in the economy that followed the Great Depression that encouraged the phenomena of the internal migration to fill the production needs of the war.

The Importance of the "A" Train. Another factor was the advent of the Independent Train Line, the so-called "A Train" which when finished, and opened April 8, 1936, connected Central Brooklyn with the Mother of African American neighborhoods in New York City- Harlem(Connelly 1972).

> When I arrived in Harlem, I was excited by the sights. I have never seen so many Negroes living so well. There was so much to do all of the time and the living conditions were alot better than those in Greenville. The problem though was I couldn't stay on 125th Street with my cousin forever. My family had a bedroom, and that would be enough in the South. But up here the style of living meant having many rooms. There was lots of people in Harlem, and I couldn't find an apartment there so when I got a job in Brooklyn, I found a nice apartment on Macon Street. That's in Bedford-Stuyvesant. It was easy to go to 125th Street yet you can have a nice neighborhood with alot of space for you and your kids. (Bell James, 1990)

The key decade was the 1940's for the African American in Central Brooklyn. The population more than doubled from the number at the beginning of the 1930, it totalled almost 209,000. (Connolly, 148) This upward climb continued into the 1950's, but at a slower rate. This was the time of the

creation of the Brooklyn's "Great African American Ghetto". "Thirty-eight percent of all the borough's blacks lived in overwhelmingly segregated (80%) area. Only 13% lived in tracts less than one-fifth black. During the fifties, the pattern of residential segregation remained unchanged." (Connolly, 154)

The Migration Builds on Earlier Settlements. This phenomenal ghetto has at its roots a core population that settled there in the 1920's. This group of pioneers met with great difficulty by the white population that viewed their presence with alarm. The opposition to the migration of the African American to the Central Brooklyn area was at times violent. It was obvious to African Americans like Mrs. Allen that they were not wanted.

> When I joined my mother in Bedford-Stuyvesant, it was not long before I found my own place only a few short blocks from my Mother. I still had mostly white neighbors and they were usually friendly. My landlady had just bought the house, she was from the West Indies. My boss at the cleaners put me on the night shift. I liked the idea, so I could see more of my children. Well, one night I had just got off the A Train at Utica Station and I was expecting to see my husband. He usually picked me up at the train station. And there was this car, with this white man looking right at me. He started toward me in his car, he was trying to run me over. I ran, and ran from the car, eventually I ran up a stoop and started to knock on the door of the house. The car went away. It was almost a week before I went back to work. And I didn't do the night shift anymore. (Barbara Sanders)

The Racial Clash. The struggle between the white and the African American community reached a climax in the pivotal decade of 1940's. In 1943 a Grand Jury was formed to investi-

gate the social (that is, crime and the causes of crime) situation of Central Brooklyn. This Grand Jury wrote in its findings that the Central Brooklyn area was a black, crime-ridden area. This created an impression of this section of Brooklyn that would do damage to the community, and set it up as a ghetto. The investigation created a "self-fulfilling prophecy" of what the neighborhood would become. It also gave legitimacy to the continuance of white flight to the other parts of the City and to the suburbs.

The investigation was desired by some to be used to improve the situation of the Central Brooklyn Area. It was hoped that its findings would show that something had to be done about this situation. Proposals were made to eliminate the cause of the down-fall of the Central Brooklyn region. One such proposal was presented by a community leader, Mr. Sirtl.

> Sirtl urged that relief recipients, many of whom were Negroes, be returned to their original townships. He later joined with local realtors in advocating the establishment of an "ideal community for the colored people" on land owned by the City near Jamaica Bay, removed from extensive direct contact with whites. (Connolly, 158)

Another leader in the Anti-African American movement in the Central Brooklyn area was Msgr. John Belford. This priest presented the idea of colonizing the African American in an agricultural area of New York State. He argued that this

would help the African American learn how to live and act like other people.

None of the proposals to relocate the African American worked. Another technique was to restructure the living conditions of the Bedford-Stuyvesant area so that the African American would be discouraged from remaining in the area or from migrating to the area. The technique involved renovating buildings in the region. This renovation entailed making multi-unit apartments out of large two family homes.

> Much of the renovation focused upon converting one and two family brownstones into multi-family dwellings. One such structure was located at 27 Halsey St. in Central Brooklyn. This typical building contained eight large rooms on four floors. The monthly rent of $25 did not cover taxes, interest on the mortgage, insurance, water charges or upkeep. After modernization, rearrangement and reconstruction, the building contained six apartments ranging in size from two to four rooms. Modern plumbing, heating, and kitchen facilities were installed. Such improvements increased rental income a potential twofold. This was billed as an exemplary `solution of the housing problem in Brooklyn', a means of stemming the migration of `desirable population' to the suburbs. Attractive renovation increased property values and permitted the owner to charge higher rents. This would effectively discourage (African Americans) from purchasing or renting homes in Bedford-Stuyvesant. (Connolly, 163)

This technique could easily be called the "squeeze-out/ price-out technique". The renovations took place. However, they did not have the desired effect. There are a host of reasons for this situation. First, what would have encouraged more working class people to move to the area would be the finishing of the Fulton Avenue Subway Line. Because it was

not ready when the renovation was beginning, and the Central Brooklyn area had poor public transportation to Manhattan, it discouraged people from seeking homes in the region. Second, the "El" Train was eliminated to be replaced by the Subway. However, the demolition of the "El" took too long and made the Central Brooklyn Area unattractive.

The effect of the "A" train

Third, the Subway line when it was completed connected the Central Brooklyn area with a Manhattan that was different than when the scheme was conceived. By the 1940's Harlem was overcrowded with working-class African Americans. The availability of the Central Brooklyn area with an already established African American population (see Grand Jury findings on the situation of Central Brooklyn) and rents that they could afford and the fact that whites did not find the area very attractive (also see Grand Jury findings on the crime in the region) made it an area of choice for the African American(Connolly 1977).

> The Sanders family moves from Harlem.
> Mrs. James, why did your family select Bedford Stuyvesant to move to After your moved from your cousin's apartment in Harlem? "As I told you before, we had to move, it was too crowded in the apartment in Harlem. Bedford-Stuyvesant was the place to go. I could get there quickly from work. Traveling on the 'A' train was great. There was people from Greenville, South Carolina in the area and the apartments were new and clean.

Four, the reconstruction of one and two-family homes into multiple dwellings caused overcrowding of the area, and

overuse of the resources of the area. The City of New York was not ready for this internal migration movement. The overcrowding made an already difficult situation worse. In essence, the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' was being fulfilled.

Community leaders like Msgr. Belford urged that a get tough approach by the police officers on the beat would improve the situation of Central Brooklyn. He stated that it would be appropriate for the law officers to use their nightsticks because 'only...language these local hoodlums understand'. (Connolly, 166)

However, another Catholic priest, Rev. Raymond J. Champion, the pastor of St. Peter Claver Church, the Catholic Church for African Americans spoke for reason in this debate on the situation in Central Brooklyn. He emphasized the fact that poor and overcrowded housing facilities, lack of recreational opportunities, and economic injustice and unfairness was at the root of what the African American were experiencing. He argued that this had to be dealt with to improve the situation of Central Brooklyn. (Connolly,1977, 111)

The Brooklyn Ghetto

> The ghetto then is not simply an expression of unequal urban development or black social disorganization; it is an expression of the racial legacy of slavery, an urban adaptation of a historically racist society. (Orleans, 1971, 276)

After the end of the slave plantation-as a total society the creation of the ghetto as a total society occurred for the African American. (Orleans 1971) This total society has different effects on the families that are part of it. The two families in this study had different experiences and different results from these experiences in their ability to climb academically and economically.

Housing in the Ghetto: Private vs Public Housing

The ghetto that started to become a reality in the 1920's in central Brooklyn had an effect on the population of the African American in Brooklyn. There seems to be more of a negative than positive effect on the population. The ghetto had an effect on the families of Gibes-Wenger and Sanders-James. Both of the families in this study moved into the Central Brooklyn Area. Both of these families were still very young when they established homes in Brooklyn.

The first housing situation for Barbara and James Allen was in the neighborhood of Brownsville, Brooklyn. It was a cold-water flat. There was sufficient space by southern standards for the growing family. Mrs. Allen had the rest of her twelve children while she lived in this residence. She would have remained in this tenement but it was condemned as part of an urban renewal project that involved the block where the tenement was located. Mrs. Allen describes her experience in this first residence on her own.

> When I moved to Brownsville I was happy with the neighborhood. The building was large and

contained five families. At this time I was having my babies. The rest of my childen were born while I lived at this address. It was hard to find another home like this one. Because of the size of my family I did not have many other choices. The babies started to come almost every year. Twice I gave birth to twins.

Do you know what a cold-water flat is? We had no hot water in the building. I had to boil water on the stove to wash my children, clean clothing, and clean the house. I think I was always boiling water. It took a lot of work. This was not always easy, one day I had to be rushed to the hospital because one the big kettles that I boiled water in fell off the stove burned me pretty bad. I had to be in the hospital for a few days. But my mother came over and took care of my family when I was mending. I quess this was the beginning of my mother moving in with me. She continued to work and added income to the house. We made part of the living- room her bedroom. My house chores would take up most of my time. When my oldest daughter got older she was also a great help in keeping the home in good shape.

You know that me and my sisters were very close. I never felt that I was alone with no one to turn to, because they were always there for me.

My husband could not be a good father to my children because of his drinking. But their uncles were wonderful. It was nice to have them come over and take the kids to the park are take them some-place. It gave me time to breath. It was important for the kids to get out in the air. This was the big difference from the South, the children could not be by themselves in the Street because they were too dangerous. Children could not just go out and play.

With all the hard work I had to do every day, I still loved my home. But one day I was told that I had to move. The building I was in was falling apart and that was the same with most of the houses in the neighborhood. The City was going to tear down the house. I was lucky. I found an apartment for rent in Bedford-stuy that had more room than I had in Brownsville, and the house was a brownstone. I had hot water. I was in heaven. My mother had her own room and I became the caretaker for the house, so my rent was not much hirer than the house in Brownsville. I even had a back yard. The owners were a nice white family that I think were moving to Long Island. It was a much better neigh-borhood to raise my family.

The Wenger Family had a different experience. After the marriage of Blanche and Alexander Wenger, the couple settled into a Federally funded low income housing project called the Marcy Houses. This housing development is in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area in Brooklyn where Bedford-Stuyvesant and the Williamsburg Brooklyn meet. The apartment was a two bedroom apartment. By the time that the fourth child was born to the couple, and the couple was planning to continue having children, it was necessary to look for more room to raise the children. Since they were in the public housing system they wanted to continue in that system, therefore they had to wait on that system to provide them with a larger apartment. They requested to move into a housing project that was close to the one they were living in. The question was put to Mrs. Blanche Wenger why she continued to live in this type of housing. Her response was very interesting.

> My being accepted for the projects made me very happy. Marcy projects gave me an apartment that had nice size rooms, a nice bathroom, a nice size kitchen, light, heat, gas for cooking, and repairs all included in the rent. It had everything that I needed in an apartment. Also there was security from losing the apartment. I could get a larger apartment when I ask for one and stay in the projects. It just took time, and the increase of rent wasn't much more than I was paying for the smaller apartment.
>
> When I got married me and my husband moved into the apartment of my mother in Crown Heights. She lived in the apartment that was provided by the family she was cleaning for. This could only be a temporary thing because my mother's boss did not like the crowded situation. But I also knew that my mother was planning to go home to Virginia. I applied to the Housing office of New York City and

was given an apartment in Bedford-Stuyvesant. When I saw the apartment I fell in love with it. I already had my first two kids and the third was on the way. I took the apartment and everything was wonderful. The neighborhood was full of people of all different nationalities, and we all got along. They just built a public school (elementary school with grades k through 6) just a block from the projects. I did not have any worries.

Well, I did have one thing that bothered me, and that was my husband. Alexander was a veteran of the Korean War, where he received a purple heart. He was a "high yellow" man (very light in complexion), so he had no problem finding a job. His problem was keeping the job. My husband liked to drink. He said that it took away from the pain he had in his head. The head is where he had the war injury. This forced my family on relief (the receiving of public assistance). Relief made sure that my rent would be paid, that was good because I could not depend on my husband. His drinking made him more than undependable for income, he was also rough at home. Sometimes he would disappear for days, and that would give me peace because when he was home I did not know what to expect. He could get violent with me and the kids.

I was telling you about my moving into the Sumner projects. Let me explain. My son Eddie was on the way, and I needed more room. I had my two girls and my two boys in the same room and they were getting older. I knew that the projects had larger apartments so I asked for one. They had just finished the Sumner Projects and that where they sent me. That was great because I was just two blocks away. I still was close to my old friends, so I had people I could talk to. I was never able to talk to my husband. Everything in the new apartment was new and wonderful. But the most important thing was that I had four bedrooms. Now I could have a room for the girls and the boys.

Mrs. Wenger lived in a housing-project ghetto. It seems from the conversation that I had with her that she entered an integrated neighborhood. In the latter part of the 1950s this section of Bedford-Stuyvesant still had the tenements. This was a community of blue-collar workers, and they worked for the most part in the factories and warehouses that were in

walking distance from the tenements. Names like Pfiser Pharmaceuticals, and Cascade Laundry employed many of the residents that lived in this community that Bedford-Stuyvesant met Bushwick and Williamsburg sections of Brooklyn. Most of these jobs were held by the European immigrants who lived in the community. Gradually these immigrants from Italy and from Eastern Europe started to improve economically and moved out of this area. On one level this was good for Mrs. Allen because this gave her access to good housing in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Remember, the owner of the house rented the house in order to move to a better area. But the end result of this social movement was the creation of the ghetto.

In the case of Mrs. Wenger the housing project she lived in started as an integrated housing complex, replacing the tenements that were built in this section of Brooklyn to house the workers in the factories. But gradually that too became a ghetto where African Americans and Puerto Ricans remained and took the units that the European Americans left on their search for housing more appropriate for their economic situation. This had an impact on all aspects of the people who remained in the area. Once a neighborhood becomes a low-income ghetto all present have greater difficulties.

> Two examples:
> (on mortgages) Thus, redlining need not be a result of banker's racism. In many cases (perhaps in almost all) it occurs not because bankers are unwilling to make home loans to inner-city blacks but because the inner city is not perceived as a profitable market at the state-imposed interest ceiling. (Williams 30)

> (on purchasing) Prices were indeed higher in ghetto areas, and several studies showed that retail food chains followed different pricing policies in ghetto and non-ghetto areas. (Williams 31)

Dr. Walter Williams' analysis of this situation does not emphasize the possibility of the racial prejudice as a factor for these difficulties for those who live in the ghettos. However, the fact that one lives in the ghetto, one experiences hardships that make living more difficult, and limits advancing in these areas. They are forced to move out to improve themselves. The Sanders-James-Allen family had to move out of Bedford-Stuy in order to get the mortgage that they needed to purchase their own home. The matriarch of the family and her unmarried children moved to the Flatbush section of Brooklyn.

The Education Situation

The Wenger, and the Sanders-Allen Family lived only twenty blocks apart in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. However, there were differences. One key distinction was the kind of dwellings they lived in and the impact that they had on the social services of the communities. In the area of educational services, the needs were different. Barbara Sanders' community was less congested because, for the most part, there were two and three family homes. Even with the migration out by the European Americans and the migration in by the African Americans from the South, the schools in the area could accommodate the shift.

Whereas, in the case of Blanche Wenger, there was not only a change of ethnic make-up of the area, but also the change in population size of the community. In the ten block area where the Wenger Family lived there were built four major Federally funded low income housing projects (Marcy, Tompkins, Sumner, and Bushwick). This required the building of new schools to accommodate the children in these housing developments. These schools had to deal with overcrowding of classes, recently arrived population, new teachers, and new administrators/supervisors. At least from the interviews there seems to be a difference of educational services provided in these two communities. Mrs. Sanders was pleased with the schools in her area.

> When I sent my children to the local public school I had no fear. It was only two blocks from my home and I could walk them or one of my older children could walk them. The teachers were good. I can't remember a time that I had a bad experience with a teacher. Sure there were times that I or one of my older children had to go to the school to meet with a teacher because of a behavioral problem. But all of my children went through the local schools, and then went to one of the high schools in Brooklyn. All graduated from high school and some of my children went on to receive college degrees. I think the schools were much better in the north.

Mrs. Wenger's story is quite different, as her situation is different from Mrs. Allen's. There are many reasons for this difference, but part of the problem was schools that were not ready to deal with the needs of the children of the new migrants.

> My experience with the neighborhood schools was terrible. Most of the teachers were friendly, but my children were having problems learning their studies in the schools. Each of my children had some problem learning in the schools and the schools didn't do much about it. I think that the schools in Virginia were better because the kids were taught. The teachers knew what they were teaching in Virginia, when children came home from school they understood what the teacher taught. This was not the case with my children's schools, there were so many problems with these schools.

Mrs. Wenger's experience with the New York City Public Schools did not meet her expectations. Her children did not do well in these schools. The job situation also caused her family difficulty in adapting to the North.

The Job Situation

When the African American moved into the Central Brooklyn area, the area that both families in this study lived in, the movement of the European American from the area was well on the way. But these individuals still dominated the local job market in the area. Acquiring steady work was not easy for the new migrants because the low skill jobs were already taken by the people that had arrived before the African American in the area. Moving from the area did not mean that they were going to leave these jobs. These jobs provided for their social mobility.

Another issue for the new migrants was that many of these factories were not expanding, or had started the process of

automation. Those who were members of the unions in these factories were protected, however, those who were recently hired, like the African American, did not have job security.

> The International Association of Machinists, which until a decade ago had an all-white clause in its constitutions, has also cautiously begun to curb discrimination within its ranks. In too many trades and crafts, however, union power today remains a major obstacle to securing equal employment opportunities for the Negro.
>
> Negro workers have placed so many of their hopes in the courts, and in state and local fair employment practices commissions, because organized labor seems incapable of overcoming its habitual discriminatory practices. (Herbert Hill 482)

> Another example is found in Williams' analysis of the taxi-industry monopoly: A free market in the taxicab industry will not produce a panacea for the disadvantaged. However, it is one small way to upward mobility for some, which has been cut off by the government. As such, it demonstrates again one of the key differences between disadvantaged blacks and disadvantaged ethnic groups of the past. A poor illiterate Italian, for example, arriving in our cities in 1925 or 1930 could, if he had ambition and industry, go out and buy a car and write Taxi on it. Thus he could provide upward mobility for his family. Today a poor person of any race would find that industry and ambition are not enough, if he sought the same path to upward mobility. He would find the path barricaded by a license costing $20, $30, or $60 thousand--a considerable barrier. (87)

There was a situation with both families in the study that the fathers of the families had a difficult time keeping jobs. Of course part of the problem was caused by the problem of alcoholism that they had, but lack of availability of work made a difficult situation worse. The mothers of these families had to become the providers for these families and the fathers played a secondary role in these homes. Both

families had to use public assistance to make ends meet. However, there was a difference in the use of these financial assistance programs. The end result, nevertheless, was the continuation of the matriarchal family structures.

In the case of the Allen Family James' skills were limited, and the type of work that he did was not well-paying. He was a meat cutter at a meat market. He also was a handy man. Whereas, his wife found work first in a laundry, and then went back to school to be a nurse's aide. She receives a pension from this job as a nurse's aide. Although she is on a fixed income, along with her Social Security Check and her savings she does very well for herself. She pays her mortgage payments without the help of her children. She used her children's income only to get the mortgage. This type of work, that is dominated by women, and is well-paying as compared with the salaries for "male" type work placed women at an advantage. At least it was so in the generation of Barbara Sanders Allen.

In the case of Alexander Wenger, his work skills were also limited. He worked as a laborer before he went to war, and after the war, with his injury, he could only do work that did not require heavy lifting. His usual place of employment was one of the local stores. His wife, towards the end of his life, started to work as nurses aide.

The availability of employment helped the families resettle in the North. Another key factor was their connection to the Church.

Religion in Family Life

Religion and religious practices play major roles in these two families. For the African American migrants religion was central in their lives. It was where most of the socialization between families took place. It was the locus of social events for these families and it provided a support system for the members of the congregations.

Mrs. Barbara Sanders was a member of a Baptist congregation in Bedford-Stuyvesant. She would bring all of her children to this church and had them participate in the choirs and in bible study programs. What she says about her experience is helpful in understanding the role of religion in her life.

> We were always church people. I was a member of the missionary board of the church, which meant that I had to be there in the church several times a week. And my children were there with me. There were several programs for the children, and the church was our church. The church was like a family. It was a great support to me.

Mrs. Wenger was also a religious woman. But her experience was different. She belonged to a store-front Pentecostal Church which was a block from her apartment in the Sumner Housing Project. For some reason she did not raise all of her

children formally in this church. The younger children were not baptized in this tradition of Christianity and did not go to church regularly there. However, she did attend services and was known as a member of the church.

In comparing the two families, it is important to note that the Baptist Church seems to be more upwardly mobile. Education is promoted by the clergy and the laity of this tradition. The ministers are required to have college degrees from accredited schools. Whereas, the Pentecostal Church tends to use fundamental interpretation of Scriptural texts. They may not encourage educational advances because the leadership does not necessarily have even a high school diploma.

Housing Project vs Private House

Mrs. Barbara Sanders moved into a private apartment house after she moved from the apartment that her mother, Mrs. Bell James, lived in. Her first apartment was in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. This was a "cold water" tenement on Bristol Street. It was here that she completed the childbearing part of her life. She comments on her years there.

> The years that I lived on Bristol were good years. They were difficult years because the children were coming very quickly but we were family and we worked together. A lot of the responsibility was on me to run the house, but it was my joy to do this because my family is my life. We did not have much. But we had enough.
>
> The streets around my apartment were not safe all the time. But there were enough people around to watch my children and keep them out of trouble. My sisters and my mother made living on Bristol possible for me. I was never alone, they would be there for me.
>
> The building was not kept up. The landlord was only around when it came time to pay the rent. In the winter it was never warm enough in the house, and so my children did catch colds. My son Robert suffered with pneumonia and I had to put his bed right in front of the stove. This was a very hard time for my family, but we got through it and Robert got well, thanks be to God!
>
> The building we lived in was not kept clean, it was not in good condition, and most of the work on my apartment was done by us. Thank God that my husband and the husbands of my sisters were handy with fixing things in the house. It was not the best apartment, but it was home and these were good years.

Mrs. Sanders lived on Bristol until the house was condemned in an urban renewal action by New York City. The building along with most of the "cold water flats" in the area was not safe or healthy for anyone. But these were the homes that were available for the African American migrant in New York. When these homes were razed the displaced families were placed in housing projects. These buildings were built using Federal Government funds to help ameliorate the problem of substandard housing that was available in central cities. It would have seen logical for Mrs. Sanders to move her family into one of these housing projects. But the difficulty was

that there was not an available apartment large enough for her family (Two parents, 12 children [six males and six females], and one grandparent). The Bristol building was being emptied out and Mrs. Sanders had to find an apartment immediately. The owners of a brownstone on Monroe Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant were moving to a recently purchased home in Nassau County, New York, but they could not find a buyer for their well-kept home. So they were looking for a family to rent it. Because of this situation Mrs. Sanders was able to find a home large enough for her family without buying the home.

> It was wonderful to be living in my home on Monroe Street. It truly was a home with all the great advantages of having control of where you were living. The whole house was under my control, and the tenants above me respected that. When these tenants moved out I just expanded into that apartment with my son Peter and his family. I felt secure raising my family here and my children felt secure, too.
>
> Much went on in my life during this time. My youngest child, Barny was getting older and my older children were getting ready to make their own lives. Gradually the ones who got married like Albert and Peter went on their own with their wives. My daughter Betty was like a second mother for my younger children. She went to college to be a nurse and when she graduated she became a help to our family. I was ready to get back on my feet. During this period in my life I went back to work and became a nurse's aide. Welfare was helpful when I needed it, but it felt good to be off of it. I worked nights so I was able to be with my children during the day. My children were taking care of each other and their father when I was at work at night. This home was a God-sent for me and my family.
>
> We lived here until 1975. Me and my children bought a house in Flatbush. (Mrs. Barbara Sanders)

The Wenger housing situation was much different. They too had a very large family. But they were fortunate to be able to get a large enough apartment in the Sumner Housing Project. The Sumner Housing Project is a New York City Government supervised Federal Housing Project for low-income residents. Previous to moving into the Sumner Houses, she lived in the Marcy Houses. The Marcy Houses is another Federal housing development that is two city-blocks from the housing development of the Sumner Housing development. In this particular area there are four major housing developments (Marcy, Tompkins, Bushwick, and Sumner). These housing developments replaced the tenement housing that was built to house the working poor, especially the workers who worked in the factories in the same area. Two of the key businesses of the area are the Pfiser Pharmaceutical Company and the Cascade Laundry Service. It is businesses like these that could have provided the necessary employment opportunities for the new residents in the area.

Mrs. Wenger moved into the Sumner Houses with her husband and her family continued to grow. Her comment about the living conditions of this complex are interesting.

> When I first moved into the Sumners everything was brand new and it was exciting. My baby was Eddie, and I was pregnant with Kenneth. My oldest child was doing very well in school, and she was a joy to have in my home. She was a great help. She also went to church on Sunday, but the two next to her in age did not want to go. During this time I could not go to church too often because I had the babies to take care of.

> I was able to keep my apartment neat and clean. But when the type of people in Sumner changed. I mean, there were fewer people who worked, things got different. For example, the stairwells and elevator smelled like urine. Also, kids would run through the halls. On check days (when Social Security and Public Assistance payments were received) there was always the problem kids trying to take your bag. My building got very rough. Luckily I had a husband and a older son who protected me.

Life was difficult being poor, and living with a husband who was abusive. What made a terrible situation worse was the fact that the environment was also dysfunctional. Some sort of intervention was needed in the impossible situation. The intervention was not done and the family suffered through years of abuse that was the result of internal difficulties (abuse by family members) and external (the living conditions in the housing complex). The life stories of Eddie and Albert give testimony to this reality.

Chapter 4

The Case Studies of the First Generation in the North

In this chapter there are two individuals studied. There are two from the Wenger Family, who are Eddie and Albert. These individuals have information to impart about the events in their lives that have shaped their lives. This information also can assist the researcher in understanding how the environment in which they lived was perceived by them. Each person will be dealt with separately and allowed to speak about his experience and to evaluate those experiences. These two were selected because they were interested in this project, hence they cooperated in being interviewed.

Eddie Wenger

Eddie Wenger was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1955. He does not know much about his southern family history because it was rarely a topic of discussion. He is also not very interested in it. Eddie's connection with things of the South is first his older sister Elizabeth who has relocated to North Carolina where she lives with her husband who is a minister, and with his own living in Virginia for a period of time.

Eddie spent some time in the State of Virginia where he was a patient in a drug rehabilitation hospital. On his free days he would travel around the section of Virginia where the hospital is located. However, he did not visit his relatives in Virginia. He does not feel a connection with them.

Eddie's experience in living briefly in Virginia and

visiting his sister in North Carolina has changed his view of the South. Previous to these visitations his thoughts on the South were negative. Eddie thought that race was a major issue in human relations in the South.

Growing up in Brooklyn. Eddie was raised in the Bed-Stuy section of Brooklyn. He was raised by both his mother and father. His father was an alcoholic and was abusive to all of the members of the household. He was especially abusive when he was drunk. Eddie speaks about his father:

> My father was an alcoholic, and when he was drunk he had to find someone to pick on. Usually it was my mother. When I got a little older I would fight with my father to leave my mother alone. This also made me a target for the abuse of my father. I spent 20 years living with the man and there were very few days that I can say were good. I did not like staying home because of him and the way he treated my mother.

Situation at home

At this point in the story of Mr. Wenger it is important to deal with the situation of abuse that has marked him for life. The research about the situation of families in the housing projects, especially the Rainwater work points to a common situation experienced by the families that he studied. Eddie's family experienced the abuse by their father, and he was a person with certain health issues that affected the way he dealt with himself and with people around him, especially with those very close to him. Yet taking this for granted there are certain similarities that show a relationship between Eddie's father and other men who have been studied in

the African American public housing ghettos.

> Highly segregated conjugal role relationships receive strong support from others in the social network of a husband and wife. In the lower class, men know they must begin to settle down when they get married, but one of the marks of masculinity is not to become too quickly and too thoroughly domesticated. The young husband, Negro or white, expect to continue to enjoy some of the pleasures of his peer group, and his attachment to that group is often a source of tension during the early period of lower-class marriages. In the lower-class Negro ghetto these tendencies are stronger because of the elaborately developed street culture; a young man often finds it easier to achieve self-respect from the response of his peers in the street than playing the role of the good provider to his family. In the streets no one is greatly concerned about whether the players are married or single, and in fact, part of the game can be to cause husbands to be disloyal to their spouses. (Rainwater 161-162)

(The following is in response of the husband dealing with the pressure of not being able to provide for his family.)

> A husband responds to those pressures with prickly self-defensiveness. He is inclined to counter-attack, perhaps most strongly when he is most aware of his role failures--when he is unemployed or deeply involved in outside relationships. Then he seeks to enforce respect by beating up the wife and the children, or by aggressive outbursts that stop short of physical attack... (Rainwater, 1970, 163)

What is key in the presentation of Rainwater, and salient for the discussion here, is the fact that the African American man, and for that matter all individuals have a need for self-worth. They can acquire that worth in positive, socially acceptable ways, or they can achieve it in other ways. Alexander, Sr. needed to have a sense of self-worth, he acquired this at home in ways that destroyed the lives of

those that he loved. His basic needs were not met, and there seems to be no evidence of intervention to correct this problem that his family was experiencing. It is important to note here that he was a veteran who periodically received medical and psychological treatment from the Veteran's Hospital system. No one seemed to care about what he was doing to his family.

Eddie and his siblings:

The Wenger children had to find ways of dealing with the abusive home situation. The most successful of Eddie's siblings, at least according to Eddie is his sister Elizabeth. She was able to break the cycle of abuse that she experienced in her family. She did this by being able to distance herself from the family unit. She went to school during the day, in the evenings Elizabeth worked for a private telephone message company and on weekends she stayed busy working in her church. Home was a place to sleep and she did not get involved with the chaotic situation that existed. Through her church activities, Elizabeth met a young man interested in becoming an ordained minister and she married him. Eventually they relocated to North Carolina where he is an assistant minister and she runs a pre-school out of their home.

Eddie speaks about the role that Elizabeth plays in his family:

"Elizabeth had the most stable life in our family and we could always look to her to provide a model of what life could

be."

Eddie's oldest brother Alex, Jr. had the potential to do well. He was able to leave home at an early age. He did not finish high school in the New York Public Schools, rather, upon enlisting in the Army he completed high school. Alex, Jr. did well in the Army and fought in the Vietnam War. However, the Army experience left behaviors that would eventually lead to his self-destruction.

Eddie talks about Alex, Jr.:

> My brother Alex, Jr. had the potential to be successful. He received his high school diploma in the Army, he went into Army during the Vietnam War. When the war was over he had a wonderful future ahead of himself. But he brought a problem home with him and that was "a monkey on his back". I did not think he had a drinking problem or a drug problem before he entered the military, but he sure had one after he left the Armed Forces. However, he was able to get married, have three children from to that union, watch his wife die of breast cancer and raise his children by himself until the last years of his life. When Alex, Jr. was ill in the hospital, this was the first time that I knew anyone who was suffering with AIDS. He was in and out of the Veterans Hospital for a year and with great suffering he died and left his children without parents.

Another elder sibling, Minnie, stayed at home until she could get her own apartment in the New York City public housing system. Her avenue to independence from her abusive home life was to start her own family. She started her own family at the age of fifteen and was unwed.

Eddie speaks about his sister Minnie:

> The last of the three older children is Minnie. She had difficulty in school and dropped out in her tenth year of high school. She was pregnant with her oldest boy when she was sixteen. She did her best to raise him but he had many problems. This young man is finally getting his life together. Minnie finally got married when she was 35 years old and she has settled down to have a normal family life.

In the middle of this generation of the Wenger's ten children there is a group of males. They were born in the span of ten years. In this group, Eddie's brother Chris is the oldest. He stayed in school until the ninth grade of Junior High School. He was already in trouble with the law by this time in his life. This was also the period in his life that he was experimenting with drugs. Chris was able to work for a period of time as a porter for the federal government. But when his addiction to drugs reached a certain level he could no longer hold on to the job and started to receive public assistance. Chris never married. In his thirties Chris was able to stop using drugs with the help of Narcotic Anonymous, and is now employed as a drug counselor. These changes occurred in his life after the death of his father. However, Chris never mentioned any connection between this fact and the change in his life.

At this point Eddie talks about his brother Kenneth:

> Kenneth was always a nice person, he would never hurt anyone or argue with anyone. Yet, he had an alcohol problem that began when he was in his teen years. My mother tried to put him into a Catholic high school hoping that he would go to school. But the work was too difficult for him.

> Because of the difficulty of the work he would not go. He did not go to the public high school either because of the danger that was present there. He is now in his thirties and had never held down a real job all of his life. He also has been in and out of prison, but he has never been in prison long because he has never done anything very serious. Prison was the one place that he would be able to live in peace and have three meals a day. Usually Kenneth is homeless until he comes to one of his relatives to stay for awhile. But then he goes back to the street.

The last of this group of sibling boys are the twins Albert and Elbert. Eddie speaks about their lives:

> Albert and Elbert are identical twins. Albert, Elbert, and I were always close. When Albert and Elbert were in elementary school they were both good students and were the darlings of their teachers. But life changed for each of them because of the situations that they experienced. Elbert, while crossing the street was knocked down by a car. His once clear mind was never the same. He could not finish his high school studies, and the money that he received from the accident most went to the City because at that time my mother was receiving Welfare. However, for about a year he was able to hold down a job at Cascade Laundry. Albert was doing well in High School of Fashion. But then for some reason he stopped going to school. He never explained why. But with the help of our cousin he went to an alternative high school and was able to complete his high school studies. He continued on to go to college at John Jay College of CUNY where he majored in law. He took a job with the New York City Housing Authority as a manager and he had been with the City for over ten years. He had a wonderful coop apartment in Manhattan and had been recently been baptized at Albysinnia Baptist Church in Harlem. We are very proud of him.

The last two children in the Wenger Family are Marie and Rose. Marie had her first child when she was thirteen years old. Rose also had her first child as a teenager, in her case around the age of sixteen.

The Wenger family had many children born out of wedlock. Each of the girls found having children a means of dealing with their abusive home life. The only Wenger girl who did not have a child out of wedlock was the oldest. In Elizabeth's case, it was discovered after she married her husband that she could not bear a child.

The book Behind Ghetto Walls contains information that helps explain why the premarital pregnancies were dealt with as they were, that is, not dealt with at all. There is a sense of helplessness that pervades people trapped in the poverty of the housing project ghetto.

> This situation is much the same for the issue of pregnancy among female children. Our field observations suggest that although parents hope their daughters will not become pregnant before marriage and that they will neither marry or become pregnant until they finish high school; they are not very sanguine. If a girl does become pregnant, it comes as no great shock, although there is sadness because of it. (Rainwater,67)

One sibling raises child of another; Eddie speaks about the lives, and the children of his youngest two sisters:

> Luckily, my oldest sister who could not have children, wanted a child, so Fred, Jr.(the first child of Marie) went to live with Elizabeth and she raised him as her own. Since then she has had two other children from this same man. He has never married her, and they do see each other occasionally. Marie has tried to work but the raising of the children has required her to stay home. She also has to raise two of her nieces. These are the children of Rose. Rose was the baby and the favorite of our father. She was always the spoiled child who got what she wanted. She also had her first child at 16. However, she was not able to raise her own children because she could not stay still long enough. She was also dependent on crack cocaine. After her second daughter she was found

> dead in a van in Queens, New York. It seems that her heart just stopped. Marie has legal custody of the children. She is a very good mother. Neither Marie or Rose went on to high school, however, Marie has made several attempts to pass here GED.

Intervention of cousin Lee:

Intervention in the lives of people can change the life course of the person or persons involved. Eddie experienced such an intervention in his life by his cousin Lee.

> Now I will tell you about myself. Me and my cousin were very close while we were growing up. Lee (my cousin) was always the good student and seemed never to get in trouble. He was always religious. He brought me to the Catholic Church near my home and I joined the youth group there. I also made my sacraments there. From my teenage years I always had a job. With this money I would take care of my needs, get things that my mother needed and keep a bank account. I went to an integrated High School, FDR, and there I received my high school diploma. This was an accomplishment because few in my family could do that. It was not easy because I could not write well. Lee would come over and help me do my work. He could explain what the teaching could not in class. Lee went to the local Catholic high school and they always seemed to be ahead of us.

Eddie had an experience in the Summer Academy of the Model Cities anti-poverty program. This made a difference in his life and provided him with academic credits he needed to graduate from high school. This was another form of intervention that aided him in dealing with his dysfunctional home life.

> There was another help to me, and that was the Model Cities program. I was a participant in the Summer Academy. The two summers that I attended Summer Academy I went to Southampton College and Hamilton/Kirkland Colleges, both of New York State. The Model Cities Program used these campuses to provide summer school for us, residences while we

were studying away from home, and they also provided us with a stipend so that we could get the things that we needed for school in the Fall. This was my first experiences with college campus living and I was able to get away from the neighborhood for a while. Also, I was able to advance, and take courses that I needed to make up. They also had counselors that were helpful.

The Church provided Eddie with work, and in doing so, gave him the opportunity to get out of his home and into a more structured and wholesome environment. Eddie speaks about this part of his life and another job he had at the same time.

> I worked all of my years in high school. In fact I held two jobs. My primary job was the evening switchboard operator at one of the local parishes. The parish rectory had in residence members of the parish prep school faculty, the religious order's missionary band, and their seminarians. The priests were wonderful to me and the income was very helpful for me and for my family. The second job was working in an oversized woman's clothing store. Working here gave me the opportunity to provide my mother with the clothing she needed.

Eddie refers to what has caused him the most difficulty in his life--his addiction to alcohol and drugs.

> Lee and I both made the promise that we would not start drinking because of what it did to my family. This was fine until Lee went on to college. He went away to Missouri on a full scholarship, and he did this a whole year early. So I was on my own for the last of high school. I was able to get through, but I also started to experiment with alcohol. I went up state New York to go to college. There is where I started to experiment with drugs. This habit I have been fighting since I was 18. I completed two years of college and went to work. I was able to hold down a job to about two years ago, even with my drug addiction (I am now 39). With the death of my mother my world has started to crumple. That is why I am in Virginia, trying to get my life back. Too many people have died in my life. If I am not careful the same situation that killed them will kill me.

Eddie evaluates the migration of his family's migration to Brooklyn. Mrs. Wenger told Eddie while he was growing up that she came North because of the opportunities that were available here for herself and for her brother. Eddie agrees that the opportunities are great to get a good education and a good job. He stated that these were available to him yet these things were not enough to have a good life. He does not believe that being in the North or South made any difference in his life. Eddie blames his father for all the problems that his family experienced. He argues that something should have been done about this situation.

Eddie also blames his living environment for his situation. He did not only come from a dysfunctional home, he came from a dysfunctional neighborhood, and attended dysfunctional schools. He explains that getting hooked on something was very easy because the "drinking" and the "drugging" helped to take away the pain.

Eddie stated that his cousin Lee had the recipe for succeess in Brooklyn for an African American male. The key ingredient is find a positive way out of the dysfunctional situations that are present in your life. It was as if Lee knew not to get too close to anyone in the neighborhood.

In retrospect Eddie believes that it was a mistake to settle in Brooklyn, or anywhere where his extended family was not present. The answer to his oppressive situation was not the removing of racial segregation, or other forms of racial

prejudice. Rather, the answer is found in a support system that would deal with some of the internal problems that his family had. This support system was not a reality for him or most of the members of his family.

Albert Wenger

The second interview is with Albert Wenger who is located in the lower end of the middle section of Wenger children. He is one of the twins that were born in that pregnancy of Mrs. Wenger. His identical twin brother is Elbert. As of this writing the twins are thirty-three years in age. There are also great differences in economic and educational levels of these two brothers. This is the result of several factors in their lives that affected their progress. Each one has been dealt with by Albert.

> I was born in 1961 with my twin brother Elbert. My parents have been good to me. But now both are deceased so I find myself taking care of some of my brothers. I lived my early years, up to twenty-five years of age in the family apartment in the Sumner Housing Projects with my brothers and younger sisters. So in the apartment at the time of my youth there were seven children and both parents. My oldest brother and older sisters were already adults and living on their own by the time I have clear memories of family living.

Albert's relationship with his parents:

> Though I said that both of my parents were good to me, they were not good to or for each other. My mother was abused by my father. He never seemed to be happy at home and he would take it out on her. She was an attractive woman who could hardly live her life in peace. This depressing situation had an effect on the entire household. I can recall evenings of horror watching my mother being beaten by my father and there was no apparent reason that he was doing this other than his drunkenness.
>
> There were also many good times when my father took me and my twin brother out to the park or to visit his

sisters. I have many good memories of him also.

The relationship between my father and my mother improved when my father became sick. He developed epilepsy and would have frequent attacks. During this time my mother could take care of my father and he was not so abusive to my mother and he would not disappear on his binges. After a few years of being taken care of at home he had to be placed into a veterans long term medical facility. This is when my mother could come back to life again. She started to dress up again. She started to lose weight, and get training that would eventually lead to a job as a home attendant aide. My father would be allowed to come home on certain weekends. On one occasion he had an attack of epilepsy in the bathroom and he died. I remembered that day because there was such a sense of peace, this phase of my family life was over. Though much of the damage from this marriage would have seemingly permanent results on the children,and in my mother.

His impression of his childhood neighborhood:

Now the neighborhood that I was raised in did not make things any better. When I was financially able to I moved out of the neighborhood and took over my oldest brother's apartment in Manhattan. I did this after he died. But before I did this I had to live in the neighborhood that I was raised in and in the apartment that my parents had there in the Sumner Housing Project. To understand this reality means to understand a place where society has broken down. If you get caught up in this society, the society of the building that I lived in, and the society of the block that I lived on, would mean death. There is nothing alive about the people who live there. The healthiest thing to do is not to get involved with the most dysfunctional persons in this community. My own father was one of the people you had to stay away from to be emotionally healthy.

Let me give you an example of what I mean: one of my neighbors was a Pentecostal Church bishop. She was raising her grandchildren. These children were taken away from their mother, her daughter, because she was using "Crack" Cocaine and because of this situation was allowing the abuse of these children by her associates. I can remember one occasion when this woman (bishop) was having "church" in her apartment. The praise was loud and could be heard through a good part of the building. While this was going on her daughter was robbing her blind. This sort of thing happened and it started to take on the appearance of normality.

I can give you an even sadder example of how people were living. There was a women who lived in a building

that was not too far from my building. She was an alcoholic but was kind to every one she met. She would also help people who were experiencing financial difficulties by giving them food. It is normal to run low right before the "check" comes at the first of the month. It was obvious that she had a decent income that was not related to "Welfare"(grant-in-aid provided for people who have no other income). There was noise coming from her apartment, the usual type of noise, people were arguing. As always, this arguing would come to an end. Yet we discovered that the end was permanent. She was dismembered by her son who was visiting her.

I could give you many examples, but I think these two are enough to explain my argument that if you get too involved with the neighborhood it will destroy you, because sick society is normal here. To go further, what does this do to the minds of children who know the whole story, and it become part of their reality.

Albert's school experience:

The public schools in the neighborhood were good for me. It was my opportunity to get out of my apartment and have some structure in my life that made sense. I guess that this was the most important thing that the schools did for me. Some of the teachers were good, and other were not. Some of the classes we learned in and others were too unruly that little could be accomplished. I know that by the time I reached The High School of Fashion I needed remedial courses to get up to grade level. But it was an accomplishment for my family. I was one of the few of my siblings that went on to high school for any length of time.

I did not graduate from The High School of Fashion, I guess the reason was I was lost there. I did not get the attention that I needed. Luckily when it was obvious that I was getting lost the guidance counselor recommended an alternative high school setting. I went to City As School and this gave me the attention that I needed to complete high school. I know that I wanted to graduate from high school and go to college, and so I was motivated to learn, and I kept away from the neighbor as much as I could. I was a person to this faculty of this school. They took a special interest in me. They aided me in building up my self-esteem. I was able to find other ways of living in the my community. I did not have to prove that I was important by being with the "guys". I did not have to prove anything because I was accepted as I am. Before this point in my life I was drinking and using "pot" with the guys. I was putting my friends above my future. With the intervention in my life by these caring people and other caring people I decided to

be me. The young men that I was with and experimenting with are either in prison or deceased. This alternative high school gave me the opportunity that I needed and perhaps saved my life.

Mr. Wenger's situation points to a problem that many members of the lower class have in the ghetto. Lee Rainwater, the author of Behind Ghetto Walls, in which he and others studied an African American population in a housing project in St. Louis, provides information that is helpful in understanding why the parents of Albert did nothing about the trouble that began to manifest in his behavior.

> The most important effect of the interaction between the exceedingly dim views that most Puitt-Igoe parents take of children generally and their feelings of gradual loss of control over their children, is that they begin to distrust their children. They sense that the youngsters may be involved in activities they hoped would be avoided. As time goes on, the parents tend more and more to accept the idea that their children will not behave in the ways most likely to assure progress towards the good life, whether by this they mean acceptable accomplishments in school, avoiding extensive heterosexual relations, avoiding the troubles that come from stealing or aggressive "gang" behavior. Most parents hold back any firm conclusion that their children are inevitably confined to a future in the lower class ghetto, but their expectations become less optimistic than before, less than the expectations of the stable working class. (66-67)

Intervention makes a difference in Albert's life

Mr. Wenger had the good fortune that intervention in his life offered. It encouraged him to leave the streets, and to do what was necessary to get out of the unhealthy environment of the housing project where he was raised.

After completing high school I went on to John Jay

College of CUNY and majored in criminal law. I had the dream of becoming a lawyer. I also graduated from John Jay College. College was less difficult for me because I knew that I could do the work, and I knew by that point of my life that I had to disassociate myself from the most dysfunctional members of my family and put the focus on me.

There was another key factor that helped me on my way to getting out of the Sumner Projects, and that was the work opportunities that I had every summer from the New York City Youth Employment Program. When I was in high school this program provided me a job that gave me money to buy school clothes and supplies and it gave me something to do. When I graduated from high school the same program gave me a job as a Crew Chief. That is, I supervised high school student employees who were members of the Summer Youth Employee Program. This paid much more money and gave me an opportunity to practice administrating a staff. And through the years of college I was employed as a Supervisor. Here I had several Crew Chiefs working under me. The money was good, and the experience was excellent. It gave me confidence in the workplace, experience to put on my resume, and something constructive to do with my time. This program gave me options to the illegal ways of making money that was also available in the neighborhood.

This Summer Youth Employment Program also had its problems. Though I was eligible for this program, and it was not wasted on me, I know there was money wasted on unnecessary supplies and people who were not eligible were employed on all levels of the program. The local office director was employing her own children. I think that her income put her outside of the eligibility guidelines.

His present situation

Albert believes that he has a good life. However, there are some obvious things missing in that life. He does not seem to have a rewarding or permanent relationship with a woman. He has also cut himself off from much of his family. Both of his parents are deceased as well as his uncle who helped raised him. There is an aloneness that seems to be a

normal part of Albert's life.

Albert mourns the loss of his family, those deceased and those living. His mother was a unifying force. Without her presence there really is no family to speak of.

Albert is presently working on a Masters degree in history. He finds education challenging and enjoyable. Albert works in the legal office for the New York City Housing Authority. It is a secure job. He would like a change in job, but because he is in the middle of his carreer, he would rather stay where he is until he can retire. He is a very practical person.

Mr. Wenger chooses to live alone. He has had girlfriends who he has thought of marrying, but he would break-off the relationship before it would get too serious.

Religion plays a very important role in his life. While growing up he would attend a Roman Catholic Church. He found his local Catholic Church welcoming. Albert eventually chose Abyssinia Baptist Church as his home church community and was baptized there. Albert was impressed by Rev. Butts, the pastor, and he was the main reason he joined that congregation.

Albert finds his life in New York City to be rewarding and with all the problems he has seemingly overcome, he is glad to be in New York.

> As I said earlier, security is very important to me. I have never thought about moving out of the City of New York. For me it has given me many

opportunities and I feel secure here. Where could I have accomplished so much out of the reality of where I came from. I am glad that my parents came to Brooklyn. This I say selfishly, I also believe that it was a mistake for the majority of my siblings, living and dead (Albert Wenger).

Chapter 5

The Case Studies of the First Generation of the Allen Family

In this chapter there are two individuals studied. There are two from the Allen Family, who are Betty and Jean. These individuals have information to impart about the events in their lives that have shaped their lives and the lives of their family members. These two represent the Allen Family and they were selected because they fit into two very important periods of the Allen Family's development. Betty Allen represents the earliest period of the Allen family and Jean Allen represents the middle period of that family's development. They were also selected because they cooperated with the interviews. Their story speaks about the effect of the migration and resettlement in the Brooklyn, New York, in their perspective as children in the Allen Family. Their mother provided the migrants impressions on the migration and resettlement. It is interesting to note that both of the representative here from the Allen Family are female. The males of this family are also very successful, but the females tended to be more cooperative in this study.

Betty Allen

A child in migration. Betty is the second child of James and Barbara Allen. She was born in South Carolina and was about three years old when her family moved to Brooklyn. At this time the family was made up of her parents, and two sibling brothers. The first brother is Albert, who is older

than Betty and the second brother is Peter, who was about a year old at the move. Her only recollection of the move was that she remembers a great difference between her southern home and Brooklyn. She states:

"Everything seemed so dirty, and so large. There was also a lot of people that we had to deal with. I remember just being shocked by it all."

Betty's family:

The southern background of her family is interesting. Betty's father did not have much to say about things in the house, or anywhere else for that matter. He was an alcoholic, and had little control of money. Her father went North first to set up an apartment for us. But this did not work out. Mr. Allen was working but his problem kept him from saving any money. Betty remembers the story that her mother ordered her father to come back home to her in the South. She felt that her father could not be trusted on his own. This was revealed several times during their life together, and this is still the case. Barbara Allen, her mother wanted to go north because there were work opportunities that were not available in the South. Mrs. Allen seemed always to be working. She was raising other people's children, and keeping house for them. She was raising the children of white people. Her mother's mother would take care of her and her brothers until she went North. After that point relatives of her father would watch them. She remembers that we were poor. Eventually, her

mother had put together enough money with the help of her salary and that of her father; her father is a hard worker and with Mrs. Allen around the money he made would not be wasted.

Resettlement in Brooklyn When the Allen Family moved into Brooklyn they were already living in Bedford-Stuyvesant. They lived in one room that their grandmother provided for them while they got their lives together. During this time their mother took care of them during the day and she would work at nights. Their grandmother or their aunts (their mother's sisters) took care of them.

Soon the Allen Family moved to Brownville, Brooklyn. Here is where Betty became a teenager. Her brothers and sister were coming into the world at a very fast speed. And after school, since she was the oldest girl she was expected to do much of the baby-sitting. There was not much free time for her. Her brother and sisters were always in the apartment.

The role of her mother in the home Mrs. Allen was the boss in the house. She is a stern woman, but according to Betty she is also a person that seems to personify love. She put her children first. Betty states: "I love my father, but at times he was not too lovable. His drinking problem kept us from really getting close to him. But he listened to my mother. It was as if my mother had someone else to raise. If he didn't he would not be allowed to stay at home." Mr. Allen had no close relatives in Brooklyn.

Whenever there was an emergency, like the time Betty's mother was burned by the hot water pot that fell on her, her aunts would take care of their basic needs. The extended family, that was very matriarchal, provided a support system that reinforced family values.

The Allen Family, at least when we refer to the two members of that family that are studied here, provides an environment that a woman would excel in. It is a matrifocal environment, with a head of household that provides a good role model for the children.

Early years of education The Allen Family looked forward to going to school. It was always an important part of our lives. Betty's mother believed that the only way to achieve your goals in life was to get a good education. Betty, along with her siblings, attended the local public schools in Brownsville, and they also attended the public schools when moved to Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Betty states:

> There is a difference between the schools then and the schools now. Everything seemed so different. I believe that the education was better. Today I hear all sorts of horror stories about the public schools. One of my sisters sends her children to Catholic schools because she had bad experiences with the public schools in her neighborhood. But my mother did not have these problems with the schools. My family saw the schools as our way of living well and for most of my siblings this was the case.

All of Betty's brothers and sisters completed high school. This was the Allen Family goal, and their mother

expected that they would achieve this goal. However, the majority of children went on to some form of post-secondary school education. Betty received an associates degree in nursing, a bachelor's degree in nursing, and is now working on a master's degree in health maintenance.

Relationship with siblings, and the extended family There were many children in the Allen home, if it was not their sisters and brothers, it was their cousins. They were like other brothers and sisters.

Betty states:

> My extended family truly is my immediate family. We were raised as one family, and my cousins are like my brothers and sisters. There were 12 children in my nuclear family, and then my aunt that was closest to my mother in age (four years apart) had four children. The two oldest of my cousins overlap with my two youngest brothers. I see these two cousins as my younger brothers because that is how we were raised. There is another set of cousins. They are from my mother's youngest sister (she was 13 years younger than my mother). Of this aunt I have six cousins. Because of the way we have been raised we support each other's and we take pride in each other accomplishments.

The Allen Family have family reunions and invite the relatives from outside their immediate family to share in their lives. They have cousins that they have met because of these reunions. Betty states that the cousins that she have met from the South are middle class. She states that at least in her generation of southern cousins poverty is not one of their issues.

The possibility of the family corporation The Allen Family, under the leadership of Betty, who is the Family Reunion President, have thought about forming a family corporation so that they could better organize themselves and help each other to reach their potential (Betty uses the phrase "to be self-actualized"). One of the purposes of this organization would be to create a scholarship program for their relatives so that they can go to college without the burden of finding the funds for tuition. They are very much concerned about everyone in their family having a good education. The extended family celebrates each year the accomplishments of the members of the family.

There is no homelessness in the immediate family because they own several homes, and rental properties. Betty purchased a home in Washington State. She hopes to move there when she retires from her position at the hospital where she is one of the headnurses. She is also a Major with the Army.

Her evaluation of the migration At this point of Betty's life she tired of the problems that exist in living in Brooklyn. But she says that at least for her family it was a wise decision for them to migrate here. She believes that it gave them options that at the time her mother lived in the South were not available. Betty states: "We needed a chance to help ourselves, and we did, and are still working at it."

Jean Allen

The early childhood of Jean Jean was born in the sixth pregnancy of her mother, along with her twin-sister and is a native Brooklynite. From what she was told she was born when her family was still in Bedford-Stuy before they moved to Bristol Street in Brownsville. She does not remember the first time that her family lived in Bedford-Stuy, but she does remember some things about their life in Brownsville. She remembers those days to be very peaceful at home because her mother was always in control. Her father was very quiet when he was home. He did almost everything that her mother told him to do, but he continued to drink. This meant that he would have to change jobs every couple of years because of his drinking habits. There is not much that Jean can say about her father other than he allowed Mrs. Allen to raise her and her siblings. He contributed to the house whenever he was able, and he was a social support to her mother.

Living on Bristol St. was not easy for Jean. She never seemed to be warm enough in the winter, and in the summer the heat was oppressive. She states: "It was wonderful to be forced to move, I wanted to be out of there. Not everyone agreed with me, but looking back at this time in my life, it was the right thing for the City of New York to condemn this property because it was unsafe to live in." The condemnation of their apartment building was part of the urban renewal project, slum clearance that forced her family to find new

housing. The house in Bedford-Stuy, on Monroe St., was the answer to their need. When they moved in they had space to grow, and space that they could control. They did not have much money, but with what the Allen Family had, according to Jean, they made a very comfortable home. But more than that, they made a comfortable headquarters for their extended family. Jean's mother's two sisters had homes in New York City housing projects. One of the families lived in East New York. The other branch lived in Bedford-Stuy where it borders with Williamsburg and Bushwich sections of Brooklyn. Her mother and her aunts were so close that, according to Jean, was like having other brothers and sisters who happened to visit them rather than live with them. They seemed always to be around.

The importance of education in Jean's life Jean found school useful for her need to improve myself. She went to school and did well because she was expected to do well. Her mother expected her to do her school work and homework, and her mother and older siblings made sure that it was done. Jean states that her school experience was non-descript. She attended the local public school, the local junior high school, went to one of the high schools approved for her area in Brooklyn, and she did some college study.

Employment experience When Jean took a Federal Civil Servant exam she was appointed to the Social Security Administration and has been with them for almost 30 years.

She never married and lives in the Family house in Flatbush, Brooklyn, that she bought along with her sister Betty, and her mother. It is a huge brownstone house that meets their needs.

Jean evaluates the impact of the migration on her life

In evaluating her experience in the North, Jean believes that it was the best place for her family to grow up. Though there was the danger of crime and other problems, there were the advantages that she had that has made her life a good one and continues to make it quite pleasant. Though some her siblings have talked about moving out of the state, and some have bought homes out of the state, she do not see the need to move.

Summary

Both of the women studied in this research have professional careers, and have good educations from the public school system in New York City. Both of their stories read as success stories and provide examples of when the social system is working properly what can be accomplished. If one were to compare these stories with those of the Wenger brothers a key fact is revealed; that is, the importance of the family in social mobility. The migration of the African American placed great pressures on the family-unit. Strong, and healthy family-units were more likely able to deal with these pressures. In families that are already experiencing some difficulty, the pressures of migration and resettlement can destroy the family. It is important to note here that the

migration was not necessarily the choice of the participants, but it was necessitated by situations in the South that forced populations to find other homes. A study and critique of programs that were established to deal with these pressures is to follow.

Chapter 6: Conclusion: The Role of Social Interventions

The reality of the migration of the African American from points South to points North is a very complicated migration to study. There has been much work done on this topic, and there continue to be new studies produced by the scholarship in this area. This dissertation has concerned itself with only one small aspect of the migration, and yet it is also quite complicated because of all of the issues that are involved. What was expected was not exactly what was found. I expected that the families would have been shaped by the different social and economic structures that were experienced as a result of their migration to the North. I also expected that the different social and economic class differences would have had a greater impact on the social and economic status of the participant families in the study. The reality was quite different. What was discovered was that intra-familial relationships were more important than all of the efforts made by the agencies that worked with these two families. The functional family unit can excel if given the right opportunity to do so. This is the case with the Allen Family. The Wenger Family unit had problems that the programs available were obviously not equipped to deal with. The Wenger did enjoy greater social and economic status in the South (when they are compared with the landless Allen Family), but this particular marriage had problems that had a negative effect on

their children, and this situation was made more difficult by the environment that they lived in in the North.

There were several programs available to assist the families in this study. This gives evidence that some effort was made to help these families and others like them to adjust to their migration to the North. First, the social programs that existed in the lives of the families studied had more of a secondary impact on the children of the migration. Welfare (Aid For Dependent Children) was necessary to provide for the basic needs of the people involved. However, its use was quite different for the families involved in the study. For the Wenger Family it seemed to keep the family from improving, whereas for the Allen Family it was a temporary assistance until they could do better. It was not necessarily the programs that were the problem. This program was the base income for both families for a period of time. For the Allen Family it seems to have been sufficient for their needs, whereas the Wenger Family needed other programs to assist them in their needs. Two of these programs will be looked at in some detail. They were the Neighborhood Youth Employment Program and the Model Cities Program.

Secondly, though it can be argued that the schools are a social program, especially in the "inner-city" because of the special services that the school often must provide, it seems to be appropriate to look at their significance separately. Here again the obvious view was not necessarily the correct

view. The two families both attended schools in the City of New York. The families both studied in the schools of the inner-city, with the problems of the inner-city. Yet the results of the educations as they impacted on the families were very different. This has to be discussed.

Lastly, previous educational levels and social status before the migration did not have the same effect on the children of the migration in the study. The social status in the migration generation did not seem to have any noticeable impact on the children of the migration. This, too, must be looked at.

This study says something about what has been done for the Wenger Family but was not enough and what was done for the Allen Family that seems to have been more than enough. Each of the families had particular needs and the needs of the Wenger Family were not met in the existing programs that they participated in. Intervention was essential in both cases, but some families require greater intervention.

There were several programs that responded to the negative impact of the migration and the settlement in the northern urban areas of the African American. The two agencies studied were important to the communities that they served during the adolescent period of both of the families studied.

> The essential fact is that neither existing conditions nor the garrison state offer acceptable alternatives for the future of this country. Only a greatly enlarged commitment to national action-

> compassionate, massive and sustained, backed by the will and the resources of the most powerful and richest nation on the earth - can shape a future that is compatible with the historic ideals of American Society. (Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder, 410)

The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder produced a report that studied the situation that led to the civil disorder experienced in the U. S. during the 1960's and made recommendations on what could be done about this situation. There was an apparent need for social and economic intervention at a scale that had not been experienced since the days of the New Deal. In response to this call for an all out attack on the causes of civil disorder, and on poverty itself, the two programs that are part of our study came into being.

The Neighborhood Youth Corps

To respond to the needs of youth in poverty areas of the urban U. S., the Congress created a work and training program as part of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The chief purpose of this legislation was to provide work and training opportunities for low-income youths to remain in school or to return to school and resume their education. One of the problems experienced by the low-income youths was the inability to work and continue their education. This legislation required that programs be created to provide experience and training programs that would eventually lead to gainful employment in the private sector for those who were not in

school, and to provide financial assistance for those who were in school.

The Department of Labor established the Neighborhood Youth Corps to fulfill the requirements of the legislation previously mentioned. This was originally a national initiative but by the time the Wenger Family used this program it was a local option under CETA. Neighborhood Youth Corps had three divisions. These divisions followed those required by the mandates in the legislation. Hence, there was a component that took care of the low-income students who were still in school; there was a component that provided summer employment, and lastly, there was a component that provided services for low-income youths who were dropouts.

The in-school component provided part-time work for low-income youth during the school year. The key purpose of this program was to keep potential dropouts in-school, and to find ways for those individuals who had already become dropouts to return to some educational program to complete the preparation for a high school diploma. Obviously, there was a realization that the traditional means of keeping youths in school was not functioning- i.e., the family. Here is an example of economic and social intervention in the lives of the disadvantaged youths to correct a situation that was not being corrected in the usual way. These students earned minimum wage and were provided with supportive services like educational remediation and counseling. The eligibility requirements were two-fold:

first, the participants had to be in the 9th through 12th grade and their families had to meet certain income levels.

The second component - the summer program, provided summer jobs for the participants. This component was actually more of an extension of the in-school program than a separate program of its own. However, instead of being an after-school program, it was a program to provide job opportunities for young people during the summer months with the goal to get them back to school in the Fall. Again, through the use of work-opportunities and supervision, something lacking in the home-experience would hopefully be remedied.

The last component was the out-of-school program. There were two subdivisions of this program-one for the rural youth and the other for the urban youth. We will concern ourselves with the urban subdivision.

The goal of the out-of-school program was to make the young person employable. Some of these young people were already working. However, they were in jobs that paid minimum wage and had little possibility to advancement. Also, a good number of the participants were unemployed. To accomplish this goal was first to find, or create some job for the participant that would be useful in the future for acquiring a position in the job-market. This section of the program would comprise one-third of the work week for the participant. The other two-thirds of the program were devoted to correcting the problem(s) that led to the inability of the participant to

find appropriate employment and acquire a high school diploma. This time would include job training, career orientation, counseling, cultural enrichment, and social support services. The participants, when they were admitted, were either 17 or 18 years of age, and the program was for two years. The following quote from a U. S. Labor Department document is a clear summary of the goals of the Neighborhood Youth Corps:

> ...The goals of NYC (Neighborhood Youth Corps), both explicit and implicit, can be summarized as follows: (a) to redistribute income to the poor, (b) to increase the employment of youth, (c) to reduce teen-age-related crime, and (d) to increase the lifetime earnings of enrollees through training, incentives to stay in school and work-experience. (U. S. Dept. of Labor 68)

Research has been done in the effectiveness of the Neighborhood Youth Corps and the findings are interesting. One project study is appropriate for our study and follows here:

> Black Teenage Girls Project, In-School Neighborhood Youth Corps, Memphis, Tennessee, Final Report by Andrew Fox, W. Theodore May, and Paul L. Schwartz, Social Services Delivery Systems, December 31, 1973.
>
> Nature of Study
>
> A specially designed work-program was offered to 14/15-year-old black teenage girls, which provided them with support in their work settings, well-defined tasks, supervisors, and regularly scheduled peer interaction groups led by a young black woman considered to be an appropriate role model. The experimental group was given work assignments as assistants to teachers and leaders in after-school day-care centers. They were directed by job-supervisors in each center and participated in regular discussion-groups.

The study was based on the hypothesis that positive outcomes would result if 14/15-year-old girls were involved in a work program two years earlier than is usual for NYC and were supported by peer interaction groups led by effective black female role models.

Two kinds of data were collected and analyzed: (1) personality assessment data on the experimental and the two control groups; (2) external source data - school grades, attendance, court contacts, pregnancies, and on-job performance evaluations. The older controls were a group of 16/18-year-old black female In-School NYC youths; the younger controls were a group of 14/15-year-old black girls from the same population as the experimental group-'s support groups. All three groups were tested, studied, and evaluated over a 9-month period from November 1972 to August 1973.

Findings

The most generally consistent findings of this study is that the experimental group and the older working control group maintained their levels of functioning. This maintenance outcome was most noticeable in school grades, good self-concepts, and the individuals' sense of control of their own destinies, as opposed to feeling at the mercy of fate, chance or luck. By contrast, the younger control group and those who dropped out of the program (particularly the younger ones) diminished in their levels of functioning in the same areas.

The positive outcomes for the experimental group become significant when contrasted with the changes in a negative direction found among the younger controls. Similar negative changes also characterized the leavers from the program. The findings thus suggest that the project had substantial impact.

In brief, then, the placement of 14/15-year-old black adolescent girls in a youth employment program, supported by peer interaction groups, produced positive outcomes for those included in the program. At the same time, those who were not included in the program (or who dropped out) showed negative changes in school grades and self-concepts, as well as an increased perception of themselves as being at the mercy of chance or luck rather than controlling their own destinies.

Implications

The implications for this paper are many. What was at work in the Wenger Family, among other things, was a situation of the children not being able to control what would happen next in their lives. What was needed was stability in their lives which was not something that could be solely achieved in their schools, and it was not available in their home.

The Wenger Family had a very high rate of school drop-out. Of the ten children of the Wenger Family only two completed high school. The two that completed high school did so with the intervention of some outside family agency. Without this intervention in their lives they would probably not have gone on to college. Both of the individuals studied in this family utilized the Neighborhood Youth Corps in its CETA incarnation and with other programs were able to make a life for themselves.

Credit must be given to positive intervention when the home lives can not give the social and psychological nourishment necessary for social mobility. Obviously, not all families need this intervention but some need it to survive.

Model Cities

This second anti-poverty agency also had a great impact on the society in which the families of this study lived. The Wenger Family were directly influenced by the programs of this agency.

The final legislation that formed and funded the Model Cities Program was enacted on November 3, 1966, and it was called "Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966". In the "Findings and Declaration of Purpose" of the Act reveals the goal of the Act.

> Sec. 101. The Congress hereby finds and declares that improving the quality of urban life is the most critical domestic problem facing the United States. The persistence of widespread urban slums and blight, the concentration of persons of low income in older urban areas, and the unmet needs for additional housing and community facilities and services arising from rapid expansion of our urban population have resulted in a marked deterioration in the quality of the environment and the lives of large numbers of our people while the Nation as a whole prospers.
>
> The Congress further finds and declares that cities, of all sizes, do not have adequate resources to deal effectively with the critical problems facing them, and that Federal assistance in addition to that now authorized by the urban renewal program and other existing Federal grant-in-aid programs is essential to enable cities to plan, develop, and conduct programs to improve their physical environment, increase their supply of housing for low- and moderate-income people and provide educational and social services... (Public Law 89-754)

It is this agency that had a major part in the life of Eddie Wenger. As was mentioned earlier in this paper, Eddie was a participant in the Model Cities Summer Academy Program. Because of this program Eddie was given the opportunity to be away from an often unhealthy environment and time to do much needed academic work. This program made a difference in his life, and perhaps made a difference in the lives of many other participants. This program and the Neighborhood Youth Corps

were both programs of intervention in the lives of people who were at risk.

Realistically, there is a need for intervention in the lives of urban families and the supervision of families who are at risk. There is also a need for consistency and a wise use of available funds. Model Cities and Neighborhood Youth Corps showed that something can be done, but when these agencies "lives" end, what happens to the people who are in need of these services. Are prisons an appropriate answer? As revealed in Professor James' analysis of the nativity of the "Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966", compromises needed to be reached that put at risk some of the possible contributions that could be made by the created agency (Walther 1975). Does the agenda of politicians mean the death of those in need of appropriate intervention? Intervention means life for some individuals at risk. It is appropriate to fund agencies in the communities that have large numbers of at-risk families, because these agencies could not, realistically fund themselves sufficiently to deal with the need of the people they serve.

What is key in this research is that the success story of the Allen Family is the functional nature of the family-unit, and the appropriate use of traditional agencies of help for the family, i. e., the Church and the School. Aggressive intervention was not required. However, in the less successful Wenger Family, it is argued here, that a more aggressive

intervention by agencies could have improved the success rate. This aggressive intervention could have involved the removing of the children from an abusive home environment, and mandating counseling for the parents.

Both families experienced the problems of African American Migration North to Brooklyn, New York. Both experienced a hostile society that did not want them initially. They both arrived in a city that was experiencing a revolutionary change from a manufacturing economy to a service economy where fewer and fewer low-skill jobs were available. The "settlement-houses" with the programs that helped families adjust to the city were almost agencies of the past. Even the availability of a tuition-free college education would not be available to many of their children. Yet, the Wenger Family had advantages that the Allen Family did not. For instance, they were property owners, attended secondary school, and lastly they had lighter skin color. These were not sufficient to make a success story. There existed a dysfunctional family unit that needed treatment, and without aggressive intervention it would destroy the better part of the family, as it did. Aggressive intervention is the key.

Postscript:

I had the opportunity to be in contact with relatives of both families around the time of the United States Thanksgiving Holidays in 1995. My encounter with them helps underscore

the necessity of strong family ties, or the need for intervention to help correct a problem that exists.

Eddie Wenger spent his Thanksgiving holiday in a mental health ward in a hospital in New York City. Much has happened to him since the initial interview I had with him. Eddie is in the hospital because he was experiencing a psychological disorder, and because of this he had himself admitted to the hospital. It seems that he has a "weak" personality, and this has led him to the abuse of drugs to compensate for his feelings of inadequacy. Mr. Wenger spent the holiday with the hospital staff; no member of his family came to visit him on that day, and only one distant relative visits him on occasion. Mr. Wenger's brother who was also interviewed for this paper stated that: "I am tired of taking care of my brother. He got himself into this let him get himself out of it. My twin brother is enough responsibility for me." Because of Mr. Wenger's situation he has lost his apartment, and is scheduled to enter a long-term mental health facility upon release from the present hospital that he is in. Mr. Wenger's mother, who was his stabilizing force in his life, died approximately five Thanksgiving Holidays ago.

The Allen Family's Thanksgiving Holiday celebration almost reads like something out of a story book; it is hard to believe. In the Matriarch's house in Flatbush, Brooklyn, the one remaining matriarch and her husband reside. Present at the holiday celebration were the ten remaining children, with

their children, and their children's children. In total, five generations were present from the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Allen. The children of Barbara and James are all gainfully employed and most are professionals. All of the grandchildren of college age are college students, and all of the members present are in the middle class. There were also representatives of the other branches of the Allen "Clan" (the children descended from Grandmother Sanders). These, too, were also successful. The next major family reunion became a key topic for the family discussion. It seems to be a family which encourages each of its members to excel. Religion plays an active role in the lives of this family in all of its generations.

Appendix I

Questions for interview with primary migrant:

1. Where were you born? When were you born?
2. Why did you leave the south? How did you leave the South?
3 Were you married in the South?
4. Did you have any children born in the South?
5. In what order did your immediate family leave the South?
6. What was your highest grade level obtained in school?
7. What type of work did your family do in the South?
8. Describe the neighborhood that your family lived in the South.
9. When did you arrive in the North?
10. What were your first impressions of your new home in the North?
11. How was your new life in the North different from your life in the South?
12. Describe the city, the neighborhood, and the house you moved into.
13. Did you have any children born to you while you lived in the North?
14. (If appropriate) Do you see any difference between those children born in the North and those born in the South? (If different) What would be your explanation?
15. In your estimation, how were the schools in your neighborhood? Specifically, how were they different from the southern schools?

16. What are the names of your children?
17. What grade level did each of your children reach?
18. Do you believe that being in the North was an advantage to your children? Why or why not?
19. What type of work are your children doing now?
20. In your opinion, looking back at your life, was the South-North move worthwhile? Why or why not?

Interview questions for the second and/or third generation:

1. Who are your parents?
2. What do you know about your family's southern history?
3. Have you ever lived in the South? If so, what are your impressions?
4. Describe the neighborhood you were raised in. Describe your home. Describe the schools you attended. What was the racial/ethnic makeup of these schools?
5. What opportunities do you have in the North that would not have been possible in the South?
6. What grade level did you achieve in school?
7. What type of work do you do? Are you happy with this type of employment?
8. Have you ever thought about moving to a southern city? Why or why not?
9. Are you happy that your parents or grandparents made the decision to move north? Why or why not?

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