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Oral History Interview on Bloomfield, CT

Jean Buscarello

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Buscarello, Jean. Oral history interview on Bloomfield, CT by Aleesha Young for the Cities, Suburbs, and Schools Project, August 22, 2005. Available from the Trinity College Digital Repository, Hartford Connecticut (<http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp/>).

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Consent form: BuscarelloJean_consent20050822.pdf

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Location: 38 Cliffmount Drive, Bloomfield, CT

Recording format: Cassette tape, to be digitized to MP3 file

File name: n/a

Length: n/a

Transcribed by: Aleesha Young

Additional files: BuscarelloJean_photo20050822.jpg

Abstract: Jean Buscarello reflects on her life in Bloomfield during the 60's and 70's. As a white woman, she speaks of how her children adjusted to the several different moves she made in the Bloomfield area and the public schools they attended. Buscarello states that at the time she lived in the Bloomfield area, there was a large population of white residents, and the number of black students enrolled in Bloomfield public schools has increased over time.

Submitted as part of the OnTheLine web-book by Jack Dougherty and colleagues (<http://OnTheLine.trincoll.edu>).

Speaker key:

AY: Aleesha Young

JB: Jean Buscarello

[all comments by transcriber in brackets]

AY: I am interviewing you because you lived in Bloomfield during the 1960' and 70's, but before we focus on that period, where did you live prior to that?

JB: In Windsor Locks.

AY: Why did you decide to reside in Bloomfield during the 60's and 70's.

JB: Well, our house was small, and we had four children, just had the fourth child.

AY: Did you own your home at time, or did you rent?

JB: We owned.

AY: How did you happen to buy it, do you remember who sold it to you?
[Interviewer should have clarified that she meant 38 Cliffmount Dr]

JB: No, it was 80 Kenwood Circle, but I don't remember who sold it to us.

AY: Were there other housing options that you considered?

JB: We looked at a few others, but we kind of liked this.

AY: Before you lived at Cliffmount, you said you lived on Kenwood Circle?

JB: Kenwood Circle in Bloomfield is where we moved to, we lived in Windsor Locks.

AY: [Interviewer still confused] So you moved from Kenwood Circle to here?

JB: No, Windsor Locks, to Kenwood Circle, and then Kenwood Circle we sold the house and moved to Long Island for a year, and then we moved back to Bloomfield, and we rented a house on Tunxis Avenue while this house was being built, so it was 1970 when we, 1975, I am not sure, I have a sign out there. I think it was 1970 when we moved here.

AY: What kind of work did you and your family do during the 60's and 70's?

JB: I stayed home, took care of the kids.

AY: Do you have children?....I'm sorry, you just said you have , oh, you just said you have kids, 4 kids.

JB: Yes 4.

AY: What are their names?

JB: Donald is the oldest, and then Karen, and then David, and then Denis.

AY: When and where they born?

JB: They were all born at Hartford Hospital.

AY: And where did they attend school?

JB: All in Bloomfield.

AY: Which elementary schools?

JB: Vincent.

AY: What were your experiences with these schools?

JB: I was pleased, as a mother, I think. I belonged to the PTA, it was very nice, the teachers were good.

AY: If your response is any different, what were your children's experiences?

JB: They liked it there I think, and then from there, they went to High School, I don't know if they had the Junior High..they had the Junior High on Park Ave, that's right, my other son went, and then my daughter, I don't know if she went to high school, 9th grade, or 7th grade, I can't remember now...8th grade whether they has the high school or the Junior High, I don't think the Junior High was built yet, but she didn't go to the Park Avenue, maybe she did go to the one which is now Arace School. My younger son went to the middle school, but, the middle school, I didn't like that because they just let you get away with, you know, you could do whatever you wanted, you didn't have to do that you have to just do what you liked, so I wasn't too pleased with the middle school by the time my younger son went there.

AY: And the younger son you are talked about is Dennis?

JB: Yes.

AY: In your view, how has the quality of Bloomfield Public Schools changed since the 1960's?

JB: Well of course, there's a lot more blacks than when we were there. There were some, but, not many. It didn't matter really. So, we didn't experience the population they have now.

AY: Can you tell me about your neighbors on Cliffmount during the 60's and 70's?

JB: Yea, they were very nice. The people across the street were Hanshcon [sp?], and the Noodle's [sp?] lived next door, and the Lowell's. It was a very nice neighborhood.

AY: Was it a racially mixed neighborhood, or was it mostly one race.?

JB: It was mostly white at that time.

AY: Did it change over time?

JB: Not when we were there cause we moved to long island in about 1965 and then when we came back here, we were on Tunxis Avenue. We just rented, so we really didn't know the neighbors there, we were just there while this house was being built. And this was a brand new area when we moved here, and there weren't very many black people, now there's a lot of black and white.

AY: We've read reports about racial steering during this period. Did you experience or witness any of these? Block-busting or racial steering?

JB: What?

AY: Block-busting or racial steering, do you want me to explain?

JB: Yes.

AY: Racial steering is like if a white resident is going to Bloomfield, the realtor will say something negative about Bloomfield to send them to a suburb like Simsbury or like East Hartford [interviewing meant West Hartford]. And blockbusting is...

JB: Oh, block-busting, no we never experienced any of that.

AY: When was the first time you heard about steering or block-busting?

JB: I don't know, 10 years ago. I don't know, we've been here for 35 years, so we never tried to prevent everybody, but some of the real estate agents did.

AY: How did people respond to these events?

JB: Respond to what?

AY: Block-busting and racial steering I am still talking about.

JB: None of my friends really were involved in it. Maybe its because we were older.

AY: Did you ever think about moving from here at anytime?

JB: No. The only time we'll move is when we have to if we get too old.

AY: Did anyone ever encourage you to move?

JB: Well you know people, real estate agents would have ads they send and everything up and everything, but no, nobody' ever encourage us to move.

AY: What has changed in Bloomfield since you've been here? What has remained the same?

JB: Well, I don't know, our church, we have different racial groups in our church. I belong to First Congregational. Not too many, but everybody gets along, and everybody likes everybody and we encourage them to come. And of course the town itself changed, because the main street changed, we have other stores, we've got the new town hall, the library, so, a lot of changes, and then the farmland. You know, there used to be an A.C Petersons, condos when up in different places, that has changed quite a bit, there's a golf course is now wonderful. I don't think really, Everyone is congenial. There has really been any trouble [inaudible].