

Rising Cost

Growing Old

Experts say this area is a nice place to live when you grow old. A recent article in *Carolina Piedmont* paints a pretty picture:

- A retirement consultant estimates that a retirement couple "can live comfortably" here for \$12,600 a year compared to a \$13,514 budget for the "average retired couple."

- North Carolina has one of the lowest tax burdens on retirees in the nation.

- North Carolina offers 54 separate projects for the elderly, according to the Division on Aging. Locally, there are programs sponsored by agencies like the Winston-Salem Urban League.

These figures of course, do not take into account the problems of the Black aged; the most debilitating problem being poverty.

Most of our Black elderly, locally and nationwide, live below the poverty line (\$4,979), ac-

most of their years in an overtly racist society and not being paid reasonable living wage, our senior citizens are now retiring on meager pensions. Very few - and I mean very few - own any additional assets (stocks & bonds, savings accounts, etc.) on which to live on.

This lack of finances creates other problems. When money is tight, safe and comfortable housing is often too costly. On a \$325 monthly income,



- The average costs of new housing and rentals rank below the national average.

- Hospital rooms, according to the Health Insurance Association, are cheaper than in any state but South Carolina and Mississippi.

cording to the National Caucus and Center for Black Aged in Washington, D.C. "Nearly every other major problem affecting elderly Blacks," says Samuel Simmons, NCBA president, "is related in one form or another to insufficient

where would a 65-year single Black woman be living if a third of her paycheck is paid out in rent?

You guessed it. They are likely to live in "high crime" areas or in close proximity to those areas. Most of the are



- FBI records claim North Carolina ranks eleventh among state in lowest amount of property crime.

income." In North Carolina the phrase "insufficient income" is an understatement. Having worked

afraid to leave their apartments and, in effect, place themselves under a form of "house arrest." When they do venture out,



Distinguished Senior Citizens of the Winston-Salem Community came together at the Red Room, on the campus of W.S.S.U. to fellowship and break bread together. The Senior Citizens functions for the holidays are sponsored in part by the Sara Lee Corporation.

studies show, they are more likely to have a crime committed against them by someone they know or have seen before. Most of these crimes go unreported because the victims are often told that they "better not tell no one." Would you?

Fortunately Black senior citizens, despite these disadvantages, are not without programs designed to ease burden some situations. In Winston-Salem, the Urban League

provides a number of programs, thanks to its former president, Thomas Elijah. Its comprehensive senior citizens program provides health and exercise classes, new careers training and through its Community Service program, pays senior citizens to work 20 hours a week for other agencies like the

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