

From Guns to Shoes: The Winston-Salem Chapter of the Black Panther Party

Senior History Thesis

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In June of 1971 Larry Little of the Black Panther Party (BBP) in Winston-Salem, North Carolina publicly announced the Party's intention to "put some shoes on the people's feet, food in the people's stomachs, and clothes on the people's backs."¹ Many local residents, disappointed by the violent and largely unsuccessful actions of the Party thus far, dismissed his statement as mere rhetoric. Yet Little, returning from extensive training at Panther headquarters in Oakland, California, brought with him a fundamental change in the ideology of the Black Panther Party. The group abandoned its militant past to adopt an approach of community service. As Little later noted, "we've come a long way from guns to shoes."²

This change, which occurred in Black Panther Party chapters across the United States, was inspired by lessons learned on both local and national levels. Throughout their existence, the BPP in Winston-Salem interacted closely with the local black community, depending on it for financial and political support. During the BPP's militant early years their violent stance frightened more blacks than it attracted, despite the Party's claim of defending the city's poor African American neighborhoods. Later, with their community based "Survival Programs" and a turn away from armed revolution,

¹ Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 26 December 1972.

² Ibid.

the group enjoyed much more support. The Party realized that in order to effectively serve the community they had to meet their most basic needs, such as food and healthcare, and put rhetoric and ideology behind these needs. Only then might they gain support for both their service programs and the ideas they expressed.

Yet, this transformation from “guns to shoes” never brought the results the Panther’s envisioned. Winston-Salem’s impoverished African-American community responded to the change in BPP practices, but they never fully adopted the BPP’s principles or committed to their agenda, and thus never supplied the support the group needed to achieve its goals. Instead, the community showed support according to the amount, and availability, of community services the Party provided. Although many forces, such as local and federal police attention, influenced the group, none had as much effect as the community.³ Through examination of the chapter in Winston-Salem it is evident that the community’s varying, unstable degrees of financial and ideological backing most influenced the fate of the Party and decided its programs, its success, and its eventual demise.

The sources used in this thesis substantiate this conclusion. It must be understood that very little has been written directly on the Winston-Salem chapter. Although many books and journal articles explored the history of the Black Panther Party, the secondary sources examined for this paper only mention the Winston-Salem chapter in passing. These sources therefore provide a background of the Black Panthers, both as a

³ “What Was the Black Panther Party?” n.d., <www.blackpanther.org/tenpoint.htm> (6 September 2003). Chapters across America faced attacks by the FBI, which characterized the BPP as the “greatest threat to the internal security of the United States,” and Winston-Salem was no exception.

revolutionary organization and as a community service group.⁴ Some historians considered the nature of the FBI's investigation of the Party, providing other useful sources.⁵ Social theory articles assist in formulating a framework from which to define the Party's radical vision and its relationship with the local community.⁶ Other secondary sources examine the racial situation in Winston-Salem at the time of the Black Panther Party's emergence.⁷

The primary sources consist of documents that provide a history of Black Panther Party in Winston-Salem. An FBI investigation of this branch, from 1968-1976, provides the major source of information for this thesis. Although clearly biased, this source also includes transcripts of speeches, BPP newspaper articles, and interviews that express viewpoints differing from those of the federal government.⁸ Local media reports on the

⁴ Jennifer B. Smith, *An International History of the Black Panther Party* (New York: Garland, 1999); "The Ten Point Plan," n.d., <<http://blackpanther.org/tenpoint.htm>>; "What Was the Black Panther Party?" n.d., <www.blackpanther.org/tenpoint.htm>; Mumia Abu-Jamal, "A Life in the Party," in *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Jonina M. Abron, "The Legacy of the Black Panther Party," *Black Scholar* 17 (1986).

⁵ Ward Churchill and Jim Vanderwall, *Agents of Repression: the FBI's Secret Wars against the Black Panther Party and the Native American Movement*, (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2002).

⁶ Kathleen J. Fitzgerald and Diane M. Rogers, "Radical Social Movement Organizations: a Theoretical Model," *The Sociological Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (2000); Clarence Y. H. Lo, "Communities of Challengers," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, (New Haven, Conn: Yale University, 1992).

⁷ William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, NC, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Frank Tursi, *Winston-Salem: a History* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1994).

⁸ Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706.

The FBI file, made publicly available by the Freedom of Information Act, follows the life of the Party from its very beginnings to the point where the FBI felt the group no longer posed a threat to national security. This source is extensive, with over 3,000 pages of communiqués, reports, documents, and transcripts. Through these documents the file tells the basic story of the chapter in Winston-Salem, but often from the viewpoint of FBI agents, informants, and infiltrators. This obviously gives the material a bias, but I would argue not nearly as strong as one would first think. The FBI has an interest in obtaining the most clear, objective information it can so as to pursue investigations and file legal charges. This is demonstrated by how often in the FBI file the Bureau stated that information from certain sources may be unreliable. The FBI, due its investigative nature, has to be as accurate as possible. During my research I often tried to find other documents to support FBI information from "unreliable sources", and if I could not verify the truth of the source, I made note of this or left it out.

Panthers supply additional perspectives.⁹ Other primary sources provide a general backdrop of the racial tension in North Carolina and Winston-Salem specifically, before the Panthers established themselves.¹⁰

Racial tension and inequality in Oakland, California inspired Huey Newton and Bobby Seale to found the Black Panther Party in 1966 in hopes of improving the lives of oppressed peoples. As Jennifer Smith wrote, “they did not see how [the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement] would improve the lives of the people whom they knew and the community where they lived.”¹¹ Despite the successes of the Civil Rights Movement, the federal government failed to tackle problems such as inadequate education, housing, and health care, and thus the Panthers swore to provide these services for black and other oppressed communities.¹² In short, the Black Panther Party formed to bring fundamental political, economic, and social change to black communities that legislative victories and non-violent protests could not.¹³

The Black Panther Party’s aim to drastically change the existing society established them as more radical than many other social movements of their era. Unlike more reform minded groups, the Panthers did not seek to be recognized by the dominant culture, or be incorporated into it. They instead sought a “radical restructuring of the

⁹ Winston-Salem Journal, 6 November 1969 – 14 February 1975.

¹⁰ North Carolina Advisory Committee to the United States Commission of Civil Rights, Prisons in North Carolina (17 February 1976); U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population and Housing, North Carolina (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce Field Offices, June 1971); I’m Not My Brother’s Keeper: Leadership and Civil Rights in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, prod. Mary M. Dalton, 45 minutes, M. Dalton and S. Faust, 2001, videocassette.

¹¹ Jennifer B. Smith, *An International History of the Black Panther Party* (New York: Garland, 1999), 32.

¹² “The Ten Point Plan,” n.d., <<http://blackpanther.org/tenpoint.htm>> (24 April 2003).

¹³ The Party envisioned great change, which made them a very revolutionary and radical group. They embraced Communist ideals, such as redistribution of wealth and community controlled economies. They were also influenced by the Socialist writings of Mao Zedong, and voiced support for communist revolutions around the world. Thus, they appeared a threat both by their violent tendencies and their communist ideology.

system,” which, according to Kathleen Fitzgerald and Diane Rogers, distinguished their organization from more reformist social movements.¹⁴ This approach explains the group’s dependency on the community. In Winston-Salem, the BPP relied on radically minded community members for direct support, instead of existing institutions, such as the government or mass media. Thus they structured their organization around the community’s needs, and adapted their tactics in accordance with these needs.

During its existence the Black Panther Party employed two very different techniques to assist and protect African Americans and other oppressed peoples.¹⁵ First, Black Panthers across the United States armed themselves to shield their communities from the police, who they saw as an occupying army that carried out “[the government’s] program of oppression against black people, other people of color, and poor people inside the United States.”¹⁶ In addition, the Panthers wielded arms in preparation for upcoming revolution. They argued for insurrection in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, quoting Thomas Jefferson’s rationale for overthrowing governments for failure to protect “inalienable rights.”¹⁷

In 1971 Party Minister of Defense Huey Newton began a new course of action for the Black Panther Party, which had earned a negative reputation after years of shootouts with police and numerous arrests of Party members. This second phase focused on the Black Panther Party’s “survival programs” which, although present in some form during all of Panther history, greatly expanded after 1971. These embodied the Panthers’ goals for the community as the BPP strove to increase public support through intensive

¹⁴ Kathleen J. Fitzgerald and Diane M. Rogers, “Radical Social Movement Organizations: a Theoretical Model,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (2000): 573.

¹⁵ Mumia Abu-Jamal, “A Life in the Party,” in *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 47.

community service and eventually, by empowering the community, transfer local power from the government to the populace.¹⁸

Huey Newton's decision to abandon militarism reflected his understanding that alternative social movements rely heavily on community support. Movement theorist Clarence Y. H. Lo argued that groups seeking change often attempt to gain access to the political arena through established channels to the government. However, during the Civil Rights Movement, challengers to the status quo often had no access, and thus used protests and civil disobedience to enter politics. Lo writes that these organizations depended on personal commitments given by a limited group, often in the form of the local African American community. Even though these groups, such as the BPP, were "protesting conditions and trends of national scope, typically these larger issues first became salient through a localized conflict."¹⁹ Only later, after initial success, did institutional support sometimes become available.

The Black Panther Party in Winston-Salem illustrated these trends. Their association with the national BPP, often vilified in the press, brought them little support from either black or white city residents. Thus, initially their support basis came only from a limited number of dedicated or sympathetic individuals, not from organized charities or church groups. With no access to the political arena, and no consistent or significant resources from contributors, the party adjusted its tactics to encourage greater

¹⁶ "The Ten Point Plan," n.d., <www.blackpanther.org/tenpoint.htm> (April 14th, 2003).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Jonina M. Abron, "The Legacy of the Black Panther Party," *Black Scholar* 17 (1986) 33-35. These survival programs addressed varying complaints the Panthers had against the current state of poor Black neighborhoods. Panther-run community watches, which observed both criminal and police activities, sprang up in many neighborhoods. To satisfy needs of food and health care, chapters of the Party started free breakfast and free healthcare programs in a number of cities around the country. Free schools were also established, which educated both children and adults.

local and national contribution, change the media's opinion of their group, and form a solid support basis on which to begin change. This transformation, a type Lo describes as a turn toward the conservative, erupted from the group's attempts to "mobilize communal resources to enter the polity."²⁰ Yet, the success of the Winston-Salem Party in the above avenues for change did not prove to be continuous, due to their dependence on the often wavering community.

The Black Panther Party began in North Carolina amongst rising racial tension concerning a number of social inequalities. Although blacks made up over half of the population in Winston-Salem in 1970, less than 20% of homeowners were African Americans. Furthermore, 17% of black residents lived in cramped conditions, with more than one person per room in their houses.²¹ The penal system in the state also reflected racial disparities. The North Carolina Advisory Committee to the Commission on Civil Rights found in 1974 that "three out of five of the over 12,000 inmates are minority persons in a state where the minority population represents about one out of five."²²

Unhappy with these and other factors, the African American youth in Winston-Salem followed the lead of other civil rights activists emerging in the south. On February 1st, 1960, the "Greensboro Four," as they became known, took seats at the white-only lunch counter at Woolworth's in Greensboro, NC.²³ This action inspired blacks in neighboring Winston-Salem and on February 8th, one week later, ten students there began

¹⁹ Clarence Y. H. Lo, "Communities of Challengers," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, (New Haven, Conn: Yale University, 1992), 236.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 243.

²¹ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population and Housing, North Carolina (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce Field Offices, June 1971), 35-31.

²² North Carolina Advisory Committee to the United States Commission of Civil Rights, Prisons in North Carolina (17 February 1976), iii.

²³ William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, NC, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 115-116.

their own sit-in. After arrests and media attention, the state of North Carolina made segregation of the city's lunch counters and other areas illegal.²⁴ Later in the decade, Winston-Salem witnessed racial violence similar to that in Watts, California and other cities in the years after the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.²⁵ Frank Tursi summarized that in "1967...Blacks riot after a black man is killed by police. These riots are the most serious of three racial disturbances of the late 1960's."²⁶

In 1969 the Black Panther Party emerged in North Carolina amidst this atmosphere of poverty, racial inequality, and dissatisfaction with the government. After Stokely Carmichael's, honorary Prime Minister of the BPP, visit to Greensboro A&T in December of 1968, local interest in the party grew considerably. Plans to start chapters began in Greensboro and Charlotte.²⁷ Groups claiming BPP status soon appeared in these cities, as well as in Winston-Salem. The group in Winston-Salem pursued official BPP status more fervently than those in other North Carolina cities. Following the guidelines of Party affiliation, they gathered \$300 for an application fee.²⁸ They partook in physical training sessions and political education classes, and contacted the Oakland headquarters for Black Panther Party newspapers to sell.²⁹ They also quickly became involved in the local political scene. Sandra Byrd, a history student at Salem College during the late 1960's, organized an on-campus anti-Vietnam War rally in collaboration with the Panther group in Winston-Salem in 1968. The rally attracted thousands from the community,

²⁴ I'm Not My Brother's Keeper: Leadership and Civil Rights in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, prod. Mary M. Dalton, 45 minutes, M. Dalton and S. Faust, 2001, videocassette.

²⁵ John B. Judis, "The Spirit of '68," New Republic 219, no. 9 (1998): 25.

Thirty-four people died in the Watts Riots. Other violent riots occurred in Detroit, Harlem, and other cities.

²⁶ Frank Tursi, Winston-Salem: a History (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1994), 268-269.

²⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 17 February 1969.

²⁸ Ibid., 23 May 1969.

²⁹ Ibid., 7 July 1969.

including a significant number of African American men and women, whose attendance Byrd partly attributed to the Panthers. Byrd summarized that the Panthers, of whom she recalled only Larry Little, attended the peaceful demonstration unarmed and were “easy to work with.” This shows the Party’s early attempts to gain local interest in their philosophy and their dedication to achieving the “common goals” of the community.³⁰

It was not until October, 1969 that the Black Panther Party officially accepted the group in Winston-Salem, a significant event that would allow the chapter to gain further attention and support from the black community. Winston-Salem became a branch of the Black Panther Party National Committee to Combat Fascism, an organizing arm of the national group. From this point forward, the official chapter of the NCCF in Winston-Salem, the only one in the state, retained close contact with Black Panther Party branches around the country.³¹

Once officially established, the BPP (NCCF) in Winston-Salem began working extensively, serving the black community in the ways they thought best, although many people doubted their methods. Soon after gaining official status the group increased their often unnecessary militarism, drawing attention from local and federal police.³² Their armed, confrontational appearance also concerned the local African-American community which at times felt both frightened and empowered by their flagrant shows of

³⁰ Sandra Byrd, personal interview by author, UNC-Asheville Zaiger Hall, 2 September 2003.

³¹ Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 2 October 1969.

Around the time that the group in Winston-Salem desired Party affiliation, the BPP was not opening any more chapters. The NCCF was then started by the national BPP to allow for interested groups to work with the BPP. These groups would take orders from the national party, but did not hold the same power as official BPP chapters. From this point in the paper, the NCCF in Winston-Salem is still referred to as BPP, Panthers, Party, etc.

³² Ibid.

The FBI was aware of the BPP’s actions in North Carolina from the very beginning. FBI headquarters ordered the Charlotte office to “continue your penetrative investigation of this group.” Headquarters also requested Charlotte consider Counterintelligence measures aimed at weakening the BPP in North Carolina.

strength. Ultimately though, the BPP's aggressive nature discouraged many from fully adopting the Panther's political ideology. Without this commitment, the Party could never build a support system sufficient to achieve the fundamental economic and social changes they hoped to make in Winston-Salem.

The chapter, comprised of twenty African American members under the leadership of Robert Greer and Larry Little, began a Breakfast for Children Program shortly after receiving official status from Berkeley. The Party often threatened and boycotted businesses that refused to contribute food and funding to the program. In a newspaper article for the Winston-Salem Journal, David DuBuisson criticized the party's coercive solicitation methods. Although the Meat House grocery, a target of a BPP boycott, closed within two days of BPP action, DuBuisson argued that the event was no victory, but instead diminished the party's influence in black neighborhoods. He claimed that along with alienating almost all whites in the community, the Panther's violent tendencies "earned them some new enemies among elderly and middle-class Negroes," who did welcome the increase of firearms. Perhaps, he offered, the Meat House, and other merchants, did not donate to the BPP because of its association with guns. City residents hesitated to back the Panthers, even if they agreed with their intentions, because "the guns fixed the Panthers permanently in many minds as a physical threat."³³

A split in local Party leadership in May, 1970 only increased the militant bent of the Winston-Salem chapter.³⁴ The new BPP, led primarily by Larry Little, now Captain

³³ David DuBuisson, "Closing of Meat House Doesn't Prove Panther Pull," *Winston-Salem Journal*, 16 November 1969, A11.

³⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 5 June 1970.

This split resulted from an argument about the necessity of part-time employment to supplement the donations and newspaper money that supported members doing full-time Party work. Captain of Defense Robert Greer left the party, complaining that without employment he could not pay rent, and took members

of Defense, embodied the aggressive aspects of the Black Panther Party even more than previously. Community members thus became more reluctant to show the Party the backing they desired. When the party initiated another boycott at a grocer it accused of racist hiring practices, the decline in support became apparent. The increasingly militant nature of the chapter not only frightened residents, but it also discouraged community activism. “Some community spokesmen feel that residents that might otherwise be sympathetic to the boycott,” wrote David DuBuisson, “have avoided it out of dislike for the panthers.”³⁵

On only one occasion did the early Panther’s violent habits gain them significant appreciation from the community. On the morning of March 4, 1970 sheriff’s deputies evicted an elderly black woman from her house for failure to pay rent, and put her furniture out on the lawn. A short time later, approximately 10 armed Panthers arrived and carried the furniture back into her house, and stood guard in anticipation of the deputies scheduled 2 p.m. return. They never came back. An anonymous donor paid the rent, and that for two other houses in the same neighborhood scheduled to be evicted that day.³⁶ Many poor African Americans felt protected by the Panther’s actions, and showed their support for the group in various ways. In the weeks following the eviction, the group reported selling out of newspapers “really fast,” exhibiting community interest in the workings and philosophy of both the local and national BPP. The Party gained six new “Panthers in training” over the next month, and increasing donations gave a free

loyal to him along. Larry Little, who had insisted that Greer and others quit their jobs, headed the other group, which continued as a chapter of the BPP.

³⁵ David DuBuisson, “Carver Community Wants Changes at Food Store,” Winston-Salem Journal, 2 July 1970, final edition.

³⁶ David DuBuisson and Larry Dendy, “Donor Pays Rents, Avoiding Evictions,” Winston-Salem Journal, 4 March 1970, sec. A, final edition.

meal to an average of 30 children a day through the Panther's Breakfast for Children program.³⁷

In addition to rising neighborhood involvement and interest, the eviction incident also brought increased police attention to the fledgling group. This pressure, and the Panther's rash response to it, erased the Panther's short-lived image as a protector of the poor of Winston-Salem. Police arrested Larry Little on July 27th for disorderly conduct while hanging BPP posters downtown. A short time later, two Party affiliates went to jail for armed robbery. The Panthers, aware of the increase in police surveillance and harassment, feared a "pig" attack could come at any time. They sandbagged their headquarters, barricaded doors and windows, and stockpiled firearms.³⁸ These preparations, which the BPP justified as defenses against police occupation of their neighborhoods, failed to impress most local residents, many of whom did not want any more police incidents. Instead, it alienated all but the most militant supporters. Protecting poor old women and feeding children appealed to many, but waving guns around and preaching revolution scared these people away. One FBI informant reported that he "did not expect any great response" from the community on behalf of the recently jailed individuals.³⁹

A fire that erupted at the BPP's headquarters on November 27, 1970 proved to be the only incident that received great sympathy from hesitant city residents after the eviction events of the previous Spring. The fire raged for at least 45 minutes before being brought completely under control, and destroyed the upper story of the house and

³⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 3 April 1970.

³⁸ Ibid., 24 September 1970.

³⁹ Ibid., 21 September 1970.

most of the downstairs, leaving the building useless. The Panthers, most of which were in Washington, DC when the fire occurred, immediately suspected the involvement of local authorities, and the fire department began an investigation.⁴⁰ Different clues point to the legitimacy of this suspicion. First, the fire began on an exterior wall, leading firemen to gather earth at the base of the fire for examination. Also, onlookers from the community observed police officers taking records and papers from the house, not the usual “jewelry, wills, and other valuables” firemen usually remove from the scarred remains of a fire.⁴¹ Furthermore, witnesses saw people leaving the scene as the fire began.⁴²

Larry Little, who met with the fire department shortly after the blaze to receive some of the salvaged materials, held a press conference where he made the Party’s opinion of the local authorities clear. Speaking directly about the fire officials he met with the previous day, Little asserted “They told us that they could not repudiate and they admitted that there were people in our office when our office was on fire other than firemen.” Little advised them to publicly “make it known that the fire department didn’t take anything from our office,” but that it was the police department who took the items, and later returned some to the fire department to give back to the BPP.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid., 26 October 1970.

The party had been traveling to muster support for and participation in November’s Revolutionary People’s Constitutional Convention, a Black Panther Party led gathering of political groups in Washington, D.C. intent on drafting a new constitution, seeing as the current one, according to a BPP flyer for the event, “has not, does not, and will not serve the people.” The majority of the NCCF members attended this gathering, and on their return on November 28th, they found their headquarters nearly destroyed.

⁴¹ Bill Stracener, “Fire Damages Panther House Here,” Winston-Salem Journal, 28 November 1970, sec. A, final edition.

⁴² Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 22 April 1971.

⁴³ Ibid.

The fire provides evidence of the variability of the Black Panther Party's local backing. The Panthers, although dangerous, supplied the underprivileged black community with certain benefits other organizations and charities did not offer. Some members of the black community viewed the suspicious nature of the fire, and the obvious removal of party documents, as evidence of the power structure's attempt to crush the BPP and destroy its ability to serve. Thus many black citizens rose to the Party's defense. Yet, once again, this sympathy and support soon declined. The fire portrayed the Panthers as innocent victims, but by the end of February, 1971 two violent incidents and multiple arrests tarnished this guiltless image.

Early on the morning of January 12th, 1971 meat truck driver Ralph Lindley called the Winston-Salem police, saying that his truck had been robbed at a delivery stop. Lindley told police that he found the truck parked in front of the BPP's new headquarters. Police responded by surrounding the house with about 50 officers while they awaited a warrant. By the time the warrant came, many people, including Larry Little and some other Party members, were observing the incident from the street. With the search warrant in hand, the police gave the Panthers inside three minutes to come out. After no response, the police lobbed tear-gas into the top window of the building, being the only window not barricaded. A shot erupted, "believed to have come from Panther headquarters,"⁴⁴ and the police "opened up with shotguns, rifles, and more tear gas for about 45 seconds." Two people, Grady Fuller and 15 year-old Willie Cole then emerged and police placed them under arrest.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid., 12 January, 1971.

⁴⁵ Jim Gray, "2 Arrested After Gunfire at House," Winston-Salem Journal, 13 January 1971, sec. A, final edition.

The BPP quickly denied stealing the truck by way of an article in the BPP newspaper, insisting it was brought to the house by a “pig agent,” who gave Grady Fuller the meat as a donation to the Breakfast for Children program.⁴⁶ However, Little’s comments at a press rally contradicted this claim when he said “[the police] did not get any meat out of our office. They got it out of the weeds where it was thrown.”⁴⁷ This statement implied that the police had brought the meat to the crime scene before the raid, and then brought it out after. This contradiction, along with Willie Cole’s confession of being in the stolen truck with Grady Fuller, failed to convince the community of the BPP’s innocence, although the group argued that police pressured Cole without an attorney present. While evicting the Panthers from their headquarters a week later, police arrested Julius Cornell and Larry Little for accessory after the fact for the larceny of the meat.⁴⁸

The African-American community of Winston-Salem, and other areas of North Carolina, became further distrustful of the Party when a police raid in neighboring High Point a month later ended in another violent shootout. The NCCF (BPP) chapter in High Point, which had only received official status a couple months before, interacted closely with the Winston-Salem party. And like those in Winston-Salem, the High Point chapter faced eviction from its headquarters. At 6:30 AM on February 10th, thirty-five to forty police officers surrounded their house to enforce the eviction. After police ordered everyone out a firefight ensued, leaving two officers seriously injured. Police arrested

⁴⁶ 22 April 1971.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Bill Stracener, “Panthers Evicted; Two are Arrested,” Winston-Salem Journal, 20 January 1971, sec. A, final edition.

four High Point members for assault with intent to commit murder.⁴⁹ Once again, the BPP in Winston-Salem charged the police with framing the BPP and “kidnapping” its members.⁵⁰

The Panther’s violent clashes with Winston-Salem police contradicted their stated image as “a group seeking to improve conditions in the black community.”⁵¹ Facing numerous arrests, constant evictions, increasing paranoia, and little money to bail out all but its highest-ranking members, the BPP chose to focus all of its attention on the upcoming trials. The Panthers postponed all of their community service programs, only interacting with city residents to sell newspapers and distribute flyers pleading for donations to pay the “ransom,” or bail, of members “kidnapped” by police.⁵² These calls for assistance went largely unanswered. In essence, by canceling their social services the Party destroyed the one aspect of its organization that still embodied its proclaimed goals. Although the BPP depended on their surrounding neighborhood as their only source of backing, they distanced themselves from this source.

⁴⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 10 March 1971.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 22 April and 2 February, 1971.

During this period of instability and fear the Panthers fell victim to more FBI counterintelligence tactics, aimed to further weaken the “severely handicapped” chapter. On February 2nd, calls between the BPP in Winston-Salem and Party headquarters in Berkeley, California focused recent letters mailed between the two cities. Letters sent to Berkeley denounced a member of the Winston group, but no one in Winston-Salem knew who had sent them. Around the same time, party member Julius Cornell received a letter, dismissed as a “pig trick,” containing \$50 and a note reading, “you will get the rest of the money for the information later.” Also, black community leaders in North Carolina received letters, signed by Black Panther leaders June Hilliard, David Hilliard, and Emory Douglas, stating that the Winston-Salem Party had been disbanded and was “no longer functional.” BPP headquarters replied that they had “definitely not sent the letters...and that they were probably sent by the ‘pigs’.” In a memo to Charlotte the FBI office in San Francisco acknowledged that “it may be that the submission of the letters in this instance is a counterintelligence measure utilized by the Charlotte office.”

⁵¹ Ray Rollins, “High Point Officer Hurt in Shoot-Out,” Winston-Salem Journal, 11 February 1971, sec. A, final edition.

⁵² Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 22 April 1971.

A rally on March 7th showed the distance the BPP's recent actions created between their group and the community. This event, dubbed an "intercommunal day of solidarity for political prisoners of war in America,"⁵³ attracted only 60 people who drifted in and out, a scant amount compared to attendance at past BPP events. During the rally two audience members interrupted Larry Little's speech, accusing him of doing nothing to assist the people of the community.⁵⁴ These persons were forcibly ejected.⁵⁵

However, without a permanent headquarters and eight court trials scheduled for the month of March, these individuals may have been right. The devoted defense seen after the fire all but vanished. The community showed trivial sympathy for the plight of those arrested and gave little donations to the group. In sheer desperation, resulting from their dire financial needs, Party members discussed armed robbery as a cure to their woes.⁵⁶ It was at this point, in late winter of 1971, that a split, incited by false letters sent by the FBI, occurred between national Panther leaders Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver.⁵⁷ The NCCF in Winston-Salem sided with Huey Newton, and on April 7th the national BPP instructed them to "change your sign to read Winston-Salem branch of the BPP and everybody that is functioning with you now is a party member."⁵⁸ Although at this point the party had lost active membership, due both to imprisonment and defection,

⁵³ Ibid., 10 March 1971.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 7 March 1971.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 7 March 1971.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 14 April 1971.

⁵⁷ Ward Churchill and Jim Vanderwall, *Agents of Repression: the FBI's Secret Wars against the Black Panther Party and the Native American Movement*, (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2002), 40, 87.

⁵⁸ Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 26 April 1971.

It must be remembered that until this point the BPP in Winston-Salem was still NCCF, not an official chapter of the BPP. Although there is not a very big difference between the two, the FBI and the Winston-Salem BPP felt that the event was very significant.

those who remained reacted happily to the news, and their activities reflected their new status.⁵⁹

Huey Newton, convinced that the Black Panther Party's violent actions repelled African Americans rather than inspired them, criticized the Winton-Salem chapter's previous conflicts with police. The chapter responded by adopting Newton's new community service attitude, with the hope that such a focus would reduce the intense variations of local support. Although still primarily focused on members' trials, which were postponed, members began taking first aid classes during May.⁶⁰ By July several individuals received official first-aid cards so they could both assist in medical emergencies and teach community members first-aid. They even acquired an old hearse in the hopes of converting it into an ambulance.⁶¹ The Breakfast for Children program restarted⁶² and members "spruced up" their personal appearance.⁶³ The Panthers also increased their stability when a Party member purchased a permanent headquarters.⁶⁴

In the fall of 1971, the Panthers received increasing attention when Judge James A. Long annulled the larceny indictments of Larry Little, Grady Fuller, and Julius Cornell.⁶⁵ Also, on November 14th, Bobby Seale, Chairman of the national BPP, came from Oakland to speak at Winston-Salem State University. Before a crowd of 1,200 he praised the local chapter of the BPP for instituting more community service programs,

⁵⁹ Ibid., 5 May 1971.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 4 June 1971.

⁶¹ Ibid., 7 July 1971.

⁶² Ibid., 6 August 1971.

⁶³ Ibid., 7 September 1971.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 1 September 1971.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 4 October 1971.

On September 27th, Long agreed with the BPP attorney's motion to quash the indictments due to an insufficient number of blacks or eighteen year-olds in the jury. This decision, which reflects the slow changes in the judicial system since the start of the civil rights movement, forced local residents to reconsider the group's claim of racist police practices, and gained them significant sympathy.

and reminded the audience of the party's new stance on guns, which should only be used for home defense.⁶⁶ Community interest and participation increased with these events. Indeed, local merchants donated to the newly revived Breakfast for Children program freely, without fear of BPP action if they did not.⁶⁷

Yet it was not until the spring of 1972 that the chapter fully regained stability after the fire and arrests, and the subsequent 7-10 year sentences of three High Point members in early January.⁶⁸ By March, the group began to capitalize on the increased community interest their new image brought them, and they further expanded their programs. During that month, the Free Breakfast for Children program fed 10-12 children a day. Party member Grady Fuller administered a free pest control program, spraying houses in poor neighborhoods with donated pesticide. Also, a free clothing program began on March 18th and met with such success that the BPP gave out all of the available clothes on the first day.⁶⁹ Another free clothing give-away happened a month later. By April, the FBI noted that the party "had sufficiently improved its image in the community" to the point that it received regular cash donations from the community.⁷⁰ The Panthers' programs, along with a complete abandonment of weaponry, even by

⁶⁶ "Bomb Scare Precedes Talk by Seale," Winston-Salem Journal, 15 November 1971, sec. A, final edition.

This was one of the first local newspaper articles to speak positively of the Panthers, showing a significant change in Panther appearance.

⁶⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 19 November 1971.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 2 March 1971.

Before the fire, the Panthers were not receiving much support due to their increasingly open violence stance. Yet even without much community interest, they were a stable organization, with a dedicated membership, an established headquarters, and well-defined goals.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 5 April 1971

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 19 May 1972.

posted guards, greatly changed the appearance of the Panther's in the black community, and brought support to levels not seen since the fire of 1970.⁷¹

In early June, 1972, shortly after his return from five months of training in California, Larry Little held a press conference to publicize the Party's new direction, modeled after the rapidly changing chapter in Oakland. Of great significance, he publicly acknowledged the group's past mistakes. Recalling the near hero-status of the chapter after protecting an evicted woman in 1970, Little admitted, "right then we should have started moving with our survival programs. But instead, we went on with the gun thing, alienating the black church and attacking black leaders." Little understood that the BPP, because of its radical nature, had no choice but to rely on the local community, and thus must adjust its actions to best serve the community in a way cohesive with Panther ideology. With community support on the rise, Little confidently predicted that "we can build the strongest organization against poverty and oppression in Winston-Salem."⁷²

From this point to the Party's end, the chapter in Winston-Salem embarked on a series of ambitious service projects aiming to improve the financial woes, healthcare, and political power of the local poor. These programs each met great success at times, but then failed. Local residents reacted to the availability of these services as before, but never fully adopted Party philosophy to a degree significant enough to ensure stable financial or political support. Although the Panther's service-based position definitely gained more enthusiasm than their previous militarism, enduring support still failed to appear. Thus, the Party often began new projects to revive waning community interest, a

⁷¹ Ibid., 29 June 1972.

⁷² Bill Gilkeson, "Panthers to Expand 'Survival Program,'" Winston-Salem Journal, 14 June 1972, sec. A, final edition.

habit which in turn depleted the group's available resources and doomed their ambitions to failure.

The first of these service projects came in the form of Survival Days, which Larry Little adopted from the national chapter in Oakland. On July 30th, 1972, the BPP in Winston-Salem held their first Survival Day, entitled the "Joseph Waddell Free Food Program" after a Panther member who died while incarcerated for armed robbery. The FBI and the Winston-Salem Journal estimated that between 2,000-4,000 individuals attended the rally at a local housing project. The Party handed out over 1,100 bags of groceries donated by local merchants, along with over 1,500 pairs of shoes that people picked up at the BPP's headquarters. Also, 500 individuals registered to vote and the Panthers tested 800 for sickle-cell anemia.⁷³ According to the FBI's report, one speaker at the rally, a local church leader, "compared the BPP's efforts in feeding the poor to that of Jesus feeding the multitudes." This statement, along with speeches encouraging the audience to vote for African Americans running in upcoming elections, evidenced the Party's increasingly mainstream appearance.⁷⁴ The FBI, which noted the peaceful nature of the rally, dubbed the event as "the most ambitious project undertaken by the North Carolina chapter to date".⁷⁵

The striking success of this event prompted the Panthers to begin preparations for another rally and continue their Survival Programs. On August 27th the BPP held a smaller program in Larry Little's old neighborhood, one of the poorest in Winston-Salem, with attendance only reaching 200 due to the last minute nature of the event. Once again,

⁷³ "Panthers Already Planning Another Black Survival Day," Winston-Salem Journal, 1 August 1972, Sec. A, final edition.

⁷⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 1 August 1972.

Panthers offered free food and sickle-cell anemia tests, and registered many to vote.⁷⁶ The free pest control and free clothing programs continued through the fall, and the “George Jackson Liberation School,” inaugurated during the summer, had 8-10 children attending its Saturday afternoon classes. However, the Free Breakfast for Children program did not restart with school as promised, and the sporadic nature of the above programs led to a decrease in active community support after the July Survival Day.

Larry Little concluded that “for the party to be successful, it must have the support of the black community,” and thus the Panthers once again focused all of their energy on a large Survival Day.⁷⁷ They understood that without available services community support would falter, and thus they expended all of their resources into the upcoming event. As a result, the Liberation School ceased, newspaper sales dropped, and the group fell behind on its mortgage, motivating Little to order party members to find outside work to support the group and the rally.⁷⁸ Little even found part-time construction work himself.⁷⁹ Also the meat truck case reopened, with retrial set for mid-December, the same week as the Survival Day.

The break from this pressure came with postponement of the trial and a \$7,000 life insurance policy of deceased member Joseph Waddell. With monetary and court pressures somewhat eased, the Panther’s held their promised Survival Day on December 17th. Seven hundred people attended the event where Panthers handed out approximately \$2,600 worth of winter clothes and shoes. Two hundred and fifty people received sickle-cell anemia tests and close to another 100 registered to vote. In his usual enthusiastic

⁷⁵ Ibid., 21 August 1972.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 7 September 1972.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 4 October 1972.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 17 October 1972.

fashion, Little dubbed the event “successful,” and indicated hopes for similar programs in the future.⁸⁰

However, Little’s hopes did not come to be. By January the Panthers faced financial troubles once again, and postponed all of the regular Survival Programs indefinitely. Yet the Panthers did not lose all local support with the cancellation of their community service programs. Their programs confirmed their concern for the poor African Americans of Winston-Salem, and local residents became more supportive of their ideology, instead of just the benefits of their services. When in March the meat theft finally went to retrial, 250 members of the black community came out to support the BPP despite months of Panther inactivity.⁸¹ The BPP proved to no longer be dangerous militants who, as in the past, caused more problems than they solved.

In May, the Black Panthers in Winston-Salem received a \$35,000 grant from the National Episcopalian Church for the purpose of their long-envisioned, yet illusive, Free Ambulance Program. This program, their second major endeavor since their shift in philosophy, best embodied the adaptive nature of the Panthers’ relationship with the black community. Black residents often complained of the ambulance service in Winston-Salem’s ghettos, which, among other grievances, reportedly charged a \$20 fee for its services.⁸² The Free Ambulance Program, aimed to combat this problem, received great support from the black community and recognition from city leaders.

Yet, as this program demonstrated the Party’s adaptability it also reflected the devastating effect that unreliable community support had on the group. The Ambulance

⁷⁹ Ibid., 3 November 1972.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 26 December 1972.

⁸¹ Ibid., 22 March 1973.

Program proved extremely difficult to begin and later to maintain, and the community seemed to only show assistance when they could clearly see benefits. The dedication seen at the meat truck trial disappeared. As with the flitting support during the Party's ambitious Survival Days, the local community seemed more interested in the fruit of the Party's labors than their ideology. As a radical social organization, the BPP did not expect overwhelming devotion from the masses, but just enough from a dedicated following to achieve significant change. Yet in Winston-Salem there proved to be too little to be successful.

With the money from the National Episcopalian Church, the Panthers bought an ambulance, a van, and two other vehicles. They also began construction on a four-car garage adjoining their headquarters. By September 1973, the Ambulance Program made great headway and excited the local community. At a meeting with the Forsythe County Board of Commissioners, 200 community members came to support the BPP. At this meeting, the board unanimously favored some sort of ambulance service franchise be granted to the Panthers.⁸³

With free ambulance service promised by Christmas the Panthers had much to do, but they found working within the system more difficult than they anticipated. With full confidence Little spoke to the Winston-Salem community at large through radio, television, and print media during the early autumn months of 1973. With an additional ten "community workers" greatly assisting the fourteen active full-time Panthers, and \$6,000 received from local contributions, Little's optimism was not unfounded. The Panthers discontinued or severely reduced all other activities, including selling Party

⁸² Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 2 April 1974.

newspapers, freeing up workers for the ambulance project.⁸⁴ Yet the increased funding, workers, and time could not handle the difficulties this project presented. Complications with the Federal Communications System hampered BPP efforts to establish radio contacts with the existing emergency system in Winston-Salem. Furthermore, the BPP's budget, although still receiving donations, proved too little to bring the ambulance service to compliance with state regulations. As the FBI observed, Christmas passed with no ambulance on the street, causing "embarrassment to the BPP in the black community."⁸⁵

By the time the ambulance service began operating in late January 1974, the project had nearly exhausted the Party. Yet local and national media coverage, along with the satisfaction of accomplishing their goal, revived the group. In articles from Winston-Salem, Charlotte, and Durham, reporters praised the Panthers for their efforts to assist the community. In an interview with a Duke University student publication, Winston-Salem BPP second in command and ambulance director Nelson Malloy explained the motivation behind the free ambulance service, "we had defected from the community. Now we're going back to it. We're returning to our original vision." The nation turned its attention to Winston-Salem on February 25th during a NBC Nightly News segment on the Panther's Free Ambulance Program. The report portrayed the Panthers in a positive light, quipping that "the Black Panthers used to put people into ambulances through violence, but now have...a free ambulance service."⁸⁶ The popular press's incredible shift in opinion gives credence to the sincerity and comprehensiveness

⁸³ Ibid., 11 September 1973.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 3 October 1973.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 3 January 1974.

⁸⁶ "Panthers' Ambulance Featured on TV News," Winston-Salem Journal, 26 February 1974, sec. A, final edition.

of the Party's change in tactics, but like the community of Winston-Salem, the media still did not approve of the Party's fundamental ideology.

Winston-Salem residents and the press soon lost interest in the Party, yet again, when the Ambulance program began to falter. Radio dispatching difficulties and the widespread energy crisis of 1974 led the Panthers to "park" the ambulance for all but a few hours a day, thus using it only for extreme emergencies by the end of March.⁸⁷ This severely curtailed party promises to provide 24 hour free ambulance service and "respond to all calls from the black community."⁸⁸

During this time the Party embarked on another project as Larry Little announced plans to run for public office, a move that distracted the community from the faltering ambulance service.⁸⁹ With the May 7th primary approaching, Little shifted funds and party activity, previously earmarked for the ambulance program, to the "Little for Alderman" campaign, reducing the services of the ambulance even further. Little's campaign put the future of the Party at risk as BPP headquarters in Oakland, itself struggling to stay afloat, requested that the Winston-Salem chapter relocate to Berkeley. Little and others made it "apparent that should the party find itself unable to continue the ambulance service and for Larry Little to lose the alderman seat in their own ward, the move to California would be almost assured."⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 2 April 1974.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 3 January 1974.

⁸⁹ Little ran for alderman of the North Ward of Winston-Salem, the area where the majority of Panther activity took place. This reflects both the national trend of the Panthers and his own awareness of the increasing local support for him. Little and the BPP felt black control of the community was essential for change.

⁹⁰ Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 3 January 1974.

Little lost the primary 646-566, but a couple of weeks later the State Board of Elections revealed he actually only lost by a mere eight votes, and “possibly may have won the election.”⁹¹ The Panthers and the community responded with equal fervor after this announcement. Community volunteers and donations increased, making the Free Ambulance Service available twenty-four hours a day for May, June, and July. The ambulance saw so much activity that two other vehicles often had to be on the road to assist due to the magnitude of requests. In addition to the party’s services, Little himself received enormous public attention following the announcement of the voting results, which Little challenged by asking the State Board to order another election due to “election irregularities.” He was featured on local radio and TV stations, including a local talk show, and spoke at many rallies and conventions throughout the summer.⁹² Numerous articles appeared in local papers about the election, including an editorial in the Winston-Salem Journal that gave the BPP in Winston-Salem arguably the most positive media coverage they ever received. The article criticized both the state and county election boards, pointing out that officials removed nearly 291 voters registered by Little’s supporters from the registration books before the election, and that these individuals could not register again in time for the primary.⁹³

Despite the public outcry and media attention, the State Board of Elections denied Little’s request for a new election. It seemed probable that Little would initiate a write-in campaign for the November elections, but the events of the fall months derailed his election hopes. With the Board’s decision, the community apparently lost all faith in the BPP’s political agenda and its ability to assist underprivileged local residents. This drop

⁹¹ Ibid., 30 September 1974

⁹² Ibid., 3 July 1974.

in support occurred simultaneously with increased difficulty with the Free Ambulance Service, due to costly vehicle repairs and issues with the Forsythe County Board of Commissioners. With no money or visible support, the chapter, which suffered membership losses at this time as well, made public its intentions to move to Oakland, in the hope that the threat would gain funds for the ambulance service. However, the threat did not work and Little, disappointed by an utter lack of support, resigned from the Party, only to return by mid-winter. He made only limited effort for a write-in campaign.⁹⁴

The Party struggled on for at least a year, with the ambulance only running temporarily due to insufficient funds and continuously depleting Party membership, including the departure of Nelson Malloy, Grady Fuller, Julius Cornell, and Larry Little, four long-time members of the group. By the spring of 1976, the chapter completely estranged itself from the national group, and none of its programs, including the ambulance, were operational. The FBI, then, concluding that “the BPP in Winston-Salem does not present any real or imagined current threat to the security of the country,” closed the case.⁹⁵ Although their group effort failed, some ex-Panthers continued in their attempts to change the social structure of Winston-Salem.⁹⁶

⁹³ “In the System,” Winston-Salem Journal, 3 June 1974, sec. A. final edition.

⁹⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigations, Black Panther Party, North Carolina, BUFILE number: 105-165706, 8 January 1975.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5 April 1976.

⁹⁶ V. Burke, “What’s in a Name?,” n.d., <<http://mts.admin.wsfcs.k12.nc.us/commtty/whatname.html>> (6 September 2003).

Larry Little went on to serve on the board of Alderman from 1977 to 1985.

-Phoebe Zerwick, “Murder, Race, Justice: the State vs. Darryl Hunt,” n.d., <<http://darrylhunt.journalnow.com/people.html>> (19 November 2003).

In the mid-1980’s, Larry Little was an outspoken defendant of Darryl Hunt, an 18-year-old convicted of murder. Evidence in the case suggests that Hunt could not have been the persecutor.

-“WSSU Successful in ‘Get out the Vote’ Campaign,” Winston-Salem State University RamPages, November 2000, <<http://www.wssu.edu/publications/rampages/nov2000.pdf>> (6 September 2003). Alderman Nelson Malloy is currently representing the North Ward of Winston-Salem.

During the late 1960's and early 1970's, the Black Panther Party was a presence in Winston-Salem at times both despised and praised, but which could not be ignored. Claiming to be representatives of the poor and oppressed people of Winston-Salem's ghettos, the Panthers came to the forefront of the late civil rights movement in the city. Within a few years the Party realized that their call for violent revolution did not sway the community, and they changed their approach. They understood that providing the community with their everyday needs best served them, and thus after 1971 the Panthers embarked on an ambitious agenda aiming to serve the community by working through the established social system, hoping that eventually they could adapt the system to better serve all individuals. The community responded favorably to this change, but when benefits failed to be available, their support deteriorated. Eventually, the ambitions of the Panthers spread their support too thin, and the group collapsed from insufficient funding, membership, and local backing.

Despite their failure, the Winston-Salem Black Panther Party's existence revealed important things about the BPP and other radical social movements. The BPP, and other organizations, depended solely on their local community for existence, especially the devoted few that adhered to their ideas and principles. In Winston-Salem, however, the overwhelming majority of the black community never showed dedication to the Party's beliefs, and thus residents did not care to keep the Party alive when it was of no visible use to their neighborhoods. Although the Party altered its methods of achieving its goals, not enough financial or ideological backing ever existed in Winston-Salem to allow the Black Panthers to accomplish their vision.

Works Cited
Primary Sources

Federal Bureau of Investigation. Black Panther Party, North Carolina. BUFILE number: 105-165706. 1968-1976.

This extensive file, released around 1980 through the Freedom of Information Act, details the existence of the Black Panther Party in Winston-Salem, North Carolina from 1968-1976. This file is made up of communications between the Charlotte office of the FBI and other offices across the country. These transmissions cover Black Panther events and communications with the party Headquarters in Oakland, FBI instructions from J. Edgar Hoover, and other information. Also included are many articles from the Black Panther Party Newspaper, Black Panther documents, local newspaper articles, and letters from concerned citizens in Winston-Salem.

I'm not my brother's keeper: leadership and civil rights in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Directed by Mary M. Dalton. Produced by Mary M. Dalton and Susan L. Faust. 45 minutes. M. Dalton and S. Faust, 2001. Videocassette.

This videocassette documents the sit-ins in Winston-Salem in 1960. It may be helpful in describing the kind of racial inequality members of the Black Panther Party dealt in Winston-Salem. Although these sit-ins were eventually effective, they did not affect other racial issues in the city. Thus, the Black Panthers attempted to address the everyday problems, such as inadequate housing and health services, which the early civil rights activists in Winston-Salem did not improve.

North Carolina Advisory Committee to the United States Commission of Civil Rights. Prisons in North Carolina. June 1971.

This source will help provide a backdrop for the racial situation in which the Black Panther Party formed in North Carolina. It is a federal investigation by the Civil Rights Committee of jails in North Carolina. The committee's findings show a severely disproportionately large amount of black men in the prison system, as well as an unbalanced few black workers in the jails. These numbers show why many young black men may have been frustrated with what they saw as an unfair system, which makes the Black Panther Party an appealing weapon.

Personal interview with Sandra Byrd.

This personal interview with Dr. Sandra Byrd was recorded on September 2, 2003. She was a politically active student in the late 1960's when she attended Salem College. During her years there she organized several anti-war events, one of which was co-sponsored by the BPP. She worked closely with Larry Little and other members. Although her interactions with the party were few, she was part of a large event that gives testimony to the local community's receptivity to the Black Panthers.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1970 Census of Population and Housing, North Carolina. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce Field Offices, 1971.

This source covers the greater metropolitan area of Winston-Salem in 1969 and 1970. It gives good background information on the demographics of Winston-Salem at the start of the BPP chapter their. This information helps explain why poor African American residents of Winston-Salem were receptive to black attempts to improve their status.

Winston-Salem Journal, 6 November 1969 – 14 February 1975.

This newspaper is Winston-Salem's local daily paper. It covers local, national, and international news. During the dates above, and presumably before and after as well, the Journal had many articles on the Black Panther Party. There are news articles as well as letters to the editor, editorial pieces, and photographs. This source provides my thesis with other vantage points of major events. It also has many direct quotes from Panther leaders, and will be a helpful source for determining the support of the community at different times during the Black Panther Party's existence in Winston-Salem.

“WSSU Successful in ‘Get Out the Vote’ Campaign,” Winston-Salem State University RamPages, November 2000, <<http://www.wssu.edu/publications/rampages/nov2000.pdf>> (6 September 2003).

This article is from Winston-Salem State University's newspaper, RamPages. It discusses a voting drive headed partly by city Alderman Nelson Malloy and Professor Larry Little, both of who were members of the Black Panther Party. This shows the continuing involvement of these two leaders, and gives more support to my thesis.

Secondary Sources

Abron, Jonina M. "The Legacy of the Black Panther Party." *Black Scholar* 17 (1986): 33-38.

Jonina Abron examined the enduring legacies of the Black Panther Party, focusing on its community programs, forays into electoral politics, and ideology.

Abu-Jamal, Mumia. "A Life in the Party." In *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party*, 40-50. New York: Routledge, 2001.

In this essay, Mumia Abu-Jamal examined the success of the Black Panther Party's community service projects. He also noted the lasting effects that these projects have had on service-oriented groups and their activities in the years after the party.

Burke, Vivian H. "What's in a Name?" n.d.,
<<http://mts.admin.wsfcs.k12.nc.us/commtty/whatname.html>> (6 September, 2003).

This web site is a list of various recreational parks in Winston-Salem that are named after African Americans, and a brief description of the person each park was built to honor. One such park is named after Larry Little, one of the most influential Black Panther Party members in the city.

Chafe, William H. *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, NC, and the Black Struggle for Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

William Chafe, a professor of history at the University of North Carolina, examined the civil rights struggle in Greensboro during the 1960's. In this book, he makes references to similar situations in Winston-Salem, where the Black Panther Party eventually emerged. This source is helpful in assessing the tense situation in Winston-Salem in the late 1960's, and in determining why the Black Panther Party established itself there and not in surrounding Southeastern cities.

Churchill, Ward and Vanderwall, Jim. *Agents of Repression: the FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the Native American Movement*. Boston: South End Press, 1988.

This book closely examines the role of the FBI in the weakening of two powerful revolutionary movements of the late Civil Rights era, the Black Panther Party and the Native American Movement. Churchill and Vanderwall examine FBI files, testimonies, and other evidence to argue that the federal government intentionally and knowingly used illegal methods to weaken these two groups. Although this book never mentions the Winston-Salem chapter of the BPP, it is can be used to understand the role of the FBI in Winston-Salem, and helps explain why the FBI was so intent on weakening the chapter's ties with the local community and the BPP national headquarters in Oakland.

Fitzgerald, Kathleen J., and Diane M. Rogers. "Radical Social Movement Organizations: A Theoretical Model." *The Sociological Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (2000): 573-598.

This article proposes a model from which to understand the structures and practices of radical social movement organizations. It is helpful for this thesis as its model applies to

the Black Panther Party in Winston-Salem, and helps explain the organization's relationship with the local community.

Judis, John B. "The Spirit of '68." *New Republic*. 219, no. 9 (1998): 24.

This article discusses the changes of the 1960s. It focuses on the general trends of the decade, and makes note of the violent eruptions in the late 60s.

Lo, Clarence Y. H. "Communities of Challengers." in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 1992.

This article notes that many groups striving to achieve change do not have access to normal political channels. Thus, they are forced to work with the local community, especially dedicated individual supporters, before they can gain more widespread attention and backing. Lo points out that although these groups may be addressing nation-wide issues, they often have to turn their focus toward the local level in order to be successful. The Black Panther Party in Winston-Salem reflects these trends, and thus this article helps support my thesis with social theory.

Smith, Jennifer B. *An International History of the Black Panther Party*. New York: Garland, 1999.

Jennifer Smith's book focuses on the national and international reach of the Black Panther Party. This source is helpful as it describes the reasons that led the party to become more militant than previous civil rights groups. This book also examines why the party's militant stance was so popular and spread so quickly, thus giving the reader more information as to why the party found an audience in Winston-Salem.

"The Ten Point Plan," n.d., <www.blackpanther.org/tenpoint.htm> (April 14th, 2003).

This document comes from the Black Panther Party official web site, which seeks to preserve the legacy of the Party. The Ten Point Plan it documents was the basic goals of the Black Panther Party, and is useful for this thesis as background information. By being familiar with the Ten Points, the reader can further understand the motivation behind the establishment of various survival programs the BPP started in Winston-Salem.

Tursi, Frank. *Winston-Salem: a History*. Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1994

Along with other primary and secondary sources, Frank Tursi's book on Winston-Salem's general history will help describe the scene in which the Black Panther Party emerged 1968. This book, although very general, provides information on the racial tension in Winston-Salem and neighboring Greensboro during the late 1960's.

"What Was the Black Panther Party?" n.d., <www.blackpanther.org/legacy.htm> (April 14th, 2003).

This document, also from the official Black Panther Party web site, gives a basic overview of the BPP and its goals. Along with other sources, the information from this source will provide a background before the Winston-Salem chapter is closely examined.

Zerwick, Phoebe. "Murder, Race, Justice: the State vs. Darryl Hunt." n.d.,
<<http://darrylhunt.journalnow.com/people.html>> (19 November 2003).

This site provides evidence of Larry Little's continued efforts to fight racial inequality and injustice after the end of the Black Panthers.