

Whereupon, the city, I understand that is good for

LOUISE EPPERSON

called as a witness, duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION

By Mr. Jaffe:

Q Mrs. Epperson, I thank you for coming. I want to explain we take a transcript of everything that is said.

A It is perfectly okay.

Q At some subsequent time it will be made public. I also want to assure you that these transcripts are given to all the Commission Members. Since we meet four times a week, we cannot get all Commission Members here at one time, but they do all read them and consider them. So with your permission we would like to start.

Could you please give me your full name, address, your present position and a little bit about your background in the City of Newark?

A Well, my full name is Louise Epperson. I reside at 40 Twelfth Avenue in Newark. I am active in all civic as well as political affairs in the city. I live in the target area that is proposed by the medical and dental school.

I at first was not opposed to the school coming into our city because I am one that firmly believes that any school, whether it be medical and dental, academic or what,

1 is good for the city. I want everything that is good for
2 my city. But I am opposed to 150 acres of land. I am
3 opposed for the same reason there is no housing for my
4 people to move into. I am a widow woman owning my own
5 home, keeping it up to standards the best that I can, and
6 where will I get another loan? Where will I start over
7 again at my late age in life? The money they want to offer
8 me for my home certainly will not purchase a home for me.

9 Q What kind of a home do you have?

10 A I have a one-family house.

11 Q And where is it located?

12 A At 40 Twelfth Avenue in Newark. I wrote
13 Governor Driscoll's office. I tried to take this thing in
14 steps. I first went to see the mayor. I went down to see
15 the commissioners, and I told them they could have our home
16 if they will build houses for us to move in since there are
17 no houses.

18 MR. DRISCOLL: You probably wrote Governor
19 Hughes, didn't you?

20 THE WITNESS: I wrote Governor Hughes.

21 MR. DRISCOLL: Thank you for the complement.

22 THE WITNESS: I wrote to Governor Hughes.

23 They referred me to someone else. I wrote to the
24 someone else and they gave me like a run around.

25 I even wrote to Senator Case in Washington. I had

1 a letter from him referring me back to Governor
2 Hughes and to our city fathers. Well, it was just
3 utter disregard in the city for everything. When
4 I first had a meeting I invited our honorable
5 mayor to come to this meeting and to answer the
6 charges that we felt were wrong, that we were being
7 dealt with unfairly in the city. I also put it in
8 print, that write up in the Newark Evening News
9 that if he didn't want to come, he could send any
10 aide that he had, any of his advisors and I would
11 openly debate the things with them because we had
12 checked thoroughly on the housing situation.

13 Mr. Lou Banzig claims there is plenty of
14 housing. Gentlemen, this is not true. He boasts
15 about how many houses, how many units that the
16 people were living in every year and renting every
17 year. This is true, but it only meant that
18 someone that was crowded in a three-family
19 apartment when a four- or five-family apartment
20 would get empty they would revert back to this
21 five-room apartment and thereby somebody in the
22 one-room apartment would move to the three-room
23 apartment. I have known people that have moved
24 out of the old Fairmount project that had to leave
25 the city in order to find adequate housing to live

1 in. There is plenty of middle-income houses.
2 Everybody voted to have more of them built, but
3 who can afford to live in them? If your heart
4 desires, your pocketbook won't allow it. This is
5 true.

6 We have gone down to the Planning Board time
7 after time complaining. We have gone to the
8 city commissioners and complained, and we haven't
9 had any kind of regard at all. The only thing
10 that seems to be interesting to these people --
11 they are not doing anything but like they are just
12 trying to eradicate instead of to build up. This
13 is true. No matter what you say, this is true.
14 I only wish our honorable mayor was here, because
15 I have told him of this. I will tell you this. I
16 will tell anyone this. It is the disregard for
17 people.

18 I firmly believe that anyone that is elected
19 to office, his first duty should be of the people,
20 for the people and by the people. Taxation
21 without representation doesn't mean a thing to
22 anyone because there is chaos in the city.

23 We had an ugly situation here in Newark this
24 summer that you all know about. This thing could
25 have been averted if only someone would have

1 listened. We went down to the city hall. We
2 went to meeting after meeting week after week and
3 warned them. When this thing gets out of hand
4 with these young people no one can stop it. I
5 certainly can't stop it. I certainly tried to
6 avert such a mess in Newark last summer with
7 robbing and stealing and burning and the police
8 Department and the State troopers and all this
9 militia shooting people down unwarranted. It was
10 worse than the Boston Massacre. It was something
11 where you weren't safe in your own home. This
12 will never get out of my memory, and I hope I
13 will never, never have to live through such a
14 mess again.

15 I think you people that is in office or that
16 is appointed by the Governor should really look
17 into the situation in Newark because it is far,
18 far from being on an even keel even. I mean this.
19 You cannot just go around, and it seems to me
20 somebody should try to eradicate the problem.
21 Even Police Commissioner Spina admits about the
22 housing situation. He knows it.

23 You want to know what is wrong? The only
24 thing that the people are doing is trying to push
25 us. Talking about tanks and guns and all this

1 stuff, this isn't solving the problem, gentlemen,
2 because I don't care how many tanks, how many guns,
3 how many k-9 dogs you get, I don't care what the
4 situation is, unless you plan to kill every black
5 woman, man and child in this city, it will not
6 work. We must have housing. We must have schooling
7 for our children to go to. This medical school is
8 fine for a city but not with 150 acres of land.
9 This is ridiculous, preposterous. You could put
10 ten medical schools in that much land and still
11 have a big campus and everything else. We need
12 housing. We need housing for people to live in.

13 Is there anything else that you would like to
14 know?

15 MR. DRISCOLL: You talk about the Newark City
16 Police, also the State Police and the militia.
17 Could you identify these various organizations
18 from your own knowledge?

19 THE WITNESS: I couldn't identify them
20 specifically. All I know is that we who were
21 trying to observe peace were caught in a three-fold
22 situation. It has always been said that the black
23 man tears down his own, that he never bothers
24 anything else but his own. Well, this time
25 seemingly the young people tried to protect their

1 own and the people whose stores were not looted
2 and burned at the outset, they immediately wrote
3 "Soul Brother" on their window so that even my
4 white friends, I went over and wrote "Soul Brother"
5 on their windows trying to spare their stores and
6 things that wasn't already destroyed. They did
7 this in order to protect themselves from the blacks
8 that were roving and burning. Then you turn
9 around and the whites come along that are sent
10 into the city to restore peace and order, and they
11 fire four and five rounds of shots all through the
12 night over sleeping citizens, shooting out every
13 window that says "Soul Brother." They were sent
14 here to protect and to restore, not cause chaos
15 the way they did.

16 MR. DRISCOLL: We are just trying to get the
17 facts. We appreciate your help, but did you see
18 this?

19 THE WITNESS: Did I see it?

20 MR. DRISCOLL: With your own eyes.

21 THE WITNESS: I saw some of it, sir.

22 MR. DRISCOLL: And what did you see
23 specifically?

24 THE WITNESS: Specifically I was up to my
25 girlfriend's house on Clinton Avenue and I saw the

1 military police, not the city, but the State
2 policemen come in. I spent the night at her house
3 because I was afraid to travel. You would have to
4 go ever so far around to travel. She has a business
5 on the corner of Clinton Avenue. I saw the state
6 militia come in and I saw them shooting up and
7 down Clinton Avenue. They even had that big tank
8 in a parking lot and shot across her house.

9 We got out of bed, put the sofa and things
10 against the door because we thought we would be
11 killed in the house. This is the truth.

12 MR. DRISCOLL: And did you see the State
13 Police?

14 THE WITNESS: I couldn't tell you whether
15 they were the state, whether they were the city,
16 whether they were militia or what. I know they
17 were armed and with the bayonets on the guns
18 shooting. This is a disgrace to treat people this
19 way. We weren't out there robbing and killing and
20 stealing and burning. They just pushed them to the
21 wall until they had to do something.

22 CHAIRMAN LILLEY: Thank you, Mrs. Epperson.
23 We appreciate your coming here and telling your
24 story.

25 A I have sealed in the (Witness excused)

1 whereupon,

2 THOMAS E. HAYDEN

3 called as a witness, duly sworn, testified as follows:

4 EXAMINATION

5 By Mr. Jaffe:

6 Q Mr. Hayden, I would like to put on the record that
7 we are taking a stenographic transcript of your testimony
8 as we take of all witnesses who appear before the Commission
9 and testify. It is the Commission's intention that at some
10 time subsequent to the filing of the report with the
11 Governor this transcript, along with the transcript of all
12 the witnesses, will be made public in the form of being
13 filed with the state house library and various universities
14 and the public will have access to it. So I would like
15 you to be advised of the fact that what you say now will at
16 some time in the future be public.

17 Could you give us your full name, address and just
18 very briefly sketch for us your educational background and
19 your background in the City of Newark, what groups you have
20 been affiliated with, what groups you are presently
21 affiliated with? Just a little bit about yourself.

22 A My name is Thomas Hayden. I am 28 years old. I
23 reside at 227 Jelleff Avenue.

24 Q In the City of Newark?

25 A I have resided in the City of Newark since the