

WHY DOES FRED SANFORD "TURN THEM ON?"

A SURVEY OF AUDIENCE REACTION TO
NBC-TV COMEDY "SANFORD AND SON"

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Adebayo Joseph Ogunbi

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ABSTRACT

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The Problem

As a by-product of black effort toward equality of opportunity in the United States, there has been a noticeable increase in their talents' participation in entertainment programs on television in the last six years. One of the shows in which black stars play leading roles is "Sanford and Son." The success of this show, as the second most popular on national networks, suggests a sizeable proportion of white viewership.

The question that the study attempts to answer is "why?." Is the audience appeal of "Sanford and Son" attributable to variables such as the themes on which the stories are based, the skills of the leading stars, or their ethnic background?

Three working hypotheses were expected to be tested by the study.

Hypothesis I

The high audience appeal of "Sanford and Son" to white television viewers does not imply that: a) there is a significant improvement in the attitudes of whites towards blacks; b) whites welcome the increase of black performers on television.

Hypothesis II

The popularity of the show tends to be associated more with white viewers' perception of the image of the leading characters as new versions of the old "happy Negroes" than the attributes of Redd Foxx and Demond Wilson as talented actors.

Hypothesis III

The popularity of the show does not mean that black viewers identify with the image of Fred and Lamont (the common people).

Methods

In a face-to-face interview, a non-random sample of 300 was gathered between February and April, 1974, comprising 150 black respondents (75 each from segregated and mixed neighborhoods), and 150 white respondents from a similar setting in the Lansing city area.

Results

In accordance with subjects' responses, the reasons for the audience appeal of the show are arranged in the following order:

1) its humor is light, funny, and entertaining (95%); 2) Redd Foxx and Demond Wilson are skilled actors; they play their respective characters effectively (92%); 3) its dialogue is free of dialects, easy to understand by the majority of the audience (87%); 4) it comes at an appropriate time, a relaxing Friday evening entertainment (82%); 5) its social comments are frank; Fred Sanford tells it like it is! (80%); 6) its leading characters are down-to-earth and believable (79%); 7) it is a welcome change to watch black talents perform on television (77%); 8) Fred and Lamont are the kind of black characters I like to watch on television (75%); 9) the leading characters recall memories of the old "happy Negro" (40%).

The foregoing arrangement indicated that the show's appeal rested on excellent production, talented acting, and an appropriate location for the show on the program schedule. The actors' ethnic affinity was relegated into the background.

A multivariate analysis of variance, undertaken with factors of race and neighborhood on the nine statements, revealed the significant role played by respondents' ethnic background in the results. Blacks' views were substantially more positive than whites and the seemingly high level of support over all, fell when whites' views were treated with blacks. The low support by whites was sharply defined on

statements about the stars' ethnicity except the one "recalling memories of the old happy Negro" which was marked by the largest percentage of abstentions (26%) on a single statement.

At p .05 significance level, the data showed evidence of significant differences in the views of blacks as compared to whites on six of the nine statements of opinion about the show.

Of the three working hypotheses tested, only the one stating that the show's appeal did not imply a significant change in whites' attitude toward blacks, or acceptance of increase in black participation in television entertainment, was supported. The second, associating the show's appeal with whites' perception of the characters as new versions of the old "happy Negro" and the third, stating that blacks would not identify with the "common man" image of the leading characters were not supported.

Very significant in the findings were the facts that white respondents strongly acknowledged the skills of the talented actors that play the leading roles in the show; and the impact of a massive support by black respondents on the over-all results.

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A THESIS

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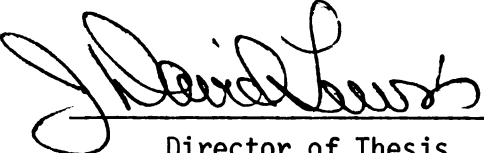
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1974

Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Television and
Radio, College of Communication Arts, Michigan State University, in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree.



Director of Thesis

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the memories of my beloved late grandmother and uncles:

Madam Orişoyin Abasi

(Pa) Kweku Johnson, and

Chief Gabriel Oguntomiya,

whose invaluable contributions toward my up-bringing prepared the foundation for this accomplishment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is impossible to undertake a study of this kind without the cooperation of many people. The list of those whose contributions helped in the successful completion of the study is too long to compile. My apology goes to those who are not mentioned by name here.

First, I should express my sincere appreciation to Dr. J. David Lewis, who, in addition to being my thesis director, provided guidance through patience, sympathetic understanding, and wise counsel throughout the entire course of my masters degree program.

I am indebted to Dr. John Abel for his helpful suggestions in the design of instrument, survey procedures, and allowing me to appeal to students in his class for volunteers to participate as interviewers in the survey.

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conducted with the help of Sharon Menkvelde, Janet Focht, Nancy Brzezinski, Gene Bratt, and Gayle King, while the face-to-face interviews were executed with the unflinching support of John Gaines, the student volunteers from the classes of Drs. John Abel (Winter 1974) and J. David Lewis (Spring 1974), and Beckie Burnette, the supervising teacher and a group of student volunteers from the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) in Lansing.

Without the cooperation of the people of Lansing in the survey, the study would not have materialized.

Ann Marie Livermore typed the letters to the actors and producers while the proposal, taped interview, and the major portion of the draft were typed by Genie Smith, Karen Berry, and Susan Worley.

Jo Anne Helfrich at the Office of Research Services for the College of Communication Arts provided access to the use of computer facilities.

Dr. Jack Bain, the acting chairman, Department of Racial and Ethnic Studies at the College of Urban Development has been kind with financial help in the form of assistantships through part of my graduate studies.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Though black access to entertainment shows on television is a recent event, the belief that black people are humorous (possessing the ability to entertain) has been part of the thoughts and reflections of the mainstream of the American society for a long time. In the days when slavery subjected them to sub-human treatments, plantation owners had the pleasure of enjoying evening entertainment provided by their slaves. Perhaps from these lowly beginnings evolved such cliches as "a happy slave," "an uninhibited expressionist," "a natural born musician," and "a perfect entertainer."¹

In the post-Civil War era, the abolition of slavery enabled many black people to move away from the plantations of the South. The target destination was the northern cities. By exchanging the rural environment for the sophistication of the urban setting, the scope and horizon of applying the cliché greatly increased. Very soon, it became commonplace to see blacks in such areas of activities requiring them to perform; the practice being to show them vividly in the employment of "body and soul." Thus, they came into a good measure of public attention through the media in athletics, musical performances, comedies, and a variety of other entertainment situations.²

The emergence of the electronic media, spearheaded by film and followed later by radio and television, opened new vistas for the extraordinary style in which the whole society would be entertained. Contrary to expectation, however, black people realized that owing to the media's characteristics, their consistent exposure carried the possibility of their becoming popular. Therefore, film producers took care to ensure that a large majority of those blacks who had the rare honor of appearing in Hollywood films were the "toms," "coons," "mulattoes," "mammies," and "bucks," as Donald Bogle described them in his recent book.³

Perhaps the only exception was the popular "Amos 'n' Andy" show on radio (played by whites who substituted for the black characters) and later on television. That the NAACP and the Urban League should apply pressure to end the show on television was an indication that black people deserved a little more stake in the new media than the clowning role of the vaudeville already perpetuated in films. And, television, being more conservative than film or radio, only went further to compound the situation. Rather than play black characters or performers in the negative as film has consistently done, it employed a method of systematically excluding them from participation. Eric Barnouw, in his book The Image Empire reported the experience of Rose, producer of CBS-TV "Studio One" in a drama which attempted to include a Negro family. The bosses objected: "The black family would have to be changed to 'something else.' A Negro as beleaguered protagonist of a television program was declared unthinkable. It would, they said, appall southern viewers."⁴

With the exception of "Amos 'n' Andy," black presence was hardly worth a notice until the late sixties when Bill Cosby co-starred in "I Spy." Later, Greg Morris joined the IMF team in "Mission Impossible" and Michelle Nichols did the same in "Star Trek." For the first time in the history of American television, a black talent successfully played a leading role in a series with Dihann Carroll as a nurse in "Julia."⁵ This is not discounting the brief but unsuccessful earlier appearance of Nat King Cole in a musical series. The failure of his show can be attributed to the unpreparedness of white viewers to have blacks regularly perform in starring roles on TV, no matter how talented.

It is significant to note that this change did not come to pass until after the marches and demonstrations, bus boycotts, and the "sit-ins," a movement which led later to the passage of the Civil Rights Acts. Worthy of note is the fact that these events were closely followed by the Watts and Detroit riots. The climax came in 1968 with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. It will be recalled that the turmoil occasioned the institution of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. In its report, the Commission described the mass media as a great accomplice in the crime of non-information about the plight of blacks in the ghettos of the American cities, adding unequivocally that "the communications media, ironically, have failed to communicate."⁶

The battle to gain access into television has not been an easy one. Pamela Esch carefully described, in a study, how blacks in coalition with church organizations, employed the strategy of challenging the licenses of television stations that discriminated against minorities in

their programming and employment practices. In summing up their effort, she said:

Broadcasters and the F.C.C. began to realize that the movement on local stations was not a passing "craze" but an issue of lasting concern to black citizens in all parts of the country. Their efforts to gain local access would not cease, even if they met strong opposition from broadcasters and the F.C.C.⁷

The courts were called to the "rescue" when the F.C.C. was found dragging its feet in bringing about the needed reform. Recommendations were made in the Kerner Report and Congress took over later by passing resolutions enjoining the media systems to be more responsive to the needs of the minorities. It emphasized the necessity to integrate the staff of television stations by raising the level of minority personnel participation to 20-30%. However, meaningful results came as a result of the people's battle with the stations at the F.C.C. and the courts.

The current trend in black participation can be described as encouraging and well deserved especially when one recalls that "Julia" came on the screen in 1968. Excepting such farces as "Green Acres," "Beverly Hillbillies," and "Hee Haw," there is hardly any major series of shows currently on television without its quota of black faces. Even the talents of Charley Pride have been acknowledged in Country Music which, until recently, has been a lily-white world. Since 1968, blacks have co-starred in detective series such as "Mod Squad," "Mannix," "Ironside," "The Rookies," and played leading roles in "Tenafly" and "Shaft." Themes about education and the school system had their share of black television stars in "Room 222" and "Bill Cosby."

In the children's cartoons, the number was increased with the "Jackson 5" and "Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids," providing the young audience more shows to choose from. Black talents have co-starred in "All In the Family" and "Maude." They have played leading roles either jointly with white stars as in "Love Thy Neighbor" and "Roll Out" or exclusively as in "Flip Wilson Show" and "Sanford and Son." And recently for the first time in the history of blacks on television, they had an unfragmented family as the focus of a series in "Good Times."

This phenomenon becomes very significant when one observes that, concurrently, a similar development is taking place in film. The movie industry is probably a step ahead as token black representation is gradually giving way to active participation in all ramifications of the business. It is apparent that the determination of blacks to establish a positive presence in the electronic media is beginning to yield meaningful results.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

¹The four examples quoted are only part of a list of nineteen stereotypes compiled by Lawrence Reddick quoted in Edward Mapp's Blacks in American Films, pp. 30-31.

²(a) Langston Hughes and M. Meltzer, Black Magic: A Pictorial History of the Negro in American Entertainment.

(b) Churchill Roberts, "The Portrayal of Blacks on Network Television," Journal of Broadcasting, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Winter 1970-71), pp. 45-53.

³(a) Donald Bogle, Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films, title page.

(b) Daisey F. Balsley, "A Descriptive Study of References Made to Negroes and Occupational Roles Represented by Negroes in Selected Mass Media" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Denver, 1959. Part of her findings showed blacks as over-represented in movie roles as servants, five times more than any other occupations combined).

⁴Erik Barnouw, The Image Empire: A History of Broadcasting in the United States, Vol. III (from 1953), p. 34.

⁵(a) "Julia: Seasonal Premiere (NBC)," New York Times, September 16, 1968, p. 94, Column 2.

(b) "Julia: First Family Series," Ebony, November 1968, pp. 56-86.

(c) "Julia: Star Dihann Carroll Interviewed on Racial Aspect of the Show," New York Times, August 18, 1968, Vol. II, p. 17, Column 3.

(d) "Julia: Wonderful World of Color," Time, 92, December 13, 1968, p. 70.

⁶U.S. Riot Commission Report: "Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders," The New York Times, p. 383.

⁷Pamela Esch, "Blacks in Broadcasting: Minority Access to Programming and Employment" (unpublished Master's Thesis, Michigan State University, 1971).

Chapter II
A BRIEF REVIEW OF STUDIES ON
AMERICAN TELEVISION AUDIENCE

Broadly speaking, mass communication is a young discipline when compared with others; so is research effort in the field. Similarly, television is the most recent of the media systems but in contrast to its predecessors, it is the most pervasive. Within a period of slightly over two decades, it had a larger audience following, winning more of their confidence and trust than any other medium.¹ In a recent interview, Alistair Cooke, acknowledging the pervading influence of television, described it as "next to mother and father, far ahead of school and church."²

However, a close look at research activities shows that the audience and their reactions have not been given a fair share of attention, at least not in proportion to the quantity of programs to which they are daily exposed.

A further breakdown in audience composition reveals conspicuously the measure of researchers' attention given to children and youth in general. Abel's selected bibliography on the subject³ provides a glimpse of the quantity of studies already conducted on the use and possible effects of television on children. Within these citations are significant contributions by Schramm, in collaboration with a host of

scholars, which broadly examined the media habits and impact of television on children.⁴ Perhaps the peak of research effort in this regard was contributed by the Surgeon General's Scientific Committee Studies: Television and Social Behavior.⁵ The studies, divided into five parts, focused on the impact of televised violence on both young and old.

In sharp contrast to the young, adult viewers seem to have been relegated to the background, even though this is the group whose attitudes as parents and teachers have far reaching effects on the disposition and viewing habits of the children. Studies such as Bronfenbrenner's⁶ have shown that where there is a decrease in the parental and family influence in the development and socialization of children, there has been a corresponding increase in the influence of peer group and television; Dominick and Greenberg,⁷ Surlin and Dominick⁸ further documented the influence of family in the child's formation of aggressive attitudes and the role of television as a "third parent." Timothy Meyer⁹ went further to examine "children's perception of favorite television characters as behavioral models," concluding in his findings that while one "can point to some of television's effects, we are considerably less able to identify what produces those effects." Among the few studies undertaken to ascertain the attitudes of the adult audience toward television, Davis,¹⁰ Schalinske,¹¹ and Young¹² all emphasized the inadequacy of research in this area.

It is necessary to point out the noteworthy scholarly contributions made by Greenberg,¹³ in cooperation with a group of researchers at Michigan State University. Series of studies were conducted to

examine the demographic characteristics and habits of media utilization by the urban poor.

In a study by Tadros,¹⁴ the effects of television on the maturing process of the adult was investigated. From the findings, he concluded that by constantly presenting escapist programs, television was shying away from addressing realistic social problems. Content analysis of programs and audience reaction showed that there was little to challenge the intelligence and critical appreciation of the adult.

Generally, few studies have been conducted to test adult audience attitude toward their favorite programs. Recently, Stuart Surlin¹⁵ investigated an aspect of the current leading television show: "All in the Family." In a paper he presented to the annual conference of the International Communication Association, he clarified some of the misgivings which have surrounded the casting and the role of the leading character: Archie Bunker. In answer to the question "Is Archie Bunker a Credible Source?," the study showed that viewers with racist beliefs found support and encouragement in the opinions of the leading character while those who were less prejudiced enjoyed his performance though they did not share his views.

In recent years, black presence on television has increased tremendously. The effects of this change requires a careful evaluation not only among the black audience but also among white viewers who have been used to seeing only white faces on the screen. Greenberg and Hanneman¹⁶ have taken the lead in attempting to ascertain "what extent racial attitudes affect reaction to the greater presence of TV blacks." There can be no doubt about the need to conduct many studies to

determine what contribution, if any, television is making in the promotion of racial harmony and understanding through a fair representation of all elements of the society in its programs.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹Television Information Office: "What People Think of Television and of Other Mass Media, 1959-1972."

²Alistair Cooke, U.S. News and World Report, April 15, 1974, p. 47.

³John D. Abel, "Television and Children: A Selective Bibliography," Journal of Broadcasting, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Winter 1968-69), pp. 101-105.

⁴Wilbur Schramm, Jack Lyle, and Edwin B. Parker, Television in the Lives of Our Children (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1961) and Wilbur Schramm and C. Godwin Chu, Learning from Television: What the Research Says (NAEB, 1968).

⁵George A. Comstock (editor), Television and Social Behavior, Reports and Papers, Vol. 5: Television's Effects: Further Explorations (Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., April, 1972).

⁶Urie Bronfenbrenner, Two Worlds of Childhood (New York: Russell Sage, 1970).

⁷Joseph R. Dominick and Bradley S. Greenberg, Attitudes Towards Violence: The Interaction of TV Exposure, Family Attitudes and Social Class (College of Communication Arts [Mimeo], Michigan State University, November, 1970), and Joseph R. Dominick and Bradley S. Greenberg, Girls' Attitudes Towards Violence as Related to TV Exposure, Family Attitudes and Social Class (College of Communication Arts [Mimeo], Michigan State University, February, 1971).

⁸Stuart Surlin and Joseph R. Dominick, "Television as a Third Parent for Black and White Teenagers," Journal of Broadcasting, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 55-64.

⁹Timothy P. Meyer, "Children's Perception of Favorite Television Characters as Behavioral Models," Educational Broadcasting Review, 7, No. 1, pp. 25-33.

¹⁰Richard H. Davis, "Television and the Older Adult," Journal of Broadcasting, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Spring 1971), pp. 153-159.

¹¹T. F. Schalinske, The Role of Television in the Life of the Aged Person (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1968).

¹²Ruth Young, "Television in the Lives of Our Parents," Journal of Broadcasting, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Winter 1969-70), pp. 37-46.

¹³Bradley S. Greenberg and Brenda Dervin, The Use of the Mass Media by the Urban Poor (finding of three research projects, with an annotated bibliography, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970).

¹⁴Samy S. Tadros, An Investigation of the Impact of Television Upon the Maturing Process of the Adult (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1960).

¹⁵Stuart H. Surlin, The Evaluation of Dogmatic Television Characters by Dogmatic Viewers: Is Archie Bunker a Credible Source? (International Communication Association Conference, Montreal, April, 1973).

¹⁶Bradley S. Greenberg and Gerhard J. Hanneman, "Racial Attitudes and the Impact of TV Blacks," Educational Broadcasting Review, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April, 1970), pp. 27-34.

Chapter III

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Blacks are breaking into the mass media as they have never done before. It is also apparent that as opportunities increase for them to participate in television entertainment, some of the shows in which they play leading roles are becoming popular. "Sanford and Son" can be cited as a good example of this success story. Since January 1972, when the first episode was premiered, the show has had a rapid climb to the "top ten," and has remained "number two" behind "All in the Family" throughout the 1973 season. In fact, it pushed its way to the top spot twice in November 1973.

The rating services of ARB and Nielsen have been heavily relied upon in the process of identifying popular programs. While they may be reliable in making a fair estimate of the number of television sets tuned in to a program, they are very poor in determining the attitude of viewers toward the show being watched. Even the methods employed by the two rating services have been severely criticized by Rene Anselmo¹ (president of Spanish International Communications Commission) who contended that the broadcast interests of blacks and Mexican Americans have not been well served. Though the services defended their methodology, it seems that changes are being considered for measuring minorities

since a number of studies have shown that the pattern of their media use was different from that of white viewers.²

With these defects, the ratings services cannot be depended upon in providing viewers reasons why some shows are popular. And the need to know what effects, if any, increased black presence on television are having on the viewers has never been more urgently felt than now.

Therefore, this study is intended to ascertain whether the appeal of "Sanford and Son" is attributable to such variables as: the ethnicity of the leading characters (blacks), their professional skill (good actors), or the themes on which the episodes are based (describing realities of human experience).

This study is designed to test the validity of these working hypotheses:

1. The high audience appeal of "Sanford and Son" to white television viewers does not imply that:
 - a) There is a significant improvement in the attitude of whites toward blacks.
 - b) They welcome the presence of increased black performers on television.
2. The popularity of the show tends to be associated more with white viewers' perception of the image of the leading characters as new versions of the old "happy Negroes" than the attribute of Redd Foxx and Demond Wilson as talented actors.

3. The popularity of the show does not mean that black viewers identify with the image of Fred and Lamont Sanford as common people.

It will be recalled that Norman Lear and Alan (Bud) Yorkin adapted "Sanford and Son" from "Steptoe and Son," just as they "borrowed" the idea for "All in the Family," the leading entertainment show, from "Until Death Us Do Part," all B.B.C. series. From the popularity of these two foreign-inspired shows with similar format, one is inclined to ask if producers of comedies have not been underestimating the level of maturity of its audience. After all, "Laugh-In" and the "Smothers Brothers Show" tested the viewers and found them receptive in attitude to critical social comments, a development which may be attributed, in part, to the youth revolution and black emancipation in the sixties. Norman Lear supported this view in an address to an audience of 600 television producers and advertisers, when he said:

The so-called adult themes that television is currently dealing in are themes for which the American people have always been ready. We in television simply weren't trusting the people of this country to accept or reject as they saw fit. The TV think-tanks were telling us that the Bible belt wouldn't accept this and the South wouldn't accept that, and the Administration wouldn't accept anything. I think that we've reached a time in our national life where we must stop psyching each other out. We especially in the media, must start to trust the American public more. And to do that, we must begin to trust ourselves.³

Comparing television in Britain with the medium in America, Nicholas Johnson remarked: "British documentary producers also appear more

willing to grapple with controversial subjects than their paler American counterparts."⁴

The high rating of "Sanford and Son" indicates that it draws a sizeable proportion of white audience. It is of special interest to know why. The crucial question to answer is whether the talents' dexterity to entertain is responsible for the show's popularity or white viewers still see shadows of the Negro stereotypical characters of the old movies in Fred and Lamont.

It is well known that the mass media, owing to lack of quick feedback channels, are restricted in their capacity to effectively communicate. As research in the area of sampling audience reactions to programs presented on television is limited, and meaningful black participation in the medium is a recent phenomenon, it is pertinent to investigate the factors responsible for the popularity of "Sanford and Son." Perhaps from the findings of the study, the producers and talents of the show, through feedback, might be able to ascertain whether the reactions obtained from the audience are the ones they anticipated or would like to encourage in subsequent productions.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹"Station Rankings to Shift in Ethnic-Rating Storm," Television/Radio Age, February 19, 1973, p. 23.

²(a) Walter Gerson, "Mass Media Socialization Behavior: Negro-White Differences," Social Forces, Vol. 45, No. 1 (September 1966), pp. 40-50.

(b) Bradley S. Greenberg and Gerhard J. Hanneman, "Racial Attitudes and the Impact of TV Blacks," Educational Broadcasting Review, Vol. 4, No. 2 (April, 1970), pp. 27-34.

(c) James W. Carey, "Variations in Negro-White Television Preferences," Journal of Broadcasting, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1966, pp. 199-211.

³Martin Kasindorf, "Tandem Productions, Inc.: A TV Dynasty- Archie and Maude and Fred, and Norman and Alan," New York Times Magazine, June 24, 1973, p. 22.

⁴Nicholas Johnson, "Just How Good is British Television? Comparisons and Lessons for America," Television Quarterly, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Fall 1970), p. 24.

Chapter IV
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Design

The survey employed the recall interview, using the telephone and face to face format. The pilot survey was conducted with the telephone while the actual data were gathered using the instrument designed from the answers to questions from the pilot survey. Having considered the nature of analysis to be made, only black and white respondents were polled in the latter interview.

Questions asked were classified into three categories. The first and second were designed to obtain information about respondents' demographic characteristics and viewing habits. These were later employed in the analysis to ascertain whether their socio-economic status, ethnicity and television use were related to their choice of reasons for watching the show. The third group consisted of statements formulated from responses in the pilot survey, suggesting a variety of reasons why "Sanford and Son" is popular. These statements covered such items as the competency of the production crew in putting together an impressive show; believability stemming from the measure of perceived reality in the stories; the ethnic background of the stars; and the selection of an appropriate time for the show on the program schedule.

Administration of the Survey

Answers to basic questions regarding the conduct of the survey are provided below.

When

The data for the study was collected with the cooperation of some undergraduate students in Television and Radio Department at Michigan State University and some student volunteers at the Y.M.C.A. in Lansing, Michigan. The interviews were conducted between February and April, 1974 (6-9 p.m. on weekdays, 1-6 p.m. on weekends).

Where

The sample was gathered from the Greater Lansing Area, with a population of 378,423, the urbanized segment being 229,605. As there was no intention to poll viewers in the university community, East Lansing and the Campus of Michigan State University were excluded. For the purpose of identifying areas where the sample was assembled, information was obtained from the 1970 Census of Housing, Block Statistics for Lansing, Michigan (HC[3]-125) (Appendix F).

How

Three areas were identified: the first, signifying a black segregated neighborhood, was designated as A; the second, a white

segregated neighborhood, was designated as B, while the third, where housing was relatively open (a mixed neighborhood) was designated as C.

Who

Only adults (18 or above, male or female) were interviewed. It was checked to ascertain that they were residents of the houses where the interviews were conducted. The head of the house was the first choice, but where there was none, any other adult who consented to the request was interviewed. A sample of seventy-five respondents was selected from each of areas A and B while one hundred and fifty were selected from C, bringing the total to three hundred (Appendices A, B, and C).

Definitions

For the purpose of this study:

- a) a black "segregated" neighborhood was that area where the population of residents was 90-100% black;
- b) a white "segregated" neighborhood signified an area with 90-100% white; while
- c) in a "mixed" neighborhood, 20-80% of residents in the area were black.

Pilot Survey

To ensure that opinions stated in the instrument were within the bounds of reaction of viewers in the Lansing area, a pilot test was undertaken. A random sample of a hundred telephone numbers was selected from every other page of the Greater Lansing Area telephone book. The number on the top extreme right column of each page was called, unless it was a business number. Among those who responded, the nine most popular viewpoints were put together to form statements to which the three hundred interviewees were to react (Appendices D and E).

The Actual Survey

The instrument designed from the responses in the pilot survey was further non-randomly tested among twenty adult citizens in the business district of the city of Lansing to ensure that prospective respondents would have no problem in understanding the meanings of the statements.

The following materials relevant to the conduct of the survey were assembled:

- a) maps of areas where the interviews were to be conducted with an indication of the number of respondents expected from each area (Appendix C);
- b) identification of all streets participating including the number of respondents from each street (Appendix G);

- c) a list of eighteen instructions to guide the interviewers in the conduct of the interview (Appendix A).

Meetings were held with the students who volunteered to participate in the administration of the interview. The purpose of the study was outlined. The materials and instruments were distributed with explanations on the content of the questionnaire, instructions for interviewers, and the manner in which the interview was to be conducted. At least one group leader was assigned the function of coordinating the operations of interviewers in each of areas A, B, and C. A total of twenty-nine Michigan State University students and seven Lansing Y.M.C.A. student volunteers participated as interviewers in the collection of the data. The report of respondents' general reaction was favorable. None of them had any adverse experience worth reporting. The only incident which many interviewers reported about was the concern of many respondents with whether or not the survey was connected with a plan to take the show off the air. To this question interviewers responded, allaying their fears about such a plan.

From the Tandem Productions:
Interview of the Stars and
the Producers

Part of the plan for the study was to obtain some input from the organization responsible for putting the show together. It was decided that the two leading stars, Redd Foxx and Demond Wilson, and their executive producers, Norman Lear and Alan (Bud) Yorkin, would be interviewed. It was considered important to know whether the stars'

perception of the role they played was related to viewers' perception of the characters. Other relevant information that the interview of the stars would have supplied included: the measure of individual star's personality reflected in the characters they played; the amount of influence, if any, they exercised in the production; and how they would have handled the production were they to be in the position of the producers. Unfortunately, neither of the two stars responded to the letters written to them to seek the interview. Subsequent effort made by phone to reach them did not yield any result (Appendix L).

Conversely, the interview of the producers was fairly successful. Both responded to the letters written to them (Appendices H, I, J), and Norman Lear was represented in a phone interview by his assistant, Virginia Carter. Though information she supplied concerned the sister show "All in the Family," it was not hard to perceive the thinking behind the creation and production of popular "Tandem" shows (Appendix K). Alan (Bud) Yorkin could not arrange an interview; instead he gave very brief answers to questions asked in the letter (Appendix J). As the purpose of the producers' interview was to obtain their viewpoints about their shows, their replies were illuminating. It was anticipated that their responses would enable the investigator to find out what the audience who cared to express their reactions thought of the shows, and the effects, if any, which these reactions may have had on further policy decisions made by the producers in connection with the shows.

Both producers indicated their sensitivity to audience reactions to each episode of their shows by "keeping their ears to the ground,"

taking care of mail and replying to the letters that required answers. Viewers' thoughtful critical analysis and valuable suggestions were taken note of in the planning and execution of subsequent episodes (Appendix K).

Chapter V

RESULTS: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data gathered focused on respondents' demographic characteristics, viewing habits and their opinions about the show. Because of the importance of respondents' ethnicity, this variable has been employed in cross tabulation with other designated variables with a view to showing their relationships on the contingency tables. A close examination of the following tables shows that the results of the study were not significantly affected by variables such as age, income, sex, or family size.

Since the data revealed the critical role of "ethnicity" in the outcome of the study, a multivariate analysis, using both ethnicity and living conditions (segregated or mixed housing), was undertaken to establish the extent to which the differences are significant.

Demographic Characteristics
(Frequency distribution: Tables 1-4)

Table 1.--Respondents' "Ethnicity" Cross-Tabulated with "Age."

	Blacks		Whites		Total	%
	Seg.	Mixed	Seg.	Mixed		
(1) 18-19	8	7	4	5	24	8
(2) 20-29	21	20	10	30	81	27
(3) 30-39	12	20	13	19	64	21.33
(4) 40-49	18	15	17	12	62	20.67
(5) 50-59	11	9	13	4	37	12.33
(6) 60 and above	5	4	18	5	32	10.67
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300	100%

The table showed that the sample contained a little over a third of the respondents under 30 years of age (35%). About three out of every four respondents polled were under 50 (77%). For every white polled in the "18-19" category, there were nearly two blacks. Conversely white outnumber blacks by about a 3:1 ratio in the 60 and above group. The distribution in other categories remain relatively even.

Table 2.--Respondents' "Ethnicity" Cross-Tabulated with "Family Size."

	Blacks		Whites		Total	%
	Seg.	Mixed	Seg.	Mixed		
(1) 1-3	36	28	41	38	143	47.67
(2) 4-6	26	30	32	33	121	40.33
(3) 7-9	10	13	2	4	29	9.67
(4) 10-12	2	3	0	0	5	1.67
(5) 13 and above	1	1	0	0	2	.66
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300	100%

It can be observed that nearly half (47.67%) of the respondents were from families of not more than three members. About nine out of every ten (88%) said they were from families ranging in size from one to six. Only blacks (2.33%) reported coming from families of ten or more members.

Table 3.--Respondents' "Ethnicity" Cross-Tabulated with "Sex."

	Blacks		Whites		Total	%
	Seg.	Mixed	Seg.	Mixed		
(1) Male	46	31	26	45	148	49.67
(2) Female	29	44	49	30	152	50.33
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300	100%

Though the sample was non-randomly selected, it is interesting to note the closeness in the ratio to that of the Lansing city and nation's populations (49:51), with females having a slight edge over males in number.

Table 4.--Respondents' "Ethnicity" Cross-Tabulated with "Income."

	Blacks		Whites		Total	%
	Seg.	Mixed	Seg.	Mixed		
(1) Below \$5,000	14	14	8	21	57	19.00
(2) 5,001-10,000	25	28	11	19	83	27.67
(3) 10,001-15,000	23	15	9	20	67	22.33
(4) 15,001-20,000	2	2	7	6	17	5.67
(5) 20,001 and above	5	2	24	1	32	10.67
(6) Refused to answer	6	14	16	8	44	14.67
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300	100%

From the large number of non-response to the above item (44), it would be noted that the respondents considered the variable a sensitive one. Over forty-five percent of the sample (46.67%) fall in the low income group (i.e. \$10,000 or below). Of the nearly seventy percent (69%) who earn \$15,000 or less, about forty (39.67%) are black. In contrast, three out of every four in the \$20,000 and above category are white.

Viewing Habits
(Frequency distribution: Tables 5-8)

Table 5.--Respondents' "Ethnicity" Cross-Tabulated with "Number of Working Television Sets Owned."

No. of Sets	Blacks		Whites		Total	%
	Seg.	Mixed	Seg.	Mixed		
1	39	28	36	36	123	41.00
2	24	33	28	27	112	37.33
3	5	8	12	1	26	8.67
4	2	3	2	5	12	4.00
5	0	0	1	0	1	.33
6	1	0	0	0	1	.33
None	4	3	12	6	25	8.33
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300	100%

The data indicated that nearly eighty percent (79.33%) own one or two working television sets. Of special interest is the fact that in spite of their relative poverty, compared to whites, fewer blacks (7) reported having no television sets than whites (18). Similarly, black respondents reported owning 246 working sets as compared to 238 by whites. This seems to be another proof of the finding by Greenberg and Dervin in their studies, "Communication and the Urban Poor," that blacks watch more television than whites.

Table 6.--Respondents' "Ethnicity" Cross-Tabulated with Their "Average Daily Viewing" Habit.

	Blacks		Whites		Total	%
	Seg.	Mixed	Seg.	Mixed		
(1) Less than 1 hour	5	2	6	2	15	5.00
(2) 1-2 hours	18	10	22	15	65	21.67
(3) 3-4 hours	26	22	31	28	107	35.00
(4) 5 hours or more	25	40	16	30	111	37.00
(5) Non-response	1	1	0	0	2	.67
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300	100%

The table shows that only one out of every twenty interviewed spend less than an hour per day watching television. Conversely, over a third (37%) of the sample can be classified as "heavy watchers"--spending five or more hours daily at the set. Further evidence is supplied to support the statement that blacks watch more television than whites. Among the 111 "heavy watchers," 65 are black, that is 58.5% of respondents in this category.

Table 7.--Respondents' "Ethnicity" Cross-Tabulated with Their Habit of Viewing "Sanford and Son."

		Blacks		Whites		Total	%
		Seg.	Mixed	Seg.	Mixed		
(1)	Once a month or less	5	6	26	19	56	18.67
(2)	Once every 2 or 3 weeks	18	15	29	24	86	28.67
(3)	Every week	48	52	20	31	151	50.33
(4)	Non-response	4	2	0	1	7	2.33
TOTAL		75	75	75	75	300	100%

From the table, it can be observed that less than twenty percent (18.67%) watch the show sparingly (i.e. once in a month or less). Nearly four out of every five respondents watch "Sanford and Son" at least once in three weeks. Over half the sample (50.33%) watches the show regularly. Greenberg and Hanneman found out in their study, "Racial Attitudes and the Impact of TV Blacks," that black adults are more likely to be regular viewers of TV programs featuring black performers than are white adults. The data showed clearly that for every white respondent who watches the show regularly, there are two blacks (51:100).

Table 8.--Respondents' TV Viewing Habit Cross-Tabulated with "Sanford and Son" Watching Habit.

	1 ^a	2 ^b	3 ^c	4 ^d	Total	%
(1) Less than 1 hour	7	4	2	2	15	5.00
(2) 1-2 hours	24	23	17	1	65	21.67
(3) 3-4 hours	13	39	54	1	107	35.67
(4) 5 hours or more	12	20	77	2	111	37.00
(5) Non-response	0	0	1	1	2	.66
TOTAL	56	86	151	7	300	100%
%	18.67	28.67	50.33	2.33	100%	

^aOnce in a month or less

^bOnce every two or three weeks

^cRegularly (every week)

^dNon-response

The above cross tabulation showed that respondents who watch TV "heavily" are also regular watchers of "Sanford and Son."

Opinions About the Show

For all tables presented under the category of "opinions," the following abbreviations are used:

BS = Black Segregated	SA = Strongly Agree
BM = Black Mixed	MA = Mildly Agree
WS = White Segregated	NO = No Opinion
WM = White Mixed	MD = Mildly Disagree
	SD = Strongly Disagree

To facilitate a convenient analysis, percentages of the frequency distribution is used in the cross tabulation.

Table 9.--"Its Leading Characters are Down-to-Earth and Believable."

	BS	BM	WS	WM	TOTAL
SA	50.67	40.00	16.00	30.67	34.33
MA	41.33	44.00	53.33	38.67	44.33
NO	5.33	5.33	12.00	2.67	6.33
MD	2.67	10.67	13.33	24.00	12.67
SD	0.00	0.00	5.33	4.00	2.33
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300

The table showed that nearly eighty percent (78.66%) agreed with the above statement while only 15% disagreed. The contrast manifests itself when one compares blacks with whites: 92% of blacks in segregated and 84% of those in open neighborhoods agreed as compared to 69.33% of whites in both open and segregated neighborhoods.

Table 10.--"Its Dialogue is Free of Dialects; Easy to Understand by Majority of the Audience."

	BS	BM	WS	WM	TOTAL
SA	40.00	57.33	34.67	34.67	41.67
MA	37.33	36.00	50.67	56.00	45.00
NO	14.67	1.33	4.00	5.33	6.33
MD	6.67	4.00	6.67	2.67	5.00
SD	1.33	1.33	1.33	1.33	1.67
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300

Of the total number of respondents, 86.67% shared the view that the show's dialogue is easy to understand. Whites' view came close to blacks probably because writers and producers were conscious of the need to reach the larger audience. The measure of understanding of the show by whites would have been limited had black dialect been employed. The percentage of segregated blacks who were in agreement was lowest (77.33%). This may be attributed to the fact that they would notice more than any other group, the effort to put the dialogue in a language that the white audience would understand and enjoy. The same group had the highest percentage (14.67%) who declined to express opinion.

Table 11.--"Its Social Comments are Frank; Fred Sanford Tells It Like It Is."

	BS	BM	WS	WM	TOTAL
SA	56.00	58.67	36.00	32.00	45.67
MA	36.00	32.00	40.00	32.00	35.00
NO	5.33	2.67	12.00	9.33	7.33
MD	1.33	6.67	9.33	21.33	9.67
SD	1.33	0.00	2.67	5.33	2.33
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300

Though four out of every five respondents (80.67%) agreed with the frankness of Fred Sanford's social comments, a breakdown between blacks and whites showed over 90% of blacks in both groups in agreement in contrast to 76% and 64% of whites in segregated and open neighborhoods respectively. In addition, over a quarter (26.66%) of whites in open neighborhoods disagreed.

Table 12.--"Its Humor is Light, Funny, and Entertaining."

	BS	BM	WS	WM	TOTAL
SA	61.33	61.33	42.67	42.67	52.00
MA	32.00	38.67	50.67	52.00	43.33
NO	5.33	0.00	0.00	4.00	2.33

Table 12.--Continued

	BS	BM	WS	WM	TOTAL
MD	0.00	0.00	4.00	1.33	1.33
SD	1.33	0.00	2.67	0.00	1.00
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300

The data in the table shows that there is little difference between blacks and whites in their agreement with the views that the show's humor is light, funny, and entertaining. Over 95% of all groups agreed with blacks in open neighborhood posting a 100% "yes."

Table 13.--"Redd Foxx and Demond Wilson are Skilled Actors; They Play Their Respective Characters Effectively."

	BS	BM	WS	WM	TOTAL
SA	46.67	58.67	53.33	48.00	51.67
MA	42.67	38.67	36.00	45.33	40.67
NO	9.33	1.33	4.00	2.67	4.33
MD	1.33	1.33	2.67	2.67	2.00
SD	0.00	0.00	1.33	1.33	0.67
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300

The totals of the percentages indicate that at least 9 out of every 10 respondents (92.34%) acknowledged the talents' performing skills.

Table 14.--"It is a Welcome Change to Watch Black Talents Perform on Television."

	BS	BM	WS	WM	TOTAL
SA	82.67	65.33	20.00	33.33	50.33
MA	13.33	26.67	36.00	32.00	27.00
NO	4.00	4.00	24.00	24.00	14.00
MD	0.00	2.67	13.33	8.00	6.00
SD	0.00	0.00	5.33	2.67	2.00
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300

While over seventy-five percent of the respondents (77.33%) support the view that the change bringing more black performers into television is welcome, an inspection of the data along racial lines shows a more revealing result. Ninety-six percent of segregated blacks were in agreement with 82.67% expressing this view strongly. Similarly, 92% of blacks in open neighborhoods were in accord with the view. In sharp contrast, only 56% of "segregated" and 65% of "mixed" whites endorsed the statement. The two groups also registered a high percentage (24% each) of "no opinions."

Table 15.--"The Leading Characters Recall Memories of the Old 'Happy Negro.'"

	BS	BM	WS	WM	TOTAL
SA	17.33	13.33	9.33	14.67	13.67
MA	34.67	21.33	21.33	28.00	26.33
NO	18.67	14.67	29.33	22.67	21.33
MD	9.33	28.00	17.33	21.33	19.00
SD	20.00	20.00	20.00	13.33	18.33
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300

The table reveals the controversial nature of the statement. The percentage of subjects who opposed the view (37.33%) is close to the ones who agreed (40%). A large percentage (21.33%) chose not to express an opinion. However, there is a good measure of disagreement between blacks in open and segregated neighborhoods; 48% of the former and 29.33% of the latter opposed the view while only 34.66% of the former compared to 52% of the latter approved. This development may be explained by the great sensitivity of blacks in segregated neighborhoods to images that may be associated with those happy Negroes of "Bojangles," "Rochester," and Stepin Fetchit fame. Generally, more respondents abstained (21%) than on any other view previously stated. Whites distinguished themselves, as on Table 14, by a substantial percentage of "no opinions." Nearly thirty percent (29.33%) of those in segregated,

and 22.67% of those in open neighborhoods abstained compared to 18.67% and 14.67% of blacks in similar settings.

Table 16.--"Fred and Lamont are the Kind of Black Characters I Like to Watch on Television."

	BS	BM	WS	WM	TOTAL
SA	52.00	33.33	21.33	30.67	34.33
MA	41.33	49.33	41.33	30.67	40.67
NO	5.33	8.00	17.33	16.00	11.67
MD	1.33	8.00	14.67	13.33	9.33
SD	0.00	0.00	5.33	8.00	3.33
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300

On the whole, 3 out of every 4 respondents supported the view about Fred and Lamont being likeable black characters, but the differences between blacks and whites is clearly shown in these percentages: 93.33% and 82.66% compared to 63.33% and 61.34%. In like manner, only 1.33% and 8.00% of blacks opposed the view in contrast to 20.00% and 21.33% of whites, in segregated and open neighborhoods respectively. The same trend is evident in the "no opinion" column. Among whites, more than twice as many as blacks declined to express an opinion (17.33% and 16.00% compared to 5.33% and 8.00%).

Table 17.--"It Comes at an Appropriate Time, a Relaxing Friday Evening Entertainment."

	BS	BM	WS	WM	TOTAL
SA	58.67	40.00	36.00	30.67	41.33
MA	32.00	44.00	42.67	46.67	41.33
NO	2.67	1.33	4.00	9.33	4.33
MD	4.00	9.33	10.67	5.33	7.33
SD	2.67	4.00	4.00	6.67	4.33
TOTAL	75	75	75	75	300

Over eighty percent (82.66%) of respondents thought that the show's location on the weekly program schedule contributed to its popularity. Blacks in segregated neighborhoods supported this view more strongly (90.67%) than any other group. As in many other preceding cases, more blacks shared this view (90.67%, 84.00%) than whites (78.67%, 77.34%).

In the next nine tables, the data on income is cross-tabulated with the opinions of the poor as compared to the well-to-do in respect to the show. The abbreviations used in the opinions in the preceding tables will be retained.

Table 18.--"Its Leading Characters are Down-to-Earth and Believable."

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
Below \$5,000	33.33	49.12	3.51	14.04	0.00	57
5,001-10,000	39.76	38.55	8.43	12.05	1.20	83
10,001-15,000	43.28	49.79	2.99	10.45	1.49	67
15,001-20,000	29.41	41.18	5.88	11.76	11.76	17
20,001 and above	9.38	53.13	9.38	25.00	3.13	32
Refused to answer	31.82	47.73	9.09	6.82	4.55	44
TOTAL #	103	133	19	38	7	300
TOTAL %	34.33	44.33	6.33	12.67	2.33	100%

Though the percentages show generally nearly 80% agreement with the view (78.66%), respondents earning \$15,001 or more posted a lower percentage of support (70.59% and 62.51%). Correspondingly their percentages of opposition to the viewpoint (23.52% and 28.13%) were higher than that of any other group.

Table 19.--"Its Dialogue is Free of Dialects, Easy to Understand by Majority of the Audience."

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
Below \$5,000	36.84	49.12	7.02	7.02	0.00	57
5,001-10,000	46.99	43.37	4.82	3.61	0.00	83

Table 19.--Continued

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
10,001-15,000	37.31	52.25	4.48	4.48	1.49	67
15,001-20,000	41.18	29.41	11.76	11.67	5.88	17
20,001 and above	34.38	46.88	9.38	3.13	6.25	32
Refused to answer	50.00	36.36	6.82	4.55	2.27	44
TOTAL #	125	135	19	15	5	300
TOTAL %	41.67	45.00	6.33	5.00	1.67	100%

While the lower income groups (\$0-15,000) posted between 85 and 90% in support of the above statement, the higher income groups (\$15,001 and above) registered comparatively lower percentages (70.59%; 80.26%). Similar to Table 18, a higher percentage of disagreement came from the same group. Likewise, more of them abstained than in the lower income brackets.

Table 20.--"Its Social Comments are Frank; Fred Sanford Tells It Like It Is."

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
Below \$5,000	49.12	35.09	5.26	10.53	0.00	57
5,001-10,000	56.63	27.71	4.82	9.64	1.20	83
10,001-15,000	37.31	43.28	7.46	10.45	1.49	67

Table 20.--Continued

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
15,001-20,000	41.18	29.41	11.76	11.76	5.88	17
20,001 and above	31.25	31.25	18.75	9.38	9.38	32
Refused to answer	45.45	40.91	4.55	6.82	2.27	44
TOTAL #	137	105	22	29	7	300
TOTAL %	45.67	35.00	7.33	9.67	2.33	100%

In terms of a comparison of lower income groups (\$0-15,000) with the higher (\$15,001 and above) the above data is nearly a duplication of those on Table 18. Percentages of respondents in lower income groups in agreement were in the 80's while the higher income groups were 70.59 and 62.50% respectively.

Table 21.--"Its Humor is Light, Funny, and Entertaining."

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
Below \$5,000	54.39	36.84	5.26	3.51	0.00	57
5,001-10,000	49.40	46.99	1.20	1.20	1.20	83
10,001-15,000	49.25	47.76	0.00	1.49	1.49	67
15,001-20,000	47.06	47.06	5.88	0.00	0.00	17
20,001 and above	37.50	56.25	6.25	0.00	0.00	32

Table 21.--Continued

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
Refused to answer	70.45	27.27	0.00	0.00	2.27	44
TOTAL #	156	130	7	4	3	300
TOTAL %	52.00	43.33	2.33	1.33	1.00	100%

As can be observed from the data, all the groups seem to have a uniformly high percentage of agreement (over 90%) but the higher income groups were unique in not having a single respondent in opposition.

Table 22.--"Redd Foxx and Demond Wilson are Skilled Actors; They Play Their Respective Characters Effectively."

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
Below \$5,000	47.37	47.37	3.51	1.75	0.00	57
5,001-10,000	45.78	43.37	4.82	2.41	1.20	83
10,001-15,000	49.25	43.28	4.48	2.99	0.00	67
15,001-20,000	64.71	35.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	17
20,001 and above	62.50	28.13	6.25	3.13	0.00	32
Refused to answer	59.09	34.09	4.55	0.00	2.27	44
TOTAL #	155	122	13	6	2	300
TOTAL %	51.67	40.67	4.33	2.00	0.67	100%

Of special interest in the above data is the difference in the range of agreement given by the two higher income groups. Those in \$15,000-20,000 bracket were 100% in acknowledgment of the stars' performing skills while those with \$20,001 or more posted 90.63%. The support of the lower income groups ranged between 89% and 94.74%.

Table 23.--"It is a Welcome Change to Watch Black Talents Perform on Television."

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
Below \$5,000	47.37	31.58	14.04	5.26	1.75	57
5,001-10,000	57.83	27.71	6.02	4.82	2.41	83
10,001-15,000	58.21	22.39	11.94	4.48	1.49	67
15,001-20,000	23.53	23.53	47.06	5.88	0.00	17
20,001 and above	34.38	34.38	12.50	18.75	0.00	32
Refused to answer	50.00	22.73	20.45	2.27	4.55	44
TOTAL #	151	81	42	18	6	300
TOTAL %	50.33	27.00	14.00	6.00	2.00	100%

There is little difference in the percentages of approval from lower income groups mainly because the high percentage of support by blacks (94%) improved the low percentage from whites (60.67%). But the disparity became well marked in the higher income groups (47.06% and 68.76%) because the sample was predominantly white (Table 4). The

\$15,001-20,000 income group also registered the highest percentage of abstentions (47.06%).

Table 24.--"The Leading Characters Recall Memories of the Old 'Happy Negro.'"

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
Below \$5,000	10.53	31.58	12.28	26.32	17.54	57
5,001-10,000	12.05	34.94	20.48	16.87	14.46	83
10,001-15,000	20.90	25.37	17.91	17.91	17.91	67
15,001-20,000	11.76	17.65	35.39	17.65	17.65	17
20,001 and above	0.00	17.85	25.00	25.00	31.25	32
Refused to answer	20.45	13.64	31.82	11.36	18.18	44
TOTAL #	41	79	64	57	55	300
TOTAL %	13.67	26.33	21.33	19.00	18.33	100%

As with the preceding Table 23, higher income groups came with the lowest percentage of support (29.41% and 18.75%). The \$15,001-20,000 group had the highest percentage of abstentions (35.29%) while the 20,001 and above group maintained their lead in opposition with 56.25%.

Table 25.--"Fred and Lamont are the Kind of Black Characters I Like to Watch on Television."

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
Below \$5,000	28.07	45.61	15.79	8.77	0.00	57
5,001-10,000	32.53	45.78	10.84	8.43	2.41	83
10,001-15,000	41.79	38.81	7.46	7.46	4.48	67
15,001-20,000	41.18	29.41	5.88	5.88	11.76	17
20,001 and above	15.63	31.25	28.13	18.75	6.25	32
Refused to answer	45.45	38.64	4.55	9.09	2.27	44
TOTAL #	103	122	35	28	10	300
TOTAL %	34.33	40.67	11.67	9.33	3.33	100%

The data above seems to repeat the pattern in Tables 23 and 24. Respondents earning \$20,001 and above remained opposed with 26%, while about thirty percent of the group (28.13%) abstained.

Table 26.--"It Comes at an Appropriate Time; A Relaxing Friday Evening Entertainment."

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
Below \$5,000	40.35	45.61	7.02	3.51	1.75	57
5,001-10,000	40.96	46.99	3.61	4.82	3.61	83
10,001-15,000	41.79	41.79	1.49	8.96	5.97	67

Table 26.--Continued

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
15,001-20,000	41.18	41.18	5.88	5.88	0.00	17
20,001 and above	28.13	37.50	6.25	18.75	6.25	32
Refused to answer	52.27	27.27	4.55	6.82	6.82	44
TOTAL #	124	124	13	22	13	300
TOTAL %	41.33	41.33	4.33	7.33	4.33	100%

The table shows only "20,001 and above" income group posted the lowest percentage of approval (65.63%). In the same pattern 25% of the group opposed the view. This trend may be explained by the fact that people with higher income tend to watch television the least because the time at their disposal for this function is very limited.

The cross tabulation of respondents' age categories with their opinions about the show did not yield any meaningful result. The level of support or opposition to each of the nine viewpoints did not vary significantly with age. The percentages of agreement of the "18-19" year olds were comparatively lower than the other age groups on statements referring to the believability of the characters (70.83% compared to 78.66% by all); the ease with which the dialogue could be understood by majority of the audience (75% compared to 86.67% by all); and the show's humor being light, funny, and entertaining (91.67% compared to 95.33% by all). But, this group led all others in their conviction

that Redd Foxx and Demond Wilson are fine actors (95.83% as against 92.33% by others).

On the statements related to the ethnic background of the stars, the older generation (50 and above) posted a lower percentage of support as can be observed from Tables 27, 28, and 29.

Table 27.--"It is a Welcome Change to Watch Black Talents Perform on Television."

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
18-19	58.33	20.83	20.83	0.00	0.00	24
20-29	55.56	25.93	12.35	2.47	2.47	81
30-39	46.88	31.25	14.06	7.81	0.00	64
40-49	51.61	29.03	11.29	6.45	1.61	62
50-59	45.95	29.73	10.81	8.11	2.70	37
60 and above	40.63	18.75	21.88	12.50	6.25	32
TOTAL #	151	81	42	18	6	300
TOTAL %	50.33	27.00	14.00	6.00	2.00	100%

The two groups who were 50 and above in the sample were lowest in their support of the statement (75.68%; 59.38%).

Table 28.--"The Leading Characters Recall Memories of the old 'Happy Negro.'"

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
18-19	8.33	25.00	20.83	25.00	16.67	24
20-29	11.11	23.46	16.05	27.16	22.22	81
30-39	9.38	26.56	31.25	7.81	25.00	64
40-49	12.90	35.48	19.35	16.13	14.52	62
50-59	18.92	24.32	21.62	21.62	10.81	37
60 and above	28.13	18.75	18.75	18.75	12.50	32
TOTAL #	41	79	64	57	55	300
TOTAL %	13.67	26.33	21.33	19.00	18.33	100%

Opinions were almost evenly distributed between those in favor and those in opposition with one fifth of them abstaining (21.33%). However, the range of approval by those who were less than 40 years old was 33-37%. The groups who were 40 years or older had generally higher percentages of support and a wider range (43-49%). The under 30's who probably did not see much of the old characterizations of the Negro in the movies were understandably stronger in their disapproval of the view with 41.67% and 49.38% respectively.

Table 29.--"Fred and Lamont are the Kind of Black Characters I Like to Watch on Television."

	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	TOTAL #
18-19	45.83	37.50	4.17	8.33	0.00	24
20-29	34.57	40.74	12.35	7.41	4.94	81
30-39	32.81	35.94	12.50	10.94	6.25	64
40-49	29.03	51.61	8.06	9.68	1.61	62
50-59	32.43	32.43	24.32	10.81	0.00	37
60 and above	40.63	40.63	6.25	9.38	3.13	32
TOTAL #	103	122	35	28	10	300
TOTAL %	34.33	40.67	11.67	9.33	3.33	100%

No clear cut pattern emerged on bases of age from the above data. Interestingly, the highest percentage of agreement (83.33%) came from the youngest age group (18-19); this was followed by the oldest (60 and above) with 81.26%. An irregular fluctuation can be observed in the percentages of the rest ranging from 64 to 80%.

It is clear from the foregoing data that differences in the respondents' views were not as clearly marked on the variables of "income" and "age" as that of "ethnicity."

A multivariate analysis of variance, covariance and regression were treated to ascertain the significance of the differences exhibited on the contingency tables. The design of the test consisted of the factors: race and neighborhood, each having two levels; black-white;

segregated-mixed, as well as the nine statements of opinion about the show.

The popularity of respondents' reaction to the show's humor and the acknowledgment of the talents' performing skills was shown on the correlation matrix as possessing the highest level (.43) of interaction.

The results show that there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the choice of opinion by respondents was dependent on race and to some extent on neighborhood. As the charts illustrating the linear regression of the scores' means would show (with p less than .05), there were significant differences in the views of blacks as compared to whites on six of the nine statements. At the same significant level (.05), there were similar results between the views of those who live in segregated as compared to mixed neighborhoods on the three statements referring to the ethnicity of the leading characters and the talents playing them (p .001, .014, .028).

"Its leading characters are down-to-earth and believable."

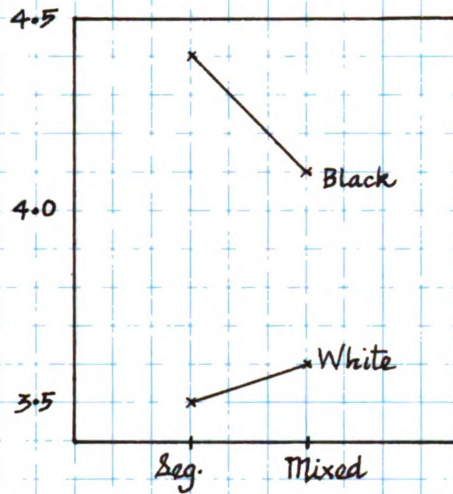


CHART 1

Significant: $p < .0001$

"Its dialogue is free of dialects; easy to understand by majority of the people."

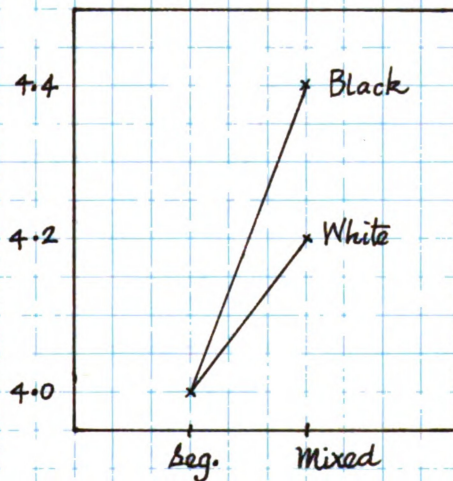


CHART 2

Not Significant

"Its social comments are frank; Fred Sanford tells it like it is."

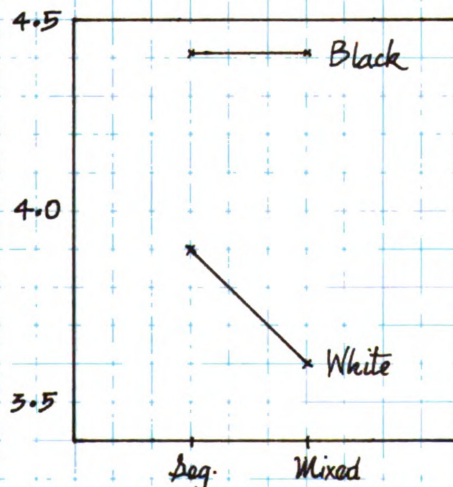


CHART 3

Significant: $p < .0001$

July 11th 1888
1888
S. 100

August 1st 1888

July 11th 1888
S. 100

1888
S. 100

July 11th 1888

S. 100

"Its humor is light, funny, and entertaining."



CHART 4

Significant: $p < .0007$

"Redd Foxx and Demond Wilson are skilled actors; they play their respective characters effectively."



CHART 5

Not Significant

"It is a welcome change to watch black talents perform on television."

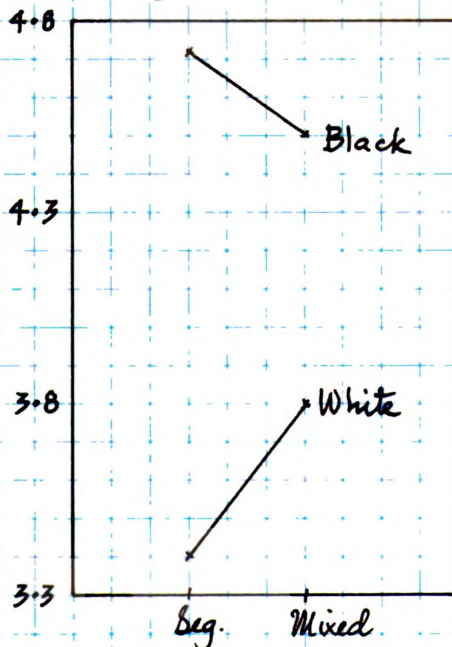


CHART 6

Significant: $p < .0001$

2. 10. 1971

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2. 10. 1971

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2. 10. 1971

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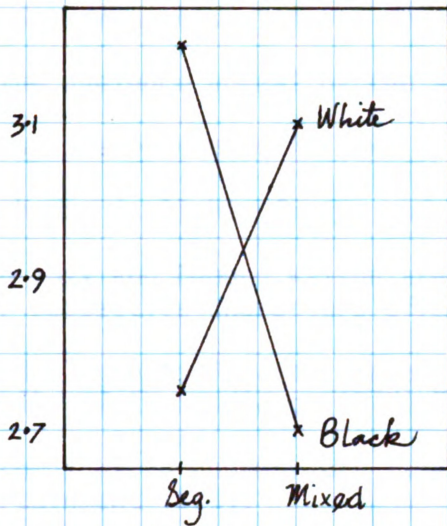
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"Its leading characters recall memories of the old 'happy Negro'."

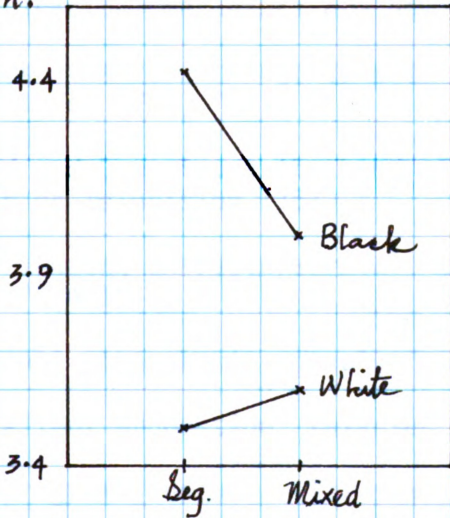
CHART 7



Not Significant.

"Fred and Lamont are the kind of black characters I like to watch on television."

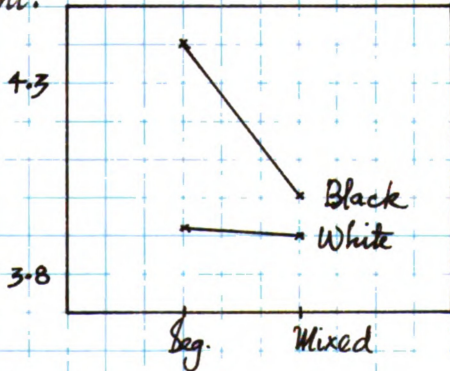
CHART 8



Significant: $p < .0001$

"It comes at an appropriate time; a relaxing friday evening entertainment."

CHART 9



Significant: $p < .0228$

10/22/21

10/22/21

10/22/21

10/22/21

Emerging from these tables, charts, and explanations, the reasons offered for the audience appeal of the show can be rearranged in order of respondents' preference as follows:

1. "Its humor is light, funny, and entertaining (95%)."
2. "Redd Foxx and Demond Wilson are skilled actors; they play their respective characters effectively (92%)."
3. "Its dialogue is free of dialects; easy to understand by majority of the audience (87%)."
4. "It comes at an appropriate time, a relaxing Friday evening entertainment (82%)."
5. "Its social comments are frank; Fred Sanford tells it like it is (80%)."
6. "Its leading characters are down-to-earth and believable (79%)."
7. "It is a welcome change to watch black talents perform on television (77%)."
8. "Fred and Lamont are the kind of black characters I like to watch on television (75%)."
9. "The leading characters recall memories of the old 'happy Negro' (40%)."

Over all, the show's appeal, from the respondents' viewpoint, rests on excellent production, talented acting and an appropriate location on the program schedule. The stars' ethnicity was completely relegated into the background with the largest percentage of abstentions registered on the three statements involving their ethnic affinity.

Chapter VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The following highlights are worthy of note in the results of the survey. The demographic characteristics of the sample show that:

- 1) About three out of every four respondents (76.67%) interviewed are 18-49 years of age. This included the largest single group (27%) who fall in the category of 20-29. Of the 8% in the 18-19 category, blacks outnumbered whites in the ratio of about 2:1. Over one third (35%) are under thirty while thirty-three percent are fifty and above.
- 2) Nearly half (47.67%) of the respondents come from a family size of three or less.
- 3) In terms of sex, females are slightly more than males (approximately 51:49). This is pretty close to the ratio in the 1970 national census figures.
- 4) Over two-thirds (69%) reported an annual income of \$15,000 or less of which less than half (46.67%) earn \$10,000 or less. Because of its sensitive nature, a large number of respondents (14.67%) refused to disclose their income.

An examination of respondents' viewing habits reveals that:

- 5) Nearly four out of every five (78.67%) of those interviewed owned one or two working TV sets.
- 6) Over a third (37%) of the sample are "heavy" TV viewers, that is they spend five or more hours watching TV daily.
- 7) "Light" viewers (those who spend an average of two hours or less watching TV daily) constitute twenty-seven percent of the sample.
- 8) About half (50.33%) of the interviewees reported watching "Sanford and Son" regularly. Incidentally the "heavy" TV watchers are part of the crowd that watch the show every week.

The subjects' reactions to statements of opinion about the shows should be viewed in the light of the fact that only those who watch the show were interviewed. This also is based on the assumption that those who watch the show must have some interest in it.

- 9) Overwhelming support was demonstrated for the production and the performing skills of the talents with percentages in "agreement" ranging from 95.33% to 78.66%. Further breakdown along ethnic lines shows that the massive support of black respondents (96.66/94.00 compared to whites' 88/69.33) was largely responsible for the positive overall results.

- 10) The low support by whites is further sharply defined on statements related to ethnicity. On the statement that is a "welcome change to watch black talents perform on television," over 9 out of every 10 blacks registered support. This ratio declines to 6 out of every 10 among whites. Correspondingly, for every black who abstained on this statement, six whites did. The same pattern, though to a lesser degree, could be observed in relation to the statement that Fred and Lamont are "likable black characters." The percentage of approval by blacks as compared to whites was 88% to 62%. For every black who opposed the view, five whites did.

Even though there was no significant difference between the views of blacks and whites on the statement that the show "recalls memories of old happy Negro," its controversial nature must have lent it to varying interpretations. The percentages of support by the two groups are close (43% of blacks and 36% of whites). The same can be said of those in opposition (38% and 36%). In short the data shows that blacks were comparatively more definite in their views either for or against. Blacks who supported the statement probably share the view expressed by Eugenia Collier in an article in "TV Guide" of January 12, 1974 that current television programs still shy away from the realities of black experience. To them, the show did not reflect enough "blackness" to elevate it above the old cliché. The blacks who opposed it probably did not see much of the real "old

happy Negro" and if they did, the memory is the kind they don't want to recall.

Interestingly, there is an equal percentage of those in support and those in opposition (36%) among whites. The supporters of the view can be regarded as more prejudiced than those who opposed.

The large percentage of abstention (26%) among whites was recorded because they did not want to be stigmatized with being racist. This becomes understandable when it is realized that Lansing is not a city noted for demonstrating racial hostility. The results may be different if these statements were presented to white respondents in Detroit, Memphis, or any of the Southern cities. It may be necessary to add that the phrase "old happy Negro" may have contributed to the state of confusion which the results showed. Though effort was made to illustrate the meaning intended (at meetings with interviewers), with characters played in 1930's films by talents such as Bill (Bojangles) Robinson, Eddie (Rochester) Anderson, and Stepin Fetchit, it is unlikely that all respondents had the benefit of having this explanation when the interviews were conducted.

From the findings, it can be observed that the audience appeal of "Sanford and Son" which was thought to be "high" among white viewers was not as high as expected. In cases where they registered a percentage as high as that posted by blacks it only indicated that they acknowledged the irresistably laughable and hilarious attribute of the show as well as the leading actors' performing skills; strong reasons which

make them watch the show. But they were not ready to equate this with acceptance of increased black presence on television. If there was a significant improvement in their attitudes toward black people, one would have expected the percentage of their support of statements related to the talents' "blackness" to be close if not as high as those describing the talents' skill or the show's humor. The two parts of the first hypothesis were, therefore, supported. Eugenia Collier put it bluntly when she remarked:

And in a sensitive area such as blackness, images can exert an insidious but profound influence. If you make a character black, you have made him different; you have added a dimension that had not been present before.¹

The producers of the show did not expect any attitude change as a consequence of exposure to any of its episodes. Virginia Carter (answering questions on behalf of Norman Lear) and Alan (Bud) Yorkin all stressed this in their replies to the questions put to them on this subject (Appendices J and K). Norman Lear himself emphasized this point in another interview. Martin Kasindorf, in an article in New York Times Magazine on "A TV Dynasty" (referring to Tandem Productions, Inc.) quoted Lear as asking: "How much could I expect to happen from my silly little half hour TV shows, when the entire Judeo-Christian ethic for some 2000 years hasn't budged race relations?"²

A number of significant studies have been conducted on the subject of the attitude of whites toward black people. Among the most impressive was Angus Campbell's "White Attitudes Towards Black People." In reference to answers given by whites in the study, he pointed out:

. . . our white respondents were expressing points of view which they have acquired over their lifetime

and which do not change dramatically in response to contemporary event.³

It seems unlikely that the conditions necessary for attitude change as suggested by Edward Johnson in Miller's (et. al.) "Comparative Studies of Black and Whites in the United States" have been met:

Change is more likely to take place if the new attitude proves rewarding. Change is also likely to take place if the individual feels that it is his own decision and not imposed from outside.⁴

Campbell summed up the study's findings by making a similar observation:

. . . despite the changes we have noted and the trends we foresee, the white population of this country is far from a general acceptance of the principle and practice of racial equality. There is little doubt that while there is collective movement of a positive character there are many white individuals whose attitudes have hardened in response to the persistent black pressure for change. These people are being confronted by demands to open their neighborhoods, integrate their labor unions, desegregate their schools, increase the black proportion of their police force and otherwise accept changes which they consider intolerable. As we have seen, these people are found at all levels of the population and it is not likely that they will soon disappear.⁵

A critical point not anticipated but clearly revealed in the findings was the extent to which the total viewpoints could be influenced by the very positive black reactions.

It goes to show the potential of the impact that massive black support could produce if their views are crucial to the resolution of an issue.

The second hypothesis was not confirmed by the study's findings. Contrary to expectations, the results showed that white viewers liked the show not because of the perceived "old happy Negro" image of the

leading stars but their skills as talented actors. As they did not want their views on the subject to offend anyone, over a quarter (26%) of them abstained while over a third (36%) opposed the view.⁶ Perhaps their opinions would have been clear cut, positively or negatively, had the issue been a "threatening" one such as "a black family moving into a white neighborhood" or "busing for school desegregation." Additionally viewing programs on television is within the control of viewers. They can always switch to another channel if they don't like the shows or shut the set off if there is not a better choice. They cannot be forced to watch if they don't want to. Another factor which may have contributed to this result is the fact that Lansing is not geographically located in one of the racially turbulent areas of the nation.

The third hypothesis, based on the assumption that blacks (in the light of their current soaring aspiration and self esteem), would not support characters exhibiting wretched images in lowly environment, was not backed by findings from the study. While blacks may not share the ghetto image of the characters, it is apparent from the results that they identified with the sense of pride and positive self image of the father and the son. The "no-nonsense" attitude of Fred and the decent and equitable attitude of Lamont seem to have produced images worth relating to by black respondents. Contrary to the "Amos 'n' Andy" image implied by critics such as Eugenia Collier, black respondents sampled in the study believed (88%) that the characters had something positive they could identify with.

Overall, this positive attitude of black respondents may be attributed to such factors as improved self confidence and self image

(exhibited by Fred and Lamont); improvement of their chances of making progress in the society which in turn lessens their feeling of bitterness and frustration. In a recent CBS-TV Special "Four Portraits in Black," this attitude was documented with analysis indicating the measure of progress made in this direction.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER VI

¹Eugenia Collier, op. cit., p. 9.

²Martin Kasindorf, "A TV Dynasty," New York Times, June 24, 1973, p. 17.

³Angus Campbell, White Attitude Towards Black People (Ann Arbor, 1971), p. 15.

⁴Edward E. Johnson, "Social Perceptions and Attitudes" in Kent S. Miller et. al., Comparative Studies of Blacks and Whites in the United States (Seminar Press, 1973), p. 376.

⁵A. Campbell, op. cit., p. 162.

⁶G. F. Summers and A. D. Hammonds, "Toward a Paradigm for Respondent Bias in Survey Research," Sociological Quarterly 10, 1969, pp. 113-121.

Chapter VII

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is not insulated from the basic shortcomings characteristic of all survey research studies. In addition, it is designed to sample the opinions of only those television viewers who watch "Sanford and Son." And since the focus of the study was the black-white audience reactions, other viewers such as minorities (Mexican Americans, Indians, Orientals, etc.) were deliberately excluded from the sample. As a result, the total population that is of special interest to the study was drastically curtailed.

The university and East Lansing populations were left out because the researcher wanted to confine the survey to the "average" adult viewer. In terms of change in attitude toward racial understanding and integration, findings from studies conducted by Greeley (et. al.),¹ and Surlin² have indicated education as a strong correlate in the demonstration of positive attitude. Similarly, people who exhibit a strong opposition to the above movement, in addition to other characteristics, have been found to be low educated. If the academic community had been represented in the sample, it would have helped to compare their response with those of the Lansing city audience surveyed.

In accordance with the study's design, the sample was non-randomly assembled. Because of the purpose for which the sample was

intended in the analysis, the researcher had to forego the advantages of generalizing his findings for the entire population, since the sample was not truly representative.

The instrument used in the survey was not exhaustive of all possible questions that could have been asked to elicit a more comprehensive response from the audience interviewed. The main reason was the plan to stay within the bounds of viewpoints presented by respondents in the pilot survey.

Wherever research involves the use of a survey, the possibility of interviewers and interviewees biasing the outcome from their respective angles is part of the problem that must be contended with. From studies conducted by Schuman and Converse,³ Williams,⁴ Sechrest,⁵ Dohrenwend et. al.,⁶ Summers et. al.,⁷ and Kahn et. al.,⁸ the impact of interviewer on respondents and their perception of each other, to a certain extent, affects the type of answers that the latter gives in an interview situation. Most particular in this study are situations where white interviewers question black respondents or black interviewers question white respondents in mixed neighborhoods. There were some cases where data showed respondents either "strongly agreeing" or "strongly disagreeing" with all the viewpoints expressed in the instrument. It is unusual for a subject to be on the same scale when responding to all the statements. However, the level of interviewer bias or respondent distortion may not be high in this study since the theme of the survey is not a "hot issue" requiring a mandatory stand either in favor or against the stated issue.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER VII

¹Andrew M. Greeley and Paul B. Sheatsely, "Attitudes Towards Racial Integration: The South Catches Up" (National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, July, 1972).

²Stuart Surlin, "Evaluation of Dogmatic Television Characters . . .," *op. cit.*, p. 8.

³Howard Schuman and Jean M. Converse, "The Effects of Black and White Interviewers on Blacks Responses in 1969" (Detroit Area Study, Ann Arbor, 1969).

⁴J. A. Williams, "Interviewer Role Performance: A Future Note on Bias in the Information Interview," Public Opinion Quarterly, 32, 1968, pp. 287-294.

⁵L. Sechrest, "Naturalistic Methods in the Study of Social Attitudes," Human Development, 10, 1967, pp. 199-211.

⁶B. S. Dohrenwend et. al., "Social Distance and Interviewer Effects," Public Opinion Quarterly, 32, 1968, pp. 410-422.

⁷G. F. Summers and A. D. Hammonds, "Effects of Racial Characteristics of Investigator on Self-Enumerated Responses to a Negro Prejudice Scale," Social Forces, 44, 1966, pp. 515-518.

⁸R. L. Kahn and C. F. Cannell, "The Dynamics of Interviewing," (New York: Wiley, 1957).

Chapter VIII

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

From the findings of this study, it is premature to make valid judgements regarding what effects, if any, the increase of black participation in television shows would have on white viewers. Shows where black talents play leading roles are few and their chances of enjoying the privilege of running consistently over a long period of time are very slim. It will be recalled that recently "Roll Out" and "Love Thy Neighbor" were cancelled. The same fate is already pronounced on "Tenafly" and it is uncertain whether "Shaft" would return for the coming season. It is unlikely that any far reaching impact could be established by shows which make sporadic entries and exits like those mentioned above.

Paradoxically, "Sanford and Son" (the most highly rated show featuring black talents in leading roles), is equally facing an uncertain future because of the controversy between Redd Foxx (the leading star) and Tandem Productions, Inc. (the producer of the show).¹ With the possible exception of "Good Times," there are no other shows playing black stars in the leading role with a bright prospect of returning in the coming 1974-75 season.

Since attitudes take time to form, lasting impressions about black entertainers on television will take time to develop only if

there is some measure of regularity in the presentation of shows featuring them. Consequently, there is need to conduct continuous series of studies to monitor the level of attitude change, over time, brought about by television.

This study attempted to examine general trends in black/white attitudes using a highly rated black-oriented television show. Subsequent research effort may zero in on specifics like content analysis of a number of episodes in a series with a view to determining what kind of "subtle messages" are disseminated among viewers. The strong attribute of television as a medium lies in its "less threatening" characteristics. There is no doubt that a large percentage of whites would establish contacts vicariously through regular and increased black presence on television. As more successful black-oriented shows are aired, black talents would be "guests" in many living rooms where they otherwise would have been regarded as persona-non-grata. Though the extent has not been clearly determined, the potential of television to teach has not been in doubt. Eugenia Collier recognized this when she remarked: "But there is no such thing as 'just entertainment.' For images persuade, images control, images determine attitudes."²

Nicholas Johnson stated this idea more eloquently when concluding his message to viewers in his book, "How to Talk Back to Your TV Set:"

All television is educational television. It may not teach the truth. It may preach violence rather than love. It may give more emphasis to the quantity of acquisition than to the quality of use. It may produce more mental illness than health. But it teaches. Endlessly. Soap operas, commercials,³ prime time series shows: each has its own lesson.

In this setting, a continuous series of studies hopefully would help to unfold the direct, contributory and cumulative effects of white exposure to increased black presence on television.

It would be of interest also if future studies examine exclusive reactions of black audience to the many images and characters that are featured on television shows.

Similarly, other ethnic minorities, Mexican Americans, Indians, Orientals, etc., may constitute the focus of studies to ascertain their perception of black characters played in the shows and the implication of this perception for inter-ethnic relations.

In view of the fact that education is a strong correlate in the determination of positive attitude change on racial issues, a study of the university community's reaction to shows such as "Sanford and Son" may provide material for making comparisons with "average" audience.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

¹(a) Bill Davidson, "Why the Producers of Three Top Comedy Shows are Faced With: Trouble in Paradise," TV Guide (Michigan Edition), April 6-12, 1974, pp. 4-8.

(b) Bill Davidson, continuing . . . "Trouble in Paradise: King Lear and his Unruly Court," TV Guide (Michigan Edition), April 13-19, 1974, pp. 12-17.

(c) Louie Robinson, "Redd, Crazy Like a Foxx," Ebony, June 1974, p. 154.

²Eugenia Collier, op. cit., p. 9.

³Nicholas Johnson, How to Talk Back to Your TV Set, p. 102.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW

Instructions for Interviewers

1. The instrument to be used in this survey is a simple one. The statements are few and closed ended. Having read them to the respondents one at a time, then follow with a question: 'Do you agree or disagree?'; 'How? Mildly or strongly?' Check the appropriate opinion on the five point scale.
2. As item 4 of section B on the first page of the questionnaire is a sensitive one, it has been prepared on a small card. Just hand it over to the respondent and ask him/her to identify the letter standing for his/her answer on the list. If he or she still objects to providing an answer, continue with the rest of the interview.
3. The ideal time for visits would be evenings on weekdays, (i.e. 6-9 p.m.) and afternoons on weekends (i.e. 1-6 p.m.). This is a time when most of the respondents are likely to be at home.
4. Interview only adults (i.e. 18 or above) who are residents of the house selected. Ask them to make sure they are. Don't poll non-residents.
5. The head of the family should be the first choice for the interview. Where there's none, poll whoever consents to the request as long as he or she is 18 or above.
6. Poll only one respondent from a household unless too many people decline in the street, in which case you can poll a second person in the same house until the required number for the street is obtained.

7. Selection of household: streets participating have been designated in each area. The number of polls to be made in each street is already specified. If the street runs east-west, start your interview from the east, and if north-south, start from the north. Alternate houses on both sides of the street are to be sampled till the required number is obtained.

8. If you poll a non-black or non-white in the 'mixed' area, don't count them.

9. Similarly, if you poll a black respondents in the white 'segregated' neighborhood, don't count them. The same rule applies to whites polled in 'segregated' black neighborhood.

10. It helps to be polite even when the prospective respondents appear to be uncooperative. Dress decently and identify yourself with your student Identification Card.

11. Your introductory statement shall run like this:

We are students in the Department of Television and Radio at Michigan State University. We are conducting a survey of audience reaction to the NBC-TV comedy: 'Sanford and Son.' Would you mind if we ask you some questions?"

Y.M.C.A. students:

We are students of the Y.M.C.A. in Lansing, helping to conduct a survey of audience reaction to the NBC-TV comedy: 'Sanford and Son.' Would you mind if we ask you some questions?"

12. Transportation arrangements will be made to get interviewers to their respective areas.

13. These areas have been marked out on the Greater Lansing Area map.

14. Number the answer sheets serially. The unnumbered extras are to be used for non-white, non-black respondents.

15. In statement number seven on page 2, 'happy Negro' refers to those in the early movies e.g. 'Stepin Fetchit.'

16. No additional explanation should be made about the statements except the 'happy Negro.'

17. Allay the fears of respondents by assuring them that information gathered shall not be used for anything other than the survey.

18. Nothing else must be entered into the sheet except answers to the questions and responses to the statements.

APPENDIX B I

Questionnaire on 'Sanford and Son'
(NBC-TV Friday Evening Comedy)

Section A (Check each appropriate answer)

- (7) a. Do you own a television set at home? Yes _____ No _____
b. How many do you have? _____
c. How many are working? _____

Do you watch television? Yes _____ No _____

- (8) On the average, for how many hours daily do you watch television?
a. 5 hours or more _____
b. 3-4 hours _____
c. 1-2 hours _____
d. Less than an hour _____

Do you watch 'Sanford and Son'? Yes _____ No _____

- (9) How often do you watch the show?
a. Regularly (every week) _____
b. Once every two or three weeks _____
c. Once in a month or less _____

Section B (Check each appropriate answer. Item 4 should be checked by the interviewee, from a small card containing the information.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| (10) <u>Age</u> | (13) <u>Annual Income</u> |
| a. 13-19 _____ | a. Below \$5,000 _____ |
| b. 20-29 _____ | b. \$5,000-10,000 _____ |
| c. 30-39 _____ | c. \$10,000-15,000 _____ |
| d. 40-49 _____ | d. \$15,001-20,000 _____ |
| e. 50-59 _____ | e. \$20,000 and above _____ |
| f. 60 and above _____ | |

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| (11) <u>Size of Family</u> | (14) <u>Ethnic Affinity</u> |
| a. 1-3 _____ | a. White/Caucasian _____ |
| b. 4-6 _____ | b. Black/Negro/
Afro-American _____ |
| c. 7-9 _____ | c. Other _____ |
| d. 10-12 _____ | |
| e. 13 and above _____ | |

- (12) Sex
- a. Male _____
b. Female _____

Section C (Check the appropriate opinion)

Note: SA=Strongly Agree
 MA=Mildly Agree
 NO=No Opinion
 MD=Mildly Disagree
 SD=Strongly Disagree

Some of the main reasons why I
 like the show are:

	<u>SA</u>	<u>MA</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>MD</u>	<u>SD</u>
(15) Its leading characters are down-to-earth and believable.	—	—	—	—	—
(16) Its dialogue is free of dialects: easy to understand by the majority of the audience.	—	—	—	—	—
(17) Its social comments are frank; Fred Sanford tells it like it is!	—	—	—	—	—
(18) Its humor is light, funny and entertaining.	—	—	—	—	—
(19) Redd Foxx and Demond Wilson are skilled actors; they play their respective characters effectively.	—	—	—	—	—
(20) It is a welcome change to watch black talents perform on television.	—	—	—	—	—
(21) The leading characters recall memories of the old 'happy Negro.'	—	—	—	—	—
(22) Fred and Lamont are the kind of black characters I like to watch on television.	—	—	—	—	—
(23) It comes at an appropriate time; a relaxing Friday evening entertainment.	—	—	—	—	—

APPENDIX B II

CODING FORMAT

<u>COLUMN NUMBERS</u>	<u>CONTENT</u>
1, 2, 3	<u>Subject Identification</u>
4, 5, 6	<u>Group Identification</u> 111 = black segregated (group A) 212 = white segregated (group B) 133 = black mixed (group C) 234 = white mixed (group C)
7	<u>Own TV Set (working)</u> 0 = none actual number
8	<u>Watch TV Daily</u> 0 = does not watch TV 1 = less than 1 hour 2 = 1-2 hours 3 = 3-4 hours 4 = 5 hours or more
9	<u>Watch 'Sanford and Son'</u> 0 = does not watch 'Sanford and Son' 1 = once in a month or less 2 = once every two or three weeks 3 = regularly (every week)
10	<u>Age</u> 0 = refused to answer 1 = 18 - 19 2 = 20 - 29 3 = 30 - 39 4 = 40 - 49 5 = 50 - 59 6 = 60 and above
11	<u>Family Size</u> 0 = refused to answer 1 = 1 - 3 2 = 4 - 6 3 = 7 - 9 4 = 10 - 12 5 = 13 and above

COLUMN NUMBERSCONTENT

12

Sex

1 = male

2 = female

13

Annual Income

0 = refused to answer

1 = below \$5,000

2 = \$5001 - 10,000

3 = \$10,001 - 15,000

4 = \$15,001 - 20,000

5 = \$20,001 and above

14

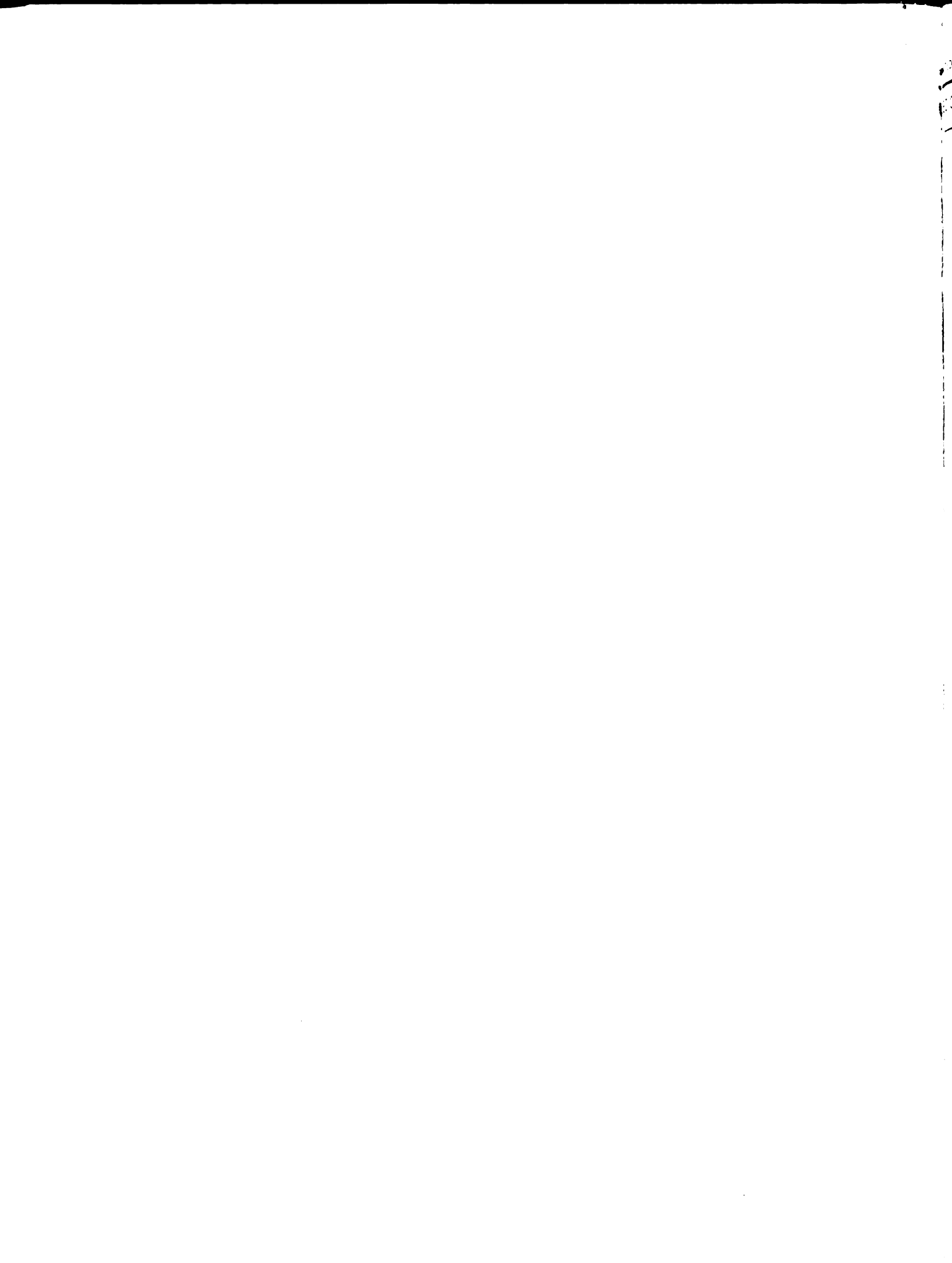
Ethnicity

1 = black

2 = white

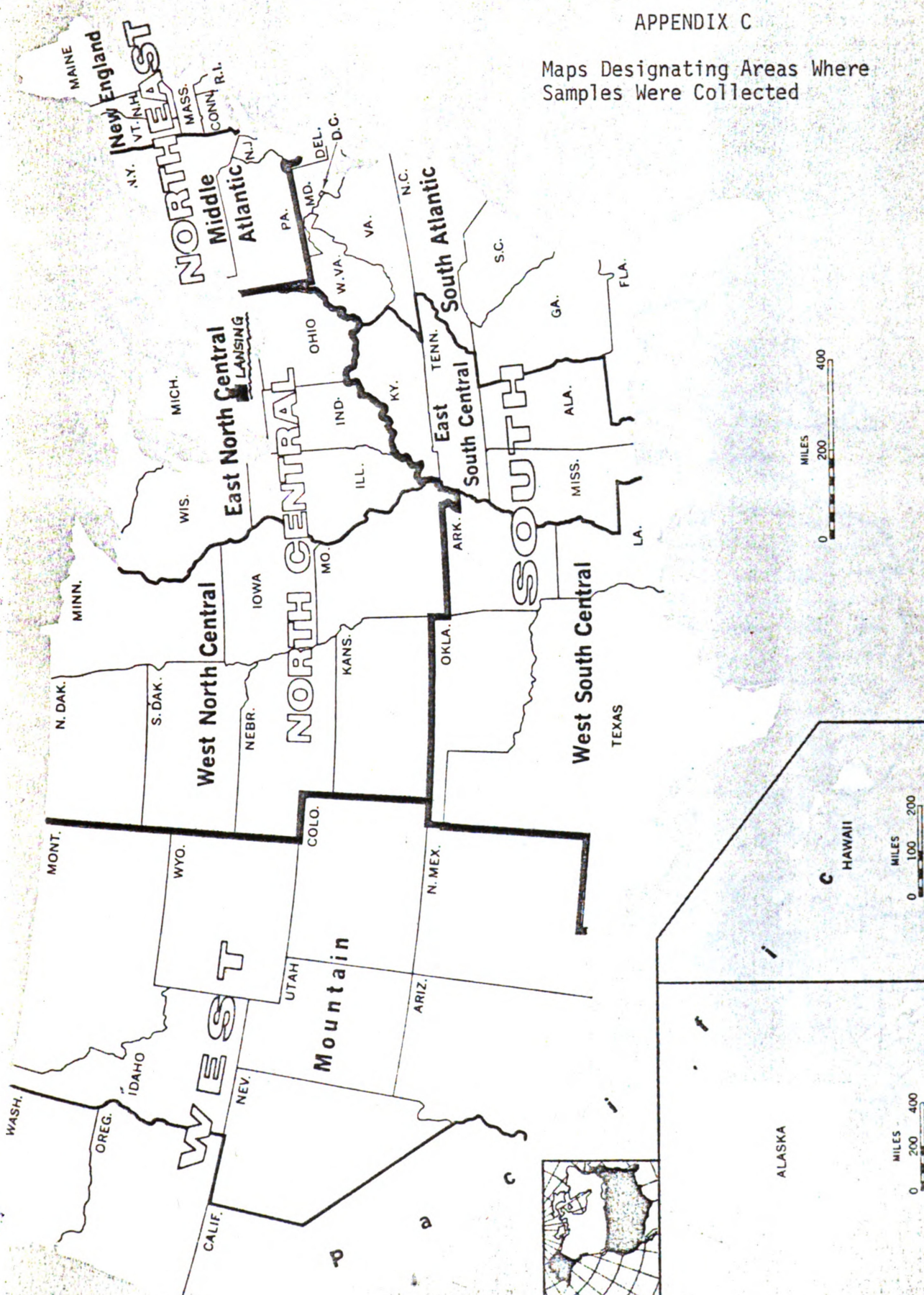
COLUMN # QUESTIONS ON OPINIONCONTENT

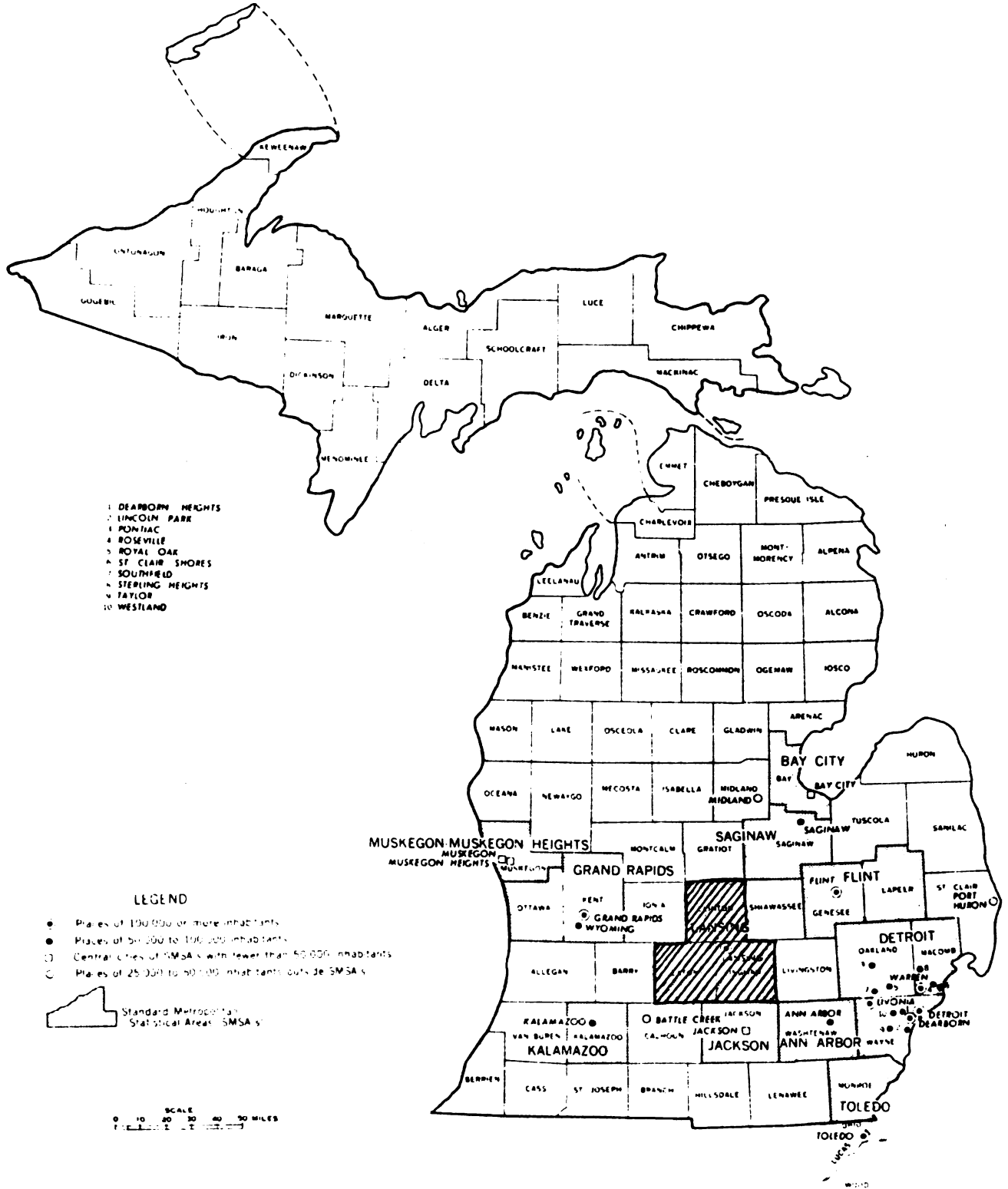
	SA	MA	NO	MD	SD	blank
	5	4	3	2	1	0
15						
Its leading characters are down to earth and believable.						
16						
Its dialogue is free of dialects; easy to understand by majority of the audience.						
17						
Its social comments are frank; Fred Sanford tells it like it is.						
18						
Its humor is light, fun, and entertaining.						
19						
Redd Foxx and Demond Wilson are skilled actors; they play their parts effectively.						
20						
It is a welcome change to watch black talents perform on television.						
21						
The leading characters recall memories of the old 'happy Negro.'						
22						
Fred and Lamont are the kind of black characters I like to watch on television.						
23						
It comes at an appropriate time; a relaxing Friday evening entertainment.						

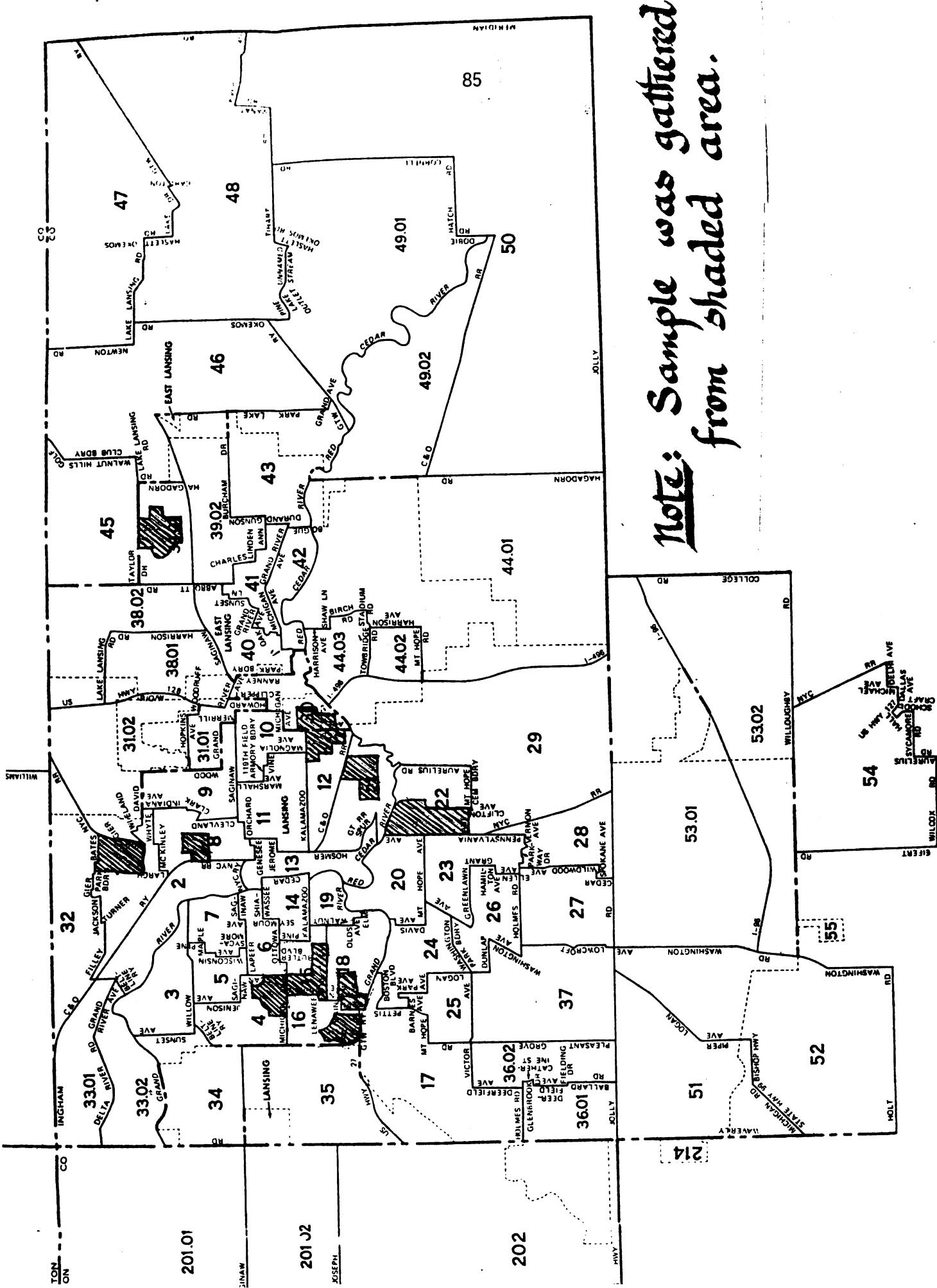


APPENDIX C

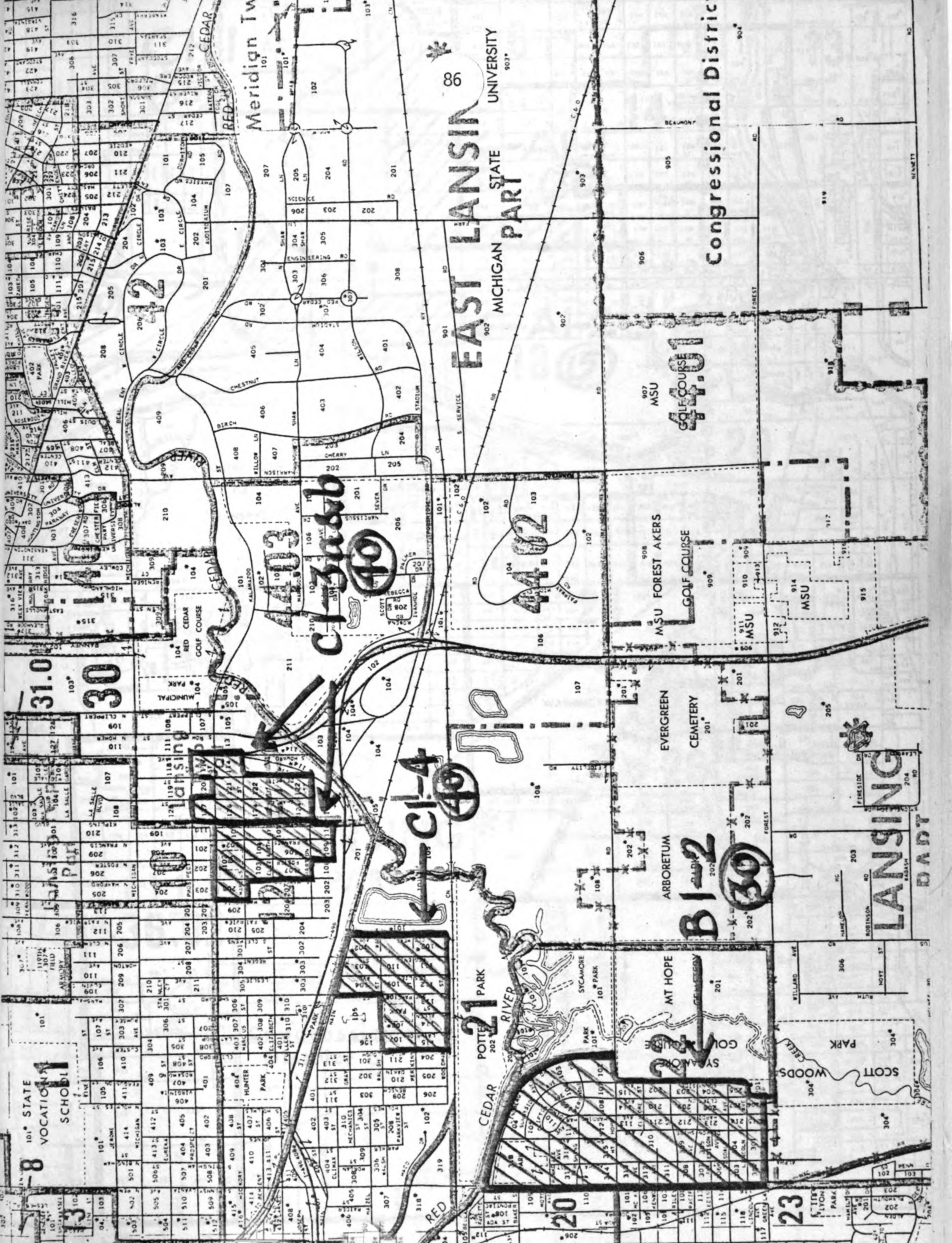
Maps Designating Areas Where Samples Were Collected







Note: Sample was gathered from shaded area.



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MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Congressional District

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GOLF COURSE

MSU FOREST AKERS
GOLF COURSE

EVERGREEN
CEMETERY

ARBORETUM
B1-2
30

MT HOPE
GOLF COURSE

LANSING
DADT

Meridian Tw

POTTER
21 PARK

23

20

31.0
30

8
101 STATE
VOCATIONAL
SCHOOLS

12

44.03
40

44.02

22
30

22
30

22

RED

CEDAR RIVER

SYCAMORE
101 PARK

SCOTT
WOODS PARK

CELESTIAL PARK

WILLARD AVE

BURN AVE

ROBINSON AVE

LAUREL AVE

FOREST

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203

202

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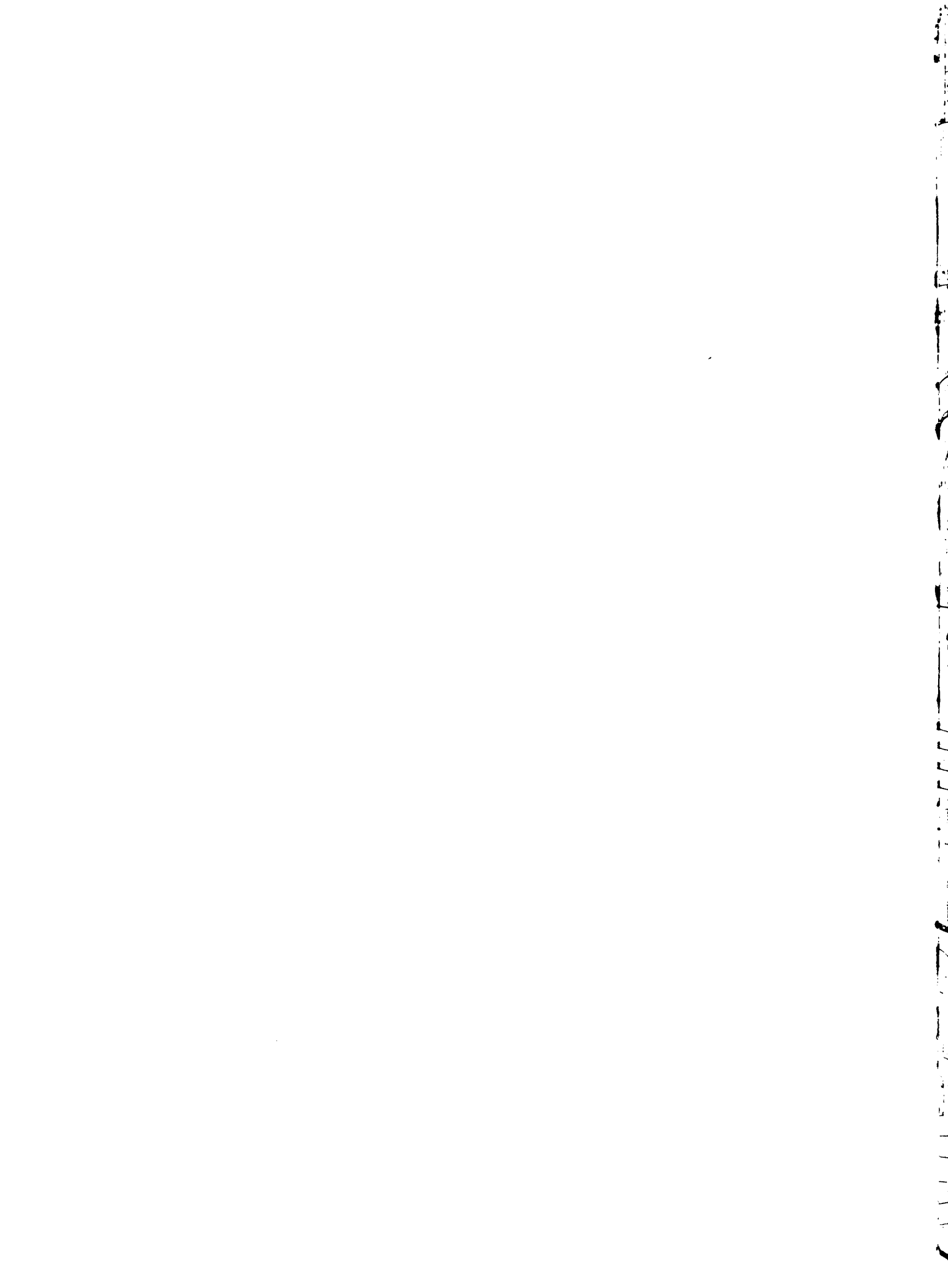
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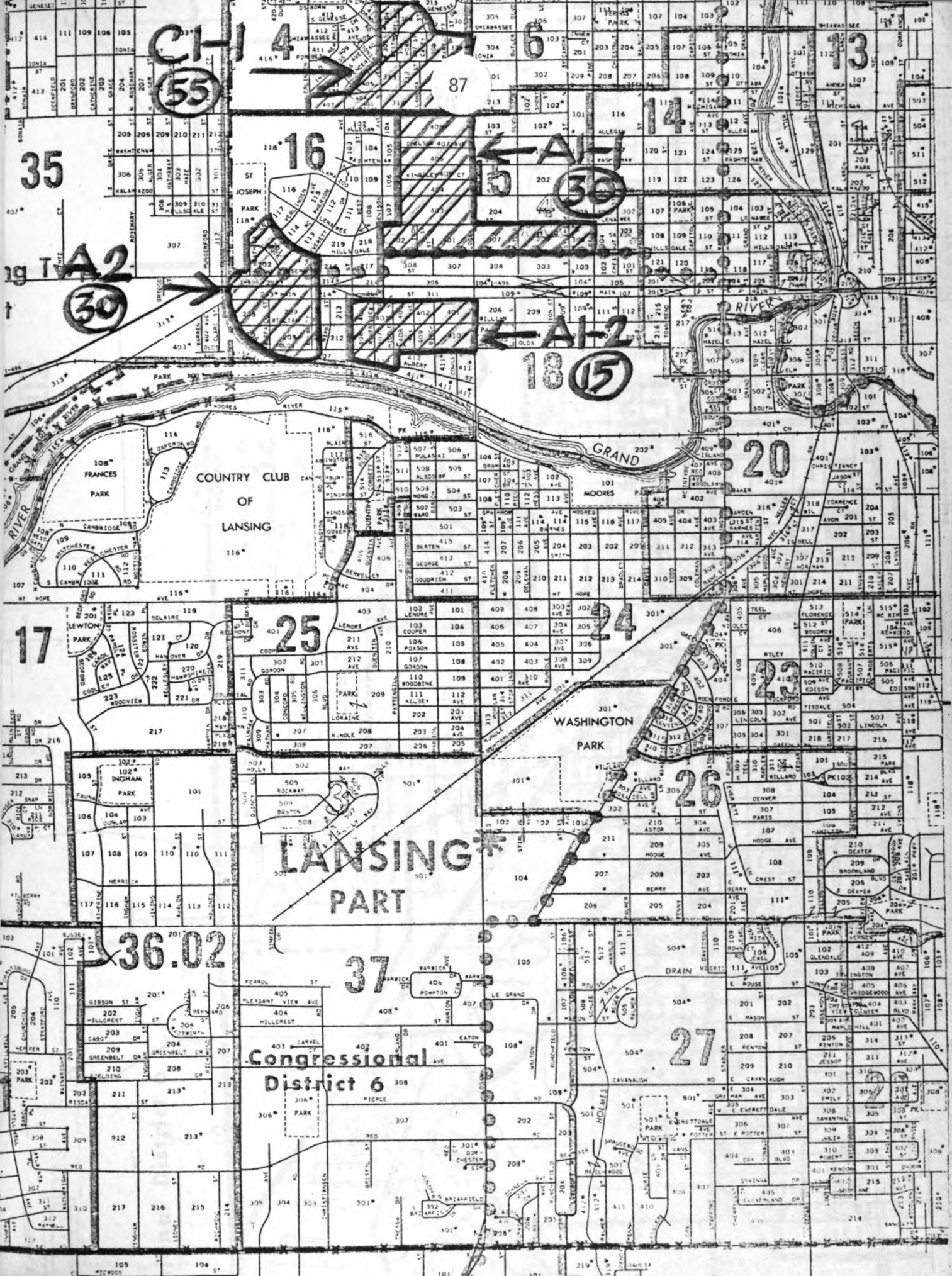
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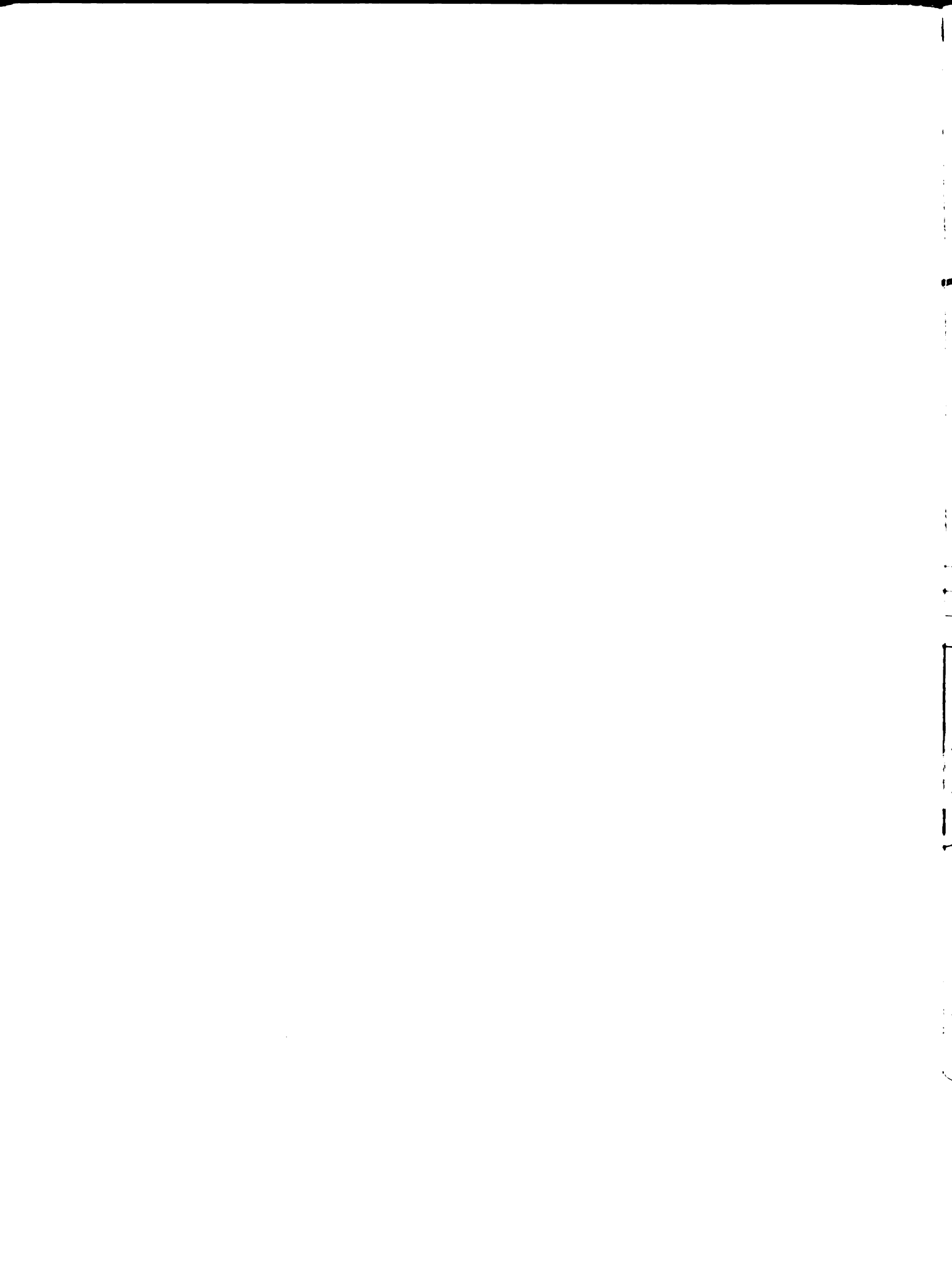
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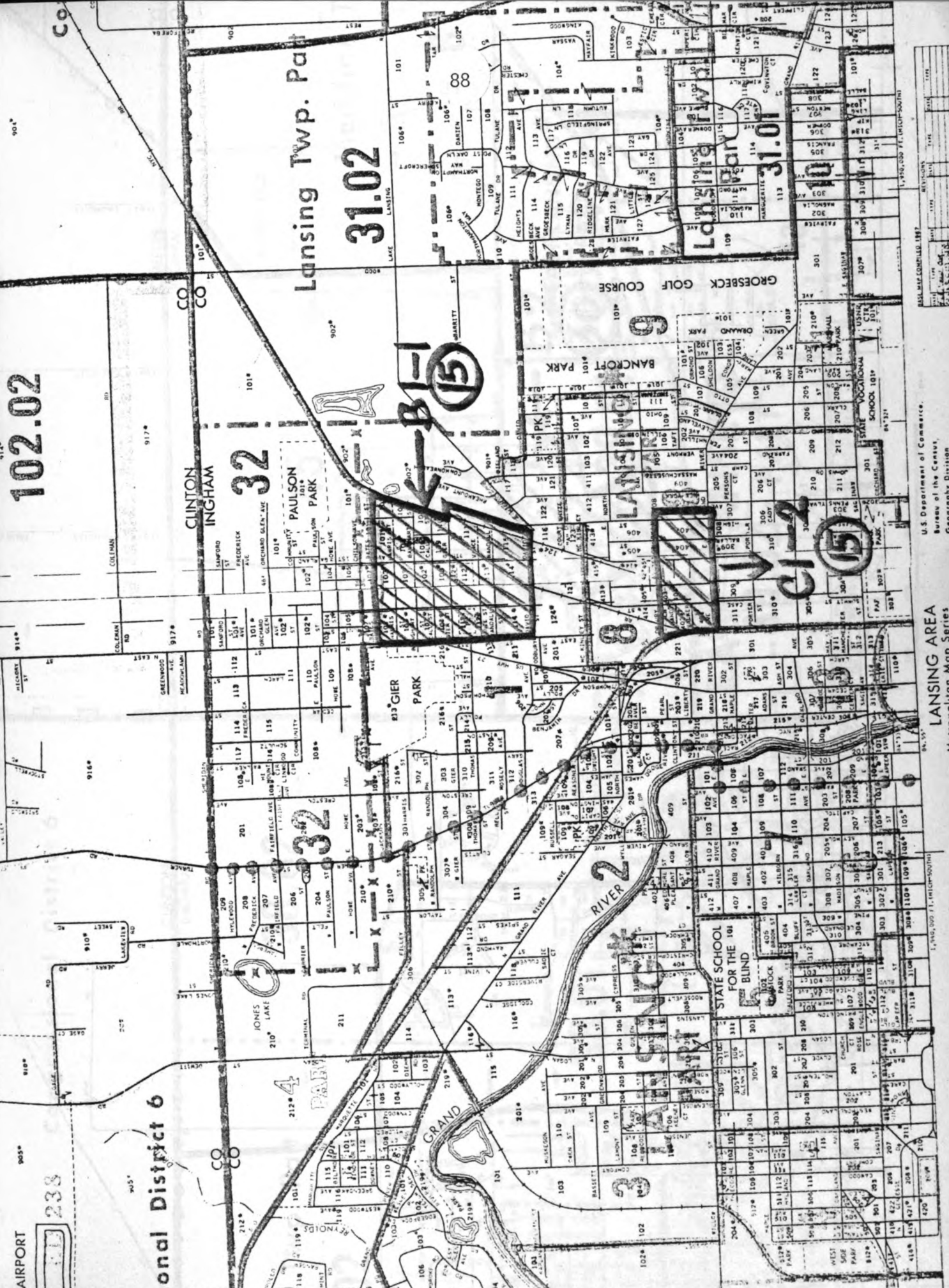
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Personal District 6

U.S. Department of Commerce,
Bureau of the Census,
Geography Division

LANSING AREA
Metropolitan Map Series

1:750,000 (1:1,000,000 SOUTH)

1:750,000 (1:1,000,000 SOUTH)



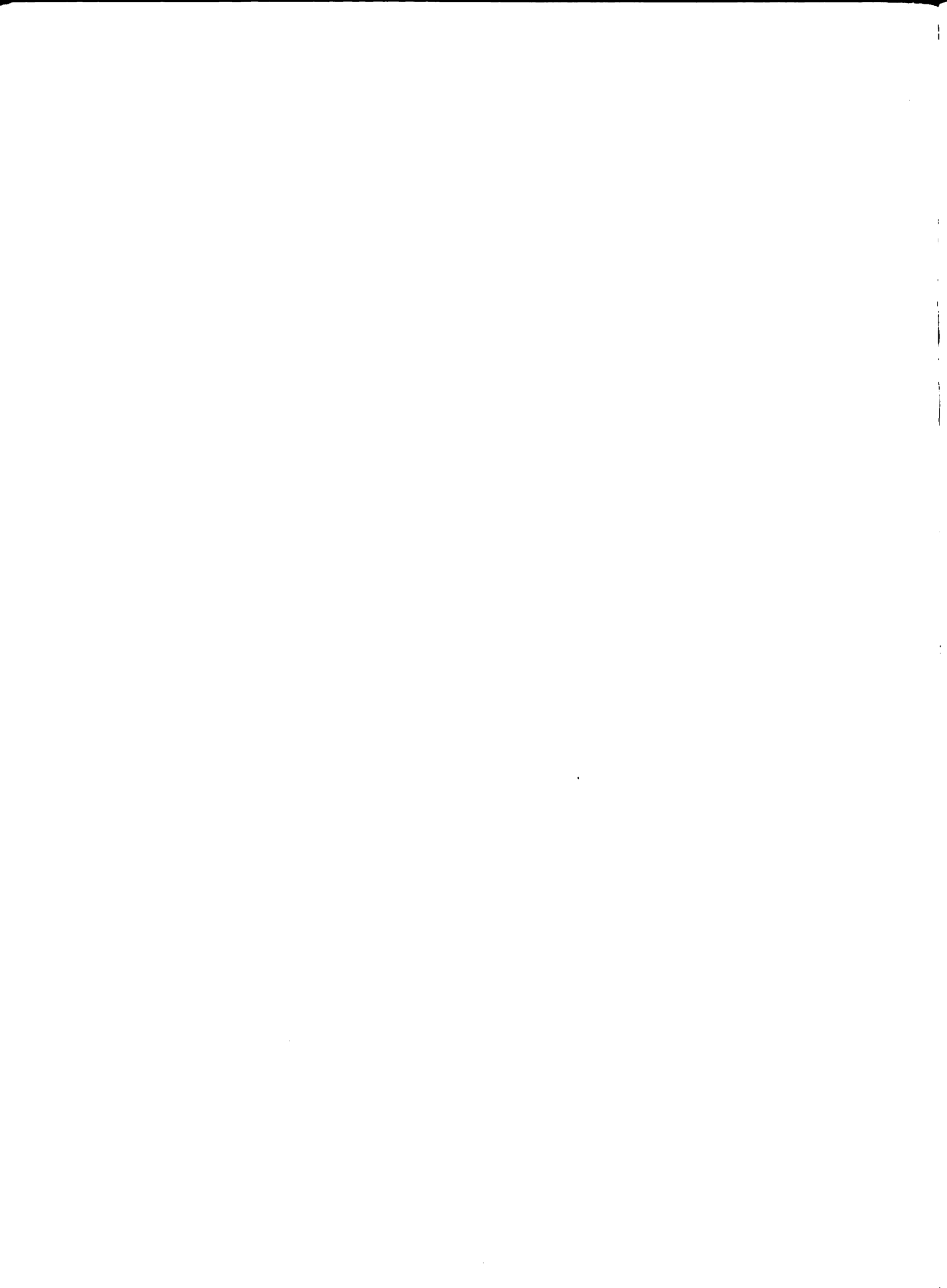
APPENDIX D

TELEPHONE PILOT SURVEY

Instructions for Interviewers

1. This is a preliminary survey. It is intended to sample, in a general way, the reaction of audience to the show.
2. Further details about the interview would be presented in the second interview the questionnaire of which would be formulated on the response to the first.
3. An ideal time to make the call would be in the evening between 7-9 p.m.
4. Ask for the head of the family and where there's non, talk to whoever answers the question as long as he/she is 18 or above.
5. Your opening explanation would be:

We are graduate students in the Department of Television and Radio at Michigan State University and we would like to know if you would be willing to participate in a pilot survey which we are conducting. We would like to ask you some questions about the NBC-TV comedy 'Sanford and Son.'
6. If the prospective interviewee objects, thank him/her and proceed to the next number.
7. Try to summarize their answers to items 6 and 7 on the questionnaire into phrases.
8. Numbers to be selected at random are those on the top of extreme right columns of each page of the Lansing phone book from pages 1-100. If the numbers are business numbers, the next below *it should* to be selected.



APPENDIX F

Description of Areas Covered in the Survey

Where the Survey is Conducted

The following areas have been identified as fulfilling the conditions stated in the definitions:

Area (A)--Black segregated neighborhood (75 samples)

A1-1 (30)

This is the area of land enclosed by : Hillsdale Street to the south, Pine and South Logan to the east, Lenawee and Michigan to the north, Huron and Jenison to the west. Six streets run east-west. Five respondents would be polled from each.

A1-2 (15)

Streets marking the boundary are: West Main to the north, Olds Avenue to the south, West Street to the west, and South Logan to the east. Five respondents are to be polled from each of the three streets running east-west.

A2 (30)

Value of houses in this area are slightly higher (about \$25,000) than the previous two locations (about \$15,000), as indicated in the 'Block Statistics' document.

Streets within the area are enclosed by Olds Avenue to the south, Everett to the east, Hillsdale to the north, Heather and Clare to the west. Four major streets run east-west. Eight respondents would be polled from the first two and seven from each of the remaining two.

Area (B)--White segregated neighborhood (75 samples)

B1-1 (15)

This area is demarkated by the following streets: David to the south, North High to the east, Bates to the north, and North East to the West. Of the six streets running east-west, five samples would be polled from Harris while the remaining five would provide two each.

B1-2 (30)

Streets forming the boundary of this area are: Smith and Pennsylvania to the west, Greenlawn to the south, Sunnyside to the east, and Lindberg to the north. Each of the ten streets identified here would provide three samples.

B2 (30)

This area is bound by Hitching Post to the west, Walbridge Drive to the south, Stonegate and Foxcroft to the east, and Taylor Drive to the north. Six streets run north-south while two run east-west. Four respondents would, therefore, be sampled from each of the first six streets, and three each from the remaining two.

The average value of houses in this area is higher (\$55,000) than the preceding two (\$20,000), using information from the 'Block Statistics' document.

Area (C)--Mixed neighborhood (150 samples)

The average value of houses in this section can be put at \$15,000.

C1-1 (55)

This area is enclosed by West Michigan Avenue to the south, North Logan to the east, Shiawasee to the north, and Jenison, Spencer and Verkinden

to the west. Three major streets run east-west and five short ones run north-south. Ten respondents would be polled from each of the three long streets and five from each of the short ones.

C1-2 (15)

The following streets mark the boundary of this area: East Grand River to the south, Ballard to the east, Drury Lane to the north, and the C&O Railroad line to the west. Three main streets run north-south while two minor ones run east-west. Three respondents would be sampled from each.

C1-3A (18)

This segment lies within the following streets: East Kalamazoo to the north; Magnolia, South Hayford, Foster to the west, I-496 Freeway to the south; and South Miffin to the east. Three streets run north-south while three others run east-west. Three respondents would be polled from each.

C1-3B (22)

This segment, adjacent to C1-3A, is bound on the east by South Howard and Detroit, on the south by Harton, on the west by Kipling, and on the north by Prospect and Kalamazoo. There are four streets running north-south. Each of the first three would provide six respondents while four would be polled from the fourth.

C1-4 (40)

This segment is situated within South Clemens to the east, East Michigan and Walsh to the north, Sheppard and McCullough to the west, and Woodman to the south. Seven streets run north-south. Six respondents each would be selected from the first six streets and four from the seventh, which is shorter than the rest.

Since the focus of the study is on the reaction of white and black viewers, the following arrangement was made:

75 black respondents were polled in the black segregated area.

75 black respondents were polled in the mixed area.

75 white respondents were polled in the white segregated area.

75 white respondents were polled in the mixed area.

Responses which did not fulfill the above conditions were excluded from the list.

APPENDIX G

STREET IDENTIFICATION

AREA 'A'	AREA 'B'
<u>A1-1 (East-West) 30</u>	<u>B1-1 (East-West) 15</u>
(a) West Allegan 5	(a) Harris 5
(b) Chelsea 5	(b) Baughart 2
(c) Washtenaw 5	(c) Call 2
(d) Kingsley 5	(d) Cier 2
(e) West Kalamazoo 5	(e) Vance 2
(f) Lenawee 5	(f) Randall 2
<u>A1-2 (East-West) 15</u>	<u>B1-2 (North-South) 30</u>
(a) West Main 5	(a) Sunnyside 3
(b) William 5	(b) Parkdale/ Clifton 3
(c) Olds Avenue 5	(c) Pershing 3
	(d) Mount Hope 3
	(e) Riley 3
	(f) Pacific 3
	(g) Elmore 3
	(h) Edison 3
	(i) Tisdale 3
	(j) Lincoln 3
<u>A2 (East-West) 30</u>	<u>B2 (North-South) 18</u>
(a) Hillsdale 8	(a) Denison 3
(b) Saint Joseph 8	(b) Stonegate 3
(c) West Main 7	(c) Meadowbrook 3
(d) William 7	(d) Old Mill 3
	(e) Rudgate 3
	(f) Anderson 3
	<u>(East-West) 12</u>
	(g) Applegate 3
	(h) Tanglewood 3
	(i) Pebblebrook 3
	(j) Northgate 3



STREET IDENTIFICATION

AREA 'C'		AREA 'C'	
<u>C1-1 (East-West) 30</u>		<u>C1-3b (North-South) 22</u>	
(a) Ottawa	10	(a) Kipling	6
(b) Ionia	10	(b) Charles	6
(c) Shiawasee	10	(c) Detroit	6
		(d) Howard	6
<u>(North-South) 25</u>		<u>C1-4 (North-South) 40</u>	
(d) Westmorland	5	(a) South Clemens	6
(e) Howe	5	(b) South Regent	6
(f) Carey	5	(c) Leslie Avenue	6
(g) Bartlett	5	(d) Sheppard	6
(h) Lahonia	5	(e) Lathrop	6
		(f) McCullough	6
<u>C1-2 (East-West) 18</u>		(g) Allen	4
(a) Handy	6		
(b) Walker	6		
(c) East Grand River	6		
<u>(North-South) 12</u>			
(d) Case	6		
(e) Ballard	6		
<u>C1-3a (East-West) 9</u>			
(a) Marcus	3		
(b) Elizabeth	3		
(c) Harton	3		
<u>(North-South) 9</u>			
(d) South Hayford	3		
(e) Foster	3		
(f) Francis	3		

APPENDIX H

Letter to Executive Producers
Norman Lear and Alan (Bud) Yorkin

February 11, 1974

Messrs. Norman Lear and Alan (Bud) Yorkin
Executive Producers
CBS TV Studios
Television City
7800 Beverly Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90036

Dear Sirs;

My name is Adebayo Ogunbi, a graduate student in the Department of Television and Radio at Michigan State University. I am writing to seek your assistance in a research study which I am undertaking.

As you are well aware, the immense audience appeal of your shows, "Sanford and Son" and "All in the Family," has been a subject of discussion and diverse comments among scholars of mass media, critics and television viewers. The objective of this study is to find out why the American television viewers cherish "Sanford and Son" so much.

While responses from viewers would enable the study to ascertain the reasons for the popularity of the show, it would be of special interest to know what motivations led you to adapt the shows from BBC series.

In addition, I would like to ask the following questions:

1. Apart from economic reasons and a desire to entertain, why did you decide to produce the show?
2. Judging from your choice of themes and the kind of dialogue employed, do you have a special message for the audience? What is it?
3. Do you anticipate attitude change as a result of exposure to this message? What change?
4. Have you had feedback in the form of mail or telephone calls from the audience about any of the episodes? If so, I'll appreciate a summary of what they said.
5. Have you had to make changes in the show in the light of the feedback? If so, what changes did you make and why?
6. What do you foresee as the future of the show?

It will be greatly appreciated if you would let me know if this request is accepted. If it will be more convenient for you to answer these questions on the phone, it can be arranged. I look forward to hearing from you soon.



APPENDIX I

TANDEM *Productions* INC.
Reply Letter from Virginia L. Carter
(Staff Assistant to Norman Lear)

(Received: Feb. 23, 1974)

February 18, 1974


Mr. Adebayo Ogunbi
Michigan State University
Department of Television and Radio
322 Union Building
East Lansing, Michigan 48824

Dear Mr. Ogunbi,

Your letter of 11 February 1974 has been directed to my attention. I will be pleased to give you whatever information I can by telephone. I can be reached at (213) 651-2345 ext. 2868.

I have forwarded your letter to Mr. Yorkin and know he will be in touch with you regarding SANFORD AND SON.

Sincerely,


Virginia L. Carter
Staff Assistant to Norman Lear

VLC:mt

APPENDIX J

Reply Letter from Executive Producer
Bud Yorkin

TANDEM *Productions* INC.

BUD YORKIN

March 13, 1974

(Received March 21, 1974)

Mr. Adebayo Ogunbi
Michigan State University
Dept. of Television and Radio
322 Union Building
East Lansing, Michigan

Dear Mr. Ogunbi:

I will try to quickly answer the many questions and attitude that you have requested in your letter.

The motivation to do SANFORD AND SON from the English series, STEPTOE AND SON, was based on two facts --

1. It was a successful series in England that had a run of some seven years.
2. It had a basic relationship between a father and son which is universal no matter what color, creed or nationality.

We decided to produce this show because, in our opinion, it would be successful and it would give us a chance to explore an area of television that hadn't been touched upon to that time -- the lower class, ethnic problems.

We have no special message for the audience -- however, we like to keep the show honest and, basically, try to dramatize the message that a father and son is a father and son no matter what his economic conditions or color may be.

I do not, for one moment, believe that a television show can radically change the attitude of an audience when all the years of our history have not been able to do this. However, if we do leave them with some food for thought, we have been partially successful.

Mr. Adebayo Ogunbi

March 13, 1974

We have had some feedback from the audience about particular episodes, and if we see that they have come in in large numbers, we certainly try to avoid making the same mistake in future shows. For example, we found that many blacks resent the word "nigger" even when it is coming from a black man's mouth and, consequently, we avoid using this phrase in the show.

I believe the show has not peaked fully with or without Redd Foxx and if I had to make a prediction, I would say that there is another two years left for this show -- that's about as far as anyone can predict for the future.

I hope the above will be helpful to you.

Sincerely,

BY:d

Bud Yorkin

APPENDIX K

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH VIRGINIA CARTER

Staff Assistant to Norman Lear
Tandem Productions

QUESTION 1: Apart from economic reasons and a desire to entertain why did you produce the show?

ANSWER: He (Norman Lear) saw a British television show which dealt, in part, with the subject of bigotry and he thought that it would be fairly exciting for him to do something similar in the American television media. That's when in 1967 he wrote a pilot television show which eventually became "All in the Family." He wrote the pilot for ABC and shot it, and ABC liked it but put it on the shelf. Three years later, ABC had done nothing with it and he took it to CBS and asked if they were interested, just at that time when the network had a new president. Bob Wood said he was very interested and they shot another version of the show and put it on the air. If you ask why did Mr. Lear do it, it's because he enjoys the ideas that are being presented; which he thinks the public will find both entertaining and thought-provoking.

QUESTION 2: Judging from your choice of themes and the dialogue employed, do you have a special message for the audience? What is it?

ANSWER: Well, the answer is no. Mr. Lear's attitude in this area is that the public and he will find a subject most entertaining when it is most thought-provoking and most gut involving. His primary objective is to present a television show which is enjoyable, which involves the audience, which the audience will choose to watch because they like it. And that, in his view, is best accomplished if the material it dealt with is that which is of emotional and thoughtful concern to the audience.

But one thing that could be noted particularly with reference to "All in the Family" is the fact that quite unlike other entertainment shows on television it developed an attitude of boldness: going out to touch an area that people thought was untouchable. Mr. Lear's view of this is that the television which preceded this kind of television was very bold in presenting an attitude. However, the attitude that it presented was an inaccurate one. Any of the earlier television shows that dealt primarily with subjects like: the mother is very upset because the roast is burnt and the father is coming home with the boss, and everybody is very upset with that. Shows that dealt with that kind of subject were saying very strongly that there was no serious labor unrest in the country, that the principal concern of the family was whether or not the roast was burnt. That's a very strong statement but it is a negative statement: that there is no minority problem; that there is no serious poverty in the ghettos. These strong cultural statements simply are not reflecting the accurate condition of our society. So what Mr. Lear did was to present equally strong statements but representative of the more honest condition of our society.

QUESTION 3: Do you anticipate attitude change as a result of exposure to this message? What change?

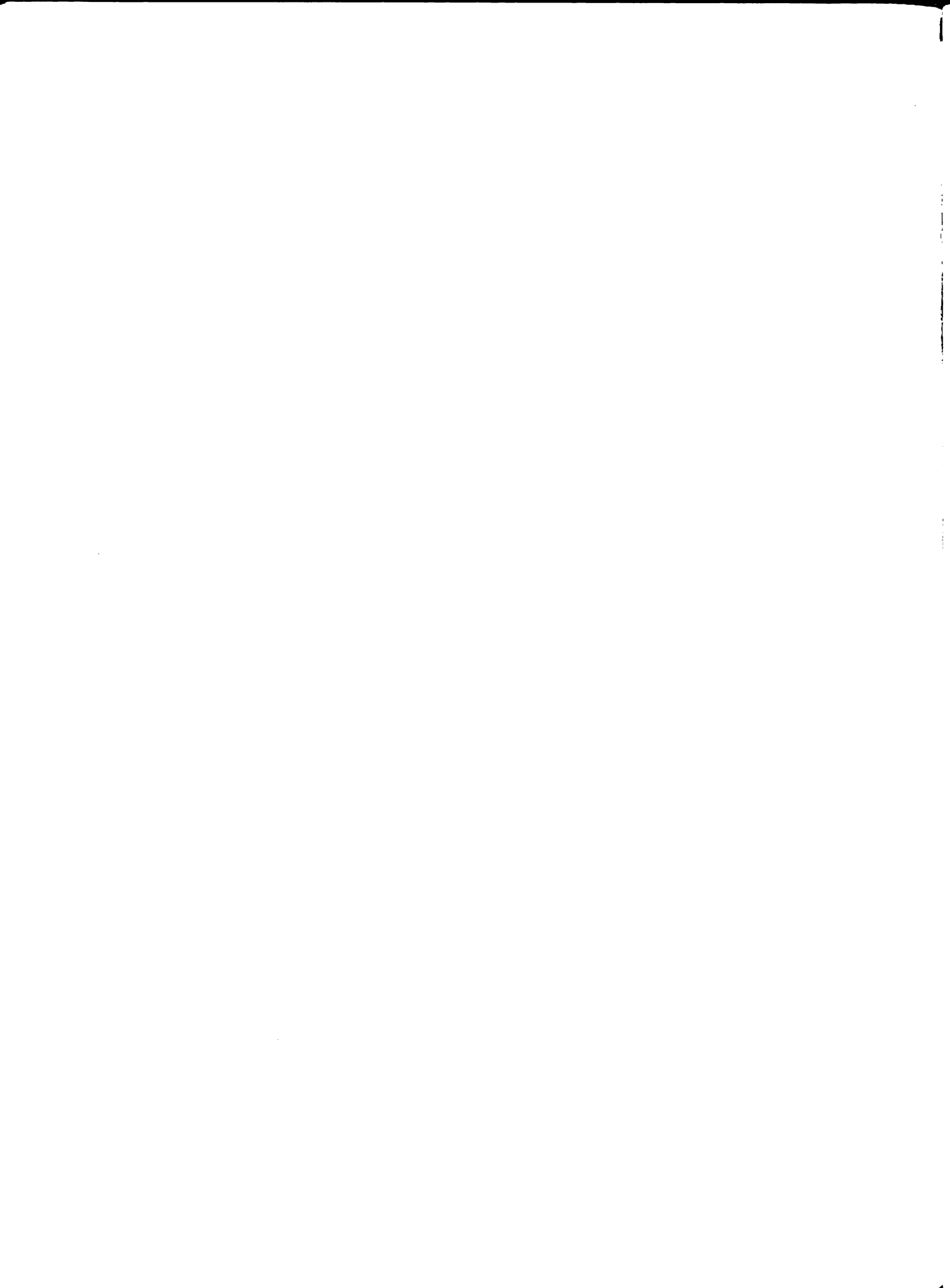
ANSWER: We have no idea. Many universities such as your own have been contacting Tandem Productions. They often say to my office: We propose to do research to analyze the effects of this or that type of program on the attitudes of the audience. We have been in contact with, and are in contact with Stanford University, Rutgers, Princeton, the University of Georgia, and now Michigan State University. These are researchers in the field of Sociology, Anthropology, Journalism, and the like. In response to their requests we often assure them that we are eager to cooperate, provide advance notice of the shows, provide scripts for analysis, and work with them in every way we can. Since we are no specialists in the area of audience analysis, we can't know the impact of our shows on the viewers. But there is a point I want to make in this connection that I find very interesting. Mr. Lear believes in trusting his judgment. When he finds a subject very interesting to him, crime in the streets or the interpersonal relationships between couples, he concludes that this would be interesting to very many people. So his television shows are largely determined by his own standards.

QUESTION 4: Have you had feedback in the form of mail or telephone calls from the audience about any of the episodes? If so, I'll appreciate a summary of what they said.

ANSWER: We have enormous feedback from the public. This company replies to all of its mail internally. Many television companies hire

a service to respond to their fan mail. We don't do that. We have the staff at Tandem Productions to make responses to all mail that comes here, and we keep a statistical analysis of all the mail on all the different channels on all the different episodes. If any of the mail comes in that is particularly interesting or is saying something that is possibly different or unique in some way, then that mail is directed to Mr. Lear's or to my attention. So we are in a very close touch with the public. You may not be aware of the fact that most of the mail is negative. This is characteristic of all shows for all times. Mail tends to come in with a ratio of 6 to 4 or 7 to 3 against. That's very understandable because you can imagine that if you saw something on television you didn't like you'd be more inclined to write a protest than you would be to write a letter that says: Dear Sir, thank you very much for a wonderful show.

It's interesting to note that when the show first went on the air four and a half years ago, CBS expected a great deal of controversy and they hired additional telephone operators to take the many calls expected. There was very little reaction. The anticipated negative public reaction proved to be false. The average number of letters we receive on any given episode (of "All in the Family") is something between 200 and 400. The most mail that we have ever received on any show was on "Maude" for the abortion show. The first time the episode ran, we got approximately 1300 letters with the expected ratio of 7 to 3 against. When it was repeated, we got 1700 letters with the ratio 50/50 because of the controversy already generated in the country



after the first showing. The second result was not spontaneous but a calculated result of campaigns to induce mail.

QUESTION 5: Have you had to make changes in the light of the feedback? If so, what changes did you make and why?

ANSWER: Of course, we don't have to make changes in the sense of there being some requirement which must be adhered to contractually. The writers, directors, and producers of these shows work very independently. However, in order to maintain the degree of popularity which these shows have attained, it would be foolish to suggest anything other than a situation in which the writers were very closely tuned to the response of the public. It would not be possible to be "number one" for 4 1/2 years if the writers and everybody weren't paying a lot of attention to the mail, not as a question of obligation, but as a matter of professional ability. So, to the extent that our writers and creators keep their ear to the ground, then the answer is yes, that they do. They attempt to reflect the attitudes expressed, I think, by the public. In addition, if someone were very thoughtful, sat down, and wrote a letter that analyzed some facet of the program in a thoughtful and creative way, and in so doing, presented a view that had not been encountered here, then that would be creatively very productive. Our system is such that the unique letters would be sent to the attention of the creators. They would take that into account in subsequent effort. That would be part of the process of keeping their ear to the ground.

QUESTION 6: What do you foresee as the future of the show?

ANSWER: I guess the only way to discuss that is to say that everyone's heart is very high. The creators of "All in the Family" enjoyed the last season very much. They found enormous satisfaction in producing many of the show's episodes. They are looking forward to next season with very good spirits.

APPENDIX L

Letter to Messrs. Redd Foxx and Demond Wilson

February 11, 1974

Messrs. Redd Foxx/Demond Wilson
NBS TV Studios
3000 West Alameda Avenue
Burbank, California 90205

Dear Sirs:

My name is Adebayo Ogunbi, a graduate student in the Department of Television and Radio at Michigan State University. The purpose of my writing is to seek your assistance in a research study which I am undertaking.

As you are well aware, the immense audience appeal of your show "Sanford and Son" is a subject of discussion and diverse comments among critics and television viewers. It is the objective of this study to find out WHY the American television audience cherish your show so much.

While responses from the audience to be interviewed would enable the study to ascertain the reasons for the popularity of the show, it would be of special interest to know what motivations help your character.

Precisely, I would like to ask you these questions:

1. Apart from economic reasons and the fact that acting is your profession, why did you agree to play your character in "Sanford and Son?"
2. What do you perceive as your role in playing this character?
3. In addition to entertaining your audience, do you have any special message for them?
4. How much of your personality is reflected in the character you play? Do you empathize with the character?

5. How much influence, if any, do you exercise in:
 - a. the themes on which the scripts are based,
 - b. the kind of language employed in the dialogue,
 - c. the choice of guest stars invited to participate, and
 - d. the general climate of the show?
6. What image of the character are you trying to communicate to the audience--since you periodically make social comments?
7. If you were the producer of the show, would you handle it differently? If so, how?
8. Have you had feedback in the form of letters or telephone calls from the audience about any of the episodes? If so, what did they say?
9. What is the best thing about the character you play that you want the audience to remember you by?

Realizing that you are very busy, I will appreciate it if you could consent to answering these questions on the phone so that I can tape it. It would save us a lot of time. You could call me collect at this number: (517) 351-5151. Kindly let me know in your reply if this request is accepted and what time would be convenient for the interview.

I remain,

Yours in the avant-garde to project
more positive black images on television.

Adebayo Ogunbi

AO:sw

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