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### Interview with Samuel Floyd, Jr., 1998

Columbia College Chicago

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## Sam Floyd

*All right, it is April the twenty-ninth, 1998 and this is the interview with Sam Floyd, the Director of the Center for Black Music Research.*

**OK, we'd like to start with, if you could tell us, when you came to Columbia, and what were the circumstances or individuals that were influential in bringing you here?**

Well, I came to the College in July of 1983, at the invitation of President Mike Alexandroff, to start a Center for Black Music Research. So I guess Mike was the primary influential individual. Fred Fine also, Fred talked to me early on and thought it was a good idea. And a person who was a member of trustees at the time, Erwin Bud Salk had a say. So I think the three of them, along with Lya Rosenblum and Bert Gall, all played a role.

**Why did they come to you?**

Well, I'm not quite sure that they came to me. I guess this developed over time. I guess back in—I don't remember what years now, but sometime before that Mayor Jane Byrne was planning an international festival to be held in Chicago. It never came off but I was brought up, up here, as a consultant to work with some people on the music portion of it. And somehow, an office was provided to me at Columbia College. And at that time I became familiar with Mike Alexandroff. And I believe Bud Salk had something to do with the festival and had something to do with my being invited to participate. And I guess I lost touch until I wrote to

Mike about something. I think it was a letter of recommendation or something. And I told Mike that I was leaving and Mike asked me to come up and talk to him. And after a few conversations, I was invited to come to Columbia and do what I was trying to do, at the time, at another place.

**Could you expand on that? What Mike recognized what you were trying to do or what it was like coming to Columbia?**

He thought, yeah, he thought it would be a nice fit at the College. I'm not sure that was the case *(laughs)*. For us it is a very nice fit. But, you know, we are a research center and the College deals more with the doing of art. I think we are a nice and unique presence here. Anyway, that's the way it came about.

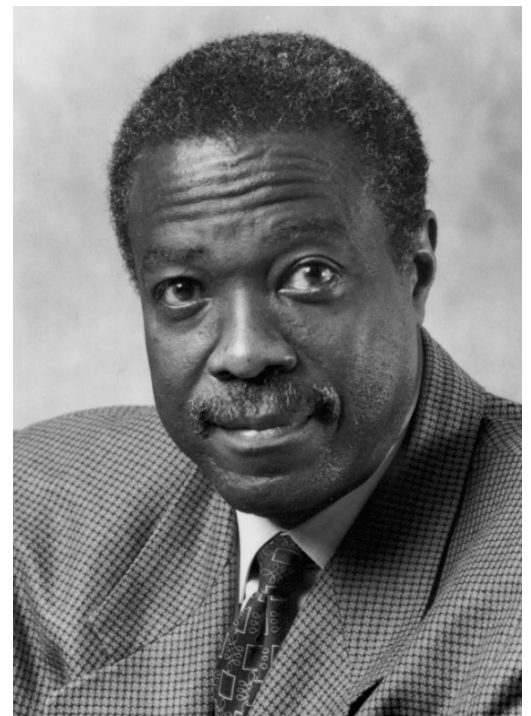
**Maybe talk about the Center for Black Music Research, its, you know, what you were trying to do with that center?**

Well, the idea was to have an entity that would conduct research, sponsor research and encourage research in the field of black music worldwide, and to disseminate the results of that research to both the scholarly community and to the general public. And the idea was to set up programs that would do that. Naturally, we felt that the establishment of a library would be central to this. It would be very important because that's, that would be the basis for it. So initially we started trying to set up the library. Unfortunately, we were able to get other things in place before we were able to get the library in place. I came here in

1983 and we got the library, we hired a librarian in 1990 and by 1992, the library was in place. And before then we had a number of other programs going because they were easier to do. The library was quite a large undertaking. But I was already publishing a scholarly journal and a newsletter. So the publications program, as it was at the time, was immediately established. We started working on the library immediately and it took that amount to develop it. We started having conferences in 1985. The performance program, with the Black Music Repertoire Ensemble, was established in 1987. And various components of those programs were developed in the meantime. When I came, I was in a tiny room that looks like it was about six by nine, I guess. And eventually...

**Were you the Center for Black Music...**

I was the Center, right. And I think it was the second semester of that year, I got a half-time secre-



tary, one that I shared with Bill Russo at the time. And as we went along and attracted outside funding we eventually got to where we are now, which is almost seven thousand square feet of space and seven full-time staff and some others who are on grant money. So I guess after, what, fifteen years, we are almost where we want to be.

**You mentioned that you were trying to establish this elsewhere and then through conversations with Mike brought it to Columbia. Can you maybe describe a little bit more, you know, why it happened here and not elsewhere? Was it specifically...**

I think it could have happened somewhere else but the institution that I was at at the time ran into dire financial restraints. It was, had big problems. But even so, and at another institution, the Center had been approved. I won't go into why I chose to go somewhere else to do it. It has to do with a very attractive situation. But that's the situation I ran into with financial trouble. But I think all that was fortuitous because Chicago was the place to do this, Columbia College was the place to do it. So in spite of the thing having been approved at another institution, I'm glad that I was attracted to the other institution which didn't work out, because I was able to end up here. And I think there's several reasons why I could work here. One was simply because of Mike's concern that it happen here, and Bert Gall wanted it to happen, and Lya Rosenblum also. So that it was a kind of welcoming situation. And while they didn't have the money to do this, they provided what support that they could. The fact that this is a city in which all the forms of black music have flourished at one time, are remembered historically,

made it attractive, and the kind of freedom that you have to create at Columbia College, which wouldn't have happened anyplace else: not the kind of freedom that was needed to develop this program. You know, the environment here encourages uniqueness and creativity. And I think that probably, that and the kind of support that we got, was what made it happen.

**Maybe, I think we can tie that into, you know, do you see that as part of Columbia's mission, or how would you define Columbia's mission?**

Well, I don't know how, if I can tell you how I understand it. It's devoted to giving everybody a chance: the well-off and the not well-off, those who have done well in high school and those who have not done well in high school. And it's devoted also, particularly to people in the city of Chicago. It's devoted to the arts and communication and to provide an open, a kind of open environment where students can develop themselves. I think that's about it, that's the way I understand it.

**And if you could maybe speak to as well, the relationship of this Center to the College and maybe with the student population.**

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's easy I think. Bud Salk taught a course here called Missing Pages in American History. You're probably familiar with that one. And it seems that Bud was trying to provide things that were missing in higher education. And at the time, and it's still true, there was no place in the United States devoted to the research of this music. Given the make-up of Columbia College, the ethnic and racial make-up of Columbia College, in spite of the

fact that historically black institutions weren't doing it either, it seemed to me that the effort here matched that mission very well, because it was doing something that was relevant to a large part of Columbia's population. I think at that time that black enrollment here was something more like thirty-five or forty percent, it was pretty high. So in that way I think Mike was trying to address a part of that mission, that may not have been addressed in other ways, by providing a place here for the study of this music that was so connective to the background of that large proportion of people. The other thing is this: sometimes people look at things like this as separate, separatist, or separated operations. And one of the things we've tried to do here is stress the fact that black music is a part of American history. Everything belongs to everybody. It's the fact that, the simple fact that it had been neglected was the reason for us to do this. And a reason for Columbia to do it also. So I think in that way it's related to the mission.

**I'm curious as to what student reaction is to, maybe, discovering something that they were not aware of, its history. I mean, is there a lot of feeling of accomplishment in that respect or...**

Well, I can't say in a broad way. The mission of the Center is research and the dissemination of that research. I mean, we've set up courses where we teach students but the focus is more, is professional research. But we do things that involve the students in meaningful ways. For example, one semester when I taught the course in Black Music History, I don't know if I was positively creative or foolishly creative at the time, but I developed a mammoth research project for that class. And the idea

was to do a bibliography on black music and Ebony magazine. And I had the students read issues of Ebony magazine from 1945 and to annotate all of the articles that were written about music. And the students went to libraries where those Ebony magazines were and read the articles and did the annotations. To make a long story short, we published a book called *Black Music and Ebony*. I had never had a class that took to research like that class did. They were reading about things that they had never known about but that were fascinating; things that they did know about, so that the connections that they were making were very good. They were reading about things that their parents knew about. And they'd tell their parents about what they were reading in Ebony that happened in 1950, 1960, that kind of thing. So things like that is what excites students, or can excite students, about what they do. And there are the regular undergraduate courses, for example, a course on gospel music, a course on vocal music and that kind of thing. In a commuter institution that's really hard to get students involved in meaningful projects like that. That's the difficulty but everybody faces it. No matter what you teach you face that. But because we are a research center we've found it particularly difficult.

**What are some of the other challenges that you face as a research center, maybe in relation to Columbia or maybe independent of, you know, the institution?**

Well, the real problem is money. I hate to say that because everybody's got that problem. Because the—I hate to use this word—deal, I guess, was that Columbia would provide operational support when I

came here. But it was expected that I would raise the money for all the programming. And that's what we've done. And we try to do that. And as we raise money for the other things that we do, Columbia has increased its support, so that's been fine. But it's becoming more and more difficult to find money because foundations, over the years, have been changing the focus of their giving. And the trend for the last three years has been toward pre-college education. And there was, there had been foundations that were supporting us on an annual basis but when they changed that focus, I have to say that they encouraged us to start doing programming for pre-college; but that's not in our mission. So, because of that, and because of the attacks on the NEH and the NEA, for example, NEH took about a, I think it was a thirty-five percent cut, budget cut. And they eliminated entirely one of the programs that we had been depending on for years. So that's getting difficult. Otherwise, I guess we've had few problems.

**What about, I'm curious, collection and preservation? I know how expensive that is as well, but are there more resources out there that you're trying to gather that are getting lost, or has that been...**

Oh yeah. Yeah, that's a huge problem, that's a huge problem. There was one collection that we wanted very badly. It was one of the two best collections in Chicago of black music going back to the 1920s. And this person went into the hospital and I guess the people who were dealing with her things, to them it looked like junk. Things like this happen. There is a

composer in North Carolina who, between 1800 and—at least his heirs live in North Carolina—between about 1897 and the 1940s he wrote and had produced fourteen operas. They were produced in locations between New York and Denver. And because he was neglected and not attended to as they think he should have, they have all his material in a house and they won't discuss them with anybody. And I, from time to time I wonder if the house is gonna catch fire or if they're gonna die and somebody's gonna come and see all this junk, throw it away or something. Things like that worry us all the time. And then there's the matter of oral history which, you know, this is partly my fault. Back in the '70s and very early '80s there was a lot of support for oral history, not funding. Somewhere along the line, around 1985, all of it seemed to disappear overnight, we just had a very negative experience of doing oral history. In the nineteen, late '60s through the 1970s, I set up oral history interviews for the Smithsonian Institution. And at that time, the interviewees were being paid five thousand dollars for a half-day or a whole day interview. And the interviewer was being paid two thousand dollars; and this was in the 1970s. And, well, people were anxious to do those interviews. Now, naturally they were people of high achievement. And, but when that disappeared, then it became very difficult. At the same time, I started having, because there wasn't—I had serious misgivings about interviewing people, about paying them. And when I came here, we established a policy; if you can't pay, you don't do it. And it's nice to have those kinds of ideals, but it works against what you're trying to accomplish. For example,

Willie Dixon just died, he should have been interviewed. But we simply have this policy, we have to pay them. Our developers added to that, I guess, when many older blues musicians and some contemporary R&B people were complaining that these people are doing these interviews and writing these books and they get money or get promotions, they get tenure at institutions of higher education, and we get "Thank you." And there was something immoral about that; and I felt real funny about it. We do, if somebody comes in and says, "Why don't you interview me?" Well, we don't do that. But we don't solicit people and that's working against our mission. This high, some would say, nonsense. Because we're not doing what we should be doing and we aren't doing for them what we should be doing for them. So that's been problematic and I haven't been able to come to grips with that.

**Always a quandary, right? It's never easy. What, why don't we talk to, you know, we talked about some of the challenges, and what were some of the institution's successes or things that you're most proud of over the years?**

Well, I guess our publication record. We have a tremendous reputation all over the world about our publications. They have attracted good critical notice; the fact that we've done an international constituency. The fact that since we've been published we've contributed mightily to the store of knowledge in the field of American music and black music in general. The fact that we are fortunate to have the Rockefeller Foundation funding two fellows in residence each year.

**How long have you had that?**

We're in the third year and we've got three more years coming up. The challenge is to continue that. The fact that we can develop programs that's meaningful to the community. For three years we ran Project Kalinda which, it was a project to demonstrate the musical connections between African-American, Latin American, and West Indian black music. And we made good connections with the Latino community and Western Indian community. And it was probably a good appeal to everybody.

**What years or...**

The last three years. And it was so successful until we started another project called Project StopTime which is going to be seminal, but dealing with different kind of music. But that way we are reaching a general audience which can care less about reading scholarly publications. So we're connecting with them and demonstrating what we do and the importance of what we do.

**Is that a community outreach or, what does StopTime mean?**

Well, StopTime was first a musical device that's found in all black music. That's why we're calling it Project StopTime and we're gonna demonstrate what this means as far as all this music is concerned. And we do that by doing lecture demonstrations all over the city. With Project Kalinda we did, I guess, thirty-two lecture demos in the Latino community, the African-American community and all the way out. And we published a newsletter called Kalinda. This time we're gonna publish a letter called StopTime. And that's the fun part of all this, the fact we can go out and play in parks and stuff and make connections to the communi-

ties. So I'm rather proud of that. In fact, I'm waiting right now for a decision from the MacArthur Foundation on the funding of this. They funded Kalinda so I'm sure they'll pick this up too.

**Maybe this is a good time to expand on—because it sounds like you've got the professional mission, certainly as a research institute, and then we were just talking to some of the community outreach. Is there a formal mission, and you talked about your mission, is it pre-higher education? Anything else that you haven't talked to that is part of the mission of the Center?**

No, we talked about education, performance, the library. That's not the only performing organization we have. We have an organization called the Black Music Repertoire Ensemble and that group is dedicated to performing not popular music but classical music and Broadway shows. And we, that's a touring group; it's the way we reach beyond Chicago to the international community.

**And that's from the Center as well. Do they use the materials from your collections?**

Yes, in fact, it's based on that, yeah.

**Really? What are some of the collections that the Center has acquired, or just its strengths, I guess, if they aren't specific? I can better speak to its weaknesses. But...**

**What you missed or what you're missing?**

Yeah, yeah. For example, we're stronger than other places in terms of musical scores by black composers, we're very strong. And that's, one reasons for that is I've been collecting that stuff since

about 1970. And nobody else has devoted their time to that. And that's something I did long before I started institutionalizing this and that's been incorporated into the collection; we are very strong in that area, very strong in the field of jazz. There are two areas in which we are not so strong and it's unfortunate. One is the area of ragtime. The best collection...

**OK, so it's in private collectors.** Yeah. So we need to strengthen that, find somebody to strengthen that. The other area of concern is the area of gospel where we don't have, well, we're a lot better than we were before, because we're developing that. But to find sheet music is difficult, it's difficult to get. We know where it is but it's very difficult to get. And the other problem is finding recordings prior to the 1960s. And a lot of them are in private hands, a lot have been, just didn't last and were destroyed. So we need to do what we can in that area. We are probably, in some ways, weak in contemporary popular music. But that's always going to be the case because you can't collect everything and you don't know what's historically valuable so you can't develop a rational plan for collection. So you'll always be behind because you can, in retrospect, you can look back and say, "We need this."

**And with those, I mean, you said sometimes things get lost and sometimes people, you know where they are but you can't get at them. Are there also the occasions where you have a good rapport with private collectors, where they make available copies, or is there kind of competition?**

Well, I think, I think mostly with private people there is that kind of

competition. And if they've got duplicates they would, they trade. You know, the idea is to get what they don't have so...

**Do you get them to leave it to you in their will?**

That's hard because most of the time they leave it to heirs. But we have had, in fact we had very good luck with Martin Williams, who was the nation's premier jazz critic between 1950 until he died in 1990, must have been about 1991 or 1992. He was the premier jazz critic. He put together that collection called the Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz, which is still a mighty collection. And in the, in a conversation with Martin I told him that him that he wasn't going to be living much longer and he should bequeath his stuff to us; and I was joking, I was kidding. So he said, "Well, send me the stuff!" I sent it to him and he signed it. A couple of years later he died, unfortunately, but now we have his collection. In fact, he was a prodigious writer about jazz and we have a couple of manuscripts that aren't finished that he was working on at the time, you know? We have been working, trying to get bequeaths from other people also. And some of that's gonna pan out. But a number of people are giving us their collection and it's getting easier and easier to attract them.

**You were talking about, earlier, that the funding is becoming increasingly harder to come by. Is more and more of your time or the Center's time devoted to trying to find new—I mean, has that been a problem where before, you know, you could develop other areas and the demands of money have taken**

**away from that? Or the search for money?**

Yeah, well, it's difficult. It's, well, let me give you an idea, you know, you raise money and you become successful in attracting money for projects. And then when you get the projects you start working on the projects. Right now we are working on a massive international dictionary of black composers, which it looks like we've got, we're going to be finishing in the next three or four months. But the fact that we were able to do that takes my time. So it's hard for me to go out and do that. And with the amounts of money shrinking and then after that the successes that we've had brings another burden on us. We are caught up in this vicious circle here of almost ineptitude as far as raising money is concerned. We're working to try to correct that, working hard to make some changes that will take care of that problem. You mentioned earlier something about, someone else in here this morning talking about social problems. She was saying that she was working on a project having to do with the arts, and they were doing it for single parent children and their mothers. And I guess that popped into my mind when you mentioned some of the problems. Because I was also talking to a foundation, a person in a foundation who indicated that they were having to move a big chunk of their money to social problems: unwed mothers, drugs, and this kind of thing.

**In order to attract funding, or no?**

No, that's where they were moving their money to fund. So, and he was telling me that because he was letting me know that there was not going to be much money for the arts any more. So a lot of these things are having—and that's

important to do, but I think sometimes foundations or foundation boards don't realize the impact that the arts can have on people who don't have anything. And, you know, the phrase comes to me, the old, old song about, it's very naive in a way but: Man cannot live on bread alone. And that's why I think black music, things like rap, are so powerful in those communities because it's needed very, very badly. I just think a broader range of art and music would be better rather than just alleviating those communities to the mercy of marketing.

**Could you maybe provide a couple more illustrations of that—the power to transform, the arts, the power to transform—that maybe you've seen or witnessed that makes you confident in that: Mankind cannot live on bread alone?**

You know, I'm not sure I can, because I guess for me it's much more subtle than that. You know, I—and these are things you can't sell. You know, I think, for example, that art transforms the intellect and I think that it brings to the intellect perspectives that you can't get in other ways, but I can't prove that. It widens one's range of choices. You know, if all you're going to deal with is rap—and nothing against it—but you're missing a lot of other things. Just like people who only go to the symphony, you know, they're missing what rap can bring them. And education is supposed to widen opportunities and broaden values and the arts should do that, can do that, very, very well. I think the, I believe that the part of the current social—part of the reason for the current social problems has to do with the disappearance of the arts from schools. When I was growing up—don't let me go back that far, let me just go back to late '60s and

early 1970s—when I used to come to Chicago to judge band and orchestra contests; at the time I was teaching down at SIU, Carbondale. And I used to come here to judge band and orchestra contests. And I used to be floored by the quality of these bands and orchestras, I mean just stunning. The best in the city at that time was Lane Tech. They had an orchestra that was better than most of the college orchestras I heard in that time. It was a real growing concern. Then I stopped. Coming about 1972 or 1973, I believe it was, and in 1981 I came back and I could not believe what had happened to these places, these schools. They were shameful, I was embarrassed, and it's even worse now. And, you know, you can attribute that to a lot of other things like the panic that came when Sputnik went up, "Oh, we got to put money into the sciences, into math, and where are we gonna get it from?" You know? And they still do, they're still gutting music programs and art, all the arts; just gutting those programs. In a lot of places they just disappeared. But now let me go back to my high school days when I was everywhere, all these schools, there were bands, orchestras, choirs, they had band rehearsals after school, choir rehearsals after school, go home and study, people were occupied in pursuits that were redeeming and transforming. The only thing we've got is basketball and that doesn't take but twelve players with skill.

**How did you, as a young person I mean, what developed this interest in music that grew into the desire to establish a research center? What were the origins of that?**

I'm not sure it grew until I didn't have any choice. When I was five

years old my mother said, "You're gonna take piano lessons!" and that was it.

**My mother told me the same thing but I didn't, you know, what was... I gave it up probably five years or whatever time it was, I moved on to different things or whatever but...**

Well, I couldn't give it up. I remember when I was a kid, I remember one thing, I didn't do it for one time. Well, no, I did it more than once. But I did it about three times before I got caught. And that is, I would leave home to go to piano lesson and I'd stop and start playing ball or something. And I'd pay an older girl to write in my book; until the teacher asked my mother where was I? But I didn't want to do that, but I did it because I was told to do it. And that wasn't the thing to do in my community. But, I guess by the time I got to the ninth grade, we didn't have a band at all, but when I got, I think I was in ninth grade, the school hired a band director. And I wasn't interested in doing that but he found out that I knew music because I had been doing piano lessons.

**Since you were...**

So he came and got me one day and said, "Boy, you're gonna play in this band! What do you want to play?" And after that, I also started, after I developed some facility I started to play gigs with him, he was also playing gigs. And I became very, very interested at that time and I was grateful for the piano lessons that I had.

**Was that in Florida, did you say?**

Yeah, yeah. And I was so interested, he was a model for me; and I guess I wanted to be a band director. So I got a scholarship to college to play in the band and I went to

college and majored in music. I never thought about doing this, of course. During that time, the idea of black music was nonexistent, you know? What really got me into this was in 1971 a new book came out. It was written by a Harvard University professor whose name, she wasn't at Harvard at the time, she was at NYU, but the book was called *The Music of Black Americans*. I had never seen anything like that in my life. And I had read that book and I was teaching it. And I was teaching, you know, Beethoven and Bach stuff, and I read this book and I immediately wanted to teach a class. So I started looking for printed music, and sound recording in order to teach this course and I couldn't find any. So I said, "Well, I can't teach this." So I started looking for it. I got a grant from the Newberry Library to come here one summer and go through a huge collection of sheet music; more than eighty-four thousand pieces of sheet music, looking for music by black composers. There was so much that I didn't finish it that summer, I had to come back later and finish it. And I wrote an article on what I found in that collection at Newberry and that was the start of this. The music that I found, I started trying to get copies of it and it went on from there. So it was just, this book came, I had no interest in it but I was intrigued by the title. So I started reading it and here I am. I wanted to be a performer, that's what I wanted to do in one way or another, either as a conductor or a player. But I got interested in things intellectual and also finally came to the conclusion that I wasn't that good. So at the time I had been teaching applied music at SIU for years and years and years. And I was there for fourteen years.

**And that was, what years were you at SIU? It's not in here but... I left in 1978.**

**'78. And that was the earliest time that you started the search for music?**

Yeah, by 1976 SIU had approved the establishment of a center. We called it, at the time, The Institute for Research in Black American Music. And I was in the process of setting up a national board for that center. Heddy had gone to the Illinois Board of Education and they had approved it so I was giving her to set it up. In the process I approached the president of this university about serving on the board. And he said, "You should be doing that here." So I ended up going there because my father had been a Fisk Jubilee singer and the history of that school and all of that so I—but it hit extremely hard times. It almost disappeared

**Were discussions going on or in the decision to bring it to Fisk that this should be at a black institution of higher education?** That was his son, you know. There were several things that caused me to move. One was his point that it belonged there because of Fisk history in doing this thing, this kind of thing, all of it wasn't fashionable anywhere else. There were people there who had written books on the music and my father had been a Jubilee singer there and those were attractive items. At SIU we lived only among whites. And the neighborhood I moved into was all white. People used to come out and look and stare (*laughs*). But anyway...

**You were the neighborhood attraction, novelty I should say...** Yeah. And since they had grown up in an environment that was almost all white I wanted them to have models of black intellectuals and I thought that Fisk would be a good place to do that. And that was another reason.

**Just, this isn't directly related but, you were born in the south, in Florida, and when you came, I don't know if SIU is considered north but Chicago, I mean, how has that played in your life, or has it?**

I don't think so, I never thought about it. It just seemed to be a natural thing. The south prepared me for a lot of things. For example, I wasn't surprised at all when I got to Carbondale and we went to this restaurant and every head in the place turned around and said, "Look!" So, you know, things like that, but I don't know, I never thought about that one, I don't know. I don't know how to think about it.

**I ask only because I had a good friend in graduate school that was born and raised in Chicago and had many relatives in the south and could not go down there unaccompanied, they were very worried about how he'd act and that he might, you know, do the wrong thing. So I was wondering if that move, be more than south going to SIU and then your family; I don't know if that was different worlds or not. And then Chicago.**

I don't know. You see, I guess one of the reasons I have trouble dealing with it is that fact that when I moved to from Florida to Carbondale, Illinois this was in the midst of a tremendous period of

change. This was 1964 and before '68, when Martin Luther King was killed, there was the business about open housing, the Civil Rights Act took place, we saw the rise of Black Power, and all this stuff. So it's hard to, since the conditions were changing so much and so rapidly, and, you know, I was a part of all that change, it's hard to—see, if it had been stable in the south and stable in the north then I could see the difference. It was just a dynamic change during that time.

**Everywhere.**

Yeah, yeah. One of the things that I noticed though, that really troubled me, and in some ways I think this is related to the question we talked about earlier, in regard to what has happened socially and in the schools for music, in Florida at this time, with integration coming—so-called integration, there was never integration, there was desegregation. But in Florida they made a genuine effort to try to smooth the transition from segregation to what they were calling integration. And to do this they started trying to integrate some extracurricular activities. So what they decided to do was integrate, for example, the All-State Band. So they had two All-State Bands: one for whites and one for blacks. So they said we're going to have one. And in doing so, when the time came for auditions, after the auditions what shocked everybody that all the first chairs were occupied by blacks which spoke just reams because the idea, the notion was that blacks were inferior, couldn't read music. And what really shocked people were the level of sight-reading at the time. So naturally black orchestra directors and band directors, orchestra too, felt elated about this.

Then, when the time came to integrate the schools, many of the black schools were closed. And so they retained the white band directors and in schools, black schools, that were integrated they sent white teachers there. So many black musicians, teachers, ended up doing Driver Education and some other things. And the result of that is what's really troubling. Before then there was this real critical mass of black talent in high schools. And where I first saw it, ironically, was in Carbondale, because I had left Florida and I didn't see the results of it. But what happened in Carbondale, which also had segregated school systems, and there was a large white band at the white school and a large black band. So they integrated the school. Within two years that integrated band had about two black people. There are probably a variety of reasons for this but the so-called integration brought some, had some negative impacts on the black community. And all at the same time, you know, all these things that were happening at that time just contributed to this because urban renewal became the watchword. So the black neighborhoods were being destroyed by expressways and that kind of things. Another thing that was happening was open housing and people like me moved out of black communities looking for better homes. So all of this, it just had a devastating effect on our society.

**And the high-rise housing; standing on top of each other.**

And, you know, you wonder, why wasn't this foreseen? Why did we let it happen? I don't know. Some of it was forced in by some people. I remember hearing an interview by Dempsey Travis on, where he was recounting what was happen-

ing when they were ready to build the Robert Taylor Homes and some other places and reminding people in this town that he spoke against this and said, "What you're going to do is turn the people into animals. You can't put them in places like this," but they did it anyway. So there were people speaking out but there were also people who had their own particular interest in doing that. So, I didn't mean to get off on this.

**No, I think this, you're good at it, if you ask me, and we are at the end.**