

We Exist Series 4: African Americans, Maine, and Leisure Activities



Ms. Odessa Barret

Interviewer: - n/a

“Life for me as a child was bitter sweet. I was between the youngest boy and girl so I was never alone. Church was the focal point of our lives. It was a time of "White Only" restrooms and drinking fountains, but we were spared a lot of that because we owned our own car so public transportation was not a worry for us. Traveling food for us was a basket of fried sausage and biscuits if it was morning and fried chicken and bread if it was lunch time. We learned to use the bathroom before we left and take in few fluids because we had to hold it until we could find a restroom. We are talking about a 3-hour drive. We lived in a spacious 3-bedroom house on a corner lot where we grew vegetables and flowers on one side and fruit trees (orange, plum, fig) and flowers on the other. Our playground was the athletic field for the high school that was across the street from our house: the track run, the tennis courts, and baseball diamonds. We lived on the west side of the tracks, the whites lived on the east side. There was no public transportation for our side, so people who worked as domestics walked or were picked up by their employers. I was not affected by this when I was young because my parents were very protective. I became aware as I got older.”

Ms. Odessa Barret (age 53; born 1948 in Port Arthur, Texas; born in a middle-class, blue collar family; moved to Maine in October 1979)

Keywords: family demography, Black Families, Maine

Full Length Interview: https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/aa_hiwimi/17/