



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
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## **Against The Tide: Three Who Made It!**

Curriculum Unit 85.05.04  
by Ruth M. Wilson

This unit will explore the lives of three individuals who were born or raised in New Haven, Connecticut and who went on to important public careers in politics, law, and entertainment: Constance Baker Motley (law), Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (politics), Raymond St. Jacques (entertainment). Two of the individuals, Constance Baker Motley and Raymond St. Jacques, attended local public schools: Troup Junior High (known as Troup Middle School) and New Haven High School (now known as Hillhouse) in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. The third, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., the son of a prominent New Haven minister, was educated in New York City. The purpose of this unit is to inform the remedial student about these three figures, about their common roots in New Haven and about the resources they found in the pursuit of their careers. This unit situates these three figures within the New Haven of their youth and, by doing so, aims to connect their early lives with their community's history.

Sixth and seventh grade teachers may use the reading selections included in this unit to reinforce reading skills. These selections of the high points in the lives of these three individuals may also be used during Black History Month (February). The student will be able to use the skill lessons located at the end of the teaching unit to enhance a specific skill area in reading and to gain some "hometown" knowledge. After each selection, the student will do lessons in reading, spelling and language arts. The skill exercised will consist of *Cloze Stories* (choosing the correct word among several words displayed to give the selection meaning), finding the main idea of a specific selection, sequential order, comprehension and oral discussion of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s in New Haven.

The students whom I teach have scant knowledge of the achievements of native New Haveners past or present nor of their own community history. Many of my students have come here from Puerto Rico and the South and would benefit from knowledge of the social history of the city at that time. To make this unit more appealing, I have selected three individuals who have gone on to become nationally known figures. The individuals to be discussed lived in a New Haven which is quite different from the New Haven of today.

New Haven's 20th century character is less a product of the city's 19th century history and culture than of its unique and ongoing mixture of peoples. It is a city of foreign immigrants and American-born migrants. For example, after 1905, West Indians from Nevis and Jamaica settled in the New Haven area. The routes of economic and geographic mobility open to many whites were closed to many New Haven blacks. Afro-Americans and West Indians who congregated or settled in the Dixwell and Spruce Street areas rarely had the

option of moving to surrounding suburbs. Oak Street area housed many Afro-Americans and West Indians. Because of the congestion in this section, some blacks found their way in the 1930s and 1940s to the Dixwell Avenue neighborhood known as the 20th ward. Over the years with the help of the “Open Occupancy” code in 1949, blacks (meaning all black minorities) have been able to move elsewhere in the city, especially in the neighborhoods previously dominated by other ethnic groups.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1910 and 1930 the population doubled in what was then called “Negro Town: lower Dixwell Avenue. The corner of “D and W” (Dixwell and Webster) was where the “action” was according to one local historian. At its central crossing in 1930 there stood a hotel, a dance hall, a hair-dressing salon for women, a Greek ice-cream parlor, a market, a drug store, a gambling den and the district police station (which is now St. Martin De Porres Catholic Church). The adjacent blocks housed barber shops, restaurants, poolrooms, and saloons, stores of all kinds to serve the community’s needs. Constance Baker and Raymond St. Jacques frequented the ice-cream parlor and the drug store, and bought their food from the market on what people called the “Avenue” (this term is still in use).<sup>2</sup>

Professional men such as Dr. Herman Scott, Dr. Harold Fleming, and Dr. Carter Marshall practiced dentistry and medicine in the Dixwell neighborhood. Lawyer George Crawford, New Haven’s first black Corporation Council, drew some of his clients from the Dixwell area during the same time span. Holley’s Drug Store, the first black business of its kind in New Haven, was located on the corner of Foote Street and Dixwell Avenue. Although the store is now long gone, Holley’s son, Dr. Marshall Holley, follows the tradition of helping people and is located on “the Avenue”. These people serviced local-patrons and contributed to the self-sufficiency of the neighborhood in which Constance Baker Motley and Raymond St. Jacques grew up.

In the Dixwell area there were a variety of churches: Bethel, A.M.E. Zion, Immanuel Baptist, Congregational were Protestant; St. Luke’s was Episcopalian; Blessed Martin De Porres (now known as St. Martin’s) was Catholic.

St. Luke’s Episcopal Church played an important part in the lives of Constance Baker Motley and Raymond St. Jaques. Both were communicants of the church, still located on Whalley Avenue near Sperry and Dickerman Streets. This church had a very active social life and Constance and Raymond fully participated in it. During the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, many youngsters chose not to play sports on school teams so that they would be eligible to play for their church. St. Luke’s Church, for example, was a power house in basketball at that time.

When Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., was six months old his father, Adam Clayton, Sr., was Pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church located on the corner of Chapel and Day Streets. Adam C. Powell, Sr., had been called to become Pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in 1893. He, his wife and daughter Blanche resided in the church’s Parsonage, where Adam, Jr., was born in 1908. Soon after Adam’s birth, his father accepted the Pastorship of Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York City.<sup>3</sup> That is where Adam, Jr., received his education.

Prior to the introduction of Federal Housing Projects in the 1930s, many black New Haveners lived in “railroad” flats where each room was connected in a straight line to the next room. Many families, such as the Bakers on Dickerman Street, occupied individual apartments and in the summer used their front porches or stoops to socialize and watch their children. Many of the flats were given colorful names such as the “Oat Meal” flat, reflecting the difficult food situation of the depression years. In fact families were usually known for their flat and not their street number.

In the 1930s the median rent for the lower Dixwell area was \$23.70 for an apartment with indoor plumbing and bath, but seldom with central heating. The buildings were warmed on the first floor by hot air furnaces;

the upper apartments were heated with kerosene ranges. Many tenants paid \$15 for apartments with toilet and water fixtures but no bath. Many tenants with water closets in the hall paid \$12 and on Eaton Street a rental could be secured for \$8 to \$10 per month.<sup>4</sup> The Dixwell area contained many old dilapidated homes where many blacks and a few whites lived. At the corner of Dixwell and Shelton Avenue ran an imaginary dividing line stretching from the intersection north toward Hamden; only a few black families lived beyond the dividing line.

The 1940s were a turning point for New Haven's black community, for it was during that time that the first public housing was built in the United States, specifically the Elm Haven, Quinnipiac and Grand Avenue projects. When the Elm Haven project was constructed, it was built on land from which many poorly housed people had been displaced. With the introduction of public housing, modern heated apartments with bathroom, refrigeration, and gas stoves became available at prices that even low income families could afford.

Familiar landmarks that were meeting places for the younger set were torn down to make way for public housing. Places such as Bazukas, the Goffe Spa, and Frankie's Luncheonette had been traditional spots to eat or to meet a friend. Constance Baker and Raymond St. Jacques both frequented these places and enjoyed many a coke and hamburger at the Spa. "Meet you at the Goffe Spa or Bazukas" was a familiar phrase in the 1930s and 1940s.

The Community House, better known as the "Q" house, was located on Dixwell Avenue. This building was completed in 1924 and served as one of the focal points for black youngsters growing up in New Haven, like Constance Baker and Raymond St. Jacques. "The Avenue" was one of the main entertainment and shopping centers of the neighborhood from the 1930s through the 1950s. People had their needs taken care of and usually ventured "downtown" to the large department stores and theatres only on week-ends.

Long time residents recall that with the exception of a few fair-skinned blacks, New Haven's large department stores did not employ Afro-Americans as sales-persons before 1950. They were only employed as sweep-up persons and cooks in the various downtown establishments. Even though some blacks spent money at such department stores as Moline's, Shartenberg's, Gamble and Desmond, Stanley's and the Edward Malley Company, these businesses, now demolished or vacated, had an unwritten policy of not hiring blacks. The five and ten cent stores (so named because the items were cheap), like Newberry's, Kresge's, Grant's and Woolworth's, employed blacks only as sweepers, dishwashers, and short-order cooks.

As for eating in downtown restaurants, this was considered off limits. Long time residents recall that eating establishments such as the Taft Hotel employed black cooks and chefs but didn't take kindly to black patrons patronizing their establishments.

Of course, the black community had their own fine stores and restaurants such as Julia's Tea Room, located on Sperry Street, and Chick Harris's restaurant on Dixwell between Webster and Eaton Streets. These were fine eating establishments with excellent food and courteous waitresses.<sup>5</sup> Still there was considerable resentment of this type of treatment of the black population, but very little was done about the conditions until the civil rights movement in the early sixties.

*Conclusion* : The three individuals discussed were born at different times in New Haven, Connecticut. Two, Raymond St. Jacques and Constance Baker Motley, attended the same church, community center, Junior and Senior High Schools. They each lived through hard times and discriminatory attitudes to become notables in their own right. Each contributed enough to have made their family, friends and city proud of them.

“Where we love is home,  
home that our feet may  
leave, but not our hearts.”  
(Oliver Wendell Holmes)

*(figure available in print form)*

New Haven Notables

### *Constance Baker Motley*

Constance Baker was born in New Haven, Connecticut to Rachel and Willoughby Baker. Her parents had been born on the island of Nevis in the British West Indies. Mr. Baker had immigrated to New Haven in 1905 with his wife following two years later. The Bakers, who raised nine children were among the first West Indian families to settle in New Haven. During Constance’s early years her family lived on Day Street, Garden Street and finally moved to Dickerman Street to a big cold water “railroad” flat. There they resided on the second floor until they were grown.

Constance attended Dwight Elementary School from Kindergarten to sixth grade; then on to Troup Junior High in 1936; three years later she became President of the Ninth Grade Student Council at New Haven High School (now known as Hillhouse), then located on Tower Parkway. While at Hillhouse, Constance was also President of the French Club. She excelled at each school she attended. While at Troup she received the music and art awards. (The school now has an award in her honor which is given to an outstanding eighth grade student at graduation.) While a student at Hillhouse, Constance was one of the first sophomores to have a poem published in the school’s newspaper, *The Gleam* . Prior to that time only Juniors and Seniors had been eligible to write for the paper. It was titled:

“Listen Lord From The Slum”

Someone told me that a God made the world

and everything from stone to wood;

And when He had finished it  
He said that was good.  
He worked on it six long days  
On the seventh He rested content.  
But I have often wondered  
If this is the place He meant.  
Man made the slums where I live  
With its mountain of sin;  
They jammed the housing together  
to keep beauty from entering in.

I often think that it is true  
That real things have never been seen,  
'Cause I've lived here all my life  
And never saw grass that was green.  
I don't think God made my world,  
'Cause it's misery not fun.  
If he made a beautiful place  
This is not the one.  
Yet someone said there is a place  
Where the sun shines bright all day;  
And that beautiful trees and flowers  
Have been planted along the way.  
My days are dark and dreary,  
Yet I often wish I could  
See with my own eyes  
The world that God called good.  
When I see Him I'll tell Him  
That it's the sin which man has hurled  
Upon this beautiful earth  
Which has devastated the world.  
No longer am I sad, for someday  
When my eyes close for good,  
I'll see in glory  
The world the way I should.  
(June 17, 1937)

After graduating from Hillhouse, Constance attended Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Her first encounter with overt or legal discrimination occurred there. Coming upon a sign that read "For Colored People Only," Constance realized that what affected one black person affected all and she realized that things needed to be changed. When she came home for vacation, her family asked her how she liked the South. Her reply: "Oh, Ma I got something for you." She went to her suitcase and took out the plaque which read "For Colored People Only". Her mother was upset and said, "Don't you know they could put you in jail for that! What are you doing with it?" Young Connie answered, "It said, "For Colored People Only" and I'm colored! Momma. If it's the last thing I do, I'm going to break this mess up!" She took the plaque and broke it across her knee.

Constance then transferred from Fisk to New York University, from which she graduated in 1943. She immediately entered Columbia Law School and received her law degree three years later. While at Columbia she met Joel Motley, Jr., who had come to New York from Decatur, Illinois. In August, 1946, two months after graduation they were married.

True to the words she uttered to her mother, Constance took ten civil rights cases to the Supreme Court and won nine of them. She then became the only woman to plead a case before the United States Supreme Court. In 1954 as a member of the N.A.A.C.P. (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), Constance Baker Motley worked with Thurgood Marshall on *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, which became the landmark in school desegregation. Being the new member on the team, Constance Motley worked predominately on research. Later she represented such notable civil rights leaders as the Reverends Martin Luther King, Ralph Abernathy, and Fred Shuttlesworth, giants in their field of civil rights.

Upon becoming Manhattan Borough President, Constance Baker Motley was honored by the city of New Haven in 1965. In the mid-seventies Judge Motley addressed a gathering at a dedication ceremony for an elderly housing complex located on Sherman Parkway. This complex was named in her honor to show the city's appreciation. The complex is a five-story building providing 63 units of low-rent public housing for the elderly.

The Yale Women's Forum presented the Achievement Medal to the Honorable Constance Baker Motley. This award is presented to women "who saw their own professional achievements have contributed to the achievements of all women (past recipients have been Frances [Sissy] Farenthold, Helen Frankenthaler, Mary Griswold, the late Patricia Harris, Alice Paul, and Dr. Helen Taussig).

Since 1961, Judge Motley has received more than forty awards in recognition of her outstanding service to society. Included in this list of tributes are: Honorary Doctorate of Law Degree from Western College for Women in Oxford, Ohio; the Distinguished Service Award of American Teacher's Association, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Public Service Award of the New Era Democratic Club, and the Award of Merit of the Barristers Club of Philadelphia.

### *Raymond St. Jacques*

Raymond Johnson (stage name Raymond St. Jacques) was born in Hartford, Connecticut during the height of the depression. His parents were divorced when he was an infant. His mother, now remarried, moved to New Haven when her son was four months old. Raymond and his younger sister, Barbara, lived with their mother first on Munson Street near the northern end of Dixwell Avenue and then on Townsend Street between Orchard and Charles Street. There Mrs. Johnson could raise her two children with the support of her own family. Raymond had a close relationship with his uncles Raymond and Donald West, and they served as excellent role models for him.

During the early 1940's, Raymond attended Simeon Baldwin Elementary School on County Street. Although students usually started school in Kindergarten, Raymond entered Baldwin in the first grade and continued there through the sixth grade. While attending Baldwin School, his mother recognized his creative talents. "He was always writing stories" she recalled, "which he later developed into plays and acted them out. His vocabulary was extensive as a child. One day (she continued) Raymond wrote a play about an elevator operator. He and his sister went into the closet and shut the door pretending they were in an elevator. Well, the door of the closet shut too tight and his sister became frightened . . . Raymond, undaunted, went on with his script. Lucily I heard his sister crying." Even then, Raymond believed the show had to go on!

In 1946 Raymond entered Troup Junior High School. With his mother's encouragement, Raymond enrolled in the schools Social Arts Course (a college preparation course). From Troup Jr. High, Raymond went on to Hillhouse High School. He became a member of the Drama Club and Performed in the operetta "The Hot Mikado." This was an achievement in itself for very few black students were involved in school activities during the 1940's. In 1951 Raymond graduated from Hillhouse.

A year later Raymond enlisted in the Air Force (the Korean Conflict). While in the service, he continued to develop his talents by arranging plays and entertaining servicemen at a base in Denver, Colorado. Soon after his discharge from the Air Force, Raymond attended the Actor's Studio, the Institute for Advanced Theatre Arts, and the Herbert Berghot Institute.

While a student at Troup, Raymond worked at various odd jobs to help with family finances. He delivered groceries for the local A & P store, and being an ambitious young man, he sold *The Saturday Evening Post* door-to-door. His extended and supportive family helped him out by buying most of his magazines and Raymond won a prize for his large sales.

While a student at Hillhouse, Raymond worked at Race Brook Country Club. From the Country Club he went on to work in the Yale dining halls as a dishwasher. One day Raymond complained, "Mother, I've washed so many dishes that I never want to wash another dish now or ever." But dishwashing had its rewards, for when things were slow in the dining hall, Raymond would watch the student actors rehearse in the School of Drama. This he loved doing. At sixteen, using the money he earned from working Raymond bought his mother a birthstone ring.

Raymond was proud to use his hard earned money on his mother's behalf, his mother, in turn, insisted that he never work a job that interfered with his school work.

The Johnson family attended St. Lukes Episcopal Church on Whalley Avenue. Raymond was an active participant at St. Luke s as well as at the "Q" House (Community House), on the lower end of Dixwell Avenue. Through the years of Raymond St. Jacques' childhood into his youth and adolescence, the "Q" House was his "home away from home"

Early in the 1950's Raymond St. Jacques changed his name because there had been another Raymond Johnson in the Theatre who was getting his credits. While a student at the American Shakespeare Festival, Raymond was asked to become a regular member of the company. He took fencing lessons and became so adept with the sword that eventually he was made responsible for fencing scenes in the Festival's productions. In time he became an assistant director.

On Broadway, he appeared in the musicals "Seventh Heaven" and "Cool World," as well as "Night Life", a play by Sidney Kingsley. Off Broadway, he performed in "The Blacks", and "Man With the Golden Arm." In summer



stock, he performed in “Raisin in The Sun”, “Purley Victorious”, and “Julius Ceasar.” His TV appearances have included “Roots” (part one), “Sophisticated Gents and the Monk”, “Cagney and Lacey”, “Trapper John”, “Hardcastle and McCormack”, “The Fall Guy.” All told Raymond St. Jacques has starred in over 300 television shows during the course of his career. Some of the roles ranged from a regular on “Rawhide” to “Fantasy Island.”

The acting career of Raymond St. Jacques has also included such films as: “Cotton Comes to Harlem”, “Come Back Charleston Blue”, “Cool Breeze”, “Uptight”, “The Pawnbroker”, “The Comedians”, “Mr. Moses”, “Black Like Me”, and “Secret Files of the FBI” to mention a few of his credits. His current film is “The Evil That Men Do”, co-starring Charles Bronson.

In 1974, Raymond formed his own film company, “St. Jacques Organization, Inc., which produced and directed the film “The Book of Numbers.” St. Jacques is a member of the Screen Actors Guild, Black Motion Picture and Television Producers Association, and past member of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Science Scholarship Fund.

Raymond has been a guest lecturer and speaker across the country, including speeches to both the NAACP and the Urban League at their national conventions. Only recently Raymond St. Jacques was arrested in Washington, D.C., on the steps of the South African Embassy, protesting against the government’s apartheid policy.

This young man, one of the kids from the “Q” House and the neighborhood around Dixwell Avenue, became famous through perseverance, hard work, common sense, and creativity; he is proud to call New Haven his home and New Haven is proud to claim him.

*Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.*

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., was born in New Haven to an upper-middle class Baptist clergyman and his wife on Thanksgiving Day, 1908. He was the second child born to Mattie Fletcher and Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. His sister, Blanche, who died early in her married life, was quite a bit older than Adam, Jr. According to Adam Powell, Jr., his maternal grandfather was Col. Jacob Schaefer, a member of the New York brewing family and founder of a Christian academy for educating young blacks. It is not known whether paternity was ever acknowledged by the Schaefers.<sup>6</sup>

While Adam was still an infant in New Haven, his father, Adam, Sr., was the Pastor of Immanuel Baptist on Chapel and Day Street, at that time an impoverished parish in close proximity to Yale University. The Powells resided in the church parsonage near the church. At that time, the congregation totaled only 135, unlike the large numbers of today.

From 1893 to 1908 Adam, Sr., had looked after the spiritual needs of his congregation. He enrolled as a special student at the Yale Divinity school and continued the laborious process of self-education that had begun in a one-room log cabin in Virginia. Adam, Sr., discovered in himself a pronounced oratorical talent and set about developing it. Soon he was in demand as a lecturer in and around New Haven, which enhanced his meager income.

Almost simultaneously upon the arrival of Adam, Jr., Adam, Sr., accepted an invitation to become Pastor of New York’s Abyssinian Baptist Church. At six months, Adam, Jr., and his family moved to New York City where Adam’s family always managed to live “uptown” in private homes until they finally settled in a ten-room



penthouse located on the top of his father's new church building. There Adam spent many interesting days meeting famous black dignitaries such as Marcus Garvey and Roi Ottley.

In Adam's early years the Bible and the dictionary occupied prominent places in the family's life and home. Adam, Sr., read the Bible before and after dinner, and after the readings, the family would discuss the selection. The first influence in Adam, Jr.'s education, however, was his nurse and friend Josephine. She taught him how to read from the newspaper when he was between the age of three and four. He attended New York's 134th Street school, an old brick building which appeared enormous to a small lad. From Adam's first day at school, he enjoyed the atmosphere of learning.<sup>7</sup>

When Adam's family moved from 134th Street to an apartment next to the church, he reluctantly spent two years in a school downtown away from Harlem. Finally when his father's congregation built the new Abyssinian Baptist Church on 136th Street, Adam and his family moved to the top floor. Adam was finally happy to be back in Harlem. Since Adam's father was a minister Adam spent many hours attending church and listening to his father's sermons from the pulpit.

Between 1922 and 1926, Adam attended New York's High School for Achieving Students. Upon graduation he entered Colgate University in upstate New York. While a student at Colgate all students were obliged to attend chapel where guest speakers would deliver sermons. One of the guest speakers was his father, Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., who because of his wit became a popular speaker in the chapel.

Adam managed to pass his courses at Colgate, but his parents weren't too pleased with his antics outside class. His father was deeply disappointed with him, but his mother still kept her faith in his intellectual ability. During his senior year, Adam thought briefly about applying to Harvard Medical School but instead chose the ministry, which his father had wanted him to do. Eventually his son would follow in the father's footsteps and become pastor. After graduating from Colgate, Adam entered Union Theological Seminary in New York City. When he had completed his studies at the seminary in 1931, he became assistant minister to his father at Abyssinian Baptist Church.

Adam Clayton Powell's college education took place during the great depression. Fortunately for his family they escaped its tragedy and didn't lose their wealth. For upon graduation from Colgate, Adam left immediately on his first trip to Europe. He had \$2500 in his pocket, a round trip ticket and a job waiting on his return. This was a time when many rich and middle-class families had lost everything: jobs, money and self-respect. Poverty and misery were everywhere. Unfortunately, Adam did not become aware of these problems until his return home. Evidently Adam was too busy enjoying the "good life" to view the suffering that was around him. After his return home, however, he realized the despair around him.

During the depression, Adam became a crusader for reform. He was instrumental in persuading several large corporations to drop the unwritten ban on hiring blacks. He directed a relief and soup kitchen which fed, clothed, and gave fuel to many of Harlem's destitute. In 1935, Mr. Powell persuaded officials of Harlem Hospital to allow black interns and nurses to work there, and sought better hospital housing and educational facilities for blacks along Harlem's "main stem" (people in his district).<sup>8</sup>

Adam C. Powell, Jr., became Pastor of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in 1938 after his father's retirement. While pastor, he served as chairman of the Co-ordinating Committee on employment. This committee organized a picket line before the executive offices of the 1939 World's Fair, located in the Empire State Building. This action led to the employment of hundreds of blacks at the Fair.

In 1941, Adam was elected to the New York City Council and in 1944 went on to the Congress of the United States, where he soon earned the name “Mr. Civil Rights.” During his tenure in Washington as a Congressman, Adam encountered many discriminatory practices: he could not rent a room in downtown Washington or attend a movie in which his wife, Hazel Scott, was starring. He could not use such facilities as the Congressional dining rooms, steam baths, showers, and barber shops. He met these challenges by using all the facilities and by likewise insisting that his entire staff do so.

During Powell’s years as a legislator, he engaged in many fiery debates concerning civil rights, and as Chairman of the House Education Labor Committee, he denied any funds to any projects where discrimination existed. By doing this, Powell caused the dislike of those who preferred to preserve the racial status quo just as he was highly rewarded by those for whom he fought. Unfortunately, in 1967, Adam Clayton Powell’s flamboyant life style caught up with him. His enemies used his spotty bookkeeping practices and other financial irregularities to deprive him of his Congressional seat. In 1962, a vote to exclude him from Congress was passed based upon allegations that he had misused public funds.<sup>9</sup>

In 1968, Powell was re-admitted to the 91st Congress after the Supreme Court ruled that the House of Representatives had violated the Constitution by not allowing him to take his seat in Congress. In 1970 he lost the New York Democratic Primary and his seat in Congress to Charles Rangel. As Powell’s support dwindled, Rangel’s popularity increased. Angry and bitter, Powell spent his later years on the island of Bimini in the West Indies. There, on April 4, 1972, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., died. Ironically, this was the date of the fourth anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s death. Adam was a man who drew much controversy in his life time but he will always be remembered for his service on behalf of the civil rights cause.

## Notes

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1. Lucinda Burkepile, *New Haven an Illustrated History* (Windsor Publications, 1981) p. 56.
2. Dan Stewart, *Black New Haven* (New Haven: Advocate Press, 1976) p.2.
3. Edward Edwin and Neil Hickey, *Adam Clayton Powell and the Politics of Race* (New York: Fleet Publishing, 1965) p. 19.
4. Robert Austin Warner, *New Haven Negroes* (New York: Arno Press, 1969) p. 201.
5. Stewart, *Black New Haven* , p. 1.
6. Adam Clayton Powell, *Adam by Adam* (New York: Dial Press, 1971), pp. 4-5.
7. Edward Edwin and Neil Hickey, *Adam Clayton Powell* (New York: Fleet Publishing, 1965), pp. 18-19.
8. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. *Adam by Adam* (New York: Dial Press) p. 22.
9. Warren Marr and Harry Ploski, *Afro-American Bicentennial* (New York: Bellwether Company, 1976), pp. 327, 328.
10. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. *Adam by Adam* (New York: Dial Press, 1971) p. 21.

Lesson I

Concept :

The black establishment in New Haven, Connecticut in the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's.

**Objective Student will become aware of the type of city New Haven was at that point in time and compare the past to the present.**

**Materials Photographs showing New Haven before Federal Housing projects.**

**Activities** The students and teacher will discuss New Haven, then and now, using pictures shown preferably on an overhead projector.

Teacher helps students to compare the "amenities" now as opposed to then. Teacher will then ask questions to elicit discussion:

In what kind of housing did most blacks live in the 1930's?

How did many of the flats get their names?

How does housing compare to housing today?

What social institutions were popular in the Dixwell area?

What was the "unwritten" employment practice policy at that time? Name specific places.

How does the employment pattern compare with today's employment?

Teacher note: It is important for students to be aware of the personal aspects of the city. (Schooling, Amusements, and Church).

When the occasion arises or if the unit is intended for teaching Black History, teacher and students can define the term "minority," then remove to a discussion of New Haven during the 1930's, as seen through the eyes of a particular minority's population. Try to determine if a minority person's viewpoint would differ from someone who isn't from the same background? Why?

## Lesson II

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**Concept To be aware of some notable people who were born or lived in the "Elm City."**

**Objective** The student will understand the procedure for understanding the Cloze sentence structure.

**Materials** Short story with blanks which student is to read and then select appropriate words to complete the assignment.

**Activity** The teacher passes out a particular selection (Motley, St. Jacques, Powell, Jr.). The student is to write correct response in the appropriate blank space.

## Lesson for Objective II.

Constance Baker Motley was born in \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_. She came from a \_\_ family. Her parents were immigrated from \_\_, \_\_ \_\_\_\_. Constance attended Dwight Elementary School from Kindergarten to \_\_\_\_, she then entered \_\_\_\_, and finally graduated from \_\_\_\_ in 1939. At each school she attended, \_\_\_\_\_ received awards for being an \_\_ student. While at Troup she was awarded the \_\_ and \_\_ award. She also enjoyed writing poetry for \_\_\_\_ while at Hillhouse. Her English teacher thought her poem was good enough to be \_\_ for all students to read.

### WORD LIST

Published

Sixth grade

Hillhouse

Music and Art

Sophomore

Troup Jr. High

New Haven, Conn.

large

excellent

The Gleam

Constance Nevis,

British West Indies

This type of lesson can also be used for Raymond St. Jacques and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.

## Lesson III

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**Concept** Life in New Haven in the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's.

**Objective** The student will be able to enjoy and understand the selections being taught through vocabulary awareness.

**Materials** *The chalkboard and chalk. Selections to be read, for example, the employment section of Raymond St. Jacques' biography passed out to the class to be read orally or silently as teacher so desires.*

**Activity Vocabulary study. The teacher will list on the chalkboard specific words which relate to the story and its comprehension as well as other words which students may not be familiar with.**

The appropriateness of words for the class will depend upon the teacher and the class being taught.

### **Lesson for Objective III.**

Word list (selection: Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. childhood)

congregation

paternity

peak

meager

pronounced

Roi Otterly

laborious

simultaneously

position

managed

penthouse

prominent

oratorical

challenging

invitation

acknowledge

Marcus Garvey

Abyssinian Baptist

1. The teacher will guide the students in the pronunciation of of the words.
2. The class will copy the words to learn meaning for individualized test on vocabulary on the color computer (Radio Shack) if room is so equipped.
3. The student will make sentences using vocabulary words.

Teacher note: I have found that teaching vocabulary with the use of computer (in my classroom) has been successful in motivating the students.

## Lesson IV.

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**Concept** Times and event must have sequential order for things to make sense.

**Objective** The student will recognize the importance of sequential order chronological or flashback.

**Materials** The students with the teacher will read the selection on Constance Baker Motley in its entirety. Then the teacher may take (at least four) sections from the story out of sequence and students are to justify the reasoning for putting selections in the correct order.

**Activities** The student will read orally and will discuss:

- a. examples of subtle discrimination in the city
- b. how each person pursued their career
- c. how education played a major role in their achievements
- d. how growing up in those times was different or similar to today?

Students will elicit the main idea of their selection.

## Lesson V

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**Concept** Comprehension is the art of understanding.

**Objective** *The student will be able to discuss and answer questions intelligently at the end of narrative.*

**Materials** Questions which could be passed out to the students on ditto or written on the chalkboard. Depending upon the selection read, answer these questions.

### Lesson for Objective V

1. What is the main idea of this selection?
  - a. Education is important

- b. Awards are very important
  - c. Education has its reward
2. Name some awards Constance Baker Motley won during her adult career?
  3. While a sophomore at Hillhouse, Constance wrote a poem entitled:
    - a. Listen God from the Ghetto
    - b. Listen Lord from the Slums
    - c. Why did God make Slums?
  4. What was the name and location of the university from which Constance transferred?
    - a. Columbia University, New York City
    - b. Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia
    - c. Fisk University, Tennessee
  5. What did Constance do with the sign she took home with her?
    - a. Threw it away
    - b. Burned it
    - c. Broke it
    - d. Showed it to her neighbors
  6. What was her feelings when talking about the sign?
    - a. Positive
    - b. Negative
    - c. Neutral
  7. What makes you think so?
  8. In what year did Mrs. Motley graduate from Columbia Law School?
    - a. in 1947
    - b. in 1943
    - c. in 1946
  9. When did she become Mrs. Joel Motley, Jr.
    - a. before graduation
    - b. after graduation
    - c. while a student at Columbia
  10. Ask your parents if they have ever heard of Mrs. Constance Baker Motely? If so, when?



## Activities

1. Students may list awards listed in the story and any others he/she may know about.
2. Many elderly people live in elderly apartments in New Haven: see if you can locate what is directly across from the Constance Baker Motley Elderly housing on Sherman Parkway.

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## Acknowledgments

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Interview with Mrs. Edna Baker Carnegie, sister of Judge Constance Baker Motley, June 1985.

Interview with Mrs. Vivienne West Brown, mother of actor Raymond St. Jacques, July 1985.

## Reading List for Students

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*(figure available in print form)*

Pictures of New Haven.

*(figure available in print form)*

Map of Dixwell Area. Reprinted from New Haven by Elizabeth M. Brown.

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