

**REPORT
ON
RAPID CITY**



**BY THE
SOUTH DAKOTA ADVISORY
COMMITTEE TO THE
UNITED STATES COMMISSION
ON CIVIL RIGHTS**

MARCH 1963

NEGRO AIRMEN
IN A
NORTHERN COMMUNITY

DISCRIMINATION IN RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

A Report of The South Dakota Advisory Committee

To The

United States Commission On Civil Rights

MARCH 1963

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P R E F A C E

This report was submitted to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights by the South Dakota Advisory Committee. The South Dakota Committee is one of the 51 Committees established in every State and the District of Columbia by the Commission pursuant to Section 105(c) of the Civil Rights Act of 1957. Its membership consists of interested citizens of standing who serve without compensation. Among the functions and responsibilities of the State Advisory Committees, under their mandate from the Commission on Civil Rights, are the following: (1) to advise the Commission of all information concerning legal developments constituting a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution; (2) to advise the Commission as to the effect of the laws and policies of the Federal Government with respect to equal protection of the laws under the Constitution; and (3) to advise the Commission upon matters of mutual concern in the preparation of its final report. The Commission, in turn, has been charged by the Congress to investigate allegations, made in writing and under oath, that citizens are being deprived of the right to vote by reason of color, race, religion, or national origin; to study and collect information regarding legal developments constituting a denial of equal protection of the laws; to appraise Federal laws and policies with respect to equal protection; and to report to the President and to the Congress its activities, findings and recommendations.

SOUTH DAKOTA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE
UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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INTRODUCTION

The South Dakota Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights held an open meeting in Rapid City, South Dakota, on December 11, 1962, for the purpose of gathering information about community practices and attitudes toward non-white airmen stationed at nearby Ellsworth Air Force Base. The Commission staff was concurrently conducting a thorough investigation of the experiences of racial minorities in the Armed Forces.

Some of the background on the Commission staff study is in order here for an understanding of the role of the South Dakota Advisory Committee. Mr. Philip L. Hammer, Attorney Advisor for State Advisory Committees, provided a background statement at the Committee meeting. The bulk of this section of the report is freely drawn from Mr. Hammer's statement.

It should be understood that among the functions of the United States Commission on Civil Rights is that of appraising the laws and policies of the Federal Government with respect to equal protection. It is on this basis that the Commission staff is currently studying discriminatory practices involving members of the Armed Forces.

President Truman, on July 26, 1948, issued Executive Order 9981 which declared the official policy of barring segregation in the Armed Forces. The Order stated:

"It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale."

The Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force are reported to have issued orders effectuating this policy by mid-January of 1950. In 1961, the Department of Defense considered integration to be an accomplished fact and took the position that further reports on the progress of eliminating discrimination would be of no purpose.

However, Mr. Hammer reported that the Commission was disturbed because of:

". . . . the persistence of complaints and reports of continuing discrimination in off-base housing for military personnel, in the segregation of schools to which military personnel were forced to send their children, and in the unavailability of places of public accommodation near military bases. The picture that was revealed by these reports was one of serious deprivation of opportunity for non-white personnel once they left the protective wing of the military base to seek the essentials of life available only in the surrounding civilian community."

As a result of these circumstances the Commission staff, in January 1962, decided to make a full study of the situation.

The Department of Defense has not been unaware of this problem. On June 19, 1961, the Deputy Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum for the respective Secretaries of the

Army, the Navy, and the Air Force, in which he included the statement:

" in those areas where unsegregated facilities are not readily available to members of the Armed Forces in adjacent or surrounding communities, it is the policy of the Department of Defense to provide such facilities on military installations to the extent possible. In addition, local commanders are expected to make every effort to obtain such facilities off base for members of the Armed Forces through command-community relations committees."

On June 24, 1962, President Kennedy expressed his concern about evidence of continuing discrimination against various military personnel by appointing a Presidential Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Armed Forces. In his letter to the Chairman, he asked the newly-appointed committee:

" to make a thorough review of the current situation both within the services and in the communities where military installations are located to determine what further measures may be required to assure equality of treatment for all persons serving in the Armed Forces."

He went on to say:

"There is considerable evidence that in some civilian communities in which military installations are located, discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, or national origin is a serious source of hardship and embarrassment for Armed Forces personnel and their dependents."

In connection with the Commission study, staff attorneys visited selected military bases around the country and, with the full cooperation and assistance of the Department of Defense, were able to gather much significant data on existing problems. One of the bases visited was Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City. Mr. Hammer reported the following results of the Commission staff study at Ellsworth:

"Here the staff found that while the base officials were doing what was required to implement the policy of equal opportunity and treatment to Negro airmen on base, there existed widespread discrimination against Negro personnel in the bars, restaurants, motels, barbershops and night clubs of Rapid City. More seriously, the staff found that discriminatory housing practices in Rapid City mean an almost complete unavailability of decent rental housing for non-white airmen, which on occasion had compelled them to leave dependents behind and live on post."

He added:

"The Commission has called upon the Advisory Committee for further information on this disturbing situation. We desire factual information from your Committee on the community attitudes and practices in Rapid City toward Negro servicemen stationed at the nearby base."

This is the report of the South Dakota Advisory Committee on that subject. Our findings are based on the evidence presented at the open meeting -- both direct testimony and submitted documents of various kinds -- and additional information that the committee has been able to assemble.

The report is divided into four major sections. First, attention is given to pertinent developments of the past two or three years in Rapid City. The Committee feels much light is shed on current community practices and attitudes by knowledge of these developments. Second, the Committee relates its findings in the areas of public accommodations and housing. Third, the Committee reports its evaluation of attitudes in the community toward discriminatory practices. The last section of the report contains the conclusions of the Committee. Recommendations for Federal action will be submitted to the Commission on Civil Rights in the near future.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ellsworth Air Force Base was established as a military base of the Army Air Corps in July 1942. Operations commenced in September 1942. From that date to June 1943, nine heavy bomber groups and ten provisional groups were trained. It became a combat training school in 1943, and remained so until 1945. In 1945, it became a base for B-17 and P-61 training for weather reconnaissance. The base was deactivated in 1946.

In March 1947, the base was reactivated as part of the 15th Air Force, and was a principal operating unit of the 28th Bomber Wing, utilizing B-29 aircraft. In 1948, it was declared a permanent installation and in 1949, the use of B-36 aircraft was inaugurated. In 1950, the command was transferred to the 8th Air Force.

The official name, "Ellsworth Air Force Base", was given to it in 1953, following the death of Brigadier General Richard E. Ellsworth, a former base commander. In October 1955, it was reassigned to the 15th Air Force and, in 1957, was converted to B-52 operations. Titan I missiles became operational at the base in June 1962.

"The city of Rapid City was laid out on February 25, 1876." (Herbert S. Schell, History of South Dakota, University of Nebraska Press, 1961, p. 142.) The Census Bureau reported that Rapid City had a population of 292 persons in 1880; the city subsequently experienced a somewhat irregular, but gradual growth so that by 1940, it had 13,844 inhabitants. By 1950, the population had mushroomed to 25,310, and by 1960 the total population was 42,399 persons. These figures reveal that the major growth of the city has occurred since the establishment of the air base in 1942. While a good share of the growth of Rapid City can be attributed to the tourist traffic that has developed in recent

years, there is no question but that the air base itself has been of tremendous importance in providing a most important and relatively stable economic resource for the city.

The Committee has no record of either the size or the composition of the early base population. One senior resident of Rapid City reports that Negroes were stationed at the base from its inception. When the Commission staff visited the base in June 1962, it was manned by 4,320 enlisted men and 673 officers; 354 of the enlisted men and five of the officers were Negroes.

Information about earlier relationships between Negro airmen and community residents is likewise lacking. It is unauthoritatively reported that there has always been some friction. On the same basis, it is said that some Negroes (and some white airmen) have been involved in occasional acts of violence and that some Negro airmen (and some white airmen) have sought favors of young Indian women, incurring the disfavor of both the Sioux and white communities of Rapid City. To what extent these accounts are factual or have evolved out of the rumor process and scapegoating is not known to the Committee members. The Committee does have significant materials covering developments in Rapid City over the past two or three years, and they are briefly reviewed here.

One indication that discriminatory practices against Negro airmen are not new to Rapid City is that the Junior Chamber of Commerce conducted a survey, in 1959, to determine the extent to which places of public accommodation refused to serve Negroes. While the Chamber's findings are reported in more detail later in the report, it may be noted that it found evidence of rather widespread discrimination, especially in bars, night clubs, and barbershops. It may also be noted that some concern about

discrimination must have prompted the Junior Chamber of Commerce to undertake this survey.

Late the following year, the Rapid City Daily Journal -- the only daily newspaper of the community -- ran an editorial on the closing of a local night club because of alleged "racial incidents" (December 29, 1960). The editorial suggested it would be desirable for authorities to issue the necessary licenses "to some respectable man who could operate a bar and grill for our colored population."

On February 5, 1961, the Daily Journal reported the results of a survey it conducted to discover what objections people might have to "well-behaved Negroes" being served in various places of public accommodation or living in their neighborhoods. The results indicated a widespread acceptance of Negroes being served in restaurants, motels, barbershops, and beauty shops. The survey reported less acceptance of such service in bars and night clubs and approximately one-third (the largest proportion reported) said they would object to having Negroes live in their neighborhoods. The Committee cannot know whether the survey fairly revealed community attitudes at that time or whether the results might have helped to shape attitudes in the community.

On March 7, 1961, the newspaper reported a downtown Rapid City cafe's refusal to serve a Negro medical officer in charge of the U. S. Public Health Service Hospital in Eagle Butte, South Dakota. Interestingly, the headline to the story ("Cafe Refuses Service to Negro") was prefaced by the word, "Surprised . . .".

Significant public concern about housing for Negroes was reflected in an advertisement carried in the May 12, 1961, issue of the Daily Journal. The ad carried the names of 1,211 residents of Rapid City who had subscribed to the following pledge:

"We believe in the right of every person to live in a home and in a neighborhood of his own choice. We hereby publicly pledge that we will welcome as neighbors on an individual basis, all persons without regard to race, creed or national origin."

On May 22, 1961, the newspaper reported that a technical training coordinator for The Martin Company, on a 45-day assignment in connection with the installation of Titan missile complexes in the area, was asked to leave a motel after having spent one night there. The manager of the motel is reported to have said that, "the Martin Company made the reservation but we did not know Mr. Douglas was colored. When we found out, in order not to embarrass him, we let him stay for the night." She reportedly added: "We wouldn't have any business if we catered to colored people. I believe you'll find there are no motels in town which do cater to colored people." (A Black Hills Civil Rights Committee survey at the time revealed discriminatory practices in approximately one-half of the motels. Specific figures are given in the section of the report entitled, "Community Practices.")

One of the more widely publicized incidents of racial discrimination also occurred in May 1961. It involved an African engineer, from Guinea, who was visiting Rapid City in conjunction with his study of road construction methods in this country -- he was refused service in a downtown cafe. The Daily Journal carried the story on May 31st, and indicated that the visiting official was later taken to a drive-in by two highway engineers who recognized him as he was seen hunting a place in which to eat.

In an editorial on June 2, 1961, following the incident of the visiting engineer, the editor made this observation: "That segregation is practiced in a minority of the restaurants and a majority of the bars should be well known by now." Continuing,

the editor stated:

"The problem of coping with Negroes is not new, but has never been solved for Rapid City because of several unfortunate occurrences. There were bars in Rapid City which served Negroes until 'gangs' of Negroes were 'taking over' the places. Statistics on the stabbings are very real for the places where Negroes have been served in Rapid City."

The same editorial stated: "The actions of a minority of the Negroes in this area have impaired progress for integration," and:

"The problem for Rapid City is apparent and if the malcontents who are moved to Ellsworth Air Force Base would resolve to behave themselves as law-abiding citizens, some progress could be made.

"Rapid City as the big town adjacent to a military base where the colored citizens get to serve for the defense of the nation should be cognizant of the problem. It is not new, but there are too many whites and too many colored people who do not understand there can be co-existence."

Concerned about publicity regarding the incident, the editor said, "It could be that Rapid City will miss the boat for favorable publicity because a visiting citizen of a foreign country failed to find the hospitality on which Rapid City prides itself." The editor observed, "The controversy cannot be ignored. It has put Rapid City 'on the map' in a light which many of the motel and restaurant operators do not like."

On June 21, 1961, a prominent front page Daily Journal story reported discrimination against three foreign visitors, one of whom was a Negro. The three were reportedly, "fresh out of Yale University where each received his Master of Laws degree a few days ago" The three visitors were making a cross-country tour of the U. S. "to see if there is any truth to the democracy in America." At approximately the same time, Local 7 of the United Packinghouse Workers in Des Moines, Iowa, urged its members not to vacation in South Dakota because of racial discrimination. The wire service story of this action was used widely in the region.

Some of these events were called to the Governor's attention. On June 22, 1961, the Daily Journal carried an Associated Press story from the state capital, Pierre, in which the Governor reportedly "repeated his charge that there seems to be special interests at work determined to show that racial relations in South Dakota are worse than they actually are." He was further quoted as saying that the next session of the legislature should pass anti-discrimination laws, "if the situation gets worse." He added, however, that, "It is not necessary to pass laws for everything under the sun." After indicating that he did not feel that the racial question then warranted a full investigation, he said that if the racial situation worsens he would probably "seek inquiry through the South Dakota Civil Rights Commission."

An editorial in the June 22, 1961, issue of the Daily Journal also commented on the action of the Packinghouse Workers and the incidents involving the three Yale graduates. The editorial commented: "The number of incidents would indicate that some of the 'refused' persons knew where to go to be 'refused' and thus they could arouse some public reaction and win some publicity." It closed with the statement: "If creating unrest for no reason other than calling attention to five restaurants in Rapid City which do not serve colored

people aids world peace, we have had the Communist stooges in this town. (sic)"

Three or four times during the summer of 1961, the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee ran an ad in the newspaper asking readers to sign the following pledge:

"I welcome the fair service of people, without regard to race, creed or national origin, and I will support business establishments who feel as I do."

Approximately 200 replies were received, including several that enclosed financial contributions.

On August 3, 1961, the paper carried a story on the difficulties being encountered by A/IC Willie Hardy in finding housing for himself and his family. In spite of his great need -- his fifth child was expected in two weeks -- real estate agencies allegedly refused to rent to him when they found he was a Negro. The Daily Journal solicited assistance for the family in solving its housing problem. A three-column picture of the family accompanied the article.

Several events in late 1962 brought renewed public attention to racial problems in Rapid City. Publicity resulted from the energetic assertion of the rights of the Negro by the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee and the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

In September, NAACP members distributed handbills in downtown Rapid City supporting the enactment of a state public accommodations law*. Attention was called to some city business

* On January 30, 1963, the Governor of South Dakota signed into law Senate Bill 1 (introduced on January 8, 1963) entitling all persons within the State to full, equal and unsegregated access to public accommodations. Violation of the provisions of the Act is made a misdemeanor. Journal of the Senate, January 31, 1963, p.230

establishments that refused to serve Negroes. The following day four Negro airmen from the base entered one of the cafes alleged to discriminate. At this point the owner, who had been given advance notice of the intentions of the airmen, ordered his establishment closed to all persons within, including whites. The Daily Journal story of the incident, on October 1, 1962, reported that police officers and a sheriff's office unit, alerted in advance, were on hand at the cafe. The restaurant owner reportedly said that the incident was designed to gain publicity for the NAACP and sympathy for Mississippi Negroes.

On October 22, 1962, the New York Times carried an article headlined, "Color Bar Firm in South Dakota." The article cited South Dakota as "a pocket of Northern resistance to legal efforts to erase racial discrimination in public places." The article reviewed many of the above incidents and mentioned legislative inaction on proposed public accommodation laws. The article was reprinted widely in newspapers of the region and elicited numerous editorial comments. Partly as a result of the Times article, the issue of racial discrimination was briefly brought into the gubernatorial race.

A week before the open meeting, the City Council of Rapid City heard a local restaurant owner charge the mayor with exaggerating the discrimination problem in Rapid City. One result of the Council meeting was an expression by the the aldermen of a desire to be present at the Advisory Committee open meeting .

On December 6, 1962, five days before the scheduled open meeting , a local radio station -- KEZU -- editorialized about the situation. Inasmuch as this brief editorial reflected some of the misunderstandings in the community of the work of the Committee, it is reprinted in full below:

"The following comments are Editorial in nature. They represent the opinion of this Broadcaster, Abner George, and of the Management of Station K E Z U. Your comments, either pro or con are invited.

"I was introduced to Rapid City and the Black Hills nearly a quarter century ago by a man who loved this spot of Gods Creation with a passion that knew no bounds. Much of this fervor he passed on to me. During all of those years since, I think that I have been more than a casual observer of this scene. As a newsman, I have reported its triumphs and its tragedys . . . The good things and the bad. And always I have tried to be as objective and forthright as possible. Never have I cried out in warning. But now I must. Rapid City . . . Wake Up . . . Be on your guard. There is a group of people who would defame you . . . Who call you dirty, unfit. This group without any legal status have created an opportunity to present to all the world a picture of Rapid City which I for one do not believe exists. It is a picture of Racial Prejudice and Discrimination which they have drawn and which just does not fit the scene. A meeting has been scheduled for next Tuesday and invitations have been sent out to a carefully selected list of people and organizations. Observers have been called in to witness the unveiling. You as Citizens of this City cannot ignore this carefully planned insult to your character. Your side is the Rapid City you know and have helped to build. It is the true Picture and you can be proud of it. Please make sure your side is heard too . . . Make it heard by attending the meeting Tuesday in the Sheraton Johnson Hotel. Don't be content to sit back and let a group of Pseudo Do-Gooders you

(sic) you names you don't deserve. We cannot sit back and let an isolated incident be labeled as Representative of the conduct of a whole community. We are all human beings and as such we are good and we are bad and that fact is not changed by the color of our skin. It is also true that Human nature cannot be changed by legislation . If you disagree with me . . . Then let the Civil Rights Committee speak for you next Tuesday. If you agree, with me, then speak for yourself. Whatever you do . . . Do not ignore this defamation of the Character of your City.

Equal time will be provided on K E Z U to any responsible person who wishes to express a contrary view."

Dr. George Pendo, speaking for the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee, was given an opportunity to respond to the editorial as follows:

"On December 6th station KEZU broadcast an editorial critical of the South Dakota Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, and the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee, and invited opposing views from responsible sources. This is Dr. George Pendo, speaking for the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee.

" We do not argue with anyone's right to their own opinion, but we do feel that an opinion should be based on an assessment of all available facts . . . and if presented in an effort to mold public opinion, it should be presented with supporting facts, not with error and confusion in an appeal to emotion. On that basis we would question the editorial of December 6th.

" The editorial indicated confusion on the difference between the State Advisory Committee and the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee. The State Advisory Committee is comprised of South Dakotans appointed to conduct investigations for the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, and on that basis has called a hearing for December 11th in Rapid City.

" The Black Hills Civil Rights Committee is a group of local residents working for civil rights. Our committee is without legal status, had nothing to do with scheduling the hearing in Rapid City, and, in fact, is without authority to set up such a hearing.

" The editorial said this group without legal status -- apparently meaning the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee -- has created an opportunity to present a picture of racial discrimination which does not fit the scene. We agree that discrimination does not belong in any setting, but anyone aware of the facts knows there has been instances of discrimination in Rapid City. And we would question whether the blame for this picture, which was painted so dirty and unfit by the editorial, should be placed on those persons who are seeking to correct the situation, or those who practice discrimination.

" The editorial said, without support, that Human nature cannot be changed by legislation. Many activities once common are now rejected as anti-social . . . but only after supporting legislation was passed. Child labor and compulsory education are a couple of cases to point out. Legislation itself may not change human nature, but it can provide the basis for an evolution in man's attitudes.

"On a couple of the editorial's statements we are wholly in agreement. Human beings are good and bad, and that fact is not changed by the color of our skin. Because we wholeheartedly believe this, we want people to form their opinions and select their friends and customers on an individual rather than a racial basis. And we, too, would urge everyone who can to attend the State Advisory Committee meeting December 11th. The Black Hills Civil Rights Committee does not wish to speak for the community of Rapid City . . . We would much rather have the fair-minded and reasonable residents of Rapid City speak for us."

On Sunday, December 9, 1962, two days before the Advisory Committee meeting, the Rapid City Journal carried an eight column story headlined, "A Matter of Degree? . . . Journal Survey Fathoms Extent of Discrimination." While appropriate references to this article appear in other sections of this report, the introductory statements are reprinted as follows:

"What constitutes an 'island of prejudice?'

"Is the race question a phony issue in South Dakota, particularly Rapid City?

"Is there a problem as it concerns Rapid City?

"Answers to these questions will be sought here Tuesday when the State Advisory Council (sic) of the United States Commission on Civil Rights puts Rapid City under its microscope. The meeting culminates a gradual focusing of attention on Rapid City, precipitated most recently by an article in the New York Times citing existence of a color bar in South Dakota.

" An emotionally-charged subject, civil rights is an issue which immediately evokes responses. This, at least, is one of a number of conclusions that can be reached from statistics developed in recent days by The Journal."

The close of the article stated:

"Unanswered is the question whether Rapid City is, indeed, part of an island of prejudice. Open to speculation is the conclusions Tuesday's meeting will be able to reach.

"Regardless of the outcome there will be the attitude of many proprietors that they are trying to run good, respectable businesses."

On December 10, 1962, the Journal reported the formation of a "Citizen's Council for Individual Rights," whose functions were to be as follows:

". . . . to protect the rights of all citizens as set forth in the Constitution of the United States . . . , to oppose any group or individual from proposing legislation that would impair their rights . . . and to disclaim the charges made by the civil rights group and the NAACP against this city."

In a prepared statement to the press, the acting chairman said:

"The council feels that if the administrative branch of the city's government wouldn't have sanctioned different incidents planned by the NAACP to gain unfavorable publicity and would have tried to handle the problem locally, there wouldn't have been any publicity, let alone bad publicity."

This background is not exhaustive, but it does give an indication that racial discrimination has been a problem for some time in Rapid City. Weak pleas have occasionally been made for the problem's solution, though usually because of the bad publicity it caused rather than for moral reasons. The Black Hills Civil Rights Committee and the NAACP have struggled with the problem, but the broad community effort needed for its solution has not been made.

By the time of the meeting on December 11, 1962, the racial situation in Rapid City had become a center of heated local controversy and nationwide interest. A network television crew, wire service reporters, and representatives of local radio stations and the newspaper were on hand to record the events of the day. The meeting appeared to many Rapid Citians and other South Dakotans to be a climax to a series of events that had thrown the spotlight on racial problems in Rapid City.

A short time after the Chairman of the Committee called the meeting to order the room was filled to capacity and it remained that way throughout the session. Over 100 persons recorded their presence by signing a paper provided by the Committee. In spite of the emotion-laden subject and the opinion-anchored atmosphere, persons attending the meeting acted and spoke with commendable restraint.

While several persons, including some Negro airmen, were for various reasons unable to appear before the Committee, fair opportunity was provided for each person present to "speak his piece." Although the meeting lasted only one day, members of the Committee felt a great deal of significant information was presented. On the basis of the information gathered, the Committee believes it can fairly describe community practices and attitudes toward Negro airmen and draw legitimate conclusions.

COMMUNITY PRACTICES

In planning the Rapid City meeting, the Committee tried to secure as broad a representation as possible of responsible groups and individuals in the area. Special efforts were made, of course, to have victims of discriminatory practices appear; but care was taken to invite representation from every organization that might have an interest in this matter. Nearly 75 personal invitations were sent to organizations and individuals who might contribute to the Committee's knowledge of the situation. Additionally, the meeting was announced in the Daily Journal three times during the month prior to December 11th, and all interested persons were invited to appear.

The Committee received oral statements, signed and notarized affidavits and other documents at the meeting. Persons who appeared were questioned by the Committee, after which members of the audience were invited to ask questions. None of the statements were taken under oath because the Advisory Committee lacks the power to adjudicate or even make findings of fact in individual cases. The individual grievances revealed served the sole purpose of illustrating the practices of the community.

This section of the report deals with community practices as the Committee came to understand them. The experiences related by Negro airmen and their wives are not, of course, exhaustive. Several Negro airmen who intended to make statements were unavoidably detained on base to meet military obligations. It should be made clear, however, that the base commander was very cooperative in making it possible for those airmen who appeared to attend. Other cases were undoubtedly unreported due to the extremely controversial atmosphere surrounding the problem at the time and the attendant publicity.

The results of surveys by various groups of discrimination in public accommodations are considered. The surveys generally concerned all Negroes, but there are so few Negroes other than airmen and their families living in the Rapid City area it seems reasonable to treat the results as referring, realistically, to Negro airmen.

PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Bars, Night Clubs, and Taverns. Members of the Armed Forces often seek off-hour relaxation in such activities as dancing, listening to music, seeking companionship, consuming alcoholic beverages (sometimes in conjunction with dining), and enjoying "live" entertainment. The pursuit of such activities in leisure time is common among persons engaged in occupations that are so rigidly routinized as to restrict personal, on-the-job, freedom. These activities are most commonly sought in bars, night clubs, and taverns. (In South Dakota, an establishment that serves only 3.2 beer and soft drinks is known as a tavern; if hard liquor is sold it is known as a bar.)

The single, Negro airman, stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base, is at a particular disadvantage in seeking these activities because of the almost complete lack of community sanctioned female companions. His leisure-time activities are therefore likely to center around fewer combinations of these forms of relaxation than would be the case for the white airman. There is some logic to the argument that this results in a greater tendency to frequent bars, night clubs, and taverns. The married Negro airman and his wife, as among whites, undoubtedly look forward to occasional "nights out" when they would also have reason to desire the accommodations of bars, night clubs, and taverns. What kind of situation does the Negro airman, single or married, face in the bars, night clubs, and taverns in Rapid City?

The Committee found this one of the major areas of discrimination against Negro airmen. In its 1959 survey of discriminatory practices, the Junior Chamber of Commerce reported that only 14 percent of the bars and night clubs served Negroes. In 1961, the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee found in a survey that 86 percent of the bars and night clubs and 92 percent of the taverns refused to serve Negroes. The local chapter of the NAACP reported in 1962 that its survey revealed that 80 percent of the bars and night clubs refused service to Negroes. The Rapid City Daily Journal, in its most recent survey reported that 50 percent of the bars and night clubs and 88 percent of the taverns do not serve Negroes.

While there is some variation in the percentages reported by these surveys, there appears to be a rather stable percentage of places that do discriminate. Results of these surveys indicate there is widespread discrimination against Negro airmen in bars, night clubs, and taverns.

Several specific cases of such discrimination were brought to the attention of the Committee at the meeting. Following are several cases and observations related by Negro airmen or their wives. The dates in parentheses refer to the time that the incident occurred.

Case #1 -- A staff sergeant and an airman entered a downtown bar. The waitress told them they could not be served. The male bar attendant came to them and confirmed the statement of the waitress, saying it was the policy of the manager. (Dec. 1962)

Case #2 -- Three days after his arrival at Ellsworth, a Negro airman, accompanied by two white airmen, sought service in a downtown bar. The waitress informed him that they don't serve Negroes. (Oct. 1961)

Case #3 -- A Negro airman and five Caucasian friends, after doing some shopping in downtown Rapid City, stopped in a lounge for a drink. After they had been served, the manager told them they had to leave. The Negro airman assumed the reason was that of his skin color. Since then he has been to Rapid City only to shop, feeling compelled to remain on base for entertainment. (Dec. 1960)

Case #4 -- An Airman, second class, accompanied by a buddy, entered a Main Street bar and was refused service. The bartender told him, "It is the policy of the Bar Owners Association not to serve Negroes." (Dec. 1962)

Case #5 -- One airman took another, who was a light-complected Negro, to a tavern near the base to see the sergeant for whom he worked. After the Negro had been served a beer a white airman reported to the manager that he, the manager, had served a Negro, whereupon the manager approached the person in question and told him he did not serve Negroes. He asked the person to leave immediately. (May 1962)

Case #6 -- The wife of a Negro airman reported that her husband and their landlord entered a local bar to get a beer. The owner told the landlord that he would serve him, but the Negro airman would have to take his outside.

Case #7 -- A staff sergeant reports, "If I tried to go in alone I would not be accepted, but with a female companion I'd be admitted."

Case #8 -- An Airman, second class, reported, "When I lived in a trailer I was working late one day and I stopped in X Tavern for just some potato chips and soda or anything they had to eat. I was willing to take the food out of the tavern and eat elsewhere, but they refused to sell me anything. He said that his license would not permit him to serve us (my friend was with me.)"

Case #9 -- An airman reported that he was refused service in two bars. The manager of one used derogatory statements, but the other was polite enough to offer a sack in which to carry the beer out.

Case #10 -- An airman reports that he entered Y Bar one night alone just to see if he could be served. The manager told him that he couldn't be served and wouldn't be able to until there was a law saying he had to. The airman further reported that before he had a chance to leave, the manager called the police.

Case #11 -- The wife of an airman reports, "I have never been to any of these places because I knew that colored wouldn't be accepted."

Case #12 -- An airman reports, "I know better than to go to bars and cocktail lounges because I know I'm not wanted. If the police is called to remove me from some establishment because of my race and such incident gets back to the squadron, I'm liable for punishment."

Case #13 -- The wife of an airman said, "I'd go into the bars and cocktail lounges but before I got all the way into the place they'd tell me they couldn't serve us. At one place the bartender said he'd serve us but it would make him lose business."

Case #14 -- One airman reported that when he arrived in 1954 he could get into any place in town, but that in approximately 1955, "they quit serving at most places."

Barbershops and Beauty Parlors. Negro airmen, as others, need to have their hair cut from time to time. While most military bases provide haircuts on the base, it is not uncommon for military personnel to prefer this service off-base.

The wife of the Negro airman has as much need for the services of professional beauticians as do other wives. Some might argue that personal grooming is a more important concern to women than to men. What do Negro airmen and their wives face in Rapid City when they enter barbershops and beauty parlors?

The Committee received several reports of discrimination in barbershops, but only heard of the results of two surveys (one incomplete) of discrimination in beauty parlors. The 1959 Junior Chamber of Commerce survey revealed that 96 percent of the barbershops refused service to Negroes. The Black Hills Civil Rights Committee survey of 1961, indicated discrimination against Negroes in 89 percent of the barbershops. The NAACP

study in late 1962, revealed 50 percent refusals by barbers. The most recent Journal survey (1962) reported that 33 percent of the barbershops refuse Negroes.

The Journal survey uncovered evidence of refusal to serve Negroes in one out of every seven (14%) beauty parlors. A current survey of the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee gives indication of a somewhat higher rate of refusals to serve Negroes.

Motels and Hotels. There are a number of times when Negro airmen and their families need or desire the accommodations of motels and hotels. Persons newly assigned to the base, Negro and white, frequently arrive in Rapid City at an inconvenient hour and prefer to check into a motel or hotel for the night before reporting for duty. Not infrequently relatives or friends of a serviceman visit the base and stay at motels or hotels. Also, it is not uncommon for a group of service buddies to decide to "spend the weekend in town," in motels or hotels.

The married Negro airman, as other married servicemen, may need the accommodations of a motel or hotel while he finds more permanent housing facilities, either on or off the base. Limitations of the BOQ may force some airmen into such a situation. What treatment is the Negro airman likely to find in Rapid City motels and hotels?

The Committee found the treatment of Negro airmen in motels and hotels to be one of the brighter spots of the racial situation in Rapid City. It is reported that neither of the two hotels discriminate. Among the motels, there is a definite trend of progress even though a small minority still discriminate.

The Journal, in a 1959 survey, revealed that 52 percent of the motels refused accommodations to Negroes. In early 1961, the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee found essentially the same results; however, by fall of the same year it found that the percentage of discriminating motels had dropped to 31. The 1962 NAACP survey and the most recent Journal study show further drops, to 16 percent and nine percent, respectively.

Further evidence of progress is indicated by statements to the Committee by the President of the Rapid City Motel Association, who is also a member of the Board of Directors of the South Dakota Association of Motel Owners. He asserted that it is a definite disadvantage to the motel industry of Rapid City and of South Dakota to be known as discriminators since so much of their business is dependent upon tourists. He maintained that, to his knowledge, not one of the active members of the local association practiced discrimination. Further, he reported that at a meeting of the State Association directors, held two days before the open meeting, a stand against any kind of discrimination was taken. He said the State Association has voted to give its support to a state public accommodations law (which has since been passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor).

In spite of improvements, reports were made to the Committee of occasions in which Negro airmen were refused accommodations. In addition, the history of discriminatory practices is not easily erased from the minds of airmen who have suffered such experiences in the recent past.

The Rapid City Chamber of Commerce did not help develop desirable attitudes when, in the Fall of 1961, it sent a letter to the Negro principal of the Bureau of Indian Affairs school in Eagle Butte, South Dakota, regarding accommodations for delegates to the forthcoming convention of the South Dakota

Education Association. This letter included the statement, ". . . and on the reverse side of this sheet you will find listed names and addresses of motels and hotels, and we have checked those that accept people of your color." On the reverse side, of 45 motels and hotels listed, seven were indicated as providing accommodations to Negroes.

Restaurants and Cafes. Everyone has to eat with some degree of regularity. Single airmen who are spending any time in town that encompasses a meal time will want to eat at some cafe or restaurant. Most wives insist on an occasional "dinner out." Most people like to have a cup of coffee, a malt, a bottle of pop, or a sandwich now and then. These things have almost become ritualized components of "after the show," "after the dance," or after a "night on the town." The choice one makes of cafes and restaurants may be based on convenience, attractiveness, sanitary practices, quality or price of food, or "atmosphere." What do Negro airmen face when they seek to patronize cafes and restaurants?

Through the years, the percentage of restaurants refusing service to Negroes has been relatively small. The Junior Chamber of Commerce survey, in 1959, found 13 percent discriminating; the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee survey, in 1961, found 11 percent; and the 1962 Journal survey showed nine percent.

Nevertheless, discrimination in these places has been a significant source of embarrassment, humiliation, and, in some cases, hardship for Negro airmen. One reason for this is the more frequent use of cafes and restaurants as compared to, say, motels and barbershops. In addition, some of the more attractive and conveniently located restaurants are among those which practice discrimination.

Illustrative of several specific cases of discrimination that were called to the attention of the Committee are the following:

Case #1 -- Three Negro airmen entered a downtown restaurant. They were neat, well-groomed and completely sober. The waitress approached them and informed them that she could not serve them. They continued, "We asked to speak to the proprietor. He came to us in a furious temper and said that he would not serve us and also stated that it is his policy not to serve Negroes. We then left quietly."

Case #2 -- An Airman, second class, reported the following incident involving a Rapid City cafe, "The weekend previous, I had been there and was served when accompanied by three Caucasians and one Latin. The next time I went there I was in a party of two Negroes, one Latin, and one Caucasian. We were given no service and heard many insulting remarks. After approximately 15 minutes the 'barkeep' came and addressed the one Caucasian with us. He said that they would never have allowed us in there if he had known he (the Caucasian) was associating with some 'black boys.' Hearing this, one asked if he meant that they didn't serve Negroes there and the answer was strongly affirmative. We left amid insults and ignorant jeerings."

Case #3 -- Two Negro airmen, dressed in the Class "A" USAF military uniform, were served in a downtown restaurant that had previously refused the same men in civilian clothes.

Case #4 -- Three Negro airmen who sought service in a cafe were refused service by the waitress and were told by the manager that it was against his policy to accommodate Negroes.

The owner of a downtown restaurant that had received considerable public attention for its discriminatory practices appeared before the Committee and did not deny the reputation attributed to his place of business by the Negro airmen.

Other Public Accommodations. The Committee heard an attorney report that, in contrast with the discriminatory practices cited above, there were many forms of public accommodation in Rapid City provided to all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin. Included were the following: public parks; public schools; public library; public swimming pools; public transportation, on a non-segregated basis; community churches; summer recreational program; municipal golf course; stores; hospitals; theaters; public concerts, plays and recitals; and athletic events, both from the standpoint of attendance and participation.

HOUSING

The second major area of discrimination receiving attention by the Committee was housing. This form of discrimination is particularly distressing for the married Negro airmen. It is distressing, too, in that, unlike most public accommodations, it involves a basic necessity of life. Serious problems in housing for Negro airmen and their families were revealed in the meeting.

The story that repeated itself, monotonously, in the Advisory Committee meeting was essentially as follows: A Negro airman and his family come to Rapid City without suspecting that widespread discriminatory practices exist in regard to housing; initial inquiries reveal that local residents and real estate agencies neither rent nor sell decent housing property to Negroes; a short stay is made at the base BOQ, followed by one of several undesirable alternatives. The normal choices, apart from base housing, are as follows: (1) renting unsanitary, cramped, unsafe, and dilapidated quarters at exorbitant prices; (2) buying a trailer; (3) breaking up the family by sending the wife and children 'back home'; and (4) rarely, 'lucking out' by finding some half-way decent place to live, at high prices, and usually within a relatively segregated area. Even those airmen of sufficiently high rank to qualify for base housing frequently must experience one of the above alternatives before government quarters, which are in very limited supply, become available. It should be noted that, while there may be times when the housing situation is 'rough all over,' the white airman does not face the housing problems of the Negro airman.

The following are some of the cases heard by members of the Committee during the course of the meeting:

Case #1 -- An airman, married over the Christmas holidays, returned and sought housing. After being refused listed rental units several times because he was a Negro, he acquired a list of places that owners were willing to rent to Negroes. In his words, "Most of the places that I looked at for Negroes were small and run-down shacks, and not fit to live in." He continued looking for about six weeks, frequently being refused rental opportunities because of his color. He finally 'lucked out' when a G.I. friend of his rented his trailer to the Negro.

Case #2 -- An airman, his wife, daughter, and son had just returned from overseas and were looking for a place to rent. He called to town from the base regarding an ad in the paper. The landlord said he could have it if he'd get into town to pay for it. After his duty, he rushed in to town, but when the lady saw that he was a Negro, she reported that the place had already been rented. The next day he called the same number and the apartment was reported to be still available. He told the lady that he was colored, whereupon she said she was sorry but she could not rent to him. He later found a very small place for \$85.00 per month. He reported that the quarters were so cramped that only one person at a time could get ready for bed in the bedroom.

Case #3 -- An airman reported that a trailer park owner refused to rent to him because it was their policy not to rent to Negroes and Indians. He reported similar refusals in other parts of the city.

Case #4 -- The wife of an airman reported two separate cases of refusal to rent to them (including three children) because they were Negroes.

Case #5 -- The Director of the USO reported a case of an airman who contacted a list of 25 'places to rent' that had been called to the attention of the USO. The airman reported back later that all places either refused to rent to Negroes or were rented. The Director, in an effort to determine the status of his list, called each of the 25 places and determined that three of the 25 had rented their places; the other 22 were 'still available.'

Case #6 -- An airman, his wife and two daughters, upon first arrival in Rapid City phoned in regard to a listed rental unit. The lady who answered first asked about the size of his family, then asked of his race. When he reported that he was a Negro, she stated, "The owner of this trailer asked us not to rent to colored people. I am sorry, I don't know why they won't rent to Negroes."

Case #7 -- The wife of an airman was given a list of 15 rental units from the USO. Each place reported it had been rented. One lady-of-the-house reported that she had no vacancy. At that moment her son came running to the door announcing, "Yes, we do have a place." As soon as he saw the color of the airman's skin, he said, "Oh, I was wrong, the place is taken." The airman's wife reported, "Because of increasing discouragement we were forced to buy a trailer."

Case #8 -- An Airman, first class, reported that he has several times failed to secure housing facilities because of his race. He stated that a usual reply to his inquiry was, "I've never rented to Negroes before and would not like to start a disturbance."

Case #9 -- The wife of an airman reported that, "When I first got here I went out looking for a place to live and went to the USO and got a list of addresses. The places the woman gave me weren't fit to keep pigs in. A few other places, the people wanted rent that was simply out of the question."

Some typical comments made at the meeting: "Housing is by far the greatest problem I have encountered as far as racial discrimination in South Dakota is concerned;" "Whenever we found a place we could have, it was inferior and the rent was high;" and "Any solutions to this problem would be helpful to a countless number."

The wife of a Negro sergeant gave an account of her family's experiences, problems, and feelings that seems to summarize many aspects of the problem Negro airmen and their families confront. For this reason, her story is carried almost in its entirety. The couple and their children came to Rapid City in 1959, after a tour of duty in England:

"When we first got here we went to the base, to the housing department. They said that they didn't have any base housing, but that we could try around in town. They informed us that it would be a little difficult. They sent us to the USO and when we went down there, the lady at the USO told us that it was a little difficult to get housing for Negroes, but they had been trying to find people who were willing to rent to Negroes. She gave us a few addresses. Just then the phone rang -- someone calling about a house. We went to see about it. We were very lucky, we got the house. Where the difficulty arose -- the house was a little small, we have two children, a boy and a girl -- and we thought we'd try to find a little bigger place. Then we ran into difficulties. I can't remember the names and the places, but we went to several places and quite a few of them would say, 'It's been rented,' or 'Someone came yesterday,' or something like that and one or two people came right out and told us, 'I'm sorry, but we don't rent to Negroes.'

" We could find places to rent but it wasn't suitable to us to live in. So we decided that we'd buy a house. We weren't expecting to live here all the time, but when we left we thought we could sell it or maybe rent it to someone else. We went to several real estates and what they had to show us weren't satisfactory. So we went over to Private Homes, Inc. The first time we went, the secretary in the office gave us a key and told us to go and look at several houses because the salesman was out that day. We went and we looked at two or three houses, I think, and we came back and told her that we liked one. She said that she'd set up a date with the salesman to have him take us around and have us look at it. We went back the next Saturday and she says, 'Oh, I'm sorry, but the salesman is ill and you won't be able to look at the house today.' She gave us another date. That happened about three or four times and every time we went, either the salesman was out and wouldn't be back or he was ill or something else. Well, one day I was home and the phone rang. I answered and he says, 'This is the sales manager of Private Homes, Inc. I'm sorry, we won't be able to sell you a house. So I said, ' Oh, have you stopped building or don't you have any available or what?' He says, 'No, that's not it. We just won't be able to sell you a house.' I said, 'Well, you must have some reason for not wanting to sell us a house.' And he just hung up the phone. He didn't say another word. So I was a little disgusted and I dialed again and I got the manager and he says, 'I'm sorry, but we can't sell houses over here to you people. It's not my fault or anything -- we just can't sell a house to you.' And so we didn't bother trying to get another house -- we just waited until we got on base housing and we moved out there."

Replying to Committee questions, she said they would have preferred living in Rapid City, but now they are happy to be on the base. When asked why she felt this way, she said:

"I thought that if I got on the base where there was a good house, nobody would tell me, 'You can't live here, because you're a Negro.' There was a house available and I'd get it, just because I was another person or another serviceman's wife that's in need of a house and it's available."

When asked if, before coming to Rapid City, she had anticipated that they would encounter this kind of situation, she said:

"No, as a matter of fact I was very much surprised because most of the -- I've heard a lot about racial discrimination in this country and everyone I've met always said that once you left the South and came to the Midwest or further North, you didn't find any racial discrimination at all."

She revealed some of the impact of other practices on the life of the Negro when she said:

"I don't want to go by hearsay, but I heard that several Negroes were turned away from different establishments in town and, therefore, we just didn't go anywhere in town. There would be a night when I was working and would like to go out for the evening or something like that and we just didn't go. If we didn't go to the NCO club or to the base movies, we just didn't go to town. It took us a long time before we even came to a movie in town here.

"I haven't found any problem as far as shopping is concerned, but as far as going out for an evening on the town

or a night out or so, we just haven't gone. I told my husband that I'd much rather stay at home than to go someplace and someone tell me, 'I'm sorry, you can't come in, not because you aren't dressed properly or you can't afford it, but because you are a Negro.' And so to avoid the embarrassment, we just haven't been."

Pressed on the question of what she had hoped to experience living in Rapid City she said:

"Well, for one thing, I thought when we came to Rapid City there wouldn't be any problem of saying, well, 'You can't go to this night club,' 'You can't go to this bar,' or 'You can't go into this restaurant,' and if you want a cup of coffee or you want to sit down and have a decent meal, 'You can't come here. I'm sorry, you'll have to go someplace else.' Or they actually point and say, well, 'We don't serve you here but you can go around the corner to the Sheraton-Johnson Hotel where you can get a drink or something like that, but we don't serve colored people in here.'

" Before we came here we had some literature on Rapid City itself -- about the area and the beauty of the Black Hills and everything else -- and we just thought, well, we'd be living in the community, where there wouldn't be any problems and you could go where you wanted to and see what you wanted to and enjoy the community as a whole. I was going to say, well, 'You were born here and you know what it is like; we're here just for a short time and we want to experience, well, more-or-less the same thing' -- not just to say, well, 'You have to see certain things and you can do certain things, but you can't do the rest!'"

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

The attitudes of the people of Rapid City toward Negro airmen are important to our inquiry. The Committee was exposed to many of these attitudes during the meeting. Other attitudes may be inferred from various materials and documents presented to the Committee by individuals and groups.

First, the fact of widespread discrimination is, in itself, an indication of one kind of attitude. This attitude reflects the belief that skin color has some sort of bearing on a person's behavior. Nobody attempts to pinpoint what it is about the behavior of a Negro that is affected by the color of his skin. Most often, it is simply said that someone is "prejudiced," as if this answers the question.

One of the questions raised during the course of the open meeting was, "Why do the discriminators discriminate?" A number of answers were offered. In general, the answers suggest that someone is prejudiced and to serve Negroes will somehow affect his business. "Who are the prejudiced?" Again, several answers were received, but in no case did a public accommodations or housing discriminator admit that he or she was prejudiced, although prejudice was apparent in some of their statements.

One common allegation was that it is the white airmen at the base who are to blame. A restaurant owner was asked if he discriminated because of what he felt to be the prejudices of the people of Rapid City. He said:

"No! The prejudice does not lie in Rapid City, sir. The prejudices (sic) here is not the citizens of Rapid City. The prejudiced are the white airmen. This is something we can't control in Rapid City. They are the ones that object and are most likely to be the agitators."

A Negro airman reported that another restaurant owner told him white airmen objected to a Negro's presence in the same restaurant with them. A barber who attended the meeting reported that he had never had a Negro enter his barbershop, but when he was asked if he would cut a Negro's hair, he said that it would depend on what it did to his business. He said that he has a lot of white airbase trade and that they resent the idea of his serving Negroes in his shop.

Another common allegation is that the people of Rapid City are prejudiced. One respected member of the community, who had given the Committee information about an unsuccessful attempt by one of the housing developers (Private Homes, Inc.) to sell its houses on a non-discriminatory basis, said, "The people to blame are not the landlords, not the barber, not the bartenders -- it's the people themselves!" Another prominent member of the community, representing the Rapid City Beverage Dealers Association, expressed it much the same way when he said, "It isn't the restaurant owners, it isn't the barbers, it isn't the landlord, it's the bigotry of the general public that's causing the trouble in this town."

Some people denied that anybody was prejudiced; rather, they thought the reason for discrimination was that many Negroes are "troublemakers." Members of the Committee heard several accounts of instances in which Negroes had entered a place of public accommodation; customers in the establishment (whites) had made insulting remarks; and this was followed by a threat of violence. This account was then followed by an expression,

such as, "So I don't serve Negroes because they cause trouble." The June 2, 1961, editorial in the Rapid City Daily Journal, cited in the section on "Background Information," reflects this orientation to the problem.

It would be grossly unfair to the people of Rapid City to suggest that these attitudes are typical of the community. The proportion of the population directly involved in refusing service to Negro airmen is extremely small. The Journal survey of 196 beauty shops, barbershops, motels, hotels, bars, night clubs, taverns, and restaurants, reported on December 9, 1962, shows that 40 do not serve Negroes. One could easily double this figure to 80, and still ask, "What are these people, among 42,000?" Are there any other attitudes reflected in the community?

The Committee could not help but be impressed with the fact that, during the course of the open meeting and from the records accumulated, there was not even one representation in behalf of discrimination, as such. Nobody said that discrimination was "good"; nobody suggested that there ought to be discrimination (unless one considers the suggestion of the local newspaper for the establishment of a "bar and grill for our colored population" as a call for segregation -- thus, indirectly condoning existing discrimination). There were many expressions of sincere and disturbed concern about the plight of Negro airmen in Rapid City.

Some of the evidence presented in the previous section on "Background Information" reflects a reservoir of good will and sympathetic understanding in the city. The active concern of the Junior Chamber of Commerce was evident through its survey of discriminatory practices in 1959. The same can be said of the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee as a result of its various surveys, solicitations of public commitments to non-discriminatory practices, and its promotion of morally and legally based positions on human relations. The Rapid City Daily Journal, while

never taking a consistently positive and constructive position, has met some of its responsibility in reporting major incidents and, in the case of Airman Willie Hardy, actually soliciting assistance from the good-willed people of the community to help him solve his housing problem.

Much additional evidence was brought to the attention of the Committee in the course of the open meeting. A long list of public accommodations that do not require any test of skin color was mentioned above. This and favorable aspects of various survey results -- the majority of establishments that do not discriminate -- provides a brighter side to the racial picture.

A number of individuals and representatives of groups told the Committee of their wish to see Negro airmen provided with the same opportunities as any member of the community. A representative of the Rapid City Ministers Association reported that the Association met the day of the open meeting and took the stand that they do not practice discrimination and that they abhor any practice of it in any public place. The ministers' statement was confirmed by several Negro airmen and their wives. One wife said, "All the churches we have visited were no different than attending our own church at home. We have been treated as if we were members." Another reported, "I am a member at First Baptist. I've always been made welcome." An airman, second class, said, "We attend the Episcopal Church here and we have found them to be courteous and friendly. They do not make an issue of our presence but treat us as fellow worshipers. This is ideal." Another airman and his wife report that they "attend church in Rapid City where the congregation is white -- with no incidents or problems. In fact, it is a very welcoming situation."

The President of the Rapid City Motel Association, as previously reported, said that his members neither practiced nor approved the practice of discrimination. Some landlords present made statements -- followed by general applause -- that, in spite of some of the seeming prejudice in the community, they were happy to rent their property to any responsible parties, regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin. Many others, in various ways, clearly demonstrated to the Committee that the average resident of Rapid City is not the least bit interested in seeing discrimination against Negro airmen practiced in the community.

Even one of the most criticized and outspoken representatives of those practicing discrimination seemed to say he did not favor discrimination per se. He said serving Negroes would hurt his business and he interpreted the Constitution to mean that he, as a business man, had the right to deny service to anyone. He called for a "slower" approach to what he called "integration" and seemed to suggest in the following statement that his main concern is the means used to change the situation:

"We pleaded with him (president of the local chapter of the NAACP) to knock down the barriers that may be there amongst a great number of people and to come in that door -- not the door of forcing themselves in,"

One responsible attorney who appeared before the Committee said that crimes committed by a few Negroes several years ago resulted in rather bad relationships between the people of the community and the Negro airmen for a short period. However, he feels that the people have come to view these acts as those of individuals rather than as acts of Negroes. He expressed the opinion that air base personnel are now regarded as ". . . good citizens, . . . fellow Americans, and . . . an

integral part of our community." Asked if Negro airmen were included in this assessment, he responded in the affirmative.

Two additional attitudes observed cannot be ignored. In many ways they seem to be the most common. One of these attitudes is freely aired in public; the other can only be inferred from evidence that is largely indirect. Since they both relate to the community view of the problem, an understanding of them is essential to any realistic solution.

Some of the materials cited in "Background Information" reflect the first attitude -- the foremost concern of the community for the "bad publicity" the city and the area are receiving. As was suggested earlier, there is seldom public recognition of a problem of moral injustice; but, on almost every pair of lips, there is indignation over what this publicity is doing to "the good name of our city."

Public reaction to racial "incidents" almost invariably follows on the heels of some form of regional or nationwide attention to such incidents. The most violent reaction has come since the publication of the widely reprinted article in the New York Times, in October 1962.

The second attitude appears, in many respects, to be a corollary of the first. It is inferred from the lack of what is said and done about the racial problems of the city. The attitude is one of wanting to ignore the problem. This leads people to argue that all of these things have been blown way out of proportion. "It's not as bad as all that, and if 'foreign organizations' and 'foreign news media' and 'malcontents' and 'troublemakers' would leave us alone, the problem would go away." In the almost frantic desire to escape the problem, all kinds of scapegoats have arisen, including the city council and other city leaders, the NAACP, the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee, white airmen, the Times reporter, and, in the absence of any other specific person or group, the general public.

The attitude of community leaders was also reflected in the meager response received by this Committee to the letters of invitation sent to civic organizations and others. Those organizations which sent representatives contributed greatly to the Committee's understanding of the problem, but they were largely the organizations with a direct concern, such as the NAACP, the Black Hills Civil Rights Committee, the Rapid City Motel Association, and the recently organized Citizens' Council. The Committee observed that no representatives of the League of Women Voters, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Bar Association were present.

C O N C L U S I O N S

Any conclusions regarding the question of discrimination in Rapid City against Negro airmen must take two major elements into consideration. First, the situation must be viewed from the standpoint of Federal policies designed to guarantee equal treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Forces. Second, the local community attitudes and practices must be taken into account if any realistic implementation of Federal policy is to occur. It should be understood that, in this report and in these conclusions, the Committee is concerned, solely, with the problems of off-base treatment of Negro airmen; it has not attempted to study and, therefore, is not in a position to make any assessment of the treatment accorded Negro airmen on the base itself.

First, the Federal policy regarding equality of treatment and opportunity for Negro airmen is clear and unequivocal. The Executive Order of President Truman, which laid out the basic policy, was issued fourteen and one-half years ago. The Deputy Secretary of Defense, and more recently the President himself, as reported in the Introduction, have emphasized their concern over the experiences of discrimination encountered by servicemen in communities where military installations are located.

The evidence gathered by the South Dakota Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights provides the basis for the unqualified conclusion that Negro airmen stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base, and their families, experience discrimination in Rapid City to the extent that it is, in the President's words, "a serious source of hardship and embarrassment." Discrimination takes two major forms -- public accommodations and housing. The Committee is reluctant to take the position that discriminatory practices of one form are more serious than the other. It is the conclusion of the Committee, however, that discrimination in some

places of public accommodation is an especially serious source of hardship and embarrassment for single Negro airmen and that discrimination in the form of housing is an especially serious source of hardship and embarrassment for married Negro airmen and their families.

It is the further conclusion of the Committee that officials of the Ellsworth Air Force Base cannot ignore the discriminatory practices that are occurring in Rapid City if they are to fulfill their responsibilities to Federal policy and the Negro airmen. While the Committee cannot, here, judge the past and present actions of the base officials, it does conclude from the evidence that it has received that positive and energetic leadership, in a cooperative spirit, would be welcomed by all responsible elements in the community and could do much to alleviate many of the problems faced by Negro airmen and their families in Rapid City. Insofar as conditions on the base itself and policies under its control contribute to the problem, base officials should take immediate remedial action. The Committee has reference, here, to such matters as the alleged actions of white airmen who discourage proprietors of places of public accommodation from serving Negro airmen, and two other alleged practices: the granting of advertising space in the base newspaper to places of public accommodation that discriminate against Negro airmen, and the sanction of part-time employment of white airmen in such places.

Inasmuch as the community attitudes and practices in Rapid City are of direct relevance to the problem of providing equal treatment and opportunity for Negro airmen and their families, the Committee offers the following analysis as a part of its conclusions.

The Committee finds no reason to believe that Rapid City was other than a normal and typical northern community, prior to the establishment of the air base in 1942. The addition of the air base, and its subsequent development, brought about two profound changes in the community. First, extremely rapid growth of the population of the city resulted, accompanied by a complex array of new problems, including those associated with housing development, sewer and water facilities, fire and police protection, street construction, and zoning. Attempts to cope successfully with these problems would strain the energy, patience, and resourcefulness of any community.

The second major change was in the ethnic origins of the population. A much greater variety of people, from all sections of the nation, now live in what was previously a fairly homogeneous area. These people brought their experiences, thinking habits, and aspirations with them. Included among the people who made up this new community were, of course, Negro airmen and their families.

The presence of even relatively few Negroes in the community was a new experience for most of the residents of the city. Whatever attitudes the people of the city might have held about such situations -- hypothetically -- were now put to the test of action. Most residents surely had strong attitudinal orientations of general equality, but they also had the seeds of prejudice which are shared by all Americans who see movies, read newspapers and magazines, and listen to their relatives, friends, and neighbors.

People reacted in two ways to this new situation. On one hand, some people have responded by implementing values of moral justice and equal opportunity. On the other hand, some people have responded to the seeds of prejudice. Most importantly, from the view of the Committee, these actions occurred on an individual basis. The vast majority of the people of the community were never forced to translate their conceptions of hypothetical situations into direct action. Many persons who were so challenged weren't quite certain how to handle the situation. Some of these temporarily took on the pattern of action suggested by others until they were able to develop their own pattern and settle down with it.

The result of these conditions was that Rapid City ended up with discriminatory practices toward Negroes in some places, but not in others. Most people in the community had no important awareness of what was going on; all of the Negroes -- some with disappointment and others with amazement -- found out what the situation was.

Occasionally, an incident of discrimination was publicized and the people of the community were embarrassed. But few did anything about it -- most people weren't really affected. After several incidents had occurred, some did begin to initiate action; they were some of the affected Negro airmen and a few members of the community who had strong feelings that the civil rights of the Negroes were being denied.

Inevitably, the situation was brought more and more to the public attention -- to the point where many people finally began to feel an involvement in what was happening. The actions that were taken, however, were largely reactions -- reactions to the bad name the community was being given in the state, in the region, and in the nation. This is where most people were affected by the situation, not in relationships they had with Negroes in the city. In the absence of constructive efforts to focus the community attention on the problem, people defensively began to belittle the size of the problem and to deny that the problem existed.

As the public spotlight continued to shine on Rapid City and the problem wouldn't go away, some people began looking for someone to blame. The city council and mayor are always among the first objects of blame for community problems, especially in cities that suffer the "growing pains" that Rapid City does. Some looked to the white airmen and, surely, one probably can find some airmen who really do object to being served with "niggers." Some blamed the Negroes themselves; they said they were "troublemakers." The more sophisticated turned their guns on the people of Rapid City themselves -- the general public -- but not because the people weren't facing the problem; rather, they claimed the people caused the problem.

The Committee believes the vast majority of the people of Rapid City, including its most responsible leaders and officials, have no desire to see discriminatory practices perpetuated. Most people, in the belief of the Committee, would like to have the community symbolized by the Shrine of Democracy, of which Rapid Citians are so rightfully proud.

In the words of one Rapid Citian who appeared before the Committee:

"I have come recently to South Dakota. I've lived in Rapid City about a year and a half and I thoroughly love this city. It has many wonderful advantages, but I would share that it has been my impression, since coming here -- when it comes to some of our real problems, there is a tendency to overlook them and to kind of act as though they don't really exist. I feel, personally, we'd do a lot better to face up to them and begin to take some steps to make some improvements."

In the absence of concerted, positive, community action, however, the Committee feels that forces of self-interest, ignorance, and bigotry -- already beginning to develop -- will cast the die of Rapid City's future.