

BLACK PEOPLE AND THE 1980 CENSUS

Volume One

**Proceedings From A
Conference On The
Population Undercount**

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how the undercount is tied together with all federal money that could be used to benefit the Black community like revenue sharing and block grant funds. Instead of getting our fair share, we are being undercounted and we don't have an understanding of how this is happening, so we haven't created a mechanism to see that this kind of discriminatory and racist practice is stopped.

GERALD McWORTER: Yesterday we heard from the National Urban League, and now I'd like to call on the brother from the Urban League of Champaign-Urbana to see what his reaction to the conference has been.

ROBERT BROWN: I didn't think you were going to call on me, being from a small place like Champaign-Urbana. I think that, overall, I've heard different perspectives here at the conference that have helped in my gathering information. When I first attended this conference I didn't exactly know what to expect. I heard the perspective of a demographer; I also heard a social science perspective about the importance of quantitative data, of looking at ourselves, trying to develop policies, and trying to obtain funds. I have been thinking about the experiences I've had in the Urban League in Champaign County in terms of planning. When I started doing work in planning, there was no census data there and nothing from the health planning board; there were no statistics to look at. I went

out and developed the statistics. Would you believe that people started calling the Urban League office to try to develop proposals, to try to get their social agencies, that weren't specifically dealing with Blacks, but were considering the quality of life in general, to listen. We have quite a few poor people in certain parts of our community. Now they have someone going around asking questions of various agencies about how many people do you serve, how many Blacks are in this program, and how many minorities are in this target area that you're working in. These agencies have started calling.

One useful thing is to go out and collect the data that's available, and let it be known that you're collecting data. Another thing is not to deal only with the quantitative aspect, because once you collect the data you can show it to anybody out there, in the neighborhood, and they will say, "That is phony, that's bad data." What I hear here on the professional level is that even with our estimates of error, we don't often know what the quality of the data is that we're looking at. So let's not get into a God-complex on data. Let's start looking at other avenues in terms of studies that take a case study approach, a profile. The Urban League is going across the country and doing national surveys from a Black and minority perspective. But most of all, we need to develop ourselves as individuals to have a different self-concept and

a different philosophy on how we approach things. This is the broadest thing that I think that we could actually find--whether you're an agency, an individual, or from a professional background. Yes, let's go out and get the quantitative things that are available; let's start working with that data. But let's also encourage a qualitative perspective, a new self-concept in terms of our identity. Let's not just look at "minority" as a quantitative way of doing things because the data ain't correct noway, and the name of the game can always change. Thank you.

GERALD McWORTER: I'd like to call on Stan Moore, Regional Director of the U.S. Census Bureau. While he's coming to the microphone, let me just say that it was many months ago that we had the first conversation about the conference. Had it not been for the commitment of Stan Moore to support this conference, it wouldn't have been held. We owe a great debt to him, more than to anybody else, for providing full cooperation and an open door to have the conference. Thank you.

STAN MOORE: Thanks a lot. I was hoping you would keep that part quiet. (Laughter.) I'm very impressed. From those days when we started talking about the conference, and to have come this far has really impressed me and the other members of the Census Bureau that have been in the

audience. I am the Regional Director for the Chicago Region, and I'd like to tell you a little about that. When I came to Chicago and started working as the regional director, I didn't see very many minorities coming around the office. With the help of Mrs. Grady and the other staff we have interested minorities in the census and what these figures could do. One day Rev. Riddick walked in and surprised the hell out of me, because he was looking for some statistics to find out how many farms we Blacks have lost in the South. Then he started asking other questions and I realized that we did have some brothers around that were asking some of those questions, as were all of the other people from the minority population that were coming in.

We've talked about the decennial census today, but the Census Bureau is also involved in other surveys. To give you an idea, we are constantly out taking surveys--surveys such as annual housing statistics. We're looking at the housing market; we put out crime statistics; the national crime survey; the longitudinal manpower survey; the current population survey; those statistics that come out every month on the number of people employed and unemployed. All of this comes from the Census Bureau. The business statistics that you read about--we're out collecting those on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis. We could go on and on about all of the statistics that come