

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Westlake Terrace Project

Resident Experience

O. H. 637

JAMES LOTTIER

Interviewed

by

Elisa Calabrese

on

October 16, 1985

JAMES PRESTON LOTTIER

James Preston Lottier a life-long resident of Youngstown, Ohio, the son of the late Charles and Icea Lottier was born April 18, 1915. Mr. Lottier was active in varsity football and basketball during high school and was selected for the all-city football team in 1932. He received honorable mention for the all-state football team in 1933. Upon graduation from South High School in 1934 he enrolled in Wilberforce University. During college he played varsity football and was honored by the selection to the second team Negro College All-American team of 1937. Mr. Lottier graduated in 1938 with a B. S. degree in social administration. On June 14, 1939 James married Pauline Robinson. They have one son; James Jr., age 44. During World War II he served with the United States Navy and received an honorable discharge in March 1946.

Mr. James Lottier was employed by United Engineering and Foundry Company as a boiler operator. During the years 1946-1966 he was employed as physical director and program director at the West Federal Street YMCA. Since 1966 he has been employed with the Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority. Various positions held at the Housing Authority include: housing manager of the Westlake Terrace Homes, Social Service Coordinator in 1980; he is currently employed in that capacity.

Actively involved with the Youngstown community, he is a member and serves on the board of trustees of St. Andrews

A.M.E. Church. He is affiliated with Caseworkers Practitioners Covenant Lodge F & AM (P.H.A.) Roberts Deliberating Club and is a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

Mr. Lottier is a participant on the advisory committee of Choffin Career Center and has served on the mayor's human relations committee under Mayors Anthony Flask and John Hunter. He was chosen as Vice-chairman of the Board of Mahoning County Nutrition Program for the Elderly and he is also the Chariman of the Board of Mahoning County Council on Aging.

These contributions are examples of Mr. James Lottier's concern with the Youngstown area community.

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INTERVIEWEE: JAMES LOTTIER

INTERVIEWER: Elisa Calabrese

SUBJECT: worker and resident of Westlake, low income housing, YMCA coordinator

DATE: October 16, 1985

C: This is an interview with Jim Lottier for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on Westlake Terrace, by Elisa Calabrese, on October 16, 1985, at the Metropolitan Housing Authority in Youngstown, at approximately 2:00 p.m.

Just to get started a little bit, can you tell me a little bit about your family, your origins, things like that?

L: Of course, you know my name is James Lottier. I was born here in Youngstown, Ohio on April 18, 1915. I was one of five children; I had four sisters, no brothers. I attended the local schools here and graduated from South High School in 1934 and went to Wilberforce University. I graduated from there in 1938 with a degree in social administration and had a minor in education. After graduating from school, my father insisted that I should get my Master's. I thought he had taken care of me long enough, so I decided that I was going to go to work.

It was pretty hard trying to find a job in 1938. I worked for the United Engineering and Foundry Company as a boiler operator. I had worked there previously during the summers when I came home from school. I worked there until 1946. Then I went to the West Federal Street YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) as the physical director. I worked there until 1966. Then I came to the Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority.

Previously upon graduating my first job was with Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority. I worked as what they called a relocation agent for the Youngstown Metropolitan Housing

Authority in 1938 along with a young man by the name of Thomas Robinson. Our specific responsibilities were to help people who lived in the area where the present site of the Westlake Terrace apartments are who had to be vacated. Wirt Street, Griffith Street, Westlake, Ardale, all the streets up in that area had to be vacated. So it was our responsibility to assist these people in trying to find homes where they could relocate.

C: How did you go about assisting those people?

L: We worked closely with the realtors in the area, and then we would scout the area to see if we could find rental properties or properties that were for sale and relay that information to the people who lived in the areas of Westlake, and they could make the decision as to what they wanted to do.

C: Going back a little bit before Westlake Terrace was built, what was Youngstown like during that period? I know we were in the Depression. What was the atmosphere around that area at the time?

L: It was beginning to become a little depressed. Griffith Street and Westlake, Ardale, there were a lot of small structures, one and two bedroom homes that had been constructed by the Carnegie-Illinois Steel Company. My general knowledge is just feedback from people in the community. At the time of the strike around 1919 the steel mills in the area had brought a lot of workers to this area from the south to break the strike. Of course, when they brought them here, they had to have somewhere for them to live. These houses were constructed by what is now U. S. Steel which was Carnegie-Illinois, and that was where those people lived.

Of course, when the mills went down during the Depression, it was a little difficult for employment. As a result the area started running down to some extent.

C: So you were helping these people, at this time when it came a depressed area, relocate their homes.

L: To another area because all of these houses were going to be torn down in order to make room for the Westlake project. So they had to have somewhere else to go to live.

C: While you were doing this, do you remember any of the politicians or any of the architects or construction workers who participated in the Westlake project?

L: Mr. Scheibel was the architect, Morris Scheibel. The construction company was a combined effort of Heller-

Murray, Joe Bucheit, and Pesa. They joined to submit a bid for the construction of Westlake Terrace and they won the bid; so they were the contractors for construction.

C: In this area when you were helping people relocate, what type of ethnic groups were there?

L: There was a cross-section of people in the community. About all the ethnic groups that you could name were in the area, lived in this area.

C: Did you work with individual families on this project to relocate them?

L: We had to go to houses. Those who needed our assistance that is what our responsibility was; we were to assist people who needed assistance in finding homes. We were to help them in the way of guiding them to the banks where they could be financed if necessary.

C: It wasn't all office work; it was a lot of leg work too.

L: Oh, yes, a lot of leg work. You had to go house to house to talk to the people; you had to go to realtors to see if they had properties available, if they had some association with the banks and mortgages or whatever. Those who were able to buy could be financed. It was all pretty well rounded out.

C: Then when the project was built did you have the job working with people to see if they met the qualifications to come into the project?

L: No, this was our promise. It just didn't pan out that way. After working as relocation agents we were working under the assumption that when the project was formulated, we would be given employment.

C: They didn't . . .

L: No, they figured that the jobs available would be better suited for women.

C: Women?

L: Yes. Most of them were to man the office as clerks and do the management of the project itself.

C: So that was all conducted by women at the time?

L: No, they hired some men. They just didn't see fit to hire the two of us. It was still a little shaky at that time. There was a lot of prejudice with both of us being

black. We just weren't going to be hired in a management position at that time.

C: That's true? That's what happened?

L: Right.

C: At that time was there a lot of prejudice within the building contracts, the workers that they hired, politicians?

L: About the biggest jobs minority groups could get were strictly labor; that's what happened when the project was built. They had a lot of black workers, but they were all laborers. That was just about part of the area in the steel mills or whatever.

C: Can you maybe rehearse a little bit of a typical day of your work before the project was built, like what would you do? Would you have to report to a superior? Who was your boss?

L: The director of the Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority. The Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority was formulated in 1933. Construction of the Westlake Terrace or any project in this area didn't happen until 1939 when they actually started some type of construction. So the first director was Mr. Paul Strait. Through him and, I guess the sanction of the board, was the way we were hired. Our responsibility or our reporting had to be to Mr. Strait. He in turn reported to the board in the need of activities. He gave us our direction. We had an office site at the corner of Griffith and Madison Avenue. One of the last houses that was torn down in that area was what we used as an office space. We reported there every morning for work.

Of course, we had to keep statistical record as to who we contacted and if people moved, as to where they moved to, from what type of house and to what type of house, the rent that they had to pay as to where they were moving from and where they were moving to, but we had a complete historical fact on the families as they moved out of the Westlake area. Of course, we had to keep a map. We kept a map where we would pinpoint as to where they moved from and where they were moving to. So they were pretty well scattered throughout the inner city of Youngstown. Not too many went out of the county unless they moved on their own without our assistance.

C: Anything else pertaining to your job that you would like to explain to us?

L: It was gratifying in a way because you were able to help;

this was the main thing. A lot of these people who had moved into these homes, this was their first move. since coming to Youngstown. Of course, that was rather a trauma to some of them because they were going into a new area and just happened to pick up and leave everything because they were forced to leave. There was no choice; they just had to go. The Housing Authority had taken over all of the properties in that area. So it wasn't a choice of--I would rather stay; they had to go and find something. So you have to be pretty close to some of the families. Of course, a lot of them you had to give some kind of guidance in order for them to keep their morals high and not lose sight of their own dignity because they were being forced out. It was an opportunity to be very, very helpful to a lot of people.

Actually, a lot of those people had a very difficult time in reading and really understanding the English language. You had to be an assistant in that manner also.

C: How did you assist in that way? Were there programs to help people to learn how to read?

L: Yes, there were. Shortly after that a lot of area, especially during the time of the Depression, grew up where they had remedial classes in reading and writing. That was some of the programming in the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) and the YMCA and community centers in the area. They started having classes; that was the way they started. A lot of people came who were uprooted and hadn't completed their schooling. They came here to work in the mill where they could make some money. Of course, when they got here, they had to learn a new way of life. A lot of them did really well.

Westlake was one of the first projects . . . It was the number one project built in the country under the Revised Housing Act of 1936. We felt gratified in that manner that we were working on a number one project in the country.

C: Now your job today is . . .

L: My job today is what they call coordinator for the Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority. I still work with the residents of all housing authority, of the entire housing authority. I go to all the projects working with the residents. I'm sort of the liaison between management and the resident themselves to help the structure programs and laws in that manner.

C: Today at the Westlake what type of programs do they offer through the government?



- L: It is pretty much on their own. We have a resident council, and they establish their programming. They have social and cultural programs. Of course, the community centers which are located in every area where we have a project is a big assist because they have preschool and remedial classes. Of course, the other agencies come in for instructions like for first aid, and then they have various programs where they call people from other agencies to come in just to discuss things with them, changes in law, social security; welfare comes in and discusses their program, all of this sort of thing so you can pretty well keep up-to-date on things that are actually happening within the community.
- C: During the time that Westlake was built until now what type of changes have taken place within the community itself? Is there still . . . I was reading about this project before. It seems like in the beginning it was like a stepping stone for people to move into other areas. Is that still today, or are there many residents who still live there?
- L: There are many residents now who have seemingly accepted the low rent housing projects as a permanent home. When the housing was first constructed, most people used this as a go-between or a stepping stone until they actually could get on their feet and do better. It is low rent housing as I said. It is a little different now too because when the Housing Authority was first established and they moved into public housing, there was a limit on your income to be eligible to move in. They still have an eligibility, but if you are able to get into the Housing Authority and then go to a bracket where you can go way up on your income, you can stay there but you just have to pay the rent according to income. A lot of people still do this who stay there.
- C: They stay there.
- L: But then there are still a few who take it as it was intended. When they are able to do better, then they want to get out into the private market to get a house.
- C: Is there anything else that you would like to add about that?
- L: The start of the Westlake Terrace in particular, the site was chosen because of the fact that the properties in that area were going down. Under the Revised Act that they were eligible to get funds to construct such housing, they had to be what they called slum elimination. This is one reason they were able to acquire that property to build the project. Some of those areas were still pretty nice. The

properties extend from West Federal Street to Lexington Avenue, from Wirt Street to Griffith Street, encompassing better than thirteen acres of land. The original project was built with 618 apartments. After a time when they found that they needed larger apartments, some of them were converted where they were joining apartments and each apartment had two bedrooms. They made some four bedrooms by joining these two apartments, and they have several in the area where we have five of those four bedroom apartments. So actually now for rental we only have 607 units in Westlake Terrace.

It was also interesting because within that area you weren't too far from Evans Field which is a prominent spot for amateur baseball and there were tennis courts up in there. On the other side at the present site where Otis Street is and Chase swimming pool, that was the old circus ground. It used to be called Wright Field. Within that area as well as having the circus grounds there was space laid out for softball, et cetera. It was an attraction which made it a good spot for projects because there was a recreational area around there which is helpful. There were a lot of stores within the area and churches within the area; so it made an ideal spot for the project.

- C: At the time the Madison highway was the expressway. Did you work for the Housing Authority then?
- L: No, I was working for West Federal Street YMCA at the time so I was in an area where I could observe most of the moves. Since they wanted to construct the highway and it was going to go through that area all of the buildings that are over into the Otis Street area were moved. We built them and moved them. We moved all of those buildings over into the Otis Street area. It was a difficult job, but very, very little damage was done to any of the buildings.
- C: Do you happen to know the residents who lived in those homes that had to be moved? Where were they housed at the time of the move? Do you happen to know.
- L: As families vacated an apartments, families living in a unit that had to be moved, because of the highway, were transferred to another vacant apartment. Some residents moved out of the project so their unit was left vacant. What happens in a case like this, of course, you know well enough in advance that you are going to have these vacancies. So when people would move out, rather than bringing in another family to take the apartment, you just cut it off; you just don't house people until you get all units vacated in the building that must be moved. So therefore, you don't have their responsibility of moving a lot of people out. If Mrs. Smith is going to move, you just don't pick someone from

your occupation list to replace her. You just go with a vacancy until you get all the number of people who have to be moved eliminated; then you can move the building. That's the way they did most of them. Some people get to a place where they are ready to move and are waiting it out and when they hear about it, they are just almost automatically ready to go and move. It was a big job. I guess it was well over a year after they moved all of the buildings before they could start moving people in.

C: You hear a lot today about the crime that goes on in Westlake. Is this all true?

L: Some of it is pretty well fabricated. Projects really are not much different than any other neighborhood that you know so far as attitudes and reactions of people. It makes it difficult in a sense because of the fact that people have to live so close together. We have just as many good people in any of our projects that you will find in any normal neighborhood. You have some bad, but you have bad in every neighborhood.

C: That's right, good and bad in everything.

L: It is sad to say, but anytime something happens in a project area it is automatically blown out of proportion for some reason or other. Another thing that brings this about is the police have to come into an area like this. There are so many different ways to run and hide behind buildings and there are no direct streets through most of the projects that they just can't bring one cruiser car; they just bring swarms so that they can chase from a lot of different angles. This creates a sensation, especially if news people are around saying that the police are all over this project. Sure enough, they are. If you don't have accessible roads to a project, that is about the only way to do it so you can apprehend someone.

There are a lot of sensational stories. There are a lot of good people who have come out of our projects. I'm very proud of a lot of boys and girls who I have had association with who have gone on as a success in the world. It is sad because most of them had to leave this area in order to get jobs. Most of them worked their way through school. They were poor to start with, but they had enough initiative to make something of themselves because they wanted to and they found a way and a time to do it as doctors, lawyers, dentists. Some of the guys have gone on to judges, engineers. These you don't hear too much about. You hear about the ones who have gotten into trouble, but you don't hear a lot about some of the boys who have really established themselves and the girls also.

- C: If you had to sum it all up, what would you say about your job as coordinator of the Housing Authority? What type of impressions of you give to the public? What would you want to convey to them?
- L: I enjoy working with people. That's been my life's goal from the YMCA to the Housing Authority where I have had to deal with people; that has been my way of life. I just enjoy working with people.

One of the saddest things that I have observed is the way some people within a community, because of the fact that a person lives in a project, they automatically assume an air of superiority and this person can't be anything because of the fact that they live in the project. People who live in projects have a very difficult time getting insurance, credit, things of this nature because of the fact when they give their address they are told that they will have to wait to see or that they will be called later. As a result some of the publicity that has gone out is some merchants won't even deliver in some of the project areas. I guess they feel they have a legitimate reason. Some of their trucks have been vandalized, robbed, but I say again, what neighborhood hasn't had this type of delinquency at some time or other?

Like I just stated, some of my joys are just knowing some of the people who have been able to rise above all the negative things and really make something or their children make something of themselves where there is the pride of the area. It works both ways.

Then there is the joy of just seeing some of the young ladies who have come in and made the determination that they were not going to be on welfare, and take some of the job training programs that have been offered. They have established themselves in getting jobs and finishing school, going on to college and seeing that their children are well taken care of. It is really a good feeling.

I worked as a relocation agent in 1938. In 1946 I was hired by the Housing Authority as manager of Westlake Terrace. I worked as the manager of Westlake Terrace. I had a unique experience. I worked for the authority as the relocation agent and was laid off when all the people moved out. Through the help of some people I was hired as one of the laborers for the construction of Westlake. So I worked with the contractors when Westlake was being constructed. I was married, and after the construction of the project I moved into one of the apartments. So I was a resident at Westlake for a period of about ten years until I moved out.

C: How was it being a resident?

L: It was just like living anywhere else only you were living in rental property. Especially at that time there were a lot of good families and a lot of stable families who helped especially after the Depression days in order for them to get established. Judge Kryzon, Don Hanni, Judge Haynes . . .

C: They all lived there?

L: Yes, Detective Alonzo Wilson, and the numerous other people who lived in that project at that time. There wasn't that much money. Many didn't have jobs. Most of them were still trying to go to school to get their degrees; so it was a big help. Of course, being new they weren't that hard to take care of. Most people took pride in trying to take care of those things. It made a nice place to live.

C: Being a laborer for the construction of the project who hired you, the WPA (Works Progress Administration)?

L: No, I was signed by the contractors. I worked directly for the contractors. WPA was a little something different. That was a program that was established and run through the government. You did a lot of work on government projects.

C: Were people from that program working on that project?

L: No, not WPA.

C: You were hired by the contractors themselves.

L: I was hired by the contractors themselves.

C: What contractor did you work under?

L: They formed a corporation themselves. Three contractors went together. Previously before that they all worked individually. Heller-Murray was strictly, I would say, lumber and construction of things. Pesa and Bucheit did more of the heavy construction, larger buildings, roads, and bridges. So they formed a cooperation for the bid, and they won the bid.

Westlake was an interesting area too. There was one vacant area up on Wirt Street which was an old dump site. People used to haul their own junk a lot of times in wagons and just throw it down in the hole which was up on Wirt Street. So construction of Westlake did a lot of good. It really beautified the area. Of course, like I said when it was new, all the young trees and

shrubbery and flowering shrubs and nice lawn made it a beautiful site.

- C: Do you remember anything about the ground breaking ceremony? I've seen a film about the Westlake Terrace homes, and there were a lot of women, maybe a women's club, and big politicians.
- L: You probably saw pictures of when Mrs. Roosevelt came to town. I don't recall as to who had it, but it was the president's wife, Eleanor Roosevelt. Of course, she went to the project and the mills. Of course, she had a following. She had the mayor and the governor and everybody else right on her coattails, but it was a big thing. Like I said, we were number one in the country under the Revised Housing Act of 1936. We were proud of that. It was really something. I wasn't at the dedication.
- C: How long did you work on the project itself?
- L: Over a year. We started in 1939, and the first families started moving in early 1940's. In 1940 and 1941 was when they actually started moving the families into the apartments. Of course, as they completed buildings then they just started filling them up.

Another interesting thing about when you speak of the differences in intentions . . . I don't know how it ever was established. Most areas throughout the city were pretty well mixed. To my surprise when they started filling up the project, from Madison to Federal between Wirt and Griffith, were all black families. From the other side of Madison to Lexington between the two streets were all white families. This wasn't broken until after the war before they started mixing the families. Now most projects are almost predominantly black.

- C: All the projects here.
- L: Most of them.
- C: Most of them in Youngstown.
- L: All of them down in Youngstown are almost predominantly black. I can't give you any rhyme or reason as to why other than they have the availability of the home and there is a lot of prejudice especially if you are going to buy a home. There were certain areas that even if you had the money, you couldn't buy, as a black person. As a result there were a lot of people who didn't have anywhere to go if they wanted any type of decent home so that left the project area.

In each of our projects we always tried to put in the community center. We never operated in the center. We were fortunate that the neighborhood centers were operated by the associated neighborhood centers. They tried to have a variety of programming for all persons. This is another thing that has always amused me. We couldn't live next door to each other right there in Westlake. We had to be separated by the dividing line of Madison Avenue. But yet we still associated in club groups, craft classes, and remedial reading classes at the Hagstrum House.

C: That was at the Hagstrum House.

L: At that time it was called Lexington Center. It was under the direction of Mr. Harmon Hughes; there was another director previous to him. A lot of these men had worked in social centers in the area. When they built Westlake, they just became a part of it. They just transferred. It was a little larger center, modern as I said. It had a nice, big gymnasium, shower room, locker room, and club space. It had an outdoor wading pool; so it really was a nice center.

C: In the Hagstrum House then there was no segregation. It was just whites and blacks.

L: Right. Yes, they just accepted you as you came. Naturally, some friends formulated clubs. They had some all white clubs and all black clubstoo. But most of the activities you were welcome to participate. So there have been a lot of changes within the area.

When the projects were first constructed, I think moral standards were pretty high. If there was a lady who moved in with her family, because you had to be a family in order to qualify, if she became pregnant and didn't have a husband, she just automatically had to vacate. Of course, you had to have some kind of recommendation by someone within the community in order to move in too. They used to inspect the house from where you were moving to the projects to see the type of housekeeper you were or whatever.

C: Do they still have that today?

L: No. With the civil rights changes and the invasion of privacy and all of this, it got a little difficult where you could have applicants display their marriage certificate and birthrecords. If you moved in and you had three or four children, that was your business. The rules started breaking down. This was when we started noticing some of the decline in the residents of the projects. We had

difficulties with some of the young ladies who started moving in because young men started shacking up and this sort of thing. It is pretty difficult to prove. After all, this is your home and you are allowed to have guests in your home. So you can't prove that they are permanent guests. So it breaks down in that manner. Like I said we still have many more good families than we have bad families in all of our projects.

C: Alright, thank you very much. You have been most helpful. Is there anything you care to add, maybe stories you heard back then?

L: Some stories that have happened within projects a person could almost write a book, like I said with the experience of some of the young ladies who moved in and a lack of training in the home. You observe as to how they try to cook and prepare meals or if you go down to the laundry room and you see them for the first time. There is a little eighteen year old mother who is going to do her washing and she has a difficult time in mixing clothes and things of this nature. Then there is just the fact of a lot of people just trying to acclimate themselves because of the fact of having to live so close. People who move in from large homes have to get used to living in a little, one bedroom apartment and getting rid of furniture and making a decision that they have to eliminate some things when they try to bring it all with them. There are a lot of interesting things that go that way.

Some of the sadder things are like when elderly people move in to your units and they have no other family members and have to depend upon their friends in case of sickness. It gets to be a problem because anybody who lives within the project is supposed to be physically able to take care of their apartment. If there is an old lady who moves in and is well and hearty, then she gets a few years on her and starts getting feeble and it gets a little difficult for her to take proper care of her house like she can't wash her windows anymore or can't run the sweeper anymore. Then she starts eating irregular. Of course, you know what happens when they start to deteriorate in that manner. Then it becomes the responsibility of someone within the authority to try to give them some kind of assistance. The last thing most people want to hear is the nursing home. But when they have no family, sometimes there is no other choice. So it makes it pretty rough that way.

C: You mentioned you were the manager of Westlake.

L: I was hired as the manager of Westlake.

C: Would you tell me what that job involved.



L: I had an assistant manager and the office staff under my jurisdiction. I had to go over applications and place people as they qualified. When the applicants came to the office, I had to see that they got into the proper apartments, and to see that the people properly took care of their apartments. I was to enforce the rules and regulations of public housing and work with the maintenance and see that the area was kept . . . The manager is the one who is responsible for any project he manages. So you had to work not only with your hired help within your project but also with the residents of the project. Fortunately, I never had too much difficulty.

I guess for two reasons I worked for twenty years within the area before I was hired as manager. I knew a lot of people within the area. I knew a lot of the children especially; so it didn't make it too difficult. I also had an advantage over a lot of people because of the fact that I had come through and lived in the project. I knew some of the goings on in the project and I knew the rules and regulations as a resident. As a manager then it was just reenforcement of my learning, knowing as to what I could expect of people.

C: What years were you a resident?

L: From about 1941 through 1950.

C: You were manager . . .

L: I was manager in 1966 until 1972. Then I became the service coordinator. My office was transferred to the new central office on W. Wood Street. I had to work with all of the projects, Kennelbrook, Brier Hill, Victory Annex, Campbell, all the high rises. It is nice.

Public housing definitely is an asset to most cities because of the fact that it is low rent housing. Most people when they move in are able to pay their rent, and in most cases the rent payment is inclusive of everything with the exception of their telephone. A lot of places have to pay a partial payment on electric and gas. So there is definitely an advantage. Of course, you always have the advantage in case something breaks down in your apartment you can always call your maintenance department. You don't have to be worried about all those service charges, unless it is something you broke; then, of course, you have to assume some of the cost for the repair. It is good housing. There are a lot of good people even considering all of the bad stories we hear. There are a lot more good people than bad.

Some of the changes are financing through the government.

That is where we get some of our money. Under the Nixon administration there was a moratorium put on funding for public housing. That is another area where we are starting to have some of the breakdown. If you need money, you can't raise rents. Rents are payable according to a person's income. When we first started rent it was twenty-five percent of the adjusted income. Today you pay thirty percent of your income for rent after allowable deductions.

When I first started with the Authority, we had about eleven painters on regular staff. Most people within five to seven years their apartment was completely redecorated so far as painting was concerned. When the moratorium was put on under the Nixon administration, we didn't have the funds for some of what they figured to be excess. Some of the painters had to be laid off. When they retired or quit, there was no one to rehire in their places. It is down now to about four painters with better than 2,000 units.

You know what kind of difficulty we have in trying to stay on a regular routine to paint apartments especially with the number of moves in and moves out. We are obligated under law to have an apartment ready for rental which means that it be clean, properly painted. So most of the painting that is done is in apartments where the people have moved out; that is an unoccupied apartment. Occasionally, there is some funding where we can hire an outside contractor to do some of the painting. When these funds are available, this is what happens. In order to catch up on some of the painting we paint some of the occupied apartments, and when there is money available, we hire a contractor who does a lot of the painting. It is a real problem keeping the Housing Authority above board because you can't operate in the red. If we had the paint available and the people properly prepared their walls for painting, we permitted some people to paint their own apartments. We furnished them the paint, the brushes, the equipment, and they did their own painting. That took place too where you just had the extra paint that you passed out to the residents.

C: Thank you very much.

L: It has been a real pleasure talking.

END OF INTERVIEW