The Gary Family of Richmond: Fighting for Equality and Standing for Their Rights

MOVING IN—Members of the Wilbur Gary family, pictured above, expect to complete moving into their newly purchased home in Rollmngwood. Pictured above they are shown around a white cross which was stuck in the front yard. They are, front: Thomas, 7, left, and Constance, 9. Left to right: Barbara, 5; Wilbur, 17; Mrs. Gary, Raphael, 19 months; 1952
WW II in Richmond

During World War II (1939-1945), Richmond, California was one of the most important industrial sites of the homefront war effort. With large numbers of employable white men overseas, blacks, along with women and Mexicans, played a critical role as home front workers in this industry. The population of Richmond dramatically grew from 30,000 in the 1930’s to 100,000 by the end of the war.

In order to accommodate the large influx of workers and their families, the largest war housing program was developed here. By the end of the war, more than half of all Richmond residents lived in war housing, including close to 80% of all black residents. The Richmond Housing Authority maintained a 4 to 1 ratio between white and black residents, and segregated black residents by building projects. The Canal and Terrace Housing Projects were largely black. The Harbor Gate, Atcheson Village, Nystrom Village and Triangle Court War Housing Projects were primarily white. (1)

The housing demolition policies enacted by the Richmond city leaders (all white) at the end of the war suggested that they thought that there were too many blacks in Richmond. This speculation was partially based on the particular scheduling of the demolition of predominantly black-inhabited war housing

In 1952, residents of the Canal and Terrace War Housing Projects received eviction notices that stated, “We regret the necessity of asking you to move.” Seven hundred black families from Canal and Terrace were forced out. (2)

The Rev. W. Lee La Beaux, a black pastor at the Canal Project’s Providence Baptist Church, and Father John Garcia led the displaced black tenants in protests to City Hall, demanding priority in other public housing projects. In response, a relocation center was created. Little private housing was available to blacks. Most were moved to other rundown apartments also on the demolition schedule. (3)

National Housing Policies

In other parts of the country, racist housing policies were being challenged. In the mid-1940s, NAACP and ACLU lawyers, including Thurgood Marshall and Loren Miller, represented many plaintiffs seeking to invalidate housing covenants that prevented blacks from purchasing or renting housing in certain areas. Racial covenants became the fashion, almost a passion, in conveyances, and were demanded by banks and lending institutions in all real estate developments. In 1948 the U.S. Supreme Court declared in Shelley v Kraemer that racial covenants cannot be enforced by the courts.

Many racist individuals responded with terrorist attacks and fire bombing of the houses of blacks and Mexicans in several parts of the country, including Florida and Los Angeles.

Former Navy man Wilbur Gary and his wife Borece were residents of the Harbor Gate War Housing Project at the end of the war. In 1952 the Garys heard the rumors that the Harbor Gate War Housing Project, where they resided, would likely be next on the demolition list, even though it housed mostly skilled white workers. The southside geographic area was coveted by the Safeway supermarket chain for a warehouse. The Richmond Chamber of Commerce exerted enormous pressure for a year and successfully helped to deliver the evictions. The demolition was conducted by early 1953, over the objections of the NAACP and others.

The Gary family was familiar with the disastrous fate of thousands of blacks from the Canal and Terrace Housing Projects. They needed more room for their seven children and were saving their money.

Early in 1952, as word was getting out about the likely demolition of Harbor Gate, the Garys, like their white neighbors, started searching for options.

After years of hard work, with their savings and the help of the GI bill, the Garys were ready to purchase a home of their own, if they could find one. This is where the Gary family’s story of courage and determination begins.

The Garys find a house...

A fellow Navy man, Lt. Commander Sidney T. Hogan, was selling his house and moving to San Francisco. Mrs. Neitha Williams, a black real estate businesswoman with offices on 347 Sixth Street, would handle the transaction. The house was in Rollinwood, an all-white defense worker subdivision built during the war with racial covenants, recently declared unenforceable by the courts.

...but they also find bigotry and racism

Monday, March 3, 1952

“A glaring white cross, standing about 3 feet high, was planted in the front yard of a Rollinwood home some time last night apparently in protest to the occupancy of the residence by a Negro family. ………… Gary said: ‘We purchased the home and have no intentions of relinquishing it unless some physical force is exerted’. Sale of the home was handled through a real estate firm in Richmond operated by Naitha Williams, also a Negro. It sold for $8,700. While no organization of Rollinwood residents would comment on the placing of the white cross, opposition to the occupancy of the home was voiced by neighbors, many of whom were irate and said so.” (Richmond Independent, Tuesday March 4, 1952 p. 1)

Tuesday, March 4

“The board of directors of the Rollinwood Improvement Association urged all residents to refrain from any acts of violence and reported, in leaflets distributed throughout the 800-home district, that they had retained legal assistance in seeking to negotiate the purchase of the home from Gary.” (Richmond Independent, March 6, 1952, p. 1)

Rollinwood Improvement Association: The Garys are not welcome.

“During the last week there have been numerous rumors, speculation and misinformation [sic] circulating, and the purpose of this message is to give you the facts: Within the past few days one of our fellow residents, for reasons best known to himself, has entered into a valid contract to sell his home to a Negro family. We are told that this family plans to move in the very near future. Since that time feeling has been running very high in many quarters and there has already occurred one regrettable instance which only serves to heighten the friction and strong feeling that already exists. Nothing can or will be served by such demonstrations, and we ask each of you to do what you can to discourage such further display. Without attempting to debate the morals of the situation, or to justify one side or another, we feel that the best interests of Rollinwood would be accomplished by approaching this problem in a calm and restrained manner. With that in mind, we have secured legal advice and thoroughly explored the situation. We are at present negotiating for the purchase of this property from the Negro family, giving them a reasonable profit. Such action is being taken, believing that it is the fair way to solve our present difficulty and restore harmony to our community” The leaflet was signed by T.C. Houston, president, and Ernest Hill, Bill Carpenter, Ed Powell, Mrs. Dorothy Miller, Walt Weyman, Stan Anderson, Roy Tibetts, Mrs Rose Scott and Mrs Ada Goodbar.

(Richmond Independent, March 5, 1952, pp 1-3)

“Despite the presence of a wooden white cross, Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur D. Gary plan on moving into their new Rollingwood residence sometime tomorrow. Here Gary holds one of their seven children, Raphaelle, 19 months.” (Richmond Independent, Tuesday, March 4, 1952)
Violence Against the Black Realtor

Tuesday, March 4

“Tuesday night while Gary was in the office of Neitha Williams, 347 Sixth Street, the Richmond real estate operator who handled the sale of the home, a large brick was tossed through the plate glass window. Gary said that two men were in the automobile, which disappeared north on Sixth Street. No one was injured.”

(Richmond Independent, March 6, 1952, p 1)

The Garys Ready to Make Their Stand

Tuesday March 4

Attorney Russell King offers to buy out the Garys on behalf of the Rollingwood Association

“In his written offer to Gary, King says: "I am authorized and prepared to buy the described property from you for the total sum of $9,900 which would represent a clear profit to you of $1,000. Such an offer would contemplate assuming any obligation or items now existing on the house, either recorded or otherwise, and pay the difference between that and the $9,900 in cash.”

In spite of intimidation tactics and buy-out offers, the Garys stood firm.

They would not be bought out. They would not be run out.

“I’m not afraid and I will not be forced out…We’ve got to whip this thing sometime, and it might as well be now.”

Wilbur D. Gary  March 6, 1952

Doris Campbell, employee of Neitha Williams Real Estate
As Richmond Gary family moves in, mob gathers outside...

“Richmond Independent, March 6, 1952, p 2)

“The Richmond Negroes spent the first night in their recently purchased home there (Rollingwood)... The Garys are the first Negro family in the 800 home suburb north of San Pablo. The crowd began gathering about 6 P.M. (about 200 persons, many of them youths).

Gary sent five of his seven children to stay at their old apartment on South 25th Street. He remained there with his two oldest children and a White neighbor. At one point during the evening the neighbor, George Eldredge, went out on the porch in an attempt to quiet the crowd.”

“Richmond Independent, March 6, 1952, p 2)

“My property would go down $2,500 if the n-----rs moved in”.

“My contract reads this is an all-White neighborhood” shouted a housewife, referring to a restrictive clause in all sales contracts for the tract.

A woman yelled to Long: ‘I talked with my banker today and he said my property would go down $2,500 if the n-----rs moved in’. Long replied: “I’m not here to argue with your banker... you have a constitutional right to gather here; you are not violating any law nor disturbing the peace, but I ask you again in the name of common sense and as good American citizens to go home” He was ignored.

(Daily People’s World (DPW), Friday, March 7, 1952, p. 8)

“Get out n-----r or we'll burn your house down.”

Meanwhile, inside the house the Negro family met the attack calmly. At one point, when Mrs. Gary went out on her front porch, a bigot shouted, ‘Get out n-----r or we'll burn your house down.’ Mrs. Gary walked across the street facing the mob and declared: ‘If you do, then as soon as the ashes cool, my family and I will come back and live on the empty lot.” Friends persuaded her to come back in the house.”

(DPW, Friday, March 7, 1952, p. 8)

And Death threats:

One mobster walked by the house as Gary stood in the front yard and bawled out: “Where I come from, we shoot the SOBs when they act like you.”

(DPW, March 10, 1952, p. 8)
Civil Rights Activists Defend and Support the Garys

“One morning in 1952, the San Francisco Chronicle reported: a cross had been burned on the lawn of a black veteran, Wilbur D. Gary, who had bought a house in the all white housing project of Rollingwood, some fifteen miles from Oakland. Buddy (Green) and I raced out there, past the sign that said, "Welcome to Rollingwood," and into the maze of neat pastel bungalows. We had no trouble identifying Gary's house, where a huge crowd of white men and teenagers were gathered (four hundred according to Buddy, expert crowd estimator), chanting ‘Out, niggers!’ and hurling stones at the windows, one of which was shattered. It was the first time I had witnessed the horrifying sight and sound of a mob in action... a revolting spectacle.”

Jessica Mitford, A Fine Old Conflict, 1956, pp 128-129

“The Rev. Lofton L. Fowler, Chairman of the Richmond NAACP, and his wife Mrs. Fowler

“We can’t sell this type of democracy to other people.” Rev. Lofton L. Fowler
(DPW, Friday March 7, 1952, p. 8)

“Two uniformed sheriff's deputies stood idly by watching the scene. We made a dash for it through the mob to the front door; seeing Buddy's black face, Gary readily admitted us and led us into the kitchen, where his wife and children were huddled behind makeshift barricades, the chairs and table pushed up against the doors. Buddy explained we were from the Civil Rights Congress and were prepared to put our entire organization at the disposal of his family for defense of their home. With Gary and his wife, we quickly worked out a many-pronged approach: physical protection of the house, trade union resolutions demanding police protection, leaflets to be drawn up by CRC and distributed throughout the Bay Area.”

Jessica Mitford, A Fine Old Conflict, 1956, pp 128-129
The Progressive Community Responds to Protect the Garys

“A few judiciously placed telephone calls to Party and CRC leaders brought within an hour a dozen carloads of black and white volunteers prepared to doss down for the night in the Gary living room. They were the first contingent of more than eight hundred who in the next few days poured into Rollingwood to keep vigil in the house, to patrol the streets in cars, to furnish protective escorts for Mrs. Gary and the children on their way to work and school. The defenders achieved a sort of stand-off with the attackers, who continued to gather in menacing knots at a safe distance from the house, but ceased throwing rocks.” Jessica Mitford, *A Fine Old Conflict*, 1956, pp 128-129

“Around 10:00 p.m. the tide began to turn in the Garys’ favor when supporters began arriving from all parts of the East Bay. Some said they had been phoned by the East Bay Civil Rights Congress; others by the National Association for Advancement of Colored People. Still others learned of it in their union meeting.”

( *DPW*, Friday March 7, 1952, p. 8)

Three white ministers come to support the Garys’ rights under the Constitution

Insults against the flag and the Constitution “Three white ministers arrived around 10:30 p.m. carrying the American flag and a copy of the Constitution. They tried to disperse the crowd but as soon as the flag was raised the ministers and the flag became the objects of insults

( *DPW*, Friday, March 7, 1952, p. 8)
The Garrys are Surrounded by the Support of Hundreds of Good People.

The Tide is Turned. The Opposition Cracks.

Decent White Neighbors Come Out for the Garrys’ Rights. Further Attacks

Massive Support

Mrs. Garry estimated that more than 800 persons have visited their home offering help since last Wednesday. (DPW Monday, March 10, 1952, pp 1, 8)

Cracks in the Opposition

Bill Carpender, treasurer of the Rollingwood Improvement Association, issued the following statement: ‘Regardless of previous information, I personally am not opposed to the Negro family moving into Rollingwood. Any action taken or approved by me previously I sincerely felt to be in the interests of keeping the peace and preventing an international incident.” (Richmond Independent, Wednesday, March 5, 1952, p. 2)

A Member of the Rollingwood Improvement Association, Mrs. Rose Scott, also came to the Garrys’ defense against the majority group of the body. (DPW, March 6, 1952, pp 1,8)

White Neighbors Come Out In Support

Around 11:00 p.m., W.P. Carpenter, a resident of the district arrived with a petition signed by himself and twenty-one other persons welcoming the Negro family to their new home. Carpenter told reporters he was proud to be a neighbor of the Garrys and glad to be in on the fight to win their right to live there. (DPW, Friday, March 7, 1952, p. 8)

Supportive letters and telegrams

The Garry’s mail has been heavy. They have received 200 telegrams and letters, and every letter except two extended praise and offered help…A sign painter who lives in the East Richmond Heights wrote that he does not want his daughter to grow up in an all-White neighborhood because he “wants her to know about the whole wide world.” He offered to do any sign painting for the Garrys free of charge (DPW, March 10, 1952, p. 8)

Organizational Support Pours In

Telegrams came from several organizations offering help. Many organizational leaders were present. Among those present were Mrs. Ann Rosenfield and Mrs. Mary Green, both officers of the California Emergency Defense Committee. Mrs. Decca Treuhaft, East Bay Civil Rights Congress director, and J.D. Galbreath, also a CRC officer, conducted the meeting. The meeting raised $12.67 to replace a window the bigots had broken. The meeting pledged to guarantee around-the-clock patrol duty at the home as long as necessary.

The meeting called for protests to Governor Earl Warren and Sheriff Long. Steps were taken to ask the County Board of Supervisors to go on the record condemning the outrage. (DPW, Friday, March 7, 1952, p. 8)

Good Neighbor

George Eldredge, a Shell Oil Co engineer, invited the Garrys to attend church with his family, declaring they would be “fine neighbors.” (DPW, Thursday, March 6, 1952, pp 1,8)

Local teachers unite with the Garrys:

Two high school teachers who lived in the same block as the Garrys, came over and welcomed the family. (DPW, Friday, March 7, 1952, p. 8)

San Francisco March 13:

The struggle of Negro Navy veteran Wilbur D. Garry and his family to live in their newly purchased home in Rollingwood was again stoned by bigots Monday night [3/10/52]. Mrs Garry reported “several rocks struck the house sometime after midnight.” She said two policemen were parked nearby at the time, but no arrests were made (DPW, Wednesday, March 12, 1952, p. 3)

As Support Pours In…

bigots stone the home again!

The home of the Wilbur D. Garry family at 2821 Brook Way in the former all-White district of Rollingwood was again stoned by bigots Monday night [3/10/52]. Mrs Garry reported “several rocks struck the house sometime after midnight.” She said two policemen were parked nearby at the time, but no arrests were made (DPW, Wednesday, March 12, 1952, p. 3)
Gary and Supporters Go On the Offensive to Demand Rights and Safety from the Authorities

Gary's Open Letter

March 12, 1952

Dear Friends:

I wish to express deepest thanks to the many hundreds of democratic minded Americans, both Negro and white, who have come to the defense of my home and family within the last few days, and to those of my white neighbors who have pledged their support.

When it became known that we were moving to the all-white neighborhood of Rollingwood, a Ku Klux Klan cross was placed on our lawn, our window was smashed by a rock, the window of the real estate agent who handled the sale was similarly smashed by bigots.

The night we moved in, a threatening mob of some 400 persons gathered. In open defiance of the law they stoned our new home and shouted insults.

Within a short time over 100 Negro and white men and women arrived on the scene to defend us, and by their presence prevented more vicious acts by the bigots.

Sheriff's deputies stood by and observed the rock throwing, they did not make a single arrest, nor did they order the rock throwers to stop. Since that night more rocks have been thrown and threats have been made, but still no arrests have been made and there has been no action by the authorities to put an end to this lawlessness.

Failure of authorities to act makes me fearful for the safety of my home and family. Inaction on the part of the sheriff's department will be construed by the bigots as an open invitation to violence against us. As a Negro veteran of World War II who fought to defend our country, I feel that my wife, my seven children, and myself are entitled to protection of the law, which is the right of every American citizen.

For the sake of our beloved Constitution, I urge you and your organization to do all in your power to convince the Contra Costa Sheriff's Department, the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors, and the governor and the attorney general of our state, that they should take the necessary steps to guarantee our safety. You have my full permission to duplicate this letter and to make copies available to your membership and to the public.

Sincerely

Wilbur D Gary, Vice-Commander, American Legion Post 269

P.S. Please let me know of any action that you take.

(Newsweek, Thursday, March 13, 1952, p. 3)

20,000 Gary letters ask help to end Jim Crow

Some 20,000 copies of the letter written by Wilbur D Gary, which requested the public to demand that officials provide full protection for his family and newly purchased home ...will be distributed this weekend.

The reprinting and distribution of the letter is being done by the East Bay Civil Rights Congress. Mrs. Decca Truehaft, director of the organization, said that CRC is doing it as a public service. She said another 2,000 copies of the letter have been mailed to organizations and newspapers in the area. (DPW, Friday, March 14, 1952, p. 3)

NAACP Regional Director Franklin Williams joined with others in demanding that Sheriff Long station guards around the Negro family’s home 24 hours each day. Williams said Long told him that he did not have enough men to spare for a permanent patrol but that a squad car will always be in the area. Williams said he would go to Sacramento today and ‘call upon high executive officers for this state to maintain order.’ (DPW, Tuesday, March 18, 1952, p. 6)

Assembly Member Rumford

The first African American elected to any public office in Northern California, who successfully shepherded a measure in 1949 that ended segregation in the California National Guard, joins in the fight: "I'm going to take the matter up in Sacramento to see that the Gary's get the full protection to which they are entitled as American citizens.” He talked to the office of the Attorney General Edmond C Brown. (DPW, Tuesday, March 18, 1952, p. 6)

Mrs. Decca Truehaft, Director of the East Bay Civil Rights Congress, said her organization would participate in a delegation before the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors today to demand full protection for the Negro family and their property. (DPW, Tuesday, March 18, 1952, p. 6)
Unions join battle to protect Gays

March 10: Trade Union and people’s organizations are taking action to prevent the renewal of last week’s violence against Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Gary, the Negro family that moved into the heretofore all-White Rollingwood area. In Oakland, the East Bay executive board of the Warehousemen’s Local 6, representing some 4,000 workers sent four letters:

- To the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, saying “We expect the law enforcement authorities of your county to maintain law and order in Rollingwood and protect Mr. and Mrs. Gary and family in their right to live in Rollingwood peacefully and in freedom.”
- To Thomas C. Houston, president of the Rollingwood Improvement Association, saying the association “is to be condemned for its subversion of the best traditions of our country” and “we think you people should be ashamed of yourselves.”
- To the Colonel Young Post of the American Legion, Richmond, of which Gary is an officer, requesting the post to “do what it can to assist him.”
- To Mr. and Mrs. Gary, telling them “the fight you are putting up for your rights as American citizens will do more to eliminate bigotry and break down the bars of prejudice than a thousand speeches…action is the most effective way of carrying out and enforcing good, sound and democratic principles…please be assured that we will consider it a privilege if you will call on us.”

Board of Supervisors gets the heat!

A delegation was organized in response to a circular letter signed by Gary calling for organizations and individuals to demand that public officials provide full protection for his home and family. Mrs. Decca Truehaft, Director of the East Bay Civil Rights Congress, was first to address the supervisors. She told them how members of her organization had witnessed the sheriff deputies “standing by, watching bigots hurl rocks at the Garys’ home and not making an arrest or even asking them to stop.” She made four demands:

- That a 24-hour watch be kept around the Negro family’s home
- That the Sheriff’s office be investigated to see why no arrests have been made
- That a hearing be conducted among residents of Rollingwood to dig out the perpetrators of violence
- That arrests be made for past acts of violence

Rev. H.T. S. Johnson, Chairman of the Alameda County Independent Progressive Party declared: “The eyes of the world are upon California. We must act now or stop talking about democracy. God made most of the people of the world colored and the U.S. is having a hard time trying to sell our brand of democracy to the colored people elsewhere. When I sing ‘My Country ’Tis of Thee, Sweet Land of Liberty’, I do so with mental reservations. The people of the world are against mob violence and it can be stopped. This board can help stop it.” (DPW, Thursday, March 30, 1952, p. 6)

East Bay Negro Labor Council representative Mrs. Mary Ellen Jones strongly urged the board members to “investigate the sheriff’s department” (DPW, Thursday, March 30, 1952, p. 6)

Rev. H.T. S. Johnson declared: “We are citizens, taxpayers and loyal Americans. We are entitled to justice. We ask no more and demand no less” Mrs. Julia Wright, representing the Eastern Star (DPW, Thursday, March 30, 1952, p. 6)
Follow-up Events

Supervisors vow to protect Garys: Martinez, March 19, 1952 A delegation of 75 persons has won from the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors assurances it “will do all in its power” to protect the home and family of Wilbur D. Gary. (DPW, Thursday, March 20, 1959, p. 6)

Council to probe Richmond Jim Crow: Housing segregation, unemployment and other special problems facing Richmond’s Negro residents will be considered by the Richmond City Council during a special meeting at 2:00 p.m. Monday at the City Hall. (March 20)

Mayor Gust Allyn said he would invite representatives of the Richmond Housing Authority and the Richmond Redevelopment Agency to attend the meeting.

Community relations group in Richmond –On March 27, 1952, a committee of five Negro leaders and three Richmond city officials have been named to handle future problems affecting Richmond’s Negro population, particularly those concerning Canal housing project. …Rev. W. Lee LeBeaux and Rev. S.R.H. Banks headed the delegation. Appointed to represent the city were Wayne E. Thompson, City Manager; Robert D. Lee, Executive Director of the Richmond Housing Authority, and George Tobin, Executive Director of the Richmond Redevelopment Agency. Negro representatives will be selected by the delegation. (DPW, March 28, 1952)

City officials dodge queries on why the city of Richmond employs only two Negro police officers and no Negro firemen. (DPW, March 28, 1952)

The Richmond City Council passed a resolution banning segregation in public housing.

In 1952 the NAACP Regional (I) Legal Committee was formed and in 1953 it wins an additional victory over restrictive covenant penalties in the U.S. Supreme Court decision Barrows vs Jackson.

In the years that followed (1953-1975) an additional 9 black families moved into Rollingwood neighborhood without problems.

On March 27, Wilbur Gary speaks to the Northern California Division of the American Jewish Congress. He opposed the freedom of choice amendment, which would, among other things, permit neighbors to make contractual agreements to vote on the admission of potential new residents. Gary also said: “No price tag exists on my property in Rollingwood. I realize I’d be selling the rights of all minorities in America if I sold.” (DPW, March 28, 1952)

The Daily Californian presents debate on the Gary case and race relations: April 13- The Rollingwood controversy spread to the University of California this week following publication in The Daily Californian of interviews with three White residents of Rollingwood. The articles, published March 31, quoted opinions of Walter Weyman and Roy Tibbetts, who have upheld the right of Negro veteran Wilbur Gary to purchase a home in the area, and of Fred. C. Stegar, who spoke for those trying to force Gary and his family out of Rollingwood. (DPW, April 14, 1952, p. 6)

LESSONS LEARNED

- Injustice and violence can be defeated. Evil cracks.
- The strength needed comes from the unity of many diverse people.
- It takes a person with courage to say: “We have to deal with this NOW.”
- Richmond’s local struggles contribute to the national progress.
- All human beings are capable of learning from their mistakes and doing better.
- Richmond’s African American community had a proud victory in March of 1952.
A message from the author

Hello Richmond friends and neighbors:

While working for the last ten years in Richmond, I kept hearing that there is very little known history of local Black struggles. The little that is archived somewhere is not well known, particularly to our young men and women. Every year we celebrate the achievements of brothers and sisters elsewhere, but we remain unaware of our own local past struggles and victories.

The Gary family story caught my attention and sustained my interest not only because it was a proud moment of local African American affirmation, but because this success was achieved by an amazing formula: Standing up for our rights and sticking it out, defending the principles, seeking and receiving the support of decent people of all races and income levels.

This account of the Gary family of Richmond is a first, and likely incomplete, view of the events described. What is presented here is essentially a summary report of newspaper coverage, particularly by the Daily People’s World and the Richmond Independent. I’m grateful to the Richmond Public Library and the Labor Archives and Research Center of San Francisco State University for access to the archives of these newspapers. Best efforts were made to credit text and other elements of this report.

I hope this short story brings you joy and pride, as it did to me. I’m grateful to Ms. Constance Gary of Richmond, one of Wilbur Gary’s seven children, for her assistance and support.

Perhaps this story will provide us with ideas on how to address the many challenges we face in Richmond and elsewhere today.

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