

LL-4, "Segregation in Bridgeport – 'Whites Only' Businesses"

**Transcript: pp.12-13**

**Text portion for pop-up/audio alternative**

**Time-line location: Decade VI, National and Int'l Events, 1957, "Civil Rights Act"**

**LL** Well, when I was a kid they had Pleasure Beach. Pleasure Beach was an amusement park and there had all kinds of entertainment there. We used to walk. I didn't have no car then. I was young and walk over there. You could walk all over Bridgeport. Nobody's bother you, or nothing like that. We went over there. And later on before, they had Ritz Ballroom where they opened up to the blacks and everything like that. And then they had Roxie Hall. That was a place they had for blacks to go dancing. And the roller skating rink. There used to be one on State Street. They didn't allow blacks in there at that time.

**I** Was that The Mosque? [roller skating rink]

**LL** Yeah, The Mosque. Then eventually, when things got where they needed money, they started opening it up. The doors then, you know. That was the main place where we went for dancing or roller skating.

**I** So back then, let's say in the '40's, or '30's and the '40's, there were places like the Ritz Ballroom and The Mosque that were whites only?

**LL** Yeah, definitely so.

**I** Up here in New England.

**LL** Yeah, up here in New England. You'd be surprised how many places were prejudiced --even some bars. Well, I wouldn't go into no bars at the time. Even some bars, they didn't want blacks to go into the bars or nothing. I had heard people experience going into a bar, they would break the glass behind you. If you drink out of a glass, they'd break the glass.

**I** Okay, I keep trying to get to this part. So the Ritz Ballroom eventually did become integrated and you would go roller skating.

**LL** Over to Lordship. That was another place they started out prejudiced, but they did allow blacks to go there. In fact, the YMCA, when I was a kid, the YMCA had special days for us to go swimming, to use the Y like on a Sunday, I think it was. They didn't allow the blacks at that time, the YMCA.

**I** YMCA, on State Street?

**LL** Yeah, on State Street. They had a Sunday set aside for the blacks.

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**I** About when was this, like the `30's?

**LL** Oh, this was about `30's. 30's 39, before the war and everything like that.

**I** And about when did that start to change?

**LL** Well, I guess it started to change after the war. After the war it started changing...