

# Bethlehem Moment 6: “Whites Only” service on 4th St.

The Bethlehem Gadfly Bethlehem Moments, Fun Stuff, Gadfly's posts February 19, 2019

## Bethlehem Moment 6

City Council

February 19, 2019

Ed Gallagher 49 W. Greenwich

A Bethlehem Moment: November 13, 1967

*Twilight Zone theme*

History is time travel. But this particular Bethlehem Moment seems less a journey in time than a wrong turn into the Twilight Zone. For on November 13, 1967, a Bethlehem black man had to argue that he was a human being with equal rights with whites. The Bethlehem black man was Malloy Warner, son of the first black trash hauler in the city, founder and president of the Colored Voters Association, president of the Bethlehem Trash Collectors Association, and member of the historic St. John's AME Zion Church. In a bar on 4th St. in which I spent many a Friday Happy-Hour around the same period, Warner was several times charged double the white price for a bottle of beer. Bethlehem was not Mississippi or Alabama. Or so I thought. And it was 1967 not '57 or '27 or '97. Or so I thought. Yet the message was clearly “Whites only.” Tension flared. The husband of the bar owner reported a death threat. “Some elements” in the black community were eager to “wreck the place.”



But Warner neither turned tail nor turned tiger. He chose the “wiser course” of filing suit with the State Human Relations Commission. It was “humiliating,” Warner said, for a “human being” to be treated in this manner. “I’m not interested in financial reimbursement,” he said, “but I am concerned with the principle involved.” And again: “I personally felt that the injustice had to be brought before a court of law and handled through legal rather than violent means.” Justice was done. The *Bethlehem Globe-Times* called it a “community victory.” But for this researcher 4th St. will never look quite the same after

learning of this uniquely brazen example of racism during this trip to the Twilight Zone.

*Twilight Zone theme*

“Trashman Wins Right to Fair-Priced Beer,” *Bethlehem Globe-Times*, November 13, 1967.

“Owner of Bethlehem Taproom Ordered Not to Discriminate,” *Morning Call*, November 14, 1967.

“A Community Victory,” *Bethlehem Globe-Times*, November 15, 1967.

-----

Additional notes:

Six months earlier, in his role as president of the Bethlehem Trash Collectors Association (made up of 27 haulers), Warner argued before City Council for private enterprise against a city plan to institute municipal trash collection, in what was described as “the most impassioned debate to happen in the 5 ½ year span of mayor-council form of government,” and for which the citizen-gallery “literally surrounded the council table, reached down the stairway, stood on tables and sat on the floor.”



Bethlehem City Council during public hearing on garbage collecting.

Warner had a successful hauling company, with such clients as Food Fair, Bethlehem Steel, Dixie Cup, and Air Products. After leaving the business, he owned a bar in Easton.

Some of the language in the news stories is of interest: Warner, for example is described as a “well-spoken Negro,” and the bar owner is described as “blonde.”

“Install Officers,” *Morning Call*, May 10, 1949.

“Trash Collectors Appeal to Bethlehem Residents,” *Morning Call*, April 4, 1967.

“Crowd Protests Bethlehem Garbage Collection,” *Morning Call*, April 5, 1967.

Denise Reaman, “Father was first black refuse collector in city.” *Morning Call*, February 26, 1995.