Index and Introduction to the Buffalo Cooperative Economics Society, Inc.; 1974

Monroe Fordham

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Index And Introduction To
Records And Documents Pertaining To
The Buffalo Cooperative Economic Society, Inc.
A Black Self-Help Organization.
Also
Biographical Sketches Of Its Founder And His Wife
Dr. E.E. Nelson And Mrs. Alberta F. O'Leary Nelson.

Microfilmed By
Monroe Fordham and Ralph Watkins
1974

The Records And Documents Were Microfilmed Using A 34X Lens.
Introduction

The financial records, ledger sheets, minutes, membership rolls, and other documents pertaining to the Buffalo Cooperative Economic Society, Inc., and its community store are preserved on this microfilm. The society was founded in the 1920's and continued to function until about 1960. Some of the goals and objectives of the society are contained in document #1. The main mover and founder of the organization was Dr. E.E. Nelson, a local medical doctor. Dr. Nelson and his wife--Mrs. Alberta F. O'Leary Nelson kept detailed records of the society during its more than 30 year history. When the cooperative's store was legally dissolved in the early 1960's, Dr. and Mrs. Nelson moved the many boxes of documents and records into the garage of their home at 445 Cornwall Avenue. The documents remained there until they were made available to this writer in August, 1973.

I learned of the documents while taping some interviews with Dr. and Mrs. Nelson during the Summer of 1973. Those interviews were to be part of a larger project which was to be co-conducted by Ralph Watkins (a fellow Ph.D. candidate in history at SUNY) and myself. Our intent was to collect and preserve primary sources (oral history initially) which could be used in researching problems and themes in the history of the Buffalo black community. It is certainly an understatement to say that the records of the
Buffalo Cooperative Economic Society was an unexpected windfall. It is hoped that the microfilming of those documents represents the beginning of a giant step in the collecting and preserving of primary sources dealing with the history of blacks in Buffalo.

Acknowledgements

It seems appropriate to acknowledge some of those who have offered support for this project. Dr. and Mrs. Nelson, in addition to giving me complete freedom in examining and organizing the documents, offered many, many, valuable leads that will eventually be useful in compiling a more detailed history of the society.

A special expression of gratitude is extended to the State University of New York and the Research Foundation for granting me a summer fellowship. The financial support from the fellowship was especially welcome in lieu of the high cost of microfilming.

I also wish to thank Ralph Watkins for taking precious time from the research for his dissertation project on the Urban League and the Buffalo black community during the depression. His help in sorting the documents during the early stages of the project was most helpful. He also assisted in microfilming the documents.

Monroe Fordham

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