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Profile (or Reporter At Large): Bridgehampton Black Community

Calvin Tomkins

11/30/72

IRVING MARSHALL (I)

He lives in the house where he was born, a white frame cottage set back from the Montauk Highway on the outskirts of Bridgehampton, Long Island. The house used to belong to the William Hardacre estate, where Irving Marshall and his father before him worked as gardeners and caretakers -- between them they put in a total of fifty-three years on the property. Marshall bought it from the estate ~~in 1955.~~ (about 1940.) There is a meticulously clipped lawn in front and a garden out back, with cuttings from some of the prize-winning plants that he has raised for different employers. He is a big man who does many things well -- in addition to his skill with plants he is an expert golfer and an accomplished violinist -- but lately an old knee injury has made it hard for him to be as active as he would like to be. His father was black. His mother was a Shinnecook Indian, born on the reservation near Southampton.

"My grandfather on the Marshall side came up here as a a small boy from Kingston, Jamaica," he says, in his deep, resonant voice. "It's a

funny story. One day he sneaked on board a ship because he wanted to see the engines, and by the time he came back up the ship had left. The captain made him cabin boy and brought him to New York. What happened after that I don't ~~know~~ really know. I don't know when he got married or anything about it, except that just before ~~he~~ they came out here he had a job as janitor of the Episcopal Church in Astoria. The family moved to Bridgehampton when my father was seven or eight -- I guess that must have been sometime in the eighteen seventies.

"There were three of us kids in my family -- my older sister, me, and a younger brother. We were all brought up in that garden. I started working for the Hardacres in the summers when I was fourteen. From the time I was twenty-one until I quit two years ago I always had year-round jobs, except one year in 1935 when the folks up there lost their money. I did caddying then. I was private caddy for a fella named Jim McDonnell, who played over at Shinnecock Hills course. One of his sisters married Henry Ford II. He was about eighteen years old, and he played every day.

"I caddied summers, too, whenever I could get away from garden work. Started when I was eight years old, at the Bridgehampton ~~Country~~ Club, the same year it opened. That was in 1901. We used to get paid fifteen cents for nine holes, and we'd build up the tees out of sand and water. Naturally I got interested in playing. They'd let the caddies use the course when nobody else was on it. Why, I even played at the Maidstone Club in East Hampton once, when I was a kid. The pro there then was John Shippen, an Indian from the reservation -- he later married my wife's first cousin. I also played at the Shinnecock Hills course, which I'm told is the oldest in the country. Won the caddies' tournament there one

year -- we had to put up our own money to enter, but I won it back. I don't play too much now because I can't walk too well, I've got a loose cartilage in my knee that makes it hard to walk sometimes. But I play up at ~~Spring Lake~~ Middle Island once a week or so, and in the winter I play here at Bridgehampton -- I've got a winter membership at the ~~club~~ Bridgehampton Club now. They wanted me to join up for the summer, too, but I couldn't afford that. It's a nice course. That's where I made my hole-in-one, in 1967 -- I still have the card for that round. But I don't play well any more. I hit the ball pretty well from tee to green, but I don't put well. I don't care about the score, though -- as long as I'm hitting golf balls I'm happy.

"Anyway, after that one year of full-time caddying in 1935 I went back to doing garden work for different people. And then in nineteen thirty-eight I got a steady job working for Elaine Carrington, the radio scriptwriter. She wrote that serial, 'Pepper Young's Family.' She bought a house down by Sagg Pond, on Quimby Lane, and I worked there for twenty-seven years, first for her and when she died for her son. She was a real garden woman. All those old-time women were gardeners, and nice to work for. They appreciated what you did. They knew you knew what you were doing. It's not like that today, a lot of fellas now don't know the first thing about the garden business. They just get away with it. Same way I was when I first took violin lessons. My father used to play the violin, and my grandfather too. They played for those old-fashioned dances. I picked up my father's violin when I was twelve, and he taught me a few notes, and then I picked up the rest myself. The first piece I ever played by ear was 'Ster Spangled Banner.' Anyway I thought I was playing pretty good until I went to take lessons with Richard ~~Utz~~ Lutz over in Southampton -- I was eighteen then, and he was only about four years older, but he'd

studied with Hans Stitt in Germany and he was a very good teacher. I hadn't been there five minutes before I found out I didn't know the first thing about violin playing. But I kept at it.

"I used to be what they called a 'money-stopper.' I played the violin anywhere I could pick up a couple of bucks -- at churches, at private parties, in dance bands until the sax knocked the violins out. I gave up playing a while back. Then, about nine years ago, they started this South Fork Chamber Orchestra, and I got conned into playing in it. I was working at the Carringtons then, and a young fella named Dinwiddie Smith had just bought the place next door. He was a Harvard graduate, used to come down summers. I always crossed his place when I went to have lunch with the gardeners across the way, and one day when I was coming back he called out and asked me to come and look at his violin. ~~He~~ He showed it to me, and I ran over it a little, and he said something about what a beautiful tone, and then he said, 'Can you come down here Thursday night? Clarinet player's going to be here.' Well, I ~~[illegible]~~ got my violin out of the closet and strung it up and went down, and from then on I just got conned into it. The whole thing started out to be a double quartet. I thought we were just going to have some fun in the evenings, playing a little Mozart and Beethoven, but the first thing I knew they had this organization going and practice was compulsory! For nine years I played in those concerts, but now I've quit. I never would play in the summers -- it was too hot. When it came April I'd tell them I was through. Besides, garden work and violin work don't go together, your hands get all stiff.

"But I've been lucky, really. All the places I worked I was my

own boss. I planned the plantings, did what was needed. The last man I worked for, Mr. Michael Rosenberg, fixed up his estate like nobody else has done here in Bridgehampton. It was a real showplace, nine acres, all landscaped. He and his wife would come here the first week in May and stay until the first week in October, when they went on to another place they had in Port Antonio, Jamaica. We never saw them all winter. The four of us -- there were four gardeners on the place -- would just sit in the greenhouse all winter and look at each other. Only thing Mr. Rosenberg ever told me was that he didn't want any pink flowers.

"My father used to say that the old-timers in Bridgehampton didn't want the rich people coming in. They were farmers, mostly, and they wanted to keep the farms the way they were. The rich went to Southampton and East Hampton, and that was all right with the people here. And now we've got millionaire farmers, although you wouldn't know it to look at them. Land down at Sagaponack is worth twenty-five thousand dollars an acre, they tell me; you can't touch it. Why, when Harry Fay died down there a few years back it turned out he was a millionaire! He came up from just farming. I went to school with Harry Fay. He played third base on the high school team and I played shortstop. His brother Ben pitched and another brother, John, caught. We used to play Saturday afternoons, and they'd always be the last ones to get there because their father worked them so hard. We had good teams in those days, too -- only lost two games in two years. After I quit school I pitched two summers for the East Hampton village team, the two best summers of my life and I'll never forget them. And then for a while I pitched for the Maidstone Club team. The catcher was Christian Herter. John Drew, the actor, used to watch every game, and sometimes he'd come out to the mound and con-

gratulate me afterward." Marshall laughed softly, sitting in his arm chair by the window. Born a generation later, he could easily have become a professional athlete. In the winters he played ice hockey. East Hampton, Southampton, Bridgehampton and several other towns in the East End used to get up teams and play each other on the frozen ponds, using makeshift equipment. An old hockey injury left him with a bad shoulder that aches to this day -- it used to make it hard for him to play the slow movement of a violin piece, but he says it never interfered with his golf swing.

"These Polish farmers around here," Marshall went on, reflectively, "they started with nothing and some of them have come all the way up, too.

~~gratulate me afterward~~.

"~~These Polish farmers around here have come up from nothing, too. I remember when they first started to move here.~~ They came over from Poland where everything was done by hand. And they got on some of those old farms that the farmers had starved to death on, and brought them up with hard work. You see, the American people, after they got so far, they weren't going to do any more hard work. But the Polish didn't mind, and their wives were out there helping them. There was a lot of feeling against the Poles then. The first one that got married here, to a woman in Southampton, you'd have thought the world was coming to an end. But the Polish stuck together, formed an organization, got into politics. And then of course the second World War came along, and the Polish got knocked around by the Germans, and the Polish here had to have somebody to pick on so they picked on the colored.

"Now, of course, lots of people are upset about the colored here. The Bridgehampton school is seventy per cent black. ~~I mean~~ The whites are pulling their kids out of school, sending them somewhere else. Bryan Hamlin came up to me the other day and said, 'I hear the colored are taking over the school.' I said if that's the case they must have a pretty poor principal and pretty poor teachers. Bryan and I have been friends for years, used to play a lot of golf together. We get into some pretty heated conversations, too, but it doesn't change anything. I don't know. We've lived here all our life -- my wife died in 1967 -- and always went to the white church in town, the Presbyterian Church. Some of the black people here who've come up from Virginia, I guess they thought we ought to quit and go to the Baptist Church, but I wasn't brought up a Baptist. My mother's aunt joined the Presbyterian Church here in 1885 -- it's in the old records -- and now I'm a trustee there.

When I was a kid, there was a colored maid up at one of the big houses, who sat about four rows up from where we sat in church. The minister sent her a letter telling her not to sit so far forward. Well, things change. A man got up at a church meeting not long ago and said, 'When you get ten colored people in a community, then the race issue comes up.' It's come up in Bridgehampton, no doubt about that." ~~How it's going to go now, I haven't the foggiest idea.~~"

BRYAN HAMLIN

Bridgehampton's lovely old village green was broken up for commercial development more than a hundred years ago. All that remains of it is a stubby concrete monument in the middle of the Montauk Highway, commemorating the dead of several wars and the village's founding date of 1660 (which conflicts with the 1656 date on the highway markers at the edge of town). If you are driving east on the highway, you can turn right at the monument and follow Ocean Road straight down to the beach. Once past the Bridgehampton Club with its rolling greens and its neat patchwork of tennis courts, the landscape opens up. Potato fields stretch away on both sides of the road as far as the eye can see. The farmers around here say the potato industry in Suffolk County is dying, but eastern Suffolk still has thirty thousand acres of potato land under cultivation, and in a few areas such as this you can still see the fields running right down to the edge of the dunes. Much of

the land is owned now by speculators, who lease it back to the farmers while they wait for its value to go even higher.

The first road to the left after the ~~Country~~ Bridgehampton Club is Bridge Lane, which leads to Sagaponack. A bridge built across Sagg Pond in 1686 connected the tiny settlements of Sagaponack and Necox, ~~[illegible]~~ offshoots of the original Southampton ~~[illegible]~~ colony, and gave Bridgehampton its name. The bridge builder, a wheelwright named Ezekiel Sandford, ~~[illegible]~~ built himself a house in Bridge Lane in 1680, and it is still there. Sagaponack takes its name from ~~[illegible]~~ an Indian word for "place where the big ground nuts grow." It was founded in 1656, sixteen years after the ~~[illegible]~~ founding of Southampton, and, while technically part of Bridgehampton, it maintains its own post office, its village green, its one-room schoolhouse, and its independent outlook. Sagaponack farmers flew the Confederate flag during the Civil War. They also refused for many years to recognize daylight saving time. ~~[illegible]~~ Real estate developers and some of the East Hampton summer people consider Sagaponack the coming place.

The ~~next~~ second left after Bridge Lane is Quimby Lane, a winding residential street with some new houses on it and some very old ones. Bryan Hamlin lives in one of the oldest, a pre-Revolutionary, wood-shingled farmhouse that he and his wife had moved from its original site near the railroad station. Bryan Hamlin is a partner in the Bridgehampton law firm of Hamlin, Michne, Espach, and Birdwhistle, whose offices are next to the ~~[illegible]~~ Bridgehampton National bank. His wife's family, the Bishops, have been living in ~~[illegible]~~ Bridgehampton for generations, but Hamlin is from Rutherford, New Jersey, and to this day he is something of an anomaly in town, a liberal thorn in the conservative flesh. He sometimes says he has spent his life fighting for lost causes.

Bryan Hamlin was a pursuit pilot in the First World War. He flew ~~[illegible]~~

with the 141st air squadron, whose leading ace was the Princeton football and hockey player Hobey Baker; Baker has been one of Hamlin's heroes ever since, although Hamlin (who was a Williams man, Class of 1917) had started even then to develop a certain mistrust of military authority. "When I was still in training," he explains, "I read a book by John Galsworthy about the Crimean War. It got me to thinking about the oath of allegiance you take to support your country right or wrong. So I wrote a letter to my commanding officer saying I'd support the country if I thought it was right but not if I thought it was wrong. He called me in. He told me I had a choice -- either I could be discharged and go home, or I could be a private in the infantry. I said in that case I'd be a private in the infantry. But then later, my friends talked me out of that, and I went on and became a pilot."

Hamlin got married soon after the war and moved out to Bridgehampton, where he settled down to practice law and play competitive tennis. He has won and continues, at the age of seventy-eight, to win tournaments up and down the eastern seaboard, and he can still beat good players half or one-third his age in singles. Hamlin is so well-known and so well-liked in town that he has occasionally entertained ideas of running for public office. Once he did run for Justice of the Peace, and was badly beaten. The problem is that he is a registered Democrat, which in the East End of Long Island is looked upon as a serious misfortune. East End fishermen refer to Spiny Boxfish as "Democrats" because they are notoriously prickly and hard to handle. Suffolk is the only county outside Maine and Vermont that went for Alf Landon in 1936, it has delivered thumping majorities for Richard Nixon each time he ran, and the only Democrats who get elected are those who bear this well in mind. Everybody likes ~~Mr.~~ Bryan, but not even his closest neighbors are likely

to vote for a man who has drawn up strongly worded petitions against Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, brought a black man to the Maidstone Club in East Hampton as his tennis guest (the club requested and received his resignation afterward), pressed the Bridgehampton Fire Department year after year to accept a black volunteer (no progress to date), and, since the early nineteen sixties, spoken out in public, taken full-page ads in the Times, and agitated in every way he could think of against the war in Vietnam.

For many years Hamlin was just about the only white man in Bridgehampton to take an active interest in the local black community. "I just think they're human beings," he has said. "My people used to be interested in the Hampton Institute, down in Virginia. I taught there for a year right after the first World War -- a course in sociology. Had forty black students in the class. They gave me some trouble at first, so I challenged them all to a fight. The whole class, them against me. That quieted things down, and I didn't have any more trouble afterward."

The black community in Bridgehampton, which now accounts for about half the town's population (of 1,800) has seemed until quite recently to be about as docile as Hamlin's old sociology class, although not, perhaps, for the same reasons. With the exception of a few families such as the Marshalls, most of the black people ~~came~~ here came originally as seasonal farm workers. Those who have been around the longest began coming up from Virginia and North Carolina about 1920 or earlier, ~~In those days they made~~ making their own arrangements with the Long Island farmers, who would pay and house them from early June until the end of the potato harvest in September. A few of the southern black families liked it here -- liked the climate, the

pay, and the treatment they received from the local farmers -- and decided to stay on. Most of them managed eventually to get out of farm work, although the number of non-farm jobs available in the East End was and still is severely limited. The women could get domestic work in white households during the summer months, and many did so; for a black man, the only real alternative to digging potatoes or mowing lawns in the summer was to save enough money to set up a small business -- auto body work, house painting, carpentry, trucking, etc. White stores in Bridgehampton, (under pressure from the black community, are now starting to hire a few) black employees.

During the second World War, the scarcity of available farm labor led for the first time to the large-scale importation of black migrants. They were recruited in the south by black crew chiefs who transported them from state to state as they followed the crops, housed them in jerry-built camps, fed them, and deducted from their wages the costs of these services. Although the use of migrants on Long Island has declined steadily since the introduction of the mechanized potato harvesting combines about 1958, more than two thousand seasonal workers still come into eastern Suffolk county each year, to work in the potato warehouses from September to April (their season has been reversed), and the conditions under which they work and live are, if anything, worse than ever. The crew chiefs in recent years have gone out of their way to recruit alcoholics, some from the rural ghettoes in the south but an increasing number from the slums of the larger eastern cities. Alcoholics are easier to control, and they can usually be paid in cheap wine. Under the circumstances, it seems almost incredible that a migrant should be able to break away from what amounts to permanent peonage, find another job, and establish a place for himself and his family in the community, but ever since they started coming to Long Island a few migrants have

managed to do so, with little or no help from the white residents or, for that matter, from the older established blacks.

In the late forties and early fifties, when large numbers of migrants were still coming into the county each summer, conditions in the camps became difficult to ignore. Young children were left alone

in the fields or locked up in cars all day while both parents worked. In 1950 a ~~[illegible]~~ fire in a twelve-by-twenty foot chicken coop housing fourteen migrants killed two migrant children. The Bridgehampton Community Council, an all-white body, decided that something would have to be done. A day care center for migrant children seemed the appropriate solution; the trouble was, nobody wanted to have it located near his property. Eventually Dr. Binga Dismond, a black doctor who lived in Sag Harbor (in one of the summer colonies there patronized by well-to-do black professional people), offered to turn over a house that he owned on the Sag Harbor Turnpike, for a nominal rent, to be used as a child care center, and the offer was promptly accepted. The Bridgehampton Child Care Center was established in 1950, with Bryan Hamlin as president of its board of directors. Two years later it moved into larger quarters on six acres of farmland that Mrs. Charles Brush Walmsley, a summer resident of Bridgehampton, had bought for this purpose from a farmer named William Scibek. Hamlin arranged the legal details of the sale and transfer, which entailed a mortgage that the Center would undertake to pay off. But when Mrs. Walmsley died soon afterward, her will provided that the mortgage would be paid in full by her estate, as a result of which the Center now owns the property free and clear.

Hamlin served as president of the Center's board for several years. Although still active on the board today, he has his doubts about the Center's recent emergence as the focus of a black identity movement that has been exerting considerable pressure on the Bridgehampton public school. More than forty white children have been taken out of the school in the last three years, and Hamlin is concerned about what may happen in the future. "The blacks are stronger than the whites, I mean physically, and they don't worry about hitting girls," Mr. Hamlin says. "The ~~school~~

colored have taken over at the Center and they've taken over at the school, too. It's a mess. This problem of getting along with the colored is very difficult. The whole country -- it's hard for the black and the white to get along. They have a whole different outlook on life. They haven't cottoned up to us -- not that we're so perfect or knowledgable, with that damn war in Vietnam. The world's in a kind of chaos, and I wish I knew what to do about it."

THE TURNPIKE

Bear left at the Bridgehampton monument, away from the ocean, and you will be on the Sag Harbor Turnpike. Most of the black families live on the Turnpike or near it. Except for one stretch it looks like any other country road around here, with one-family houses set back behind low hedges or wooden fences. The bad stretch is just beyond the railroad tracks, about a half mile from town.

In the dilapidated rooming houses on Narrow Lane (the sign reads "Opened 1765"), black men who have left the migrant labor camps live more miserably, if anything, than they did in the camps. Sister Maureen Michaels, who works with the eastern Suffolk migrants on behalf of The Dominican Sisters for the Sick Poor, has found as many as nine men living in a single room there. In one house she found a man who was paying seventy-two of his monthly welfare allotment of eighty-four dollars to sleep on a couch in the common living room. Some of the ex-migrants

are seriously ill. Tuberculosis, diabetes and epilepsy are prevalent, the symptoms usually compounded by alcholism. (Whether or not there is more alcoholism on the other side of Montauk Highway, the white side, is perhaps an open question).

A little further on, where Sunrise Avenue meets the Turnpike in a jumble of shacks, there is a small, one-room store known as "The Corner." It is not really a store. Inside there is a pool table and a juke box. The customers sit on the front steps or in the cars that are parked outside at almost any hour of the day or night. Now and then The Corner gets raided by the Suffolk County Police 7th Squad, which deals with drug cases and other serious felonies. The Corner is reportedly the center of heroin dealing in this area.

A lot of black people would like to see The Corner driven out of business. "It's the downfall of the black community," John Johnson, an auto body mechanic (who became, in 1972, the Bridgehampton Child Care Center's first black president) has said. "Black people out here didn't know anything about drugs until about two years ago. That place ought to be busted every hour on the hour. A while ago there was a bunch of white college kids coming around, and the cops busted it six times in one day. That got rid of the whites. But the cops don't want to get rid of The Corner -- they figure it keeps the junkies out there where they want them, out of the center of town."

Reverend Robert W. Battles, Jr., the greatly respected white minister of Bridgehampton's three-hundred-year-old Presbyterian Church, believes that if the black people organized a petition they could have The Corner closed down. "There was all that anxiety about traffic on the Turnpike, which led to their petitioning the County Legislature and getting a sidewalk put in," he points out. "The Corner is a lot more dangerous than the

cars." But the issue is a complex one. Although a good many of the minor robberies and burglaries that account for Bridgehampton's modest crime rate are probably drug-inspired, nobody is particularly concerned as yet because drugs have not become a significant problem in the school. The police, for their part, can't make an arrest unless they catch someone in the act of selling the drug; the 7th Squad has an undercover black agent, but few arrests have been made. The Corner does not appear to be in any immediate jeopardy.

Beyond Sunrise Avenue, the houses are larger and better kept up. The black families who live along here -- Hopsons, Robinsons, Turners, and others -- came relatively early to Bridgehampton, in the nineteen twenties or before. They own their houses, they work in the neighborhood, and they see to it that their children finish high school. High school graduations are major events in these families, the occasion for big parties and lavish gift-giving. The Bridgehampton Child Care and Recreation Center is a little further down the road, in a converted farmhouse and two converted barns, with a stretch of cleared land out back for basketball and softball. Once past the Center, the houses thin out until you come to Huntington Crossways, where a number of black families have built houses within the last five years. Two miles further on, the Turnpike runs into Sag Harbor, with its well-to-do black summer colonies and its 93.9 percent white public schools.

JAMES ROBINSON

It is somewhat misleading to speak of "the black community" in Bridgehampton. Black people there observe as many social [illegible] as the whites do on their side -- those who moved here in the [illegible] twenties or earlier tend to look on things differently from [illegible] came more recently, and the young, as might be expected, [illegible] with their elders. Lately, however, black residents have shown an increasing inclination to work together for common goals, and one result has been the Hampton Black Business Associates, Inc., [illegible] in 1971 to promote black commercial activities in the area and to help young blacks start new businesses of their own. This organization's founder and guiding spirit, to nobody's surprise, is James (Jimmy) Robinson, one of the few black men of the older generation who [illegible] to get along fine with everybody.

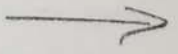
Jimmy Robinson's great-grandfather, John Robinson, was Virginia's first black state senator, serving from 1869 to 1875. The family is still a large and prominent one down there, and Jimmy keeps in close touch with his relatives; like most of the families on the Turnpike, he and his wife, Lily, go south at least once a year to visit. Jimmy was the first member of the family to settle in the north. While stationed at Camp Upton on Long Island [illegible] prior to going overseas in the first World War, he decided he liked the looks of the area and wanted to come back. He did so right after the war, coming up summers to work on potato farms in the [illegible], and then, in [illegible] years after Jimmy was born, he brought his family to Bridgehampton.

good.

After graduating from the Bridgehampton public school, Jimmy served for two years and a half in the Navy, then returned and married a Southampton girl who came originally from ~~[illegible]~~ his part of Virginia. He went to work for the post office in Bridgehampton; today he is the Assistant Postmaster. ~~[illegible]~~ He also started a taxi business that has done ~~[illegible]~~ reasonably well over the years, with five cars operating during the summer season. The Robinsons live in a comfortable house on the Turnpike, and their granddaughter, who lives with them, goes to the private Hampton Day School. They have worked very hard for a good many years. "I'll tell you, black people have really pulled themselves up around here," Jimmy said not long ago. "They've broken away from farm work, they've built themselves homes, really nice places. And it's all been done through hard work. Some of the whites feel that we don't want anything, don't want to better ourselves. But I say we've gained as much in the last twenty-five years as they have, almost. And I definitely believe that as time goes by, and we become more cohesive, more things will be demanded."

~~The feel is that until the Child Care Center began putting pressure~~ on the school a few years ago, black people in Bridgehampton had done very little demanding of any kind. (with the Centers backing) In 1969, the black parents successfully petitioned the school board to provide bus service for children who lived one mile from the school (it had been two miles before), and soon afterwards, surprised and encouraged by their victory, they began pressing for a sidewalk. People who lived on the Turnpike had worried for years that their children walking along the Turnpike's ~~[illegible]~~ narrow shoulder would be hit by passing cars. The Sidewalk Task Force, organized in 1970 with Jimmy Robinson as ~~[illegible]~~ president, got a petition signed by virtually ~~[illegible]~~

The fact is that until the Child Care Center began putting pressure on the school a few years ago, black people in Bridgehampton had done very little demanding of any kind. They bore the small daily humiliations with dignity -- not protesting, for example, when the white check-out cashier at the ~~supermarket~~ grocery store chose to wait on white shoppers behind them in line. They seemed scarcely to have heard of the civil rights ~~movement~~ movement's more militant successors in the urban communities (the framed photographs in their houses are of Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy), ~~and~~ and to this day they show no visible resentment of their year-round white neighbors or of the vast influx of white summer residents; the blacks, in fact, rarely bother to use the famous Long Island beaches in summer, although there is nothing to prevent them from doing so. In 1969, ~~however~~, with the encouragement of the Child Care Center, the black parents successfully petitioned the school board to provide bus service for children who lived one mile or more from the school (it had been two miles before), and soon afterwards, surprised and encouraged by ~~this~~ victory, they began pressing for a sidewalk along the Turnpike. People who lived on the Turnpike had worried for years about their children being hit by cars as they walked along the ~~Turnpike's narrow shoulder~~. The Sidewalk Task Force, organized in 1970 with Jimmy Robinson as president, got a petition signed by virtually



every family on the Turnpike, and took it to a meeting of the County Legislature in Riverhead. "We found it was a lot easier than we thought to do something like that," Robinson said afterward. At its next meeting the Legislature appropriated $42,000 for a Turnpike sidewalk, and the work was completed the following summer.

The Hampton Black Business Associates, Inc. has also won a few modest victories. Approached by two of its members, the manager of the Bridgehampton IGA ~~xxxxx~~ market shortly thereafter hired two black employees. Robinson himself got in touch with the management of the W.T. Grant Company, which was opening a ~~xxx~~ store in the new Plaza East shopping center west of town. In his letter he pointed out that unemployment among black people in Suffolk County was running about twice as high as it was among whites (12% to 14% for blacks, 7% for whites), and that, while he did not question Grant's employment practices, the H.B.B.A. felt that all companies moving into the area should make an extra effort to hire black residents "to both clerical and managerial positions." The ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ company wrote back promptly, promising full cooperation.

Although the success of these initial ventures in community organization has, in itself, helped to change attitudes along the Turnpike, Robinson ~~is not what could be described as overly optimistic about the~~ himself sounds a little discouraged when he talks about the future. "This place is getting harder and harder for the people who live here, whites as well as blacks," he says. "There's no industry to speak of, and not enough jobs, and prices keep going up. There doesn't seem to be any chance of getting the kind of low-cost housing we need, although I note that ~~they can put~~ they're putting up condominium apartments over ~~near Southampton~~ by Mecox that cost fifty thousand dollars a unit. I don't know where the whole nation is going, anyway, what with anti-busing and all the rest -- eventually

we may be back worse than we were before."

THOMAS HOPSON

The Hopson family is probably the largest on the Turnpike. Thomas and Rufus Hopson and their married sister, Florence Turner, have lived most of their lives here -- their father brought them up from Drewryville, Virginia in 1928, when Tom was thirteen -- and all three have raised substantial families of their own. The Hopsons are known for saying what they think, and their opinions carry a lot of weight in the community. On the day Martin Luther King was shot, Tom Hopson and Junior Brown, who runs the American service station, went into town and talked to the black teenagers who were setting fires in the streets and possibly working themselves up to more violent expressions of their anger and grief. According to Junior Brown, it was Hopson who got through to the kids and persuaded them to cool things and go home.

Tom Hopson, whose nickname is "Turk," spent eighteen months in the Pacific during the second World War, as a staff sergeant in the 93rd (all black) Infantry Division. He was in action at Guadalcanal, Biak, Leyte, Hollandia. When he got out of the service in 1945 he came home and went to work for a white carpenter named Al Lindell. In 1952 he started his own carpentry and contracting business. Hopson built the house that he and his family live in, a well-designed and landscaped ranch house directly across the Turnpike from Jimmy Robinson's. Of the Hopson's

seven children, three have gone to college and one daughter is in nursing school. Alexander Thomas Hopson, Jr., the oldest son, is at Howard University Law School. "That boy borrowed the money to send himself through college," his father ~~said~~ notes with pride. "I think he made up his mind he was going to do that from the start. He's had greater determination than the others. Of course their mother's been real firm, and I guess I was pretty strict -- stricter than I am now. Our father and mother didn't pay ~~me~~ their kids as much attention as we do. They weren't pushing them so hard to get their schooling. Only the whites went to college in those days, anyway -- there wasn't that much money around."

Not that there is much more of it around today. "The bank here in town has always been tight, with whites as well as blacks. You see all those houses on the Turnpike -- I bet not a single ~~Negro~~ black got a mortgage on his house through that ~~bankcorp~~ bank; they had to go through the construction company up in Riverhead. Now, since the black movement got started here, I hear ~~they might~~ the Bank will do something. I'd like to see a black man on the board of that bank, so he could look over my mortgage application and see if I was getting a good deal. An awful lot of the bank's customers are black people. You'll never ~~[illegible]~~ see that, though. Now they're talking about hiring a black cashier, which is just window dressing."

Some people say that Tom Hopson resigned from the board of the Hampton Black Business Associates because he found he was not able to dominate its proceedings. Hopson's explanation is that the H.B.B.A. was trying to move into areas, such as low-cost housing, where it couldn't possibly achieve anything constructive. Hopson doesn't believe that the white people of Bridgehampton will ever acquiesce to low-cost housing developments for blacks, even if the blacks could ~~ever~~ manage

to work together and press for it. "Black people are hard to get together on an issue," he says, shaking his head in amusement. Florence Turner, his sister, could almost certainly have won election to the school board in 1970 if the black people had come out and voted for her; they didn't come out, and she lost.

"Talk is no good anyway," Hopson says. "In my opinion the only thing that really helped blacks anywhere was demonstrations. The N.A.A.C.P. has lost half its membership. They never accomplished anything around here. Neither did the Muslims -- they used to be out on the street corners here every weekend, selling their paper, but so far as I know they never organized anybody."

Around town, the word is that the Muslims and the Panthers gave up on this area because of people like Hopson, who don't like outsiders coming in and ~~pretending~~ trying to deal with local problems. Hopson is about as impressed with professional militants as he is with the two integration-minded blacks who have been hand-picked (so he believes) by the whites to be on the school board. "I don't call them blacks," he says. "They're not even colored. They just think they're the same as the white men."

INSERT: "NELLIE PARKER"

SAMUEL O'Neal

About three quarters of a mile down the Turnpike from the Hopson's house, Huntington Crossways branches off to the left. It is a new street, most of the houses on it having gone up within the last five years, and at first glance it looks like a thousand other ~~such~~ streets in white suburbs. The houses are small, the front yards nicely landscaped, and there are usually a lot of children in evidence. A few of the men who live here work for Rowe In-

~~one-floor ranch houses, and there are usually a lot of children in evidence. Some of the people who live here have jobs with Rowe Industries or Sag Harbor Industries in Sag Harbor, the only two factories~~ in the area that employ unskilled labor. Some are on welfare except during the summer months, when they find work with landscape contractors in East Hampton or Southampton, cutting the lawns of the summer people. ~~Most of them are former farm workers who came up from the South in the nineteen forties or later to work on the potato farms, and who have managed~~ Virtually all of them came up from the south in the nineteen forties or later to work on the potato farms, and have managed only recently to move out of the migrant labor camps and into houses of their own.

Samuel and Beulah ~~O'Neill~~ O'Neal and their five children moved into their house in the late summer of 1972. It is a five-room shingled pre-fab towards the end of the street, on a half-acre lot that looks out, in back, on dense oak woods. The house cost $16,600 to build, plus $3,500 for the lot and an additional $475.60 (which O'~~Neill~~ Neal had to pay in advance, in cash) for extra drilling needed to put in the water line. ~~The O'Neills~~ The O'Neals did a lot of the work themselves on weekends -- painting, landscaping, clearing the brush in back. They were able to finance the construction through a government loan from the Farmers Home Administration, which they will pay off in monthly installments over the next thirty-five years (((???))). The payments are manageable, ~~O'Neill~~ O'Neal says. "They don't rise above what we were paying in rent, and we do better on taxes."

Until they moved the ~~O'Neills~~ O'Neals had been living in a four-room shack on the Rosko Produce Farm on Butter Lane, Bridgehampton. Compared to other such accomodations it was not too bad. "It wasn't a ~~camp~~," ~~O'Neill~~ O'Neal says; a camp, in his definition, is a barracks that is "strictly for exploitation." They had hot and cold running water, and some heat from a kerosene stove

in the winter. (The rent was $50. a month.) Both the ~~O'Neills~~ O'Neals are originally from North Carolina. They started coming to Long Island to work seasonally in the late forties, and liked the climate. In 1947 they got married and moved into ~~him~~ one of the shacks on the Rosko farm, and they have been working for Rosko ever since. These days they work ~~there~~ (in the potato sheds) from about the middle of August right through the winter, sorting potatoes, filling bags, loading trucks. It is hard, monotonous work, and the hours are very long -- they start at seven-thirty in the morning and often they don't get home until seven at night. The pay is $2.50 an hour, with no increase for overtime.

During the summer Samuel works for one of the local landscaping contractors. "If you don't have any bills to pay you can go on welfare and take the summer off, but I have bills to pay so I work. I pay my bills." He feels that he and his family are definitely better off now that they have their own house. "I have more freedom. If I want to get a job somewhere else, I can. My family has more freedom. We have a television in the living room, and if the kids want to look at TV and we don't, they have their own set back there. What I mean, there's freedom of privacy."

The O'Neals can't afford a car, which makes them dependent on their neighbors for transportation (one of the great drawbacks of living in the East End is the lack of public transportation). The Child Care Center has been a great ~~help~~ boon to them; the Center's bus picks up their children every day after school and returns them in the evening, and in the summer the kids spend most of the day there. O'Neal ~~O'Neill~~ feels his family is ~~they are~~ doing about as well as could be expected, although there is no assurance that this will continue to be the case. "If my wife gets sick, or if one of the kids gets sick and has to go to the hospital,

there's eighty-five dollars a day right there and I don't have anything to pay it with. No savings, no hospitalization. There's no guarantee, you understand. I can't guarantee that I'm going to go to work on Monday and find I still have a job, and I don't have anything to fall back on." ~~All I really have to go on is hope.~~"

He talks rapidly, volubly, and without a hint of bitterness. For reasons that would dishearten a labor organizer, he has no interest in finding some other line of work: "You take me out of farm work and you got to train me for something else. And by the time you do that it's going to cost you more money than it's worth. There isn't any profit in it. Now they're talking about organizing the farm workers out here, forming a union. I wish they wouldn't. If they organize the farm workers for anything except improving the farmer's productivity, it's just going to end up as exploitation. You got to let the farmers reach a level where they can produce at a profit. If the union comes in and organizes the farm labor, there won't be any farms left on Long Island. You just couldn't profit by it, any way."

One of the new obstacles that O'Neal sees standing in the way of economic improvement for people like him is what he calls "this change from 'negro' to 'black.'" As he explains it, "If you're black, you can call the white man names, and condemn him and all his works, but then you're hurting yourself, too, because your job and your improvement depends on his. The negro feels that if he helps the white man and does the best he can, he's really helping himself. The way I see it, the system is going to prevail, no doubt about that. Trying to change the system just won't work, ~~never~~ not ever. And the system don't very -- it's upward but not outward. You've just got to have faith, somehow."

ANTHONY TISKA

Anthony Tiska's parents were going on faith when they emigrated from Poland in 1900. They made their way out to the East End of Long Island, took whatever jobs they could find, and eventually saved enough money to lease a small [redacted] abandoned farm. They had nine children. When both his parents died in 1925, Anthony, who was then fourteen, quit grade school and went to work. He tended the greens at the Maidstone Club. He dug and packed potatoes on other people's farms. He leased some land, farmed it, bought it, and added to it. Today he owns and farms about two hundred and fifty acres of potato land, not counting the hundred acres that he gave to his son some years ago. His son, Anthony Tiska, Jr., graduated from Bridgehampton High School (where he played ball with Carl Yastrzemski, the Red Sox slugger, the town's best-known native son), and went on to get a degree in engineering from Union College; he also served for three years in the Air Force, but after that he decided to come back home and grow potatoes.

Some of the black people in Bridgehampton remember how much feeling there was against the [redacted] Polish emigrants in the old days. "When I first came here in 1923," Tom Hopson recalls, "the average white person would rather have seen me walk in the front yard than any Pole." Hard work, self-discipline, and thrift paid off in time, though, and success brought social acceptance. It is sometimes hard for men like

Tony Tiska to understand why ~~[illegible]~~ things should be any different for the blacks.

A lean, thoughtful, friendly man who ~~[illegible]~~ is active on the Southampton Town Planning Board, Tiska wishes something could be done about the conditions on Narrow Lane and Sunrise Avenue. For years, he says, the Planning Board has ~~[illegible]~~ wanted to buy up a number of the shacks there, including The Corner, fix them up, and either lease or sell them back to the former owners. "But the owners won't sell. Some of these college kids now who come in work for VISTA, they see that situation and they think they can go in and clean it right up. But after a year or so they learn that these people are human beings with the same rights they have. You can't change people who don't want to be changed. The fellow who owns that place, The Corner, said, 'There's no such thing as cleaning up a ghetto, because some people want to live in a ghetto.' That's what he told us. 'We got to have our ghetto,' is what he said. There have been all sorts of schemes to help these people, but the problem is more complicated than it seems."

Tiska served for nine years on the Bridgehampton school board, at a time (1945-1954) when ~~[illegible]~~ black students were still in the minority. Race ~~[illegible]~~ was not a problem then, he says. ~~[illegible]~~. "We treated them fair -- didn't give in to them, but at the same time they got their rights. Of course, they had more discipline then, both the colored and the white kids. Today you can't seem to reach the parents or the kids.

"I don't know, I had to come up all the way myself. I always figured that the opportunity is there, and if they don't learn what can we do about it? There are some that learn -- why don't the others?"

ROBERT NORTH

Sag Harbor Hills was established about thirty years ago as a summer community for black people who had made it in white America. Doctors, lawyers, and other professionals predominate here, as they do in the neighboring communities of Azur Rest, Lighthouse Lane, and Nineveh Beach, each of which maintains its own private beaches on the bay, ~~Peconic Bay~~. Robert North, the son of a successful New York dentist, spent many summers here when he was growing up. Later he graduated from Middlebury College in Vermont and went on to get his D.D.S. degree at New York University, but instead of going into private practice he accepted, in 1967, a job as director of the Bridgehampton Child Care Center. North had worked as a counsellor in the Center's day camp for several summers, during which he had come to know ~~many~~ of the Turnpike families and some of their problems. The main problem, he felt, was a lack of effective leadership ~~in~~ among the black people.

Since 1960 the Center had been operating only during the summers, as a day camp for children of the area. In theory it was open to white as well as to black children, but few whites ever came. James

Gambles, the Center's current director, remembers that when he was going to the Bridgehampton school and working summers as a counsellor in the day camp, he and the other counsellors used to hold a few jobs open for their white classmates who had said they wanted them, but that in the end the whites never showed up. The Center's board of directors had become integrated by this time, however, (in 1950 it was all-white), and early in 1969 North submitted to the board a detailed proposal for an expanded, year-round program. It is an interesting document. In it, North noted the "mounting frustration and hopelessness in the black community, especially among the young who feel shut off from the affluence surrounding them." While some of the black people had achieved a measure of economic security, North observed, the majority was still living under degrading conditions, a virtually invisible island of poverty in the midst of one of the most fashionable and expensive summer resorts in the East, and as their frustration increased, so did the possibility of racial violence. By providing badly-needed recreational and educational facilities for young children and teenagers, North said, the Center could help to defuse this threat.

Racial violence was not something that anybody in Bridgehampton liked to think about. There had been one or two minor incidents up to that time -- a brief fracas at the Firemen's Fair in 1967; a fist fight at a teen-age party at the Community House a year later -- but very few people, black or white, could conceive of a serious racial clash taking place in Bridgehampton, and very few can conceive of it today. North's proposal did not emphasize this issue, at any rate, and North was careful to point out that what he proposed was not a separatist program. One of the Center's new goals, he said, would be "to end polarization

and reopen communication between black and white;" another would be to enable Bridgehampton's black youth "to function freely in an environment other than a black one." He was quoted by Newsday soon afterward as saying that the Center's new militance was not the "hate whitey" kind, but rather "the internal kind designed to make changes downtown [the white community] by showing them what we can do to help ourselves." From the start, though, North tried hard to make young blacks think differently about themselves -- to expect more and demand more, as well as to take pride in their black identity -- and his program, which the board very largely accepted, has had a somewhat polarizing effect on black and white attitudes in Bridgehampton.

Under North, the Center became the focus of a rapidly developing black "awareness" -- the polite term for militance. The summer camp now attracts upwards of eighty children a day, five days a week. There is also an active year-round day care program for young children, and a program for older children that includes college advisory service, career counselling, job training, drama, discussion groups, remedial reading and tutorial help, teen-age parties and dances, trips to museums and other facilities, and various sports activities. The Center has its own softball and basketball teams, which play teams from other towns in the area; a number of black ball players have quit the (integrated) Bridgehampton Little League because they prefer to play for the Center. Although the day care and summer camp programs are financed by the Social Services Department of Suffolk County, the recreation program depends entirely on private contributions, which so far have come mostly from the white summer residents. Elliott Ogden, a recent (white) president of the Center's board, has expressed the view that summer residents who spend as much as $7,000 for a three-month rental out here might well contribute a good deal more than they

do, but he concedes, ruefully, that without their support the Center would have had to cut its program severely; the year-round residents give virtually nothing.

North applied for and received in ~~1968~~ 1969 a grant from VISTA, which now pays the salary of the Center's director and that of the half dozen or more VISTA volunteers who spend up to two years working in the community, and whose youthful energy and enthusiasm has been admired and resented in about equal measure by the inhabitants. Because North and his ~~own~~ successors have focussed their attention primarily on the school, and on what they considered its shortcomings with regard to black students, a lot of the resentment felt toward them emanates from there.

In Bob North's estimation the Bridgehampton Public School was one major reason for the failure of ~~the~~ local blacks to do as well, say, as the Polish emigrants. The school, he maintained, was not only academically mediocre ~~and utterly rigid~~ but racist -- "blatantly in the past and insidiously in the present." Although the student body in ~~1968~~ 1969 was more than fifty per cent black, there was not a single black teacher on the staff, nor was there a black then on the school board. The "tracking" system under which brighter students were encouraged in high school to take courses that would prepare them for the Regents' examinations and for college, while others followed a less academically demanding track, seemed undeniably racist to North -- by and large, the Regents track was white and the non-Regents was black. North claimed that in the ten years before he became director of the Center, only seven black students from Bridgehampton had gone to college. He spent a lot of his time urging black teenagers to apply for college (the school

had no guidance counsellor), and helping them to take advantage of educational opportunities and scholarships that no one had told them about before.

"Bob North did more for the black kids here than anyone else before or since," Tom Hopson has said. "He got at least six of them into private colleges, six that I know of, and I heard somewhere that a white father came around to ask if Bob could do anything for a kid of his. Often he'd stay on and on at somebody's house, overnight sometimes, trying to do something for some kid that most other people would probably have spit on. He really and truly helped these people." Even after North left in 1972 for a term of Army service, he continuedto keep in touch with families on the Turnpike, to send books to people and to visit the Center when he was home on leave, and a lot of people in town feel that their association with him has permanently changed their lives. But as North himself understood only too well, the black people in Bridgehampton are far from being a homogeneous community, and some black residents thoroughly disapproved of what he was doing at the Center.

One of those who came to disapprove the most was Reverend Lawrence A. Jackson, pastor of the Bridgehampton Baptist Church. A dignified, conservative preacher who had picked potatoes on a Long Island farm as a boy, and whose first pulpit in 1933 was the same one he now occupies, Jackson had left Bridgehampton in 1938 to spend the next eighteen years as a pastor in his native Virginia. In 1965, when Reverend Charles Cooper died, the Bridgehampton Baptist Church asked Jackson to take his place. According to Tom Hopson Jackson was a clear case of the wrong man at the wrong time: "He didn't know what black culture was, he didn't think kids

should petition the school, and he didn't believe in activism." Jackson was recently invited to become a member of the Bridgehampton Country Club, and he has been heard to cite this fact as proof that there are no racial barriers against blacks in the town. Although he did agree to serve as president of the Child Care Center's board in 1967, he reportedly came to only one meeting, and he resigned the following year ~~from the board after one year~~. Reverend Jackson disapproves of the Center because he thinks it is promoting a new kind of segregation.

"I come from the south," he said recently. "We fought segregation for a long time down there, and I believe that desegregation is more effective today in Virginia than it is in most places in New York. The Center would be all right if it were totally integrated -- not only the staff but the people who come there. I'm not a believer in this black power. I don't believe either in black power or white power, because we're all dependent on one another. We're in this society and part of it, and none of us can exist independently."

During the last year or so, Reverend Jackson has been having some problems with his congregation. The congregation, in fact, voted to oust him after he had been arraigned on charges (which were later dismissed) of "harrassing" a young black woman, but the Reverend contested the motion and he remains as pastor. Some of the older, more conservative black people agree with his views on the Center, and refuse to let their children go there. Tom Hopson says that the Reverend Jackson would like to see the Center re-established on the grounds of the Bridgehampton ~~Country~~ Club. Nobody seems to see much chance of its becoming integrated. In fact, as more and more white parents take their children out of the Bridgehampton school, it begins to look as though polarization is the order of the day.

ROBERT LA FOUNTAIN

A sudden change in a school's racial mixture usually reflects a parallel change in the surrounding community. This is not the case in Bridgehampton. Although the town's population has been for some time and still is divided about equally between whites and blacks, the school is now, in 1973, approximately seventy per cent black. What happened was that an increasing number of white parents, beginning about 1970, decided to send their children elsewhere. A good many non-Catholic white children now go to parochial schools in Southampton and Sag Harbor; others go to the private Hampton Day School in Bridgehampton (whose principal, ironically, would like to recruit more black students but is having trouble finding them); parents in Sagaponack, which falls within the Bridgehampton school district, recently won the right to send their children to high school in East Hampton or Southampton if they chose, without paying the non-resident fee, and most of them so chose. As a result of these defections, the Bridgehampton public school's current enrollment of three hundred and fifteen students is well below capacity.

The white exodus coincided with the movement by black parents and students to bring about changes in the Bridgehampton school. Early in 1968, Robert North and a few of the black parents on the Turnpike started to attend meetings of the local school board. North also talked with a number of teachers in the school. He had a sort of vocabulary test to show them, a list of words and phrases that were in common use among black children, but which proved in many cases to be totally unfamiliar

to the teachers; North's point was that they did not even talk the same language. At about this same time, a group of black students in the senior class (James Gambles among them) presented to the principal and to the school board a series of formal demands in petition form. Among other things, they wanted the school to hire some black teachers (there had never been one on the faculty), to offer courses in black studies, to abolish the "tracking" system and put everybody into Regents preparatory courses, and to acquire textbooks that taught what Gambles called "complete history instead of white-structured history"; they also demanded "new teachers, period," to replace some whom they considered hopelessly superannuated, and a full-time guidance counsellor to advise on college placement.

The demands of the black community came as a shock to the school authorities. North, Florence Turner (Tom Hopson's sister) and others pressed the issue of hiring black teachers at every meeting of the board, and the next year the volunteer VISTA workers at the Center added their sometimes strident voice to the proceedings. Some stormy sessions resulted. "This school board had never had people come to meetings and speak out like that," according to Dinwiddie Smith, the board's president at the time. "Some of them were very irate and difficult to deal with. Sometimes what they said was sensible and other times you felt it was just frustration and anger speaking. But they made the board think."

The blacks' resentment tended to focus mainly on Robert La Fountain, the principal of the school. La Fountain had come to Bridgehampton as an English teacher in 1949, soon after receiving his graduate degree from the University of Massachusetts. He became supervising principal in 1956. A forceful, highly articulate man and a strong administrator, he ran the school with something of an iron hand, and it was said that

he ran the school board the same way. Although La Fountain's reaction to the charges brought by the black community was by no means inflexibly negative, he clearly felt that most of them were unfair.

"We had already begun to move in some of the directions they wanted," the principal said recently. "We already had the Bank Street Readers, the best of the new integrated reading texts, and we were getting more black reference books for the library. It's so easy to make accusations. As to the question of hiring black teachers, one must realize that it is not too easy to find blacks who are certified to teach in this state. Every time a New York State school hires a non-certified teacher, the school has to file a statement to the effect that it was impossible to hire a certified one, and the non-certified teacher then has to take courses until he becomes certified. At one time there was the wish to put blacks/ teachers on the faculty here simply because they were black, but it has been my stand that this would be unfair both to the teacher and to the students."

Within the next three years, however, La Fountain did manage to put five blacks on his faculty -- three teachers (French, Kindergarten, and Fourth Grade), a full-time guidance counsellor, and the school nurse who comes in twice a week. He did not have to get rid of anybody to make room for these new members, however, and he does not take kindly to the suggestion that some of the older white teachers on the staff should be put out to pasture. "I don't know what they mean when they talk about 'old,'" La Fountain says. "If they mean chronological age, then perhaps it's true. There's been very little turnover here; the faculty is a stable one. It's very easy to say that they're old and out of touch with the times, but I think that before this is said one should come in and find out what some of these teachers have been doing.

Almost every one of my teachers is taking in-service courses. I have a math man who is going for his second masters degree. Several members of this faculty have given up their summers to take courses in black studies and black-white relations. The criticism I hear just isn't justified."

In addition to acquiring ~~some~~ black teachers, the school now offers a course in Afro-American studies to seniors, and the library has stocked more books by and about black people. Federal funds available under the Title I program for educationally disadvantaged children ~~are being used for a remedial reading program~~, which the black parents voted into existence. The system of a Regents and a non-Regents "track" remains unchanged, but La Fountain believes that as parents come to understand its purpose better, there will be less resentment. Most public schools exercise some form of tracking, he points out, the purpose being to give to children who are less advanced academically an opportunity to succeed in their studies, with the hope that the experiemce will encourage them to do even better. "Neither track is inflexible," according to La Fountain. "A student who has had difficulty can go into a non-Regents course, and then move into the Regents track when he begins to succeed. Also, there are any number of non-Regents students who get into college. We're not talking about Cornell or Holy Cross, but many do go to college. Of course, we were a little concerned about Bob North's feeling that every black student should go to college, because we feel that the blue collar position is an important one, too. Not all white students go to college. There are various positions for everyone, and we feel it's important that each one explore the possibilities of vocational training. I realize that many black parents are still unhappy about tracking; in many instances in the past I was wrong, in the sense that there was not

always the necessary communication between me and the parent over the child's class placement. But now that we have a full-time guidance counsellor, every child's parent sits down with her and discusses the program in detail."

Most of the black parents seem to feel that there have been definite improvements in the school since 1969. Their movement has lost a good deal of its steam as a result, at least temporarily. When Florence Turner, probably the most outspoken of the Turnpike parents, ran for a seat on the school board in 1970 she received only thirty-eight of the more than two hundred votes cast, a disappointing showing that she attributes to the failure of black people to come out and vote; the seat was won by Alan Birdwhistle, a ~~law~~ partner in Bryan Hamlin's law firm, and he is now the board's president. Mrs. Turner and her brothers have very little use for the two black members who have been added to the school board -- the members whom Tom Hopson described as "not even colored" -- ~~but~~ she concedes that the hiring of black teachers has been a major step forward. Neither she nor anyone else knows what to do about the white students who are leaving. The current First Grade has thirty-two pupils in two sections; there are two white children in the more advanced section and none in the other. Some of the white parents say frankly that they are taking their children out because of the racial situation. The ~~explanation~~ explanation heard more frequently, however, is that they can get a better education somewhere else.

"How can I say that they are taking them out because of the blacks?" La Fountain asks. "I know some parents are disturbed by minor physical problems -- a fight that may occur between a black and a white. But to me this does not constitute a reason for taking a child out of school. The belief that the quality of our education is inferior to that of the

surrounding schools, in my opinion, just does not bear weight. A student who wants to prepare himself for college has as good an opportunity here as anywhere else."

La Fountain himself believes that the solution will have to come eventually through some form of centralization, with Bridgehampton becoming, say, the elementary school of a central district that includes East Hampton and Sag Harbor. By that time, the Bridgehampton school may be one hundred per cent black.

CHARLES MOCKLER

Charles Mockler began teaching music in the Bridgehampton school in 1935, five years after the present school building opened. He is an inventive and gifted teacher, remembered with great affection by generations of students; the spring concert by his glee club and band is one of the highlights of the school year. Sitting at the dining table in his house on Bridge Lane, one summer day in 1972, Mockler talked in his quiet way about the recent changes, many of which he described as long overdue, and about the problems that remained to be solved.

"This community thinks of itself as being church-oriented," Mockler reflected, "but it's got its share of racism and bigotry. Actually the black and the white students still get along pretty well here. But because of the parents' anxieties, if a white kid comes home with a

bloody nose, it's assumed that he's been beaten up by blacks. So the whites are sending their kids to St. Andrews in Sag Harbor, to Mercy High in Riverhead, and so forth. I teach folk dancing to the younger children, but not after Fifth Grade -- the parents wouldn't like them holding hands with the other race. Some kids say now that the blacks never pass the ball to them in sports. How are you going to straighten that out? The attitudes of the children mostly reflect those of their parents, don't you think?

"Some people look at the school and say we've got a lot of oldies on the faculty. It's true. But experience is of some value in teaching. And the quality of the teaching here is certainly as good or better than it is at East Hampton or Southampton. My wife taught in the Southampton school for many years, and I know. Our three children all went through this school. Of course, there's been a big change in student attitudes in the last five years, and not only among blacks. It's a new world. It used to be that you could tell a student to sit down and he did it. Now, they're as likely to say they don't have to take that from you. One white parent objected because his daughter had seen some dirty words written on the back of a door. He pulled her out, put her in the Catholic school in Sag Harbor. I imagine she'll see some dirty words over there."

Mockler motioned toward the large window in the living room, which overlooked an almost unbroken sweep of landscape and sky. One of his neighbors, he said, was the vice-president of a large soft drink corporation. During the summer he often commuted to the city by helicopter, landing on the lawn behind his house. "And just a mile up the road are those shacks on Sunrise Avenue," Mockler said. "Sometimes I wonder why there hasn't been a revolution. Upward mobility is just not for the black people out here.

"Of course, as the black population in school goes up, the Commissioner may think about busing. East Hampton has a beautiful school that's much newer than this one; Sag Harbor has another. But I don't think the other districts would want us, do you? And would it really be better there? Both the East Hampton and the Southampton schools have serious drug problems, which is something we've avoided so far. Also race problems. I think this school is trying. Mr. La Fountain has been the scapegoat for many of the charges levelled against us, but I think he wants to run a good school. He's a very competent administrator. We have an excellent salary schedule. This year we have teacher's aides, para-professionals, which we've needed for years. But sometimes there aren't enough rooms, and they have to work with a student in the corridor, and then the Turnpike complains that their kids are being taught in the hall.

"All this doesn't make it easy to teach. It's getting more and more difficult, really. But I like this school. I like the kids here. I like the faculty, and the principal. I like what I'm doing. There are a lot of problems, but there must be solutions. We don't have all the answers, because education is a developing thing. But I do think we're trying."

~~[illegible]~~

~~JAMES GAMBLES~~

~~One of the problems James Gambles has to contend with is that people are always comparing him to Bob North. Gambles, the Bridgehampton~~

EUGENIA HUMPHRIES

During her first year in the Bridgehampton school, Eugenia Humphries, a poised and very intelligent black teacher, showed her Fourth Grade class a film that included a brief sequence on childbirth. A week later the mother of one of the white students in the class came in to ask her some questions about the film. "It seemed that at a cocktail party over the weekend they had all been talking about it, and somehow the word had gotten around that I was showing movies on V.D., contraceptives, everything," Mrs. Humphries said afterward. "The lady told me that when she volunteered to talk to me, all her friends said, 'Oh, you're so brave!' -- as though I were some sort of ogre. I'm really glad she came in and we got things straightened out."

There are twenty-nine students in the Fourth Grade, four of whom are white. "They're all very much aware of the difference," Mrs. Humphries says. "One of the girls, when they were asked to write something about friendship, wrote, 'Hattie is my friend, and even though she's white I like her a lot.' It's funny, though, how little sense of their own identity the black kids in the lower grades here really have. Last year, for example, when we came to reading about the South in the rather bad social studies textbook we were using, there was a picture of a tobacco plantation, and the caption read something like, '...in the back are the neat bungalows of the workers.' There was nothing about slavery, not a word. So I talked about that for a

while, but none of the kids seemed to respond at all to the concept of slavery. Which really surprised me."

Mrs. Humphries grew up in Brooklyn, graduated from Hunter College, and taught ~~for several years~~ in a public elementary school on the lower East Side of Manhattan for several years before coming to Bridgehampton. She has found the adjustment a little difficult. "When I taught in the city it was a very different atmosphere. We didn't have the facilities in that school that we have here, but it just seemed more alive, not so apathetic. I do think a lot of the teachers here are out of touch with what's going on now, with the black community and black consciousness. ~~[illegible]~~ I know some of them have gone to Suffolk Community College and taken courses in black studies. But out here in eastern Long Island there's a feeling that things haven't changed much in forty years and let's keep it that way."

JAMES GAMBLES

One of the problems James Gambles has to contend with is that people are always comparing him to Bob North. Gambles, the Bridgehampton

Child Care Center's present director, was born and brought up in Bridgehampton, which is an advantage in some ways and a disadvantage in others. A number of the Turnpike parents feel that he does not exercise enough authority at the Center. Gambles himself often seems a little ambivalent about his position in the community; he can sometimes sound, in the same breath, both militant and detached. ~~coolly cool style does not entirely conceal the residue of angry resentment even growing up black in the town~~. The nickname he is known by is "Coon." He once had a dog that he called "Nigger." He is young, quick-witted, and very good looking.

James Gambles' grandfather moved here from Virginia in the nineteen thirties. "It was my grandfather who started calling me 'Coon,'" he recalls. "He said I was so sly when I was a little kid, I could always find a way out of anything -- I always had an answer. That name has stuck to me ever since, but I never knew it had anything to do with negroes until one time when I was visiting some of the family down south, and a bunch of white kids started chasing us, and I heard one of them yell, 'Get that coon!' It really terrified me, because I thought they knew my name."

The eldest of eleven children, Gambles was a better-than-average student and a first-class athlete in baseball and basketball. His parents moved to the western part of the county when he was seventeen, but he stayed on in Bridgehampton, living with friends and getting odd jobs to meet his expenses. It was during this period that he began spending time at The Corner. He learned how to shoot craps and pool, how to deal from the bottom of a deck of cards, and a few other things. There were no drugs going at The Corner in those days, but there was a lot of gambling. It was also a place where older men liked to come and sit and swap stories about their experiences. Although Gambles would

like to see the drug-dealing stopped, he believes that there is a definite need for a place like The Corner, ~~where people can congregate~~. He also agrees with John Johnson that the real reason the police don't close it down for good is that The Corner keeps the junkies off Main Street in Bridgehampton, where they might offend white sensibilities.

When Gambles and his classmates presented their list of demands to Mr. La Fountain in 1968, he recalls, the principal "couldn't believe his ears. Black people are supposed to be stupid, you know. You were constantly being told in that school that you couldn't enter Regents courses because 'the administrative body doesn't think you would perform sufficiently well at that level.' And if you let yourself believe that, then you didn't have a chance. It's hard to build yourself up again after twelve years of that kind of destruction. That school doesn't reinforce anybody. It just reinforces what you can't do." The 1968 petition does not seem to have prejudiced Gambles' academic career. He won a Martin Luther King scholarship that same spring, providing full college tuition for up to five years. The following September he entered New York University, planning to major in psychology, but at the end of his third year he dropped out. "I didn't like the social climate," he said. "I don't believe in demonstrations. They're too wasteful of time and effort." Marvin Lewis, the man who succeeded Bob North, had just resigned as director of the Child Care Center, and in the summer of 1971 Gambles was given the job. He was twenty-two at the time.

Most of the Center's current programs are those set in motion originally by Bob North. Gambles spends a lot of his time working with the teen-agers, and the general opinion is that he "relates" very well to their thinking. Nearly every evening, after the younger children have gone

home, as many as forty or fifty teenagers may congregate at the Center. They play basketball (the concrete court in back of the recreation room has lights) and ping-pong, listen to records, see movies sometimes, or just sit around and talk. Gambles tries to draw out their ideas on ~~how~~ the situation between blacks and whites and how it could be changed for the better. The atmosphere at these rap sessions, he says, is rarely militant or angry, but Gambles does not consider this in itself a cause for optimism.

"Certainly if anything is going to improve here it's got to come from the kids," he said recently. "The parents are very uptight -- the parents of both races. My basic opinion is that the blacks should work separately as much as possible. A lot of the older black people around here would disagree with that. They're not aware of a lot of things. One of the main priorities here at the Center is community organization -- we want to make people aware of what's going on around them, things that are going to affect their lives, such as the new Southampton Town Master Plan that's just upgraded the zoning here from a half acre to one acre. Black people don't realize they're being pushed out of this area, but that's what's happening. This area may very well become all white-middle-class. The zoning board just recently knocked down a proposal for low-income housing. It's really such a fucked up place."

~~Last summer,~~ During a softball game in Sag Harbor between the Child Care Center's team and a Sag Harbor team, what began as a minor dispute over a cigarette lighter ended with a white boy in the hospital and a black teenager booked on ~~a charge~~ an aggravated assault charge. The incident distressed but did not particularly surprise Gambles. "Tension between black and white is increasing all the time here," he said soon

afterward. "Bridgehampton has never had a race riot. A lot of people jump to conclusions, you know, so that if two guys get into a fight, and one of them is black and the other is white, and the black guy gets hauled away by the police, they say it's a race riot. But I feel the tension is growing. There are no outlets, and things here aren't changing fast enough. The school's poor, the education there is below standard, and the whites are taking their kids out. When I look around this place, it seems to me that in the next ten years, maybe sooner, things are going to change one way or another and it may not be peaceful. These people get uptight about two kids fighting -- what will they do if a lot of them get to fighting, really going at it, like what happened down in Bellport a while ago? They'll faint. The pot's starting to boil and one of these days it's going to boil over, and man, I just want to be around to see it, that's all."

Gambles had been getting angrier as he spoke, the words coming faster and faster. Abruptly he checked himself, shaking his head as though in derision of ~~his own~~ so much vehemence. Gambles would like to get into politics someday, ~~[illegible]~~ although not as an elected official. Most politicians, he says, are prisoners of their own commitments and debts, and are therefore powerless. This he applies to black leaders as well as ~~the~~ white ones. "I don't particularly admire any of them," he said, slowly, ~~[illegible]~~ of the black leaders. "You allow yourself to be set up on a pedestal so you can become a martyr, so to speak. I feel you don't have to do that to get things accomplished, although it may be a big boost to your ego. A lot of people get carried away. But it's better to have the power really distributed, and then when the black leader gets himself killed everything doesn't disintegrate. It's best to stay away from organizations and just be cool, man. You look

at all those black leaders -- Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, H. Rap Brown, Eldridge Cleaver, Stokely Carmichael -- where are they? Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, Angela Davis, you name them -- look around and where are they?

"I would like to see some changes ~~here~~ in this place before I leave, changes that would still be here for a while afterward. I'm always hopeful of changes. But certain people will have to take the first step. Before, it's been in the hands of the black ministers and the white ministers -- this has always been a very church-oriented community. But the churches are losing their power now, ~~and~~ the people are leaving the churches. It's up to other people to pick it up now. Everything is possible, but not probable."

THOMAS E. HALSEY

The town of Southampton, which now includes the ~~area from~~ Bridgehampton ~~to~~ Eastport, was the first English settlement in New York. It was founded in 1640 by a little group of men and women who came, not from the mother country, but from Lynn, Massachusetts, which had been established ~~only~~ twenty years earlier, and most of them had thus gained considerable experience in ~~dealing~~ coping with the wilderness. According to the Long Island historian B.F. Thompson, they were "generally of a superior class and greater intelligence than some who came subsequently to other towns, being respectable both in character and in education." The names of these

original "undertakers" of the Southampton colony can be found today in the telephone book as well as in the old graveyards: Cooper, Farrington, Halsey, Howell, Needham, Stanborough, Walton. There are more Halseys than Smiths in the local telephone book. Bridgehampton has a Halsey Lane and a Halsey Street. Halsey House in Southampton, a colonial saltbox dating from before 1700, is open to the public several days a week. The original Thomas Halsey (or Halsye, as it sometimes appears on old records) came over in the first sloop from the Massachusetts colony, and was allotted one hundred acres of land -- a relatively large holding. His wife, Phebe, had the misfortune to become the only white settler killed by Indians, although not by the local Shinnecocks as it was at first believed; she was scalped by marauding Pequots from Connecticut. Thomas Halsey presumably remarried, for he left a large progeny and the family has been prominent in these parts ever since.

The present Thomas Halsey can trace his family's history back twelve generations in this area, but he has never paid much attention to genealogy. A thoughtful, soft-spoken, and extremely hard-working young man, he farms the land as Halseys have always done, and he spends a good part of his spare time in community work. He is on the board of the First National Bank in Bridgehampton. He is also chairman of the board of the Bridgehampton Agway (a farmer-owned cooperative that deals in farm supplies); former chairman of the Suffolk County Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture; a member of the Suffolk County Agricultural Advisory Commission; and a member of the Board of Sessions of the Bridgehampton Presbyterian Church. Reverend Battles, the Presbyterian minister, says that Tom Halsey is "really concerned about this community, and works too hard as a result."

Everett Halsey, Tom's father, owned and worked two large potato

farms, one near Sagaponack and the other in Water Mill, ~~two~~ three miles west of Bridgehampton. Tom graduated from Cornell in 1961 with a teaching degree in agriculture, but he had always planned to come back and be a farmer in this area. His father gave him the Water Mill property, with its hundred-year-old farmhouse, which Tom and his ~~pretty, petite~~ wife have renovated and modernized. The Halseys have known ~~one another~~ each other since they ~~went to~~ kindergarten together in the Bridgehampton school. Tom has approximately a hundred acres in potatoes, and recently he built two greenhouses and started raising flower plants for the florist trade. Like all Long Island farmers he finds that taxes and fluctuating prices make it increasingly difficult to break even growing potatoes.

When Halsey was a boy, his father used to employ about fifteen or twenty migrant workers during the growing season. Now Tom gets by with two, a man and ~~his~~ wife, who work on the Halsey farm and in his potato warehouse for about nine months of the year, and who ~~summer~~ ~~usually migrate elsewhere~~ go home to North Carolina during the off-season. Halsey is grateful that he does not have to employ the migrants who are being recruited these days. "People who haven't lived with that problem couldn't possibly understand it," he ~~said last summer~~ says. "I don't think the problem can be dealt with here -- I think it has to be corrected in their home states. Their living conditions are so bad, their educational standards are so poor that you can't expect them to be any different. They live the way they want to live, is what I think. The problem is a lot more complicated than it seems. I realize that to go into a migrant camp is a horrifying experience, it really is an awful thing to see. But often the farmer can't do anything about it. It's very frustrating to try to maintain a camp according to what the law requires.

These people come up here and sometimes they just destroy a place in one season."

Halsey believes that eventually migrant labor will no longer be needed in the potato industry. Potato ~~storage~~ warehouses in the middle west, he says, are already fully automated. He is also firmly convinced that this area's year-round black residents could do all the work now being done by migrants. "That's kind of a sore point with me," he ~~said~~ recently. "Because I know of many people who are looking for help and can't find any, while dozens of these people are on the welfare rolls. If these people would just buckle down and be dependable, I think they could replace the entire migrant work force."

When Tom Halsey and his future wife graduated from the Bridgehampton school in 1957, the black students were still in a minority but their number was increasing rapidly. "I thought there might be trouble sooner or later," Halsey ~~said~~. "Actually, I'm amazed to see how little of a racial problem there's been." According to Halsey there are no seriously hostile feelings between blacks and whites in Bridgehampton. "There are bound to be minor incidents in any community, but I don't foresee any real trouble. Hampton Bays has practically no blacks at all, and yet there are really bitter feelings against them down there. They don't understand black people. I think the Bridgehampton whites do understand black people, and that's why we've been able to get along so well with them."

IRVING MARSHALL (II)

There is an Indian grave at Canoe Place, visible from the old Montauk Highway between the Shinnecock Canal and Hampton Bays. The headstone, broken off and now nearly illegible, identifies it as the grave of Reverend Paul Cuffee, a Shinnecock who followed in the footsteps of Samson Occum as an ordained minister to the tribe. Paul Cuffee was Irving Marshall's great-great-grandfather. Marshall's maternal grandfather, Wickham Cuffee ("Uncle Wick," as he was known to just about everybody), a big, powerful man who had been first mate on a whaling ship out of Sag Harbor, claimed toward the end of his life to be the last of the full-blooded Shinnecocks; the name, however, is now thought to stem originally from a West African word for one of the days in the week. There are probably as many Cuffees on the Shinnecock reservation today as there are Halseys in the telephone book.

When the sloop bearing Thomas Halsey and the first English settlers landed in the spring of 1640 at Conscience Point on Peconic Bay (a woman in the party is supposed to have said, on disembarking, "For conscience's sake, I'm on dry land again!"), eastern Long Island was occupied by thirteen different Indian tribes, all Delawares of the Algonquin branch. The Shinnecocks, a relatively large but weak tribe, sold the eight square miles that became the Southampton Colony to the English for sixteen cloth coats and threescore bushels of corn. It was also agreed that the English would defend them against the raids of the fierce Pequots from Connecticut, and this has been taken by white historians as evidence

of the good will that existed from the outset between the Indians and the settlers. The Shinnecock view of the relationship was not recorded. Indians were barred from entering the English settlement until 1649, when that privilege was extended to women and to "ancient men" of the tribe, provided they first acquired "tickets." The settlers also forbade the Indians to dig for segapons, or ground nuts, on land belonging to the colony, and obliged them to kill all of their dogs, as a menace to Christian health and crops. .

The English used indentured servants, both Indian and white, to help with the heavy work of clearing, building and planting during those early years. As soon as they could afford it, though, they bought negro slaves. Long Island never had any large slaveholders; the average farmer owned only one or two. By 1698, however, Southampton's population included eighty-three slaves, and a hundred years later there was estimated to be one slave to every free man on Long Island. Local historians have usually maintained that on Long Island the slaves were singularly well treated (like the Indians). Old records show, however, that a good many of these carefree, happy mortals managed to escape or even, in some cases, to murder their owners, in spite of such excrutiating punishments as branding and burning at the stake. Henry Onderdonk, a Long Island minister who died in 1886, noted in his memoirs that some recalcitrant slaves "were cased in iron and suspended alive in gibbets, where they were left to starve to death and become prey to the fowls of heaven." Under the exceptionally severe New York slavery statutes, slaves were not allowed to congregate in groups larger than three, and it was lawful for the master or mistress to punish them at their own discretion, "not extending to Life or Limb." Each town had a "common Whipper" charged

with punishing slaves who gave offense. In the pageant celebrating Bridgehampton's two hundred and fiftieth anniversary in 1910, the 1660 Float featured a replica of a whipping post, with a man pretending to flog a slave.

The first relaxation in the New York laws came in 1781, when slaves who had served in the Continental Army during the Revolution for three years, or until regularly discharged, were given their freedom. Eighteen years later, New York passed its gradual emancipation act, and slavery in the state was totally abolished as of July 4th, 1827. Many of Southampton's freed slaves settled among the remnants of the Shinnecock tribe, which was living by then on an 800-acre reservation between Hampton Bays and Southampton village. A sociologist named M.E. Harrington, in a paper published by the American Museum of Natural History in 1924, reported that some of the Shinnecocks had intermarried with negroes, "a phenomenon seen among several remnants of Atlantic Coast tribes and among some Muskhogean peoples, but exceedingly rare elsewhere, fortunately for the future of the Indian race." Harrington went on to theorize that when ten young Shinnecock men were drowned while working to salvage the wreck of the Circassian, an English ship that ~~which~~ went aground off Mecox in 1876, the tragedy left the "negroid mixed-bloods in the majority in the settlement, which was so distasteful to the remaining Indian families that all who were financially able moved away." When Harrington visited the Shinnecock Reservation in 1902, at any rate, the place struck his exquisite sociological antennae as "a negro, or rather mulatto settlement, pure and simple." Irving Marshall goes up to the reservation now and then. Some of his wife's relatives still live there, and nearly everybody refers to him as "Uncle Irv."

Irving Marshall has always been particularly proud of his younger

brother, Wilbur, who was valedictorian of his high school class in Bridgehampton. "He was the smart one," (according to) Marshall. "I didn't finish high school -- didn't want to do all that work. When I went to school you had to have what they called seventy-two counts. You took four years of mathematics, four years of Latin, two years of German, and you had American History and English. Now kids graduate without even knowing how to read. My brother had all that. He read Caesar and Virgil, he knew algebra and geometry. He graduated in 1917. When it came time to take the Regents exam they told him he didn't even have to, his marks were so high. Only three of them graduated out of that class, two white girls and him. My brother could have gone to college. He was a great basketball player, and he had letters from several places -- Bates College, up in Maine, and Springfield College in Massachusetts. But he didn't want to do it. He became a Pullman porter, and then he worked in a factory. He's retired now, gets a fairly good pension. But he wants something to do, so he's a janitor in a Presbyterian church in Providence, Rhode Island.

"It's a funny thing, my sister Frances and I were the only colored in that school when we started going. And if you didn't look in the mirror you thought you was white. That's a fact. We didn't think anything about it and they didn't think anything about it. Only thing some of the white kids couldn't understand -- we always went to all the parties at the school and the church, but then some kids, their folks would give them a party at home, and the first thing you know that kid would come up and ask whether we were coming to his party, and he just couldn't understand why we hadn't been invited. Kids will always straighten things out if they don't have to listen to their parents.

"Of course, it's all turned around now. They say the blacks are taking over in the school. Some folks seem to feel that the whites have tricked us around all these years, and we've had to take what they said, but now we'll get back at them. I don't see that. If a person treats me right that's all I care about -- white, red, black, or anything. If they step on me, I step back. Of course I've taken a lot. But they tell me I have the respect of the people in Bridgehampton. I don't know. How it's going to go now, I haven't the least idea. It's just a bitter pill that some of the white people have to take."

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Calvin Tomkins