

Interview with Eugene Williams by Harry Wells, September 10, 1969

H.W.: Eugene, I would like to know what organizations you are involved with. What is your position in these organizations?

I am talking about extra-curriculum activities, not professional organizations.

E.W.: I am a member of the NSAACP, I don't hold any executive office with this organization and a member of the Cornwallis St. Baptist church, and I am the assistant clerk at the church; a member of the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers, and here again, I hold no executive position.

H.W.: Are you a member of the Black United Front?

E.W.: No, I am not.

H.W.: I don't understand. Does it take, do you have to be a member of the BUF, do you have to join an organization, is it an area a Black person is in the Black United Front.

E.W.: I really don't know Harry. I don't know if membership will be something that one will apply for or if because one is Black they are automatically a member of the organization, I couldn't say.

H.W.: What do you think of the Black United Front?

E.W.: Well, I feel that this point in time that, can have from the outset actually, that there is a need for such an organization I feel that there are many positive things that such an organization can do on behalf of Blacks in Nova Scotia. I don't know whether or not this is the time to define/^{what}some of these things might be but I think it could be the vanguard for a lot of improvements for the Black population of Nova Scotia and indirectly set a precedence for any group of people who feel they are not receiving say their

due rights or their way of life could be improved and any future organizations would probably base itself on the example that might be fortified by an organization like the Black United Front.

H.W.: In terms of your own present perspective, or your present thinking about problems of Black people, what factors have influenced your thinking?

E.W.: You'll have to explain that Harry, like what you have in mind here.

H.W.: In terms of the way you think the problems of Black people can be solved, in terms you look at the way of the Black problem now. What factors have shaped your opinions, what factors have influenced your thinking?

E.W.: I think one factor would be ~~xxx~~ ^{that} of education per se, and the many facets of education and I think various forms of government also I think these would be other factors. I think that things such as this, these rather, can be used in such a positive way that any individual particularly black don't have today necessarily hesitate whether or not to ask for something or possibly use pressures in such a way that they can obtain these things. These ~~xxx~~ ^{would} be factors that probably brought me to think this way at the present time.

H.W.: Are these local factors? That influence your thinking?

E.W.: Yes, I think attitudes of the public by and large have changed, and I like to think, for the better toward Black people in this province and I think, depending on who the Black individual is that you are talking to at any time, they can only more or less speak of things in relation to their surroundings, their environment

and I think in this city particularly that the attitudes of the public at large have changed considerably. I think they have changed to such a degree that they have improved in some ways I think they are beginning to look at a Black as an individual just that, another individual, and accept him for his merits. I think that this is a factor, local factor.

H.W.: For a person who is involved in working with some of the problems facing Blacks in this area, I think this is what you've done, what do you see as being the major local problems for Black people?

E.W.: Well, it is hard to give you a clear answer on that as far as I am concerned but I think it is still a problem with education. In general, specifically education for the Black man as far as the specific things he has in mind, this is what we found a little confusing, I don't know if I can clarify it but perhaps will try with an example. For instance, Black people today are talking about improving themselves economically, we will say, and in such a way that they are thinking I believe establishing, operating, and owning their own businesses and I think this is a very, very wise move. However, it doesn't appear to me that at the same time that they are expressing these desires that they are trying to educate themselves as to how one would operate a business, what is entailed in operating a business and this comes to mind because I know through my own work with various individuals, not just recently, but during the past few years that have expressed the same thinking but when

you leave information with them to probably what is entailed in owning a business, how to keep it operating and the like, generally most of them hesitate or they change their mind and they don't want to, they say, take the gamble. I think this is one specific illustration as far as education is concerned. People without probably people probably without necessarily in some cases going we'll say take business administration, at least search out ways of acquiring funds to establish a business, ways of hiring qualified individuals to help operate the business.

H.W. - If you don't have anything else on local factors I will move on to something else. I want to find out about your present thinking.

E.W.: Well, locally, I suppose I am carrying this a little further I don't think our young people at this particular time are making use or taking full advantage of say, the educational facilities that are available to them in relation to, say, fellow Blacks from other areas of the county, as well as the province. This is the way it appears to me. I could be mistaken but living in Halifax which is a University city, the number of young people who within the past five years anyway, have these facilities right at their doorstep and the number of our native Haligonians who are attending college is pathetic. I think that this is something that we the people will have to encourage more so among our youth.

H.W.: In terms of present perspective, has the American experience had any effect on your thinking?

E.W.: Somewhat, say, as far as programs are concerned or projects that might be or have been undertaken by Blacks and have been encouraged shall we say, by various agencies. This American influence has definitely come about. For instance, with the Neighbourhood Centre here in Halifax some years ago there were resource people invited to the city from Newark, New Jersey, both well informed Black individuals who were doing similar types of programs in Newark and they were quite able and capable of explaining just how one would begin to start something along these lines, and need for constructive things, and example would be the use of a community school within various areas in the city, that would be used for more than just academic studies by students say, nine o'clock in the morning until four in the afternoon, they strongly advocated the use of the school later on for further educational programs for adults or for the use themselves as a place to study and so forth, as well as, using the school as a building that could be used for any number of things that the community might see fit, such as a sewing class and so forth, rather than the school just being a sacred cow so to speak.

H.W.: What effects did the visit of the American Black Power advocates have on the Nova Scotian situation?

E.W.: Well, I couldn't be that sure in trying to answer this for you Harry. I feel, and I like to think, that their ~~presence~~ presence was a positive something, I think along the lines of encouraging Blacks in Nova Scotia and the immediate communities to begin with to sort of stop what they were doing and take stock of themselves

and their situation and assess all of these things in relation to total community. I think this was a positive something. I think it is quite evident that that the Black United Front is at the moment, the end result, shall we say, and the positive things that the Black Power advocates, certain Black Power advocates that were here, that were left with us I think, I think the people are trying to build upon these. I think that this influence was of a great deal of help.

H.W.: Do you think the people became more militant? after the Panthers left?

E.W.: No, I don't. I think that there was a militancy here before the Panthers came. I think it was a traditional type of militancy. There have been Blacks, we'll take Halifax as an example, there have been Blacks in Halifax, who for years I feel have never hesitated to speak out against any form of injustice that they might feel being imposed upon them by any source, and possibly these individuals because of time have grown older and maybe their verbalizations were coming through a little more muffled say, in recent years, but I think had the young people, the young Black people of Halifax come along in similar footsteps of the older Blacks that there would not have been the need for say, the Black Panthers coming here or if so we would have had much more to offer them, to show them and it would have been a matter of possibly comparing notes so to speak and again to try to draw out the positive that they might have to offer to us.

H.W.: You think there have been changes in the system since the Black Panthers have been here?

E.W.: Yes, I think there have been, there has been. I think unfortunately with the Black Panthers as an Black American organization, and the concept of Black Power, that people generally don't quite understand what it is that is being said by these people or what is defined in the concept and because of this the end result has been fear, and if anything, this fear, until the present I think, has been of a sort that has helped to bring about improvement. If nothing more has been done in some particular cases, at least people are stopping to think and listen to what a Black individual is saying or a Black youth is saying whereas possibly in the past Okay, we hear it but it is not being digested and then something done with it necessarily; therefore, I think that there have been changes since the Panthers have come and I think much of it has been caused by fear and many people in the White community have been afraid that when the Panthers were here, and the Black United Front is being established, and all that is going to come out of this is violence from the Black man toward the White man. I personally don't think this is the nature of the whole situation.

H.W.: What books oriented to Black people have you read in the past few years?

E.W.: There have been quite a few. I don't think I can remember them all. I have read Cleaver, and Soul on Ice, Wretched of the Earth by Frank Fenine ?, possibly all but one of Martin Luther Kings. I've read at least three books written by Gregory. I've read Black Rage by the two Black psychiatrists, some of Whitney Young's writings. I've read Stokeley and Hamilton's Black Power and a number of other books written by various Black individuals,

either novels or histories written by them, or histories written in collaboration ~~with Black people~~ about Black people shall we say throughout the world, at least, statesmen Africa, that kind of thing.

H.W.:; What popular magazines or periodicals according to Black people do you take, do you read?

E.W.: Usually Ebony, Sepia. There used to be a neighbour of Digest but I've never been able to find it here on our newsstands of late. I find it a very good magazine to read. I've read one or two issues of Rampart, but here again these magazines you don't see that often on our newsstands. I can't honestly say that other for Sepia and Ebony, regularly, every month.

H.W.: In terms of the subject matter of these books, how do you like these books and how do you try apply what these books are saying? to the Nova Scotia situation?

E.W.: For the magazines and all I find that they are similar to many other, I don't know if you call them trade magazines or not, other than possibly Ebony. I find that Ebony as a whole gives a good composite as far as ^{our} people are concerned. What I am saying here, what I am trying to say here about the magazines is that I find that the family magazines are no different to the shall we say, Chatelaine or something like that, other than they are Black oriented magazine. With the writings of the other books that I have read by other ~~authors~~ authors, I find that on a whole they are very well written and yet in a sense some of what is written is not, can't be used necessarily to parallel, to draw parallels as far as Nova Scotians are concerned. I think that I should kind

of clarify my reasoning here and that is, I am a young Black Nova Scotian and there are things that as far as history is concerned for Nova Scotia, maybe I am not fully aware of, or I have never seen so therefore, I can't say that what I might read in a, say, Wretched of the Earth by ~~Franklin~~ Franz Finon? I may not be able to parallel what he has portrayed here as being exactly the same case for Black Nova Scotians as far as I am concerned but I think that the basic philosophy in all of these writings, they all have something to say, and I suppose if we search, we dig deep enough, we can draw some kind of a comparison to a particular phrase, paragraph, or chapter but other than that I really can't say, because, maybe it's because many of the books as I have noticed, they start out based on history, and the history of the Black man in the United States is based upon slavery, and it was something that went on for a period of years whereas, here in Nova Scotia, there is that part of slavery here that we know of or have been able to find something out about, at least I have, just how much I can't honestly say. Canadian history possibly isn't that well written and as far as the Black man is concerned an ethnic group, an ethnic race, there wasn't that much consideration given or people probably thought, we'll gloss over it wasn't, slavery wasn't something that everyone needed to have been proud of so therefore historians possibly gloss over these things so I couldn't say there was a lot of things that really parallel between these books and the Black man here. Another reason for this is that much of this, these writings are written in a political context, and this again, is something a little foreign to the Black Nova Scotian appeal, and one other very important factor, I think, is that of numbers. To try to parallel millions to thousands is a little hard

to do unless you forget about your ratios so to speak but this these are some of the things that I feel but I enjoy the writings very much because that it is a history of sorts for any Black man, by they ~~for~~ Nova Scotian , Ontario, or American; there is something here about us as a member of a particular race and I think that this is something very good.

H.W.: What other sources of information do you use to get information concerning Black people?

E.W.: The newspaper but not necessarily our own newspaper which doesn't carry too much, probably syndicated columns of a sort but whenever possible newspaper from another city. That way, you are going to get a little better perspective, or the outlook of who ever is writing the material at that time.

H.W.: What about the news media?

E.W.: The news media here such as they are, the radio, T.V. and newspaper on occasion which isn't too often but whenever possible talking with fellow Blacks ~~and~~ in other cities, in other communities

H.W.: What about Blacks from this area, do you talk

E.W.: Yes, I often have many discussions and conversations with fellow Blacks here and get their viewpoints and ideas to see if our thinking coincide or that they might have another viewpoint that I have probably overlooked.

H.W.: When you see and hear about riots in the United States, how do you react?

E.W.: To be honest, Harry, my reaction unless there is a lot of violence incurred by any of our people, possibly my first reaction is well gee they did it again but being the type of individual I am, I would like to know more about what caused it, what led up to it and even if possible which is something you don't generally get through news media but if possible, what was the precipitating factor of the whole thing. I don't think that people just go out and cause a riot because someone comes up with an idea and sitting around and doing nothing and says look let's have a riot. I think that these things are generally caused because of an incidence, a specific incident but probably there have been a number of others that have led up to that one instance and people just figure, well look, we've had enough and we are going to demonstrate and I think that in many cases I think maybe our people in the United States start with a demonstration and then it becomes a riot, not necessarily begun by themselves. I think that probably partly you will find no matter where individuals are going to say, look I'm going to call somebody's hand and this is it but I don't think that these numbers in most cases would be ⁱⁿ the majority as far as it goes on a riot.

H.W.: When you see or hear about these riots, what are your emotions, do you get frustrated, do you identify with it, or do you reject it?

E.W._ I think we can ^{say} ~~say~~ emotionally we can identify with that personally. I begin to parallel it to Nova Scotia, to Halifax, and with the people that I have grown up with, young people and those who would be old enough to be parents and I stop and think I would possibly hate to see something like this happen here. The

same thing could happen to a individual that I know that they have something a lot to offer or they have contributed so much to date even and I would hate to think that a situation similar to this could happen here and the outcome could be such and such, particular in view of death or serious injuries that would probably mean that an individual being maimed or crippled for life. This sort of thing.

H.W.: What effect did the assassination of Martin Luther King have on your present thinking? of the Black man's struggle in America?

E.W.: Personally, to me, it was like somebody had all of a sudden cut off, this is an analogy, like a flower that is not quite in full blossom, just beginning to bud and you know that it is going to be a beautiful something, a beautiful creation, or work of nature or whatever you want, and to me it was just as ~~s~~though somebody had nipped it in the bud, his death, and I felt that here was one individual who along with a few others who were contemporaries of his, who, their families had suffered the same misfortune that tried to do or suggest what was good for all in this case, particularly Black people but that his sights and goals were set not only ~~on~~men only but for people everywhere and this kind of individual, and here in this case, he was Black and he was just cut off. I felt the same way about President Kennedy and Senator Kennedy as far as contemporaries are concerned that there were three individuals who I think the common denominator with the three was that ~~was~~ the fact all had the well being the welfare of Black people I think first and foremost in their minds and also ^{as} administrators of the country, the president and the senator, they were too were looking at people who might be in the same kind of economic, cultural, social bracket as Black people, so they, the three I think, identify very much

alike and I felt very much upset about it because it seems that you just can't win. Not only poor people in general, those in a specific bracket but even for Black people in the United States anyway, it seems that no matter how hard they try, they are not given a chance.

H.W.: Then, are you still very interested in the ideas or struggles of Black leaders in the United States?

E.W.: Oh yes, yes.

H.W.: Do you keep up

E.W.: I like to keep abreast of what is going on there because it appears that the Black people in the United States are in the vanguard of the Black people throughout the world; possibly the other country or nation that would be in the same position would be Africa but these two countries, these two nations, I think whatever they are able to accomplish within their own boundary will have a far-reaching effect on Black whether they live in Nova Scotia or they live in England or some place else. I think there appears to be a cohesiveness coming about between Black people no matter where they might be so that for these reasons I like to keep abreast of many of the Black leaders or ~~xxx~~ those leaders in the United States particularly are advocating at any time.

H.W.: I need to get your opinion about some of the following tactics as a means of solving problems, letter writing, and public calls to assistance. What is your thought about this as a tactic?

E.W.: Well, I think there is a place for it. I am not sure that I would call it a tactic as ~~much~~ much as I might define it as a technique

but they do have thier place if nothing other than initially to at least make a party aware of feelings and intents of such and such and open a door for further negotiation possibly.

H.W.: What about community organizing as a tactic?

E.W.: Well, personally, I really go for this community organizing because, for instance, if we look at letter writing and this kind of thing, through community organizations whatever or whomever the individual might be or the body that might want something done once you use the initial business tactic or technique or approach and its through letter writing hopefully you have facts and you have them on paper you can see and they can be defined; also you know hopefully you are going to know just how a community feels, just how a group within a community feels, the various factions, depending upon the size of the community. It also allows you the privilege of comparing what the issues might be in this particular community and the relation to the total community and I think that through community organizations much can be done, especially with our people that it gives us a chance to know what is going on, how things are going, maybe an individual lives in a community in a certain district within a metro area and the way the things are today you may not know what your neighbour is thinking. You may not know what the individual across the street is thinking and yet these are the people that you live among for years and other than the pleasantries of "good day" and "how are you," there may not be much more discussion about things that are very ~~xxxxxx~~ important or should be important, we'll say, or relevant

to the time so I think community organization is a basic tactic for any individual or group of individuals wish to do, if they feel it is worthwhile, if they feel rather that the goal is worthwhile.

H.W.: What about marches?

E.W.: I think there are effective marches and demonstrations provided that they are going to be of a non-violent nature. By this I don't mean that if someone comes up to me and is going to punch me or slap me in the face you are going to turn away. I don't think by and large that people are really cut off this bot of cloth. There are some who may be but again I think it is a case of calling one's hand. You are demonstrating whether you fit in or march or what have you because of a specific issue. You want to be recognized you want to be heard, and you have facts and proof related to this issue and you are prepared to hopefully negotiate and someone comes along and says, whether you say anything or not, and they just come up to you and physically do something to you and then I think it is kind of hard for an individual not to retaliate but I think that the philosophy should be to have these kinds of things such as demonstrations etc. both with a boycott, I think boycotts are very effective for something. I think boycotts are apart from marches and sit-ins in some ways.

H.W.: Are boycotts as effective as sit-ins, marches and stuff like that?

E.W.: Generally speaking, I would assume that they are.

H.W.: You said that they are ~~separate~~ separate.

E.W.: I think they are separate in this way Harry that you can march and you can sit-in but you might have to come back to these places as an individual for something. There might be no way out whereas with a boycott, I feel that if organized properly you can withdraw through a collectivity. You can withdraw aid or assistance or what have you. For instance, if there were a groceryteria here in the city, particularly a chain and if our people felt that there were one or two felt that they had been unjustly treated whether it be through service, through employment or what have you, that if properly organized, that all Black boycott of this particular groceryteria or chain, I think this would be a very effective in the long, in fact much more effective in a long run than a march, or a sit-in.

H.W.: When you talk about a sit-in, are you talking about a civil disobedience, tying up traffic and things like that? You think a boycott is better than that. What do you see in civil disobedience in being effective?

E.W.: I see it in this respect, and as I say, I am not all that familiar with it and maybe my definition may not be one and the same. I understand the civil disobedience or sit-in being one in which everyone is more than aware of being very responsible for their action and in light of we'll say of a law that is a statutory something and yet the law is serving one group of people and yet it is used to serve another group in another way and I see that a person sitting in a sit-in might be in this case they are not opposed to the law, but they are opposed to the fact that the one law is serving two purposes when it is set out to serve one purpose and in doing this if they are going to be responsible acting enough

to understand why this is being done then you are bringing it to in this case I am particularly thinking here of governmental departments or governments so to speak. I am thinking more or less of boycotts as an economic something shall we say. Here again, if we had Black businesses and people, I think that as far as it goes, one shouldn't be coercive ~~and purchase~~ ^{or feel forced into purchasing} only from a Black man as far as it goes but in doing business and spending one's money here and there, as far as a boycott is concerned, if it were a White firm or something like that, and all Blacks who might do business there that it be stressed upon them that clear up your accounts and there be no more business there. In some businesses here in Halifax, for instance, there is a lot of Black money that goes into keeping it going, I think a boycott would be much more effective than a sit-in in that particular case.

H.W.: What do you think of violence as a tactic?

E.W.: Firstly, I am opposed to violence and I can only say this because probably I have never been a part of violence myself or taken part in something that was violent, so therefore, this is the main reason I am opposed to it, yet, as I mentioned earlier I think I don't think I could turn my cheek towards you, become violent with me. At least, if it were a man to man something I don't think I could turn my cheek. If it were a collective something I think that the old cliché, self preservation, is the first law of the jungle, that I possibly would not be a cowardly something necessarily but discretion is the better part of valor, and in the event of some kind of demonstration, no matter what it might be, but some kind of a demonstration and if authorized enforcement officers be they civil

or military were to come forth and use all the weapons we'll say and techniques of enforcing the laws they have at their hand I would honestly would discreetly make my decision one way or the other. I don't think because of numbers, it doesn't make sense to me.

H.W.: Do you think that only Blacks should be leaders in organizations fighting for their rights?

E.W.: If you had asked me this question a year ago, I probably would have answered without any hesitation. Today I hesitate for a few moments but I'll give you my answer and it would be the same as a year ago, and my answer is no. I feel that there should be that there is a place for other people to work with us. I think economics dictate this. We as Black people in Nova Scotia are not economically stable and I'm thinking of not people who have bank accounts necessarily, I'm thinking of we as Black people as far as having our own businesses in such a way that we could go to a business and say "we need money, money in five figures is needed for such a such and we are coming to you to ask if you could do this for us. You go to another Black manager and do the same kind of thing so that we just can't do this and therefore I think there are White people who have access, they don't have the money themselves, but have access to fellow Whites who can help speed this to come about. For these reasons I think we shouldn't always attempt to go it alone, so to speak because if we propose this and leave our fellow Black men to believe that this is the case, then those of us who are doing this when the time arises that we have to go to the White man, and our fellow Black man finds out, they will think

probably think "look, you sold us a bill of goods. Your group~~s~~ isn't doing this because you had to do such and such," in a sense makes it what, paradox? This is it.

H.W.: I'm trying to figure out. It seems like we are not on the same wave length on this. You said something about going it alone. Do you see an organization with an all-Black executive and going it alone, or do you consider all the leadership should be Black. It seemed like you said the best man regardless of colour the best man should be the leader. My question again was kind of hazy, vague, but I am trying to find out who should occupy the leadership position, only Blacks in this position, or what.

E.W.: The leadership as far as Black people are concerned as often as possible should be held by Black people but I also feel that this being a fact I don't feel that the leadership should have want to ~~xxx~~ have nothing to do with White people or other ethnic group as far as this is concerned to attain their goal and in such a way that they are going to work with Black people and leaving the idea with them that everything that is done, is done by Black because this isn't so. I don't think in this day or age a man is an island unto himself, he can't be, and to me anyway, I think we have to use resources that are available not just to a Black man but to available to anyone who may wish to ask for them.

H.W.: Are you talking about the leaders of the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People. That doesn't both you at all does it.

E.W.: No, not necessarily. I'll tell you why. I feel this way and I suppose it boils down to this. If you started out one way and you

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have a constitution a premise that you are going to base something on well my thinking is that you should try to follow this through. Now if the N.S.A.A.C.P. their constitution doesn't read and never did that it was, it would be what today is considered a segregated organization and I think that what has happened over the years what evolved is that there were not possibly ~~Blacks~~ enough Blacks who felt qualified to take these positions, maybe they didn't feel that they wanted to, they had the qualifications or not, for personal reasons so that there were jobs that had to be done, there were positions that were there and because it was an integrated organization therefore ~~whatxxxxxx~~ as far as I am concerned I can't see any reason why if a member is White or if they are East Indian or what have you, they are members in good standing and they are the types who want to contribute to the organization they feel that it is worthwhile, why they should not hold executive positions. I think what happened here is that a lesson should be gained by Blacks who feel that well too many White people on the executive then I think it behooves the Black ~~people~~ association to ^{want to} say maybe I will try' this, I ~~can~~ I can help. One think I have noticed with the ~~xxxxxx~~ association, their White executives, they have never held the ~~highest~~ highest executive post we'll say, with the organization. Committee chairman possibly, and members of the committees, but as far as the slate of officers is concerned they have never held this kind of position, and I think this is a good something because the identify as far as it concerns.

D.W.: What word do you prefer to call yourself?

When people talk to you do you prefer the ~~change~~ word being addressed as Black, negro, coloured.

E.W.: Personally, I have no qualms one way or the other. I feel just as much at ease being called a Black man, as I do a negro if I had a preference of all names I would prefer either Black or Negro, but coloured, this doesn't mainly because I feel this way. When I was a youngster going to school it was nothing to fight every day some White kid, Jewish kid who called me a Black nigger. Thankfully through education my thinking is different on this. People have said at the same time even parents chase a little white kid home to his doorstep and his father and mother might come out, and chase you away and their parting epithet might be, "you Black nigger, why don't you go back to ^{Africa} Afriville where you belong." Well, this was said in a derogatory way at the time and today as far as I am concerned if Black people are identifying with Africa with the Black culture and the history and all, and it shows that the White man is beginning to really look at us in a different light and accept the fact that we do have things that we can be proud of. If they call me Black

H.W: You spoke about Africa. Do you consider yourself as an African living in Canada.

E.W.: No, I can't say that because I never lived in Africa. I'm Black and if I lived in the United States I could never consider myself an American. I could consider myself a Black Canadian living in the United States but for myself personally, I cannot, I don't honestly say that I am an African, because it just isn't it.

H.W.: Well do you see all Black people as having similar problems?

E.W.: Yes, generally speaking

H.W.: Could you elaborate on this.

E.W.: Well, I think under the headings politically, economically culturally, possibly, these are the things that all Black people are finding they are having problems with. Now, depending where they live, ^{I think stems, where} we get the degree. In Africa, for instance, here you have the majority of people who are Blacks in their own country and being led politically by a minority of another race. In the United States, for instance, here again politically there are large numbers of Blacks living in various areas and they are finding it a problem and have in some cases, have found a problem of having their own representative, and they have had problems as far as being able to vote in parts of the country. Here in Canada, and particularly in Nova Scotia, our problems I feel are somewhat the same as we have in Halifax, some of them, in that we have had Black individuals who have run for political office and they have never won a seat we'll say, so that this in effect is a problem. Economically, I don't dare try to illustrate the same as the others for Nova Scotia and Halifax we don't have people, as I mentioned earlier, who had their own business in such a way that they don't have to accept anything that is handed down to them, it might be second hand or whatever the case might be. I think that economically in not having businesses the same can be said for the area of employment and because of this many of our people have never had the opportunity to work in various types of business so as to gain ~~experience~~ in such a way that if they wish to work for a Black firm they would have something to offer

or if they were working for a Black firm and just a simple thing like economics caused them to move from place to place, for money's sake you know, I can earn more money over here than I can where I presently am and through negotiations I am not going to get anything more so Okay I'm going to go where the money is, and in this case here, we haven't had Black business so we haven't had Blacks who have worked in businesses who could leave and go to work for White people and have much to offer. It's coming about in a gradual sort of a way and its a long process.

H.W.: You speak about all these different problems. Do you think a militant self-help program is necessary if the Black man is to succeed in his struggle?

E.W.: I'll ask you to define militant for me.

H.W.: You define militant if you take the concept of self-help. How would you like to see it go in terms of solving the problems of Black people. People have given me different responses to that.

E.W.: I don't know if I will attempt to define militant for you Harry but I think if you mean, or if we think, put it this way, I'll put words in your mouth, but if we think of militant as being aggressively standing up for what you feel is just due, and you want to be permitted to, at least attempt it, I think that there is a place for this and through all of this I think the big thing is that in this province for our people they haven't been aware of things that have been available to them. I think we are too often prone to criticize but we don't try to constructively criticize, we don't try to objectively criticize and if people aren't fully informed about things, if people aren't aware themselves of what is available to them whether it be legally theirs we'll say, as well as things we probably take for granted we accept as the mor so to speak where we live kind of thing is equal the same for everybody, it should be

for me but if I don't know this, I don't think so, and never try to find out, then I'm unaware so that possibly had I been aware I might be much more aggressive than I might be at a particular time and I think that for our people in this province it has been the case and a lot of the times, many of the times anyway they probably in various areas were not aware of this, and once they find out or did find out, it probably was a big help but only to individuals rather than to the total productivity, we'll say, so that yet a militant self-help organization could do a great deal. I think that rather than try to be an all-encompassing type of militant self-help organization that specific or definite areas be worked at first and then go from here as you see fit because there are some things that no matter how we try we have to conform unfortunately. I think oftentimes we often have good cases but this is bureaucracy and you've got to fit into to it somehow.

H.W.: To rid the society of prejudice and discrimination who has to be changed, the Black man or the White man?

E.W.: I think both have to be changed. I don't think that necessarily one has to be changed only because this could happen and if the other is still going to retain their ^{own} ~~old~~ thinking and attitude you are still running up against a brick wall, you are still running up against a brick wall you are still beating your head against it, you are not making a dent other than your head, but I think that it is something that has to be a combined effort in that both, or all people change their outlook, their attitudes at ~~last~~ attempt to, to try to understand the other person. Not what makes them tick but why they tick this way and I think it is a two-way street.

H.W.: Which tactics do you think, which two tactics do you think the most appropriate, let's say problem-solving, the problems of Blackpeople

fostering individual excellence or strengthening the community power?
Which do you think is the most appropriate?

E.W.: I don't know if I could answer which is the most appropriate Harry, but I think that they are almost synonymous. I think if you have one the other is going to come. You take individual excellence possibly this might appear what has been done over the years more or less here in this province, and because of this the individual has become what many people say, is an acknowledgment by the public. Unfortunately, they have not necessarily been looked upon as a leader by fellow Blacks but if they were a proper kind, and I don't know what the proper kind might be, I shouldn't use that term, but I think if there were greater outlets for individual excellence among our Black people then the other as far as community, as far as strengthening community power, this could come about but I think, one without the other, if the thing should continue, one without the other, ~~the~~ things would probably remain as is. I think we could strengthen community power and probably lose individual excellence one way or another.

H.W.: If you were able, if you had enough power to make up a guideline diagram, what would happen to Black people in the next five years, which one would you emphasize, in terms of short-range goal, which one would you try to do first?

E.W.: I don't think, this question for me, I don't think I could answer it just like that Harry, because in trying to do so, my answer would be redundant, really because I still have this thought in mind that it is a synonymous something. Maybe if we were to say, a short-term goal would be individual excellence. Okay. Then what's going to happen with this individual who is excellent in a specific field or what have you, what

is going to happen to them in relation to the present community power that might be there, how are they going to be viewed, how will they be accepted; whereas, if we, if the emphasis a short-term basis were concerned were to be placed on upgrading community power so to speak, then individualism or individual excellence might be overlooked by our people which might be a good something. I honestly couldn't say I see it this way first and then the other any more than the other way around.

H.W.: I'll ask you a question about if you had the powers of a leader what do you think are the most important qualifications of a Black leader?

E.W.: Well, I think a Black leader today should be very objective in his thinking. If he doesn't have all of the academic credits that one might think he should have, I don't think this is necessarily always an important something but I think that it is a big help. I don't think this should necessarily be held against him. I think what he should be able to do if this were the case is to have access and resources available at hand that he can avail himself of to improve. I think he has to be, or she, for that matter, I think the individual should be one that has good rapport with his fellow Black man, I think this is the crux of the whole thing with our leaders is that people by and large may not necessarily be objective toward an individual or an individual towards people, but if an individual is, they can help if they are a leader, they can set to one side personalities, they can overlook temperaments and tricks of individuals and try to cull out the good points in an individual and I think that in any leader this is one thing that they would have to be, and not allowed himself to be caught where they are going to be overly critical themselves. I think the individual has to be one who is able to converse and again be very objective with representatives of public, private agencies, governments and what have you so that it is not going to be a one-way street. I don't

feel that an individual has to be one that is always going to agree but at least they should be willing to listen to pros and cons and try to pick out the positives from the whole thing.

H.W.: You think they should be good at making alliances with different White organizations and groups and things like that?

E.W.: I don't think they should necessarily have to be an expert at making alliances themselves. I think their expertise in this matter should be in getting across to other groups, and to their own Black group just what is wanted, and just what isn't wanted and that both groups be able to decide, I don't think the leader should ~~xxxx~~ necessarily always ~~be~~ viewed as the decision maker; if we as Black people can have leaders whether they are acknowledged or not or defined, that they be people who can be able to disseminate information, ideas, proposals, the whole bit to their first of all the organization they are ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{affiliated} with; secondly, that where and when pertinent they be able to do this with other groups as far as an alliance is concerned. Too often in the past Black people in this province and in the community have been acknowledged as leaders, and have not wanted this acknowledgment but haven't been able to get away from it and when something has been settled or decided upon between them and another organization, could even be another Black organization, too often the public and our people particularly view it as so-and-so did such-and-such and this is it, even though the organization may be made well aware of what is taking place, or what took place which is too late because the horse is out of the barn then and it is too late to lock the door, especially if the group is not in favour of it. Maybe they don't necessarily see it the way the alliance is formed, something like that.

H.W.: In terms of you being a social worker and everything, do you see all non-white people as having similar problems?

E.W.: No. You are asking do I see that all Black people have the same problems?

H.W.: All non-white people, I'm talking about Blacks, East Indians, Asians, do you see them as all having similar problems?

E.W.: I can honestly answer it Harry because I don't know that many, I've never talked to many East Indian people. I never talked with Chinese, Japanese people, but I suppose there is a generalism; one might say that their problems are similar in some respects depending upon the area of the problem.

H.W.: These people all have similar economic and social, economic problems, political problems? I'm speaking more in terms now of, do you think like the African nations and Asian nations, do they have the similar problems, Latin American countries?

E.W.: I really can't answer that Harry.

H.W.: Do you see poor Whites as having similar problems as Black people?

E.W.: Yes, in some respects.

H.W.: In what respects?

E.W.: When you place the adjective poor in there it helps somewhat and I think that they too are, can be classed as have-nots and in order to reach the same plateau as they have, they have the same kind of problems as the Black man, in most cases.

H.W.: You are clearly working with some of the Africville families former Africville people. What are your thoughts about the Africville relocation?

E.W.: My work with former Africville residents just prior to complete relocation and it was in the field of employment and the numbers involved weren't that great. Since then I have had no involvement with former Africville residents other than how they might become involved through our division and I can honestly say that this has been to any great extent. I think that there is much more that former Africville residents could do in their own behalf if they so choose not being fully aware, not aware, but fully knowledgeable what took place through the whole relocation. I don't honestly feel qualified to make too much of a statement ~~at any time~~ of any kind about it Harry. My involvement was very very minimal and related to a specific something, that was all.

H.W.: I've got some statements here and I would like to see how you respond to these statements, I would like to find out if you agree or disagree with these statements, "Most Whites want to keep Blacks down as much as they can."

E.W.: All I can say Harry is that when you ask me a question, you have a motive. I don't know if its true or not. Let me ask this question first, is this as I find life to date, personally or in general.

H.W.: In general.

E.W.: I'd like to think no.

H.W.: It's no big problem, only I say, you create a difficulty, you know, what I'm trying to do is "Some people have said that there are Whites store owners who take advantage of Black customers. Do you agree with this?"

E.W.: Yes

H.W.: Do you agree that most of them try to take advantage of Black customers?

E.W.: Well probably in different ways. As far as pricing is concerned

prices are concerned in the city, I don't think that this might be the case. I think the same price that I might pay for something, that the next person will pay for something, I'll pay the same for simply because the price tags are right there, but I think in other ways they may take advantage such as service itself. Some stores/you go into and the clerks are all in another area of the store, sometimes they may not be as cordial to customers as one would expect particularly because you are Black. This is the impression that one often gets. As far as doing business is concerned with some stores, I think again, the staff might not be as informative as they should be as far as questions pertaining to credit, things such as this, opening an account, various types of accounts. There are some accounts that do not cost an individual as much per month, possibly per year to acquire as others and these may not always be, this information may not always be given to a Black individual unless they ask for them. This might happen with everyone, I don't know, but I think with Blacks this is the case at times so much so that after a period of time the individual finds that they are in a bind and they can't pay the bill and the bill still goes on and they are not buying anything, so that, I think these are some ways, maybe on delivery, or things like that, you have to wait until the end of the line so to speak for delivery and you want something at a certain time, for you maybe, you can't get it within a couple of days where somebody else, they might get it the next day because they are so and so or just White.

H.W.: What do you think of this statement: "Most Whites who take part in civil rights demonstrations are not really interested in the problems of Blacks. I don't agree with that, I don't agree with that because I like to think that anybody who is going to feel that they are going to

who is going to feel that they want to become involved in something must feel this way that they personally are going to benefit or that the program itself merits a lot of work and they feel that this is going to benefit, let's say, the community at large, or part of it, and I like to think any White person who becomes involved these sort of things identifies with a Black organization must be interested in the welfare and the well being of Blacks.

H.W.: What type of neighbourhood do you prefer if all equally well kept up, mostly Black, ~~make a difference~~ a mixed neighbourhood, mostly White, you don't know.

E.W.: Well, if it is all in relation to equally kept up, here I am thinking of the physical surroundings in the neighbourhood only, I would prefer an all-Black neighbourhood or a mixed one, a homogenous type of neighbourhood. Possibly, I'll qualify my answer. All Blacks because the identification is immediately here. If you don't know everyone you are not going to worry about getting to know them or how you are going to get to know them because sooner or later, you will. Now, if it is a homogenous type of neighbourhood, strictly in this day and age, perhaps Blacks can help Whites and Whites also when we talk about who should be educated as to this side or the other, to see that we all have commonality and there are things that because of cultures and social upbringing and all this, there are a little differences here but not that they should really matter, I think by and large with people in general there are more similarities than dissimilarities and it is just that we look at the dissimilarities and build up upon it.

H.W.: I think I've asked all the questions I wanted to ask you. What I intentionally intended to do was to give this particular thing and then rework it and then have people look at it again, maybe fill it out, so what do you think of this as an instrumental ? to depict a person's

consciousness, do you think it is adequate or what holes ?? , what did I miss.

E.W.: Well I think to date, such as it is Harry, I think it is pretty well put together. It runs a gamut, I'll say that for it, and then too the thing one has to keep in mind here is what it is going to mean to you, because of the purpose, the purpose is you are attaining your M.A. which is, in order to do this thesis, so therefore, I think it is ~~pretty~~ ^{very} well put together. I wonder if your thesis is going to be based in the light of the questionnaire, if your thesis is going to be based upon similar interviews with Blacks in other parts we'll say, of Nova Scotia and the United States or if neither, just relevant to here.

H.W.: Just relevant to here. ~~What~~ I am trying to do is literature I am trying to derive on Blacks on places like the United States thinking their present state of consciousness and then I am trying to see how Blacks in Nova Scotia are thinking, and I think my big hangup is I don't understand the structural differences between Blacks in the United States and Blacks in Nova Scotia and how this is manifested in different ways of thinking. That is one problem I just haven't decided, that is one problem I am still ~~wrestling~~ ^{wrestling} with. to do is compare what is happening in the United States and what is happening in Nova Scotia. Do you know of any structural differences I should ^{really} take into ~~account~~ account between the two groups?

E.W.: Possibly, beginning with history and the Black individual you are talking to here. I'll explain it this way. I did not grow up as a slave. My mother and father didn't grow up as a slave. My mother's parents were not slaves, my ~~father's~~ father's parents to the best of my knowledge were not slaves, so therefore, there is a different kind of structure here

so that the overall picture might be totally different, for instance, my answers to many questions, might appear to an American Black, "Man this cat is passive, passive-aggressive, pseudo-militant," then too there are some who might say, "This guy is an Uncle Tom," but I think that, and this is not an easy something to do, if a good insight can be left with the reader on all this. There may be Blacks in Nova Scotia whose parents were slaves, I don't know. I would hazard a guess that there are none who could actually say they were slaves themselves there might be somebody who might be of such an age who might have a wealth of information and also have some very definite facts in relations to society that the Black man is presently living in, and say, well look yes, I wasn't but my father and ~~a~~mother were slaves and such and such but I would hazard a guess that such individuals would be few and far between in Nova Scotia so that structurally I think there is something here that would have to be put forth for the reader so to speak. This is one thing that I find very hard to do with anyone of our people I am talking to, myself too, I try not to necessarily parallel the American situation ~~per se~~ and the Nova Scotia situation because in many ways Black Americans have been fighting and struggling for things for years, for generations, whereas the Black man in Nova Scotia has not necessarily to my way of thinking been fighting for things for generations. Many things have been taken for granted, many things were supposed to have been, and maybe it was just that Blacks were ^{not} just standing up and asking for, or saying, I understand such and such is the case, I want this, why haven't I, or why doesn't my community, - something like that and I think that this is a big difference here between the two.