Radicals and Reformers: The Fight for Equal Education in Columbus Public Schools

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Abstract

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Radicals and Reformers: The Fight for Equal Education in Columbus Public Schools

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Despite serving as the capital of a prototypical Rustbelt state during a period of economic hardship and decline of other once prosperous neighboring Rustbelt cities, Columbus's history is rather separate from those of its peers. The strife experienced by the city during the 1960s and 1970s arose not from the collapse of its industrial districts, a dwindling white ethnic population, or the dilapidation of its infrastructure, but quite the opposite. Columbus's history is one of a city and an education system unable and unwilling to adapt with the changing racial and economic make-up of a rapidly developing urban center. In turn, the city of Columbus and its Board of Education engineered and perpetuated the isolation and impoverishment of black residents to various ghettos across the city to contain and constrict the ever-growing black population that threatened to disrupt the status quo. Deprived by decades of neglect and injustice, Columbus's black community sought to tear down the racial barriers constructed through neighborhood gerrymandering and attendance zones, economic, social, and political isolation, and unequal access to educational resources and facilities that had denied their children a quality education. This responsibility ultimately fell to civil rights activists, parents, students, and educators who struggled for decades against indecisive administrators, intransigent board members and trustees, recalcitrant white parents, and over one-hundred years of purposeful separation of the city's black and white communities through

a system of de-facto racial segregation. Despite their struggle and the aid of local and national civil rights organizations, social scientists, and the Supreme Court of the United States, the progress achieved during the 1960s and 1970s was largely overshadowed by the betrayal of their efforts in 1996.

Dedication

For Abigail

Acknowledgments

Without the support and counsel of my professors, friends, and family this thesis would not have been written. My advisor Dr. Paul Milazzo provided invaluable guidance and pushed the thesis to be more comprehensive, nuanced, and relevant. Dr. Kevin Mattson helped me to place my research in the wider historiography. Dr. Katherine Jellison offered her expertise and support throughout the entire process. Dr. Chester Pach has helped me to think and write like a historian. Finally, my most significant acknowledgement goes to my family and loved ones, without whom none of this would have been possible.

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Columbus at the Crossroads

On the evening of April 30th, 1964, six young black activists walked out into Columbus's busiest intersections during peak traffic, risking life and arrest, and demanded change. These independent protestors echoed decade-long community demands for city and school board officials to finally dismantle systematic segregation before another generation of black children grew up poorer, less educated, and with access to far fewer opportunities than their white counterparts. The protestors arrived in the heart of the city with a purpose and a plan. They would stage a sit-in at the intersection of High and Broad Streets – the two main arteries of the downtown – in the hopes of calling attention to their plight. While they brought traffic to a standstill, their colleagues – an interracial group of activists – handed out leaflets on the sidewalk decrying de facto segregation and the continued discrimination against black students by Columbus Schools district. The pamphlet itself called attention to Trevitt Elementary School, a facility currently under construction. The protestors thought the new facility would serve only to confine the city's black population to the downtown's east and south sides. Furthermore, the activists, dissatisfied with the existing efforts of the city's Community Relations Commission, demanded reform and "public hearings on fair housing and employment." The most crucial of these reforms was a stronger Commission to reinitiate dialogue between black and white communities that had once coexisted but had since been intentionally isolated and turned against one another by the city's discriminatory urban renewal programs and recently completed infrastructure. To them, the Columbus Public Schools system and the half-measure institutions created by the city

to address racial inequality threatened to fail another generation of black children desperately in need of a good education.

Within minutes of obstructing the thoroughfare, over one hundred law enforcement personnel arrived at the scene to quell the demonstration. Officers ordered protestors to disperse or face arrest. Of the six activists conducting the sit-in, five refused to end the demonstration and responded to the demands with a serenade of the gospel and anti-segregation ballad "We Shall Overcome," even as they were dragged away to the awaiting police vehicles. These five – Pete Calloway, Fred Howell, Marianne Howell, Francis Perdue, and Ruth Russell – were then charged with jaywalking, disregarding an officer's order, conspiracy to commit misdemeanor, and unlawful assembly. This modest demonstration on the part of a handful of young dissidents was but one skirmish in a decades-long struggle against an educational system that had systematically denied generations of black residents equal educational opportunities. The efforts to integrate the Columbus Public Schools system during the 1960s and 1970s, culminating with the 1979 Federal Supreme Court desegregation decision, serve as an excellent case study of the power local organizations have to transform their communities using mass protests. These events demonstrate the unwavering determination of marginalized citizens to improve their lives and the lives of their children.[1]

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[1] "Police Here Put on Alert For Rights Demonstrations," *Columbus Dispatch*, May 1, 1964, 1, 3. While two of the activists, Marianne Howell and Ruth Russell claimed to be members of the Columbus Coordinating Committee for Action, while the other activists claimed to be independent actors, a spokesperson for CORE claimed that the organization had no role in or knowledge of the demonstration. Patrick R. Potyondy, "Chapter Two: Reimagining Urban Education: Civil Rights, Educational Parks, and the Limits of Reform," *Counterpoints* 461 (2014): 34-35.

The Civil Rights Movement in the North, 1960-1980

While the struggle for social and political equality has an extended history in the United States, the predominant period of scholarly inquiry covers the post-war 1940s to the turbulent 1970s. Initially, the scholarship on the movement focused on its leading figures, such as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Stokely Carmichael. Over time, it incorporated often-overlooked local activists and smaller community groups. The shift in emphasis from charismatic national figures to less celebrated "local people" provided new perspectives on the movement. Ultimately, historians such as John Dittmer, Charles Payne, and Steven Lawson synthesized these viewpoints into a comprehensive and nuanced narrative that connected the local with the national and the social with the political in order to fashion a more complete understanding of the civil rights movement. A broadened source base helped to recontextualize and reinterpret earlier events, motivations, organizations, and leaders. The change in orientation from southern to northern perspectives highlighted the pervasive influence of Jim Crow policies and discrimination beyond the Mason-Dixon Line. Furthermore, this approach emphasized that many non-violent direct-action techniques were pioneered and first utilized in the North before being deployed against Jim Crow by northern organizations like CORE.[2]

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[2] John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle (*Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Steven F. Lawson, *Civil Rights Crossroads: Nation, Community, and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003).

Across the nation, but particularly in the North, governmental institutions and businesses affiliated with federal contracts underwent a process colloquially known as the new "social regulation" during the latter half of the 1960s and the 1970s. This mandate effectively bound these institutions and private businesses to ever-increasing levels of federal regulation, particularly in fields where discrimination stubbornly persisted. While the Johnson Administration laid the framework of civil rights reform and social regulation through Great Society programs, it was the Nixon Administration that accommodated significant portions of these programs and empowered the government to enact civil rights legislation and policies. This accommodation can be seen in the Nixon Administration's support for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Title IX of the Education amendments of 1972, and affirmative action in federal contracts. Additionally, the accommodation of the civil rights movement under the Nixon Administration enabled the growth of social regulation through the federal bureaucracy in conjunction with the Supreme Court's willingness to sign off on the administrative efforts promulgated by federal regulatory agencies. Furthermore, the ability to disrupt and abolish both de-jure and de-facto segregation in communities across the nation increasingly moved from the Presidency and Congress to the federal courts and bureaucracies, who addressed persistent inequality with specific plans of action for local communities, rather than the sweeping national legislation of previous decades. Few institutions witnessed as much governmental regulation as the education system, and the resulting pressure from both civil rights activists, bureaucrats, and the federal government enabled the dramatic shift towards equal education in this period. In turn, public schools

and universities, especially those in urban centers, increasingly grappled with inequality both in the classroom and in the communities that surrounded them.[3]

Of particular importance to the northern struggle for equality was the significant degree of white backlash. This backlash did not suddenly appear during the 1970s, but rather developed in tandem with civil rights offensives of the 1940s - 1960s and evolved in parallel with the New Right in the mid-1970s. The New Right and its utilization of a conservative racial narrative that placed the blame for black issues and inadequacies on the community itself shifted the focus away from the resilient racism and decades of discrimination that still gripped minority communities throughout the country. The prominence and resiliency of recalcitrant whites effectively reinforced the second-class status of black northerners. The persistent discrimination black Americans encountered in their attempts to access educational and employment opportunities, housing, social services, and political power revealed the insidious nature of racial repression and marginalization in the North. The northern struggle also served as an often-overlooked ideological battle between traditional moral values and non-violent tactics and radical, secular black power that held ever-increasing sway as the movement progressed. Whereas many activists within the black community drew strength from their respective churches, by the late 1960s and 1970s the values of religious institutions mingled with

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[3] Hugh D. Graham, *Collision Course: The Strange Convergence of Affirmative Action and Immigration Policy in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Michael J. Klarman, *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: The Supreme Court and the Struggle for Racial Equality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 448-454; Hugh D. Graham, *Civil Rights and the Presidency: Race and Gender in American Politics, 1960–1972* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Gareth Davies, *See Government Grow: Education Politics from Johnson to Reagan* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007).

the rhetoric of black liberation and community control. The resulting racial rift created resentment among whites, subverted self-reliance among black residents, and encouraged "balkanization" in the black community through ideological factionalization when American nationalism and assimilation should have been their goals. The growing power of the New Right in the North led to a resurgence of conservatism in subsequent decades and turned the civil rights movement and America's second reconstruction into an "unfinished revolution." Ultimately, while the New Right itself was not overtly racially antagonistic, it posed a persistent challenge to civil rights activists and their proposed solutions to the institutional impediments for minority communities.[4] It was in this environment of shifting movement goals, methods, and ideologies, and an increasingly interventionist federal government that Columbus's civil rights activists fought for their own interpretation of equality.

Columbus represents a convergence of American cultures and peoples. Though not located in the South, the city has attracted southern populations and adopted southern folkways. And despite serving as the capital of a prototypical Rustbelt state, it is far from a traditional Rustbelt city. Many of the conditions plaguing Columbus during the 1960s and 1970s arose not from crumbling infrastructure, population decline, or a mass exodus of industries, but from quite the opposite. Racial strife became a feature of a capital city

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[4] Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008); Peniel L Joseph, *The Third Reconstruction: America's Struggle for Racial Justice in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Basic Books, 2022); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall,"The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1238, 1262.

benefiting from the successful shift to an information economy, even as its better-known neighbor cities suffered from industrial and economic collapse. As such, Columbus's story is that of a city struggling to support unprecedented population and economic growth that exacerbated long-simmering conflicts. Residents, both black and white, clashed over access to Columbus's expanding economic and educational opportunities, growing infrastructure, and the political makeup of the city's institutions. Columbus's unique economic circumstances influenced the city's political institutions and educational policies, which in turn shaped the contours of the city's civil rights movement, the process of school integration, and the ultimate outcome of desegregation in Columbus.

Accordingly, this thesis will be organized into three chapters. The first chapter, The Background of Columbus and the Black Experience, 1812-1960, will detail the settlement and development of Columbus, the early history of the city's black community, and the establishment of the Ohio State University (OSU). Specifically, this section will highlight the beginning of racial discrimination against black residents, the creation of OSU and its influence in Columbus's politics and educational policy, and the establishment of local civil rights organizations. These topics serve as an introduction to the de-facto segregation of the city's black community, the significant growth of Columbus during the post-war period, and the key issues facing black residents by the end of the 1950s. The second chapter, Breaking Down the Status Quo, 1960-1970, will focus on black residents' frustration with the school board and their efforts to dismantle the "neighborhood system," the defenders of the status quo, and the influence of OSU's students and faculty in this struggle. This section will also detail the evolution of local

civil rights organizations, the relationship between OSU's acceptance of discriminatory policies in its surrounding communities, and the escalation of racial animosity during the late 1960s. Alongside these factors, this chapter will also incorporate the expansion of the city's infrastructure and educational facilities, the leading figures on both sides of this struggle, and the influence of national and local social science research on the movement. The third chapter, The Long Civil Rights Movement, 1970-1979, will highlight the changing nature of the civil rights movement during the 1970s, the differing approaches of the Columbus School Board and local civil rights organizations towards school desegregation, and the court-ordered desegregation of the district. This section will focus on the series of violent riots that broke out on OSU's main campus, the major protests in several high schools and the fallout of these events, the changing of the guard of the school board, the cause and outcome of the *Penick* v. *Board of Education* lawsuit, and the role of OSU faculty in the desegregation order. Ultimately, these chapters will analyze the political and racial impediments facing the city's black community during the 1960s-1970s, their struggle to end de-facto segregation in Columbus's schools, the influence of OSU both as an agent of change and the status quo, and the eventual failure of desegregation in the Columbus Public Schools District.

Chapter One: The Background of Columbus and the Black Experience, 1812 - 1960

Originally founded in 1812 on the fertile banks of the Scioto River at the confluence of the Scioto and Olentangy rivers, Columbus began its history with a specific vision for the role of the settlement – a new capital for the newly established state of Ohio. Built on the former site of the Native American Mingo settlement of Seekunk and the white settlement of Franklinton, which later became a neighborhood in the growing capital, Columbus presented an opportunity for Ohioans to construct a capital worthy of the rapidly developing state. Its namesake, the Italian explorer, Christopher Columbus, reflected the popular perception of settlers as explorers and adventurers willing to leave the comforts of home and potentially risk their lives in search of new opportunities. While the original capital had alternated between the towns of Chillicothe and Zanesville between 1803 and 1816, Ohio legislators concluded that it should be located closer to the geographic heart of the nascent state. Thus Columbus assumed the designation in 1816, four years after its founding. The town grew slowly at first. It lacked a direct trail or waterway to the state's other settlements, repeatedly flooded, and early residents suffered frequent bouts of malaria and cholera. The fate of the struggling community changed drastically following its connection to the National Road in 1831. With American settlers and European immigrants pouring into central Ohio seeking new opportunities, Columbus was ready and willing to accommodate them.[5]

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[5] Ed Lentz, "As It Were: Treaty Couldn't Oust Local Indians," *Columbus Dispatch*, 2019; H.C. Shetrone, "Indians in Ohio History Map," Ohio History Connection, 1970. Ed Lentz, *Columbus: The Story of a City* (Mount Pleasant: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 33, 58. The use of Christopher Columbus's name has since faced backlash from many in the capital city, with even the once celebrated holiday of Columbus Day

Columbus, and the state of Ohio as a whole, has always benefited from the wealth and talent of its growing population. The city developed a mixed economy that profited from the surrounding region's arable land as well as the industry that developed in tandem with Scioto River and rail access. This centralized position fostered the development of businesses and governmental offices in the state's capital. The first documented manufacturing concern in the Columbus area produced supplies for the US army during the War of 1812. As the industrial capabilities of the city grew, so too did the need for skilled and unskilled labor. Immigrants from across the nation came seeking opportunity, particularly newly arrived European Catholic immigrants and free black southerners. During the 1830s, Columbus saw a wave of European immigrants arrive by train seeking new opportunities in the growing industrial sector of the city. This significant influx of immigrants led to the creation of two distinct white ethnic enclaves on the city's outskirts. A large Irish population settled in the north along what is now Nationwide Boulevard, while the Germans took advantage of cheap land to the south, creating a community that came to be known as The Old South End or German Village. Columbus's German population constructed numerous breweries, religious buildings like the Protestant Trinity Lutheran Seminary, and the German speaking Capital University. The city's development in the late 19th century owed to the presence of several prominent industrial manufacturers, most notably the Columbus Buggy Company and the

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being unceremoniously canceled in the fall of 2018, to the ire of some in the city's Italian-American community. Bill Chappell, "Columbus, Ohio, Is Not Observing Columbus Day This Year," *NPR*, October 8, 2018.

Buckeye Steel Castings Company. Columbus at this time was also a prominent city for labor organizers. In 1886, Samuel Gompers realized the potential of the growing urban center, founding the American Federation of Labor in Druid's Hall on South Fourth Street. This trend continued when in 1890 organizers founded the United Mine Workers of America union at the old City Hall. By the end of the 19th century, Columbus had become a hub of manufacturing activity and economic opportunity as migrants arrived in droves and created their own unique and diverse communities across the city. Workers, both black and white, enjoyed the fruits of their labor in steel and tool manufacturing along the Scioto River, which runs through the heart of the city. It was the contributions of local businesses and laborers that led to Columbus's transition from a relatively sparse town to a burgeoning industrial capital city by the turn of the century.[6]

Birth of the Columbus Black Community

The history of Columbus, and Ohio as a whole, however, did not merely unfold from a long line of white pioneers and European immigrants uprooting Native Americans from the forested wilderness and establishing an industrial economy on the banks of fertile river lowlands. From the very first American settlements, black Americans have been ever-present actors in the region's development. Arriving with some of the earliest white pioneers, black settlers sought many of the same opportunities and new beginnings as their white counterparts on the banks of the Scioto but have faced discrimination in

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[6] Lentz, *Columbus*, 63-64, 91-92; "Early Columbus Factories Struggled, Later Flourished," *Columbus Dispatch*, November 28, 2011.

some of the state's earliest legislation. Ohio's Black Laws, first passed in January of 1804 by the state legislature, stripped "Black and Mulattoe Persons" of most citizenship rights in an effort to discourage black settlement. Those who did settle were required by law to obtain a certificate of freedom from local administrators or face fines and / or deportation. Additionally, the law stipulated that should a white employer harbor an unregistered black worker, they would be subject to sizable fines. Three years later, legislators piled on further restrictions in an effort to stifle the state's growing black population. By 1807, black citizens were barred from residing in Ohio without a staggering $500 bond guaranteeing their good behavior, while both black adults and children were required to pay a fee to certify their freedom at the comparatively mild cost of twelve and a half cents per individual. Those who remained could not vote, hold political office, serve in the militia, sit on juries, testify against white residents, or enroll their children in public schools. Additionally, the ambiguity of the state constitution and the representatives' own indecision led some to advocate in favor of indentured servitude in Ohio, and to allow slaveholders to travel with slaves in the state. Although slavery had been outlawed in Ohio's constitution in November of 1802, black residents who did not have freedom papers had no legal protection from the predations of US marshals enforcing the 1793 Fugitive Slave Law and its later iterations.[7]

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[7] Curtina Moreland, "The Black Community of Columbus: A Study of the Structure and Pattern of Power in a Midwestern City" (PhD Diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1977), 57-58; Felix James, "The American Addition: The History of a Black Community" (Lanham: University Press of America, 1979), 5-6; James H. Rodabaugh, "The Negro in Ohio," *Journal of Negro History* 31 (January, 1946): 15-16; Frank U. Quillen, *The Color Line in Ohio* (New York: Negro Universities Press), 1969; Kevin Kern and Gregory S. Wilson, *Ohio: A History of the Buckeye State* (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 122;

Despite these discriminatory practices, Columbus and the promise of new beginnings drew in a considerable number of black settlers in its early years, resulting in a far higher proportion of black residents in the city than the state as a whole. According to the United States Census in 1840, 573 (9.5%) of Columbus's 6,048 residents were black, compared to around one percent of the state's total population. During the 1820s and 1830s the first significant waves of black Americans settled in locations surrounding Columbus and the wider Franklin County area. Many of these groups were free people of color from Virginia who arrived via wagons in response to reports of opportunities, bringing their families, trades, and skills. When faced with persistent discrimination and threats of illegal enslavement, many black residents turned to the moral guidance and community provided by the city's newly founded black religious institutions. Erected in the early decades of the 19th century in modest log cabins, churches like the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1823 and later known as St. Paul A.M.E., and the Second Baptist Church, which hosted its first congregation in 1836, served as centers of "social consciousness and benevolent societies" for Columbus's black community. Black settlement in Columbus represented not only the desire to escape from the repressive and dangerous conditions of the South but allowed black

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Mike Curtin, "Step by Step," *Columbus Dispatch*, January 29, 1993; Kate Masur, *Until Justice Be Done: America's First Civil Rights Movement, From the Revolution to the Reconstruction* (New York: Norton, 2021); Columbus Landmarks Foundation, *African American Settlements and Communities in Columbus, Ohio: A Report* (Columbus: Columbus Landmarks Foundation Press, 2014), 12.

residents to form a community wholly their own, where they could resist the cruel binds of slavery and aid others in their escape from its clutches.[8]

Many of Columbus's church leaders who used their influence to fight against the injustice of slavery became leaders in the abolitionist movement and held great state-wide anti-slavery "Conferences of Colored Men" to address the plight of their brethren. These conferences aimed to bring awareness to the cruelty of slavery, discuss Ohio's stance on the rights of black Americans, and advocate for the repeal of Ohio's Black Laws. Given its central location, relatively lax security, high black population, and the willingness of residents to aid persons escaping bondage, Columbus became a popular stop on the Underground Railroad. Indeed, the high number of conference members whose residences and businesses were located in the city's central district led many to become active participants. Those fleeing enslavement who passed through Columbus were often "hidden in plain sight" as cooks, draymen, and laborers by the sympathetic members of the city's black community. This chapter of the Underground Railroad was led, in part, by Reverend James Preston Poindexter, a prominent abolitionist, civil rights activist,

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[8] Mary Louise Mark, *Negroes in Columbus* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1928), 7-8; Rodabaugh, "Negro in Ohio," 18; Richard Minor, "The Negro in Columbus" (Master's Thesis, Ohio State University, 1936), 191; Anne Gregory, "A History of Progress: Much has Changed since Arthur Brook's Arrival" *Northwest News*, August 7, 1985; James, "American Addition," 3; Mike Curtin, "Step by Step," *Columbus Dispatch*, January 29, 1993; Columbus Landmarks Foundation, *African American Settlements*, 12.

politician, and Baptist minister who established himself as a leading political figure within Columbus in the latter half of the 19th century.[9]

Regardless of the frequently problematic relationship between black and white residents, Ohio produced some of Washington's leading anti-slavery voices and founding members of both the Free Soil and Republican parties – Joshua Giddings, Salmon Chase, and Benjamin Wade. Despite the national influence and success of these figures in statewide elections, significant portions of Ohio, including its capital city, were controlled by Democrats following the end of the Civil War. The most impactful outcome of this division between political parties in the state was the struggle over the ratification of the 15th Amendment. When the Democrat-controlled General Assembly voted against its ratification on April 1st of 1869, Ohio became one of the few union states to initially deny black male residents the right to vote. It was only after the election of 1869, where the Republican party regained control of the statehouse, that Governor Rutherford B. Hayes spearheaded efforts to reconsider the approval of the Amendment. Despite a previously Democrat-controlled state legislature, a Democrat-dominated Columbus and Franklin County, conservative fearmongering about the impending flood of low-wage and job-stealing former slaves, and the fears of a "total eclipse of the Caucasian race in

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[9] Columbus Landmarks Foundation, *African American Settlements*, 24; Charles Chester Cole, *A Fragile Capital: Identity and the Early Years of Columbus, Ohio* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001), 193-204.

the United States," the Ohio legislature narrowly ratified the Fifteenth Amendment by a margin of just two votes in the House and one in the Senate on January 17th of 1870.[10]

The war against discrimination in central Ohio was fought not only on a political and moral battlefield, but also in the field of education. In 1829, black school children were restricted from attending property-tax funded common schools, and by 1835 the Ohio Legislature had authorized the creation of segregated public schools for black children. In 1845, the state legislature created the Columbus Board of Education to oversee the education of all children in the developing town that had gone from a single log cabin schoolhouse in 1806 to over a 1,000 by the 1850s. It would take until 1853 for the first all-black public school to be opened in Columbus, and by 1855, four black schools dotted the East Side, serving virtually all of the city's black schoolchildren. Rev. Poindexter published a letter in a local newspaper describing one of the black schools as "a PEN at the north end of the city – an old shanty, bounded by two alleys, devoid of playground, closely girded about with outhouses, the privy and well being in such proximity as makes it quite certain that the seepings from the privy find their way into the water our children are forced to drink." In another letter, Poindexter emphasized the importance of the issue to the city's black community: "No people ever attached greater value to education than do the colored people. They are more worried about their ignorance than about their poverty. They feel slavery, in depriving them of the means of

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[10] Moreland, "Black Community," 61, 63-63, 67; Rodabaugh, "Negro in Ohio," 18-20; "How Ohio Is To Be Made a Negro Voting State," *Newark Advocate*, Apr. 23, 1869.

education, inflicted upon them greater wrong than it did in working them 200 years without pay."[11]

It was at this time that the school board elected to shut down the smaller black schools, which were undersized, overcrowded, and dangerously dilapidated, and concentrated the city's black children into a single centrally located building, named after school board member Dr. Starling Loving. The location, however, proved to be unsuitable for the educational requirements of children, as the run-down and eventually condemned building was placed within the "Badlands," an area of the city known for "three institutions: the saloon, the gambling hall, and the house of prostitution." The area was described by local residents as being made up of "squatty, squalid buildings, for the most part, one or two stories in height…looking down the long row of lowly hovels grimy and greasy in appearance, the beholder would shrink back and hesitate to enter lest he become contaminated that in passing through he might drink the poisonous air which might smirch the being and life to lust." Loving himself, the leading school board advocate for a new educational facility for black schoolchildren, voted against the school that bore his name, as he believed that the placement of the school was inaccessible and unacceptable for a significant population of black children. The consolidation of black

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[11] Harold Lloyd Carter, "Domestic Colonialism and Problems of Black Education with Special Reference to Columbus, Ohio" (Master's Thesis, Ohio State University, 1976), 148-149; R. W. Stevenson, *Superintendent's Report: 1874-1875*, Columbus Public School District files, 142; Myron Seifert, Columbus Public School District files; Micki Seltzer, "The Segregation of Schools in Columbus – How It All Happened," *Call and Post*, October 18, 1975; Sylvia Brooks, "Racial Struggle Goes Back to 1869," *Columbus Citizen-Journal*, July. 14, 1975; Carolyn Focht, "Schools' Historian Traces Integration Effort to 1880, *Columbus Dispatch*, May 1, 1976.

children into a single school grew increasingly infeasible as by 1870 approximately 85 percent of Columbus's black community lived in clusters throughout the city and in five of Columbus's eight wards. As in other Ohio cities, migrants settled near local industries, railroads, downtown businesses, and service industries such as hotels and restaurants. However, unlike Cleveland's racial patterns where neighborhoods experienced growing concentrations of black residents in only three contiguous wards, Columbus's pattern was more dispersed. At the turn of the twentieth century, the largest concentration of these communities established themselves north and east of Broad and High Streets.[12]

[12] Carter, "Domestic Colonialism," 150; "Improvements Tell Their Story of the Passing of the Badlands," *Columbus Sunday Dispatch*, September 24, 1906; Himes, "Forty Years," 140; Hayes, "Negro – No. 7," *Columbus Citizen-Journal*, February 28, 1967; Seltzer, "Segregation of Schools;" Columbus Landmarks Foundation, *African American Settlements*, 16; David Gerber, *Black Ohio and the Color Line, 1860-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 10; *Ohio Statesman*, October 21, 1865; Rodabaugh, "Negro in Ohio," 18-20; Moreland, "Black Community," 63-64, 67.

Map 1. African American Settlements in Columbus, 1928. This map displays many of the neighborhoods inhabited by significant numbers of black residents and their families. This also clearly displays the rough layout of Columbus with the intersection of the horizontal Broad Street and the vertical High Street near the confluence of the Olentangy River from the north and the Scioto River from the west.
Source: Columbus Landmarks Foundation, *African American Settlements and Communities in Columbus, Ohio: A Report*, (2014), 33, Columbus Landmarks Foundation.

Armed with the franchise and scattered throughout the city, black voters refused to condemn their children to such deplorable conditions. Black male suffrage ushered in a "golden age" of black politics in Columbus, and in 1881 and 1912 ward-based elections placed five black men on the city council and two on the Board of Education. In 1881, due to the inability of the district to simultaneously support two separate school systems and growing opposition from black parents, the school board agreed to demolish the crumbling Loving facility. Without a designated facility for black children on the Near East Side, the board allowed black parents to enroll their children at the nearest white school. Thus Columbus's public schools were officially integrated for the first time. Given the relatively low number of black families on the city's East Side, outrage from white families was minimal. Seven years later, the Ohio Supreme Court declared that local boards of education could not perpetuate segregated schools for black and white children. One optimistic newspaper editor wrote: "A little time will be necessary to wipe out prejudices on both sides, when it is believed, by wise and delicate management, harmony and just feelings will be brought about."[13]

From the beginning, this judicial decision was not met with universal celebration from the black community, as many doubted the possible benefits of integration for black children. A group of black parents from the South Side, believing that their children would be met with unwelcoming and unsympathetic white students and teachers in an

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[13] *Board of Education v. State*, 45 Ohio St. 555, 16 N.E. 373 (1888); Columbus Landmarks Foundation, *African American Settlements*, 23; Sylvia Brooks, "Fight Moves into City's Backyard," *Columbus Citizen-Journal*, July 18, 1985.

inter-racial environment, wrote a letter published in the *Ohio State Journal* in 1881 stating: "Colored children will never make the same amount of progress in a mixed school that they would if not troubled about the opinion of their fellow white pupils, and vice versa." White parents, fearing that black educators would be assigned to their children, vigorously opposed the employment of black teachers in integrated schools. This led to a sizable segment of black residents believing that segregated schools would translate into more opportunities in the system for black educators. Gregory Jacobs, in *Getting Around Brown*, argues "as early as the 1880s, Columbus blacks were of two minds: some supported limited control over greater educational resources, while others backed greater control over limited resources." As stated by one contemporary observer, "The Negros of Columbus are divided between a desire for a segregated school system and a mixed system. There are numbers of Negroes in Columbus who believe that Negro teachers are best for their children in that they would be more sympathetic. Some fear, however, that it would not be as well-equipped as the present school system." Though there was a significant minority of black parents who supported segregated education for their children, the bulk of black parents favored integration as the best way to secure access to both the tangible and intangible advantages afforded to the white majority.[14]

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[14] Gregory S. Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown: Desegregation, Development, and the Columbus Public Schools* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 13; Minor, "Negro in Columbus," 196; Seltzer, "Segregation of Schools."

The Foundation and Early Development of the Ohio State University

It is impossible to properly analyze the history and development of Columbus, particularly the direction of the city's education policy, without incorporating its most influential education institution, the Ohio State University. The Ohio State University (OSU), originally named the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College, was founded in 1870 as a public land grant university, one of the first in Ohio. The institution's founding was a product of the Morrill Act of 1862, which enabled the establishment of several colleges across the nation to broaden access to education using the proceeds of sale of federal land. Originally constructed to "create and disseminate knowledge useful to society, especially in agriculture and the mechanical arts," the university grew exponentially in the years following its founding. Patronized by powerful individuals like the then governor and later president, Rutherford B. Hayes, the college expanded its scope to offer a diversified course load and officially renamed itself the Ohio State University in subsequent years to underscore both its expanded curriculum and aspirations to serve as the state university. During the subsequent decades, the school evolved from one of several dozen students to several thousand.[15]

This rapid growth, its location in the state's capital city, the largesse of leading political figures cemented Ohio State University as a significant institutional and political force not only in Columbus, but throughout Ohio. In 1906, OSU's president, William

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[15] Raimund Goerler, *The Ohio State University: An Illustrated History* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 4-7; William J. Shkurti, *The Ohio State University in the Sixties: The Unravelling of the Old Order* (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 2016), 4.

Oxley Thompson, and several supporters in the state's legislature sought to restrict the ability of the state's other public universities to compete with OSU in the field of research. They crafted the resulting Lybarger Bill to cut funding for other Ohio public universities, limit them to basic day-to-day operations, and shift any additional financial resources toward the development of OSU and its research programs. While this bill was narrowly defeated, that same year the legislature still restricted Ohio's other public colleges from offering instruction beyond a master's degree, allowing OSU to monopolize all doctoral education and research functions until the 1950s. This favoritism was further displayed by Ohio Governor Harry L. Davis, who in his 1921 inaugural address declared that "In Ohio State University the commonwealth has an educational institution which should become the largest and best state institution in the United States … I desire specifically to ask the co-operation of the General Assembly in the effort which I propose to make to help the Ohio State University to attain that goal in the not too distant future." Davis then went on to support an approximately $125,000 tax levy to fund a university building fund for centers of higher education across the state. Of these newly acquired funds, 72 percent went to OSU and the remaining 28 percent was divided between Ohio's two other prominent public universities, Ohio University and Miami University. These legislative efforts cemented the university's status as the state's flagship educational institution, much to the chagrin of other public universities. To

Columbus and state officials, the success of their "favored child" directly reflected the prosperity and prestige of the capital city and Ohio as a whole.[16]

The university used its exclusive status for doctoral research to expand both its campus and its influence in the wider city. In 1900, the population of enrolled students numbered 1,465. This figure quickly doubled and doubled again, so that by the fall semester of 1916 the student body numbered 6,188 total students. While most of the development occurred on the grounds ceded by the original land grant, a familiar pattern of expansion took hold during the first two decades of the twentieth century as the university's campus encroached into a neighboring community north of the university known as Laneview. Established in the 1870s, the neighborhood consisted predominantly of black and Italian workers and their families who had contributed to the initial construction of the university. Following the purchase of the land, however, the neighborhood was redeveloped to make way for OSU's football stadium in 1907. The destruction of this community produced a stark dichotomy in the years following the stadium's construction between the wealthier football fans who "came in roadsters and fur coats" and the impoverished families still clinging to their two and three-story frame "tenements" across the street.[17]

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[16] James E. Pollard, *History of the Ohio State University: The Story of its First Seventy-Five Years, 1873–1948* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1952), 192-195; Ohio History Connection, *Ohio State University* (Columbus: Ohio History Connection); History OSU, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, 2007, 1-4; Ohio Historical Society, *Harry L. Davis* (Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1999).

[17] Office of the University Registrar, "The Ohio State University Autumn Quarter Enrollment Total University 1873-1922," August 27, 2007; Columbus Landmarks Foundation, *African American Settlements*, 54-55.

The expansion of the campus itself marked not only the growing influence of the university in Columbus, but also signaled the growing influence of the college on the direction of educational policies beyond North High Street. In 1907, Thompson, who also served as the Columbus Public school board president in addition to his responsibilities as OSU president, took a direct interest in the issue of segregated educational facilities as he declared, "It is in the best interests of both (races) that they be educated in separate schools." This statement, in turn, led to the protest of eight hundred black residents who gathered at a Mt. Vernon Avenue skating rink to "condemn" the school board's plan to gerrymander attendance boundaries in a regressive attempt to open an all-black elementary school on the city's East Side. At this protest, black residents authored and signed a resolution that stated, "We feel that the white citizens of our city owe it to us to give us that benefit which accrues as a result of education by contact and association in the public schools as they now are." Black residents gathered a year later and authored yet another resolution that stated, "Such separation of the races, even if the laws of the State forbid it, always results ultimately in inferior school equipment for colored children, and, moreover, tends to set the races farther and farther apart, and so to hinder that mutual sympathy and understanding which close personal contact in the plastic years of childhood cultivate." Black residents and those sympathetic to their plight, however, were unable to quell the growing white racial antipathy and were thus powerless to prevent the opening of all-black Champion Avenue Elementary School in 1909. The creation of Champion marked the beginning of the school board's solidification and re-establishment of an unofficially separate and isolated school district within the city that coincided with

and accelerated the city's growing residential segregation. In conjunction with public outcry, a group of black parents filed the city's first desegregation lawsuit in the Franklin County Common Pleas Court, claiming that the establishment of an all-black school was illegal under Ohio's state law. Despite the subsequent dismissal of the case by the court, and the exhaustion of the appeals process by the end of 1912, this lawsuit marked the first tentative steps of a decades long legal struggle that would reach its climax nearly seven decades later. While Champion had originated as an elementary school, it soon evolved as junior high grades were added in 1922, in turn, funneling even more black school children and educators into the already overcrowded buildings. Over the next two decades, the careful manipulation of attendance boundaries consolidated the racial transition and cemented the segmentation of the city's neighborhoods, leaving only five all-black schools by 1943 – Champion, Felton, Garfield, Mt. Vernon, and Pilgrim – and cloistering all of Columbus's black students into Central and East High Schools.[18]

The Growth of Local Civil Rights Organizations

The consolidation of black schools indicated an erosion of the progress achieved during an earlier, golden age, which arguably began to decline with the death of Reverend James Poindexter, Columbus's first black city councilman and school board member, in 1907. In the absence of de jure segregation, "a caste-conscious code of custom began to take its place." By 1910, there were 12,739 black residents in a city of

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[18] Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 14; Carter, "Domestic Colonialism," 153-154, 156-157; *Gary L. Penick et al. v. Columbus Board of Education et al.*, 429 F. Supp. 229 (1977), 235; Seltzer, "Segregation of Schools."

181,511. They lived in pockets throughout Columbus, generally near the jobs available as factory laborers, railroad workers, domestics, waiters, bartenders, and draymen. Preachers and teachers made up the bulk of the city's small black middle-class, and few service organizations existed to address problems of substandard housing and limited employment opportunity. By 1914, the black community's economic opportunities dwindled as black workers, especially men, were replaced in the hotel, restaurant, and service industries by young white women who were willing to accept lower wages. What had once been prestigious and desirable jobs for black men in the heart of Columbus rapidly disappeared as white employers sought to increase their profits at the cost of black laborers. Though by 1910 they possessed the full rights of citizenship, economic hardship and progressive reforms solidified de facto black disenfranchisement, neutralizing the impact of the black ballot, and eliminating the influence of the black political machines, cementing them as increasingly separate and "decidedly second class." The shift in the 1912 city's charter from ward-based to at-large elections kept black citizens out of the public office for the next half century even as more and more black southerners settled in Columbus in the following decades.[19]

Recently arrived southern black migrants were often assisted in their settlement and integration in the wider community by local civil rights organizations like the newly

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[19] *Penick* (1977), 236; Carter, "Domestic Colonialism," 159; Seltzer, "Segregation of Schools;" Mark, *Negroes in Columbus*, 8, 16-22; James, "American Addition," 23; Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 7; Vinnie Vanessa Bryant, "Columbus, Ohio, and the Great Migration" (Master's Thesis, Ohio State University, 1983), 5-6; Himes, "Forty Years of Negro Life in Columbus, Ohio," *Journal of Negro History* 27, no. 2, (Apr. 1942): 136-137.

formed Columbus Urban League (CUL). The CUL, originally an affiliate of the larger National Urban League in 1911, had branched off into its own independent organization by 1917. As an independent organization, the CUL focused its efforts on the promotion of equal and equitable access to economic, social, and educational resources both in the city and throughout the country. The group primarily consisted of local black business leaders, religious figures, skilled professionals, and concerned citizens. Focusing on the social betterment of the black community of Columbus, this local branch of the organization sought to alleviate many significant problems by promoting education, employment skills, and social responsibility. The goal was to build economic prosperity and strengthen their community following Booker T. Washington's accommodationist model. The organization defined the primary issues facing the black community as the following: the inability to secure a quality education or to organize their labor effectively, the prevalence of "delinquent adults," poor living conditions, and the difficulty in procuring adequate healthcare and social services. Furthermore, members of CUL often worked extensively with other civil rights organizations within the region. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century the organization provided services and expertise to aid the local community, including employment secretaries, home-builders, travelers' aid, nurses, teachers, legal counselors, and even parole investigators. As a result of the organization's efforts, many black laborers obtained jobs with nearby factories and earned wages unheard of in the South. Although discrimination towards black workers was an unavoidable reality, between 1910 to 1920 the percentage of Columbus black workers employed in manufacturing and the industrial sector skyrocketed from 26.5 percent to

41.9 percent. In 1924, the CUL conducted a survey of black residents to determine the overall rate of employment in the community and the breakdown of professions. The survey concluded that approximately a quarter of the male respondents identified themselves as "laborer" for their occupation. Others noted employment in factory or shop work (12.3%), building trades (12.8%), railroads (14.5%), or as porters / janitors (11%). Furthermore, a substantial number of residents described their work as proprietors (2.2%), clerical (3.5%), and professionals (2.6%). Women were most identified as domestics (86.7%), factory/retail (8.4%), or other (4.9%).[20]

Perhaps one of the most significant figures in the CUL during the first half of the 20th century was Nimrod Allen. With a background as a trained humanist and social worker at Yale and Wilberforce Universities, Allen was a founding member of the CUL in 1917 and was particularly concerned with the plight of the less fortunate and marginalized. This concern was directly reflected in his approach to combating inequality, as he worked to create positive links between the white and black communities to mend decades of racial tension. Allen and his views on black and white cooperation served as a guide for the black community. By 1921, Allen had become the executive secretary of the organization and focused its efforts on civic involvement and

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[20] "Conference of National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes," *Ohio State Monitor* 26 (Columbus, OH), November 13, 1918. This newspaper served as a leading black Baptist newspaper during the period, and as such, is an excellent source of black voices and perspectives within Ohio during the early twentieth century. "The Columbus Urban League," *Ohio State Monitor* 18 (Columbus, OH), October 5, 1918; "The Columbus Urban League," *Ohio State Monitor* 48 (Columbus, OH), May 10, 1919; Bryant, "Great Migration," 15-19, Himes, "Forty Years," 142; Columbus Landmarks Foundation, *African American Settlements*, 28; Mark, *Negroes in Columbus*, 41.

economic uplift for the following three decades. During his tenure, Allen became "the most prominent leader and 'power broker' in the Black community for at least two decades." During his time in the CUL, he focused the organization's efforts through the coordination of the press, radio, police department, local citizens, and later television towards racial harmony and economic opportunity for black Americans. Through his dedication to the principles of racial cooperation, the CUL grew to become the city's preeminent black institution. Furthermore, it was his leadership and direction that formed the basis of the Columbus black community's approach to civil rights during the early 20th century: education, employment, and social responsibility.[21]

Alongside the CUL, several black-led organizations focused on the cause of black civil rights and equality established themselves in the early 20th century in Columbus. The most notable of these other groups was the Columbus branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The organization was founded by Mayme L. "Mother" Moore in the Spring Street YMCA in February of 1915. During its early years, the group focused its efforts on combating discrimination from law enforcement, proving instrumental in the removal of several officers accused of oppressing black residents, and preventing the film, "The Birth of a Nation" from playing in public theaters across Ohio in 1916. In 1918, it targeted unequal treatment of passengers on trains between Columbus and Cincinnati and discrimination against black

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[21] Columbus Landmarks Foundation, *African American Settlements*, 33; Nimrod B. Allen, "East Long Street," *The Crisis* 25 (November 1922): 12-16.

men in the Student Army Training Corps. In 1919, the local NAACP secured a significant victory in the courtroom following the recognition of unequal treatment of black servicemen and nurses by the military and by the Red Cross during the First World War. By the 1920s, the chapter was led by their president, Reverend Edward L. Gilliam, and its secretary, S. T. Kelly. Under Gilliam and Kelly, the organization directed its efforts on increasing voter registration among the black community, resulting in the registration of 97,000 black residents, and removing racial bias in public spaces like transportation, restaurants, parks, theaters, and other commercial venues. Much like the CUL, a significant portion of the group's members comprised black professionals and focused on black welfare, desegregation of public spaces, and economic uplift. In subsequent decades, the organization, owing to its high number of legal professionals, increasingly utilized local courts to combat discrimination across Columbus and would lend their legal expertise to neighboring cities like Springfield. The group also acted as a refuge and center of organized aid for black Ohioans fleeing discrimination across the state, particularly from the resurgent KKK. Ultimately, while the Columbus branch of the NAACP mirrored the CUL in its early years, the legal acumen and persistence of its members proved instrumental in combating inequality in the following decades.[22]

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[22] Wendel P. Dabney, *Cincinnati's Colored Citizens: Historical, Sociological, and Bibliographical* (Cincinnati: The Dabney Publishing Company, 1926), 147; *Gazette*, November 14, 1917, March 2, 1918, October 11, 1919, June 12, 1920; William W. Giffin, *African Americans and the Color Line in Ohio, 1915-1930* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2005), 66, 68, 162; NAACP Asks Public Aid For KKK Victims, *The Ohio State News*, February 19, 1949.

The Interwar and the Great Depression, 1920-1945

It was following the conclusion of the First World War and the beginning of the first Great Migration that the city's black community truly began to take shape. Though the state overall experienced far less of an influx of black southerners than the neighboring states of Pennsylvania and Michigan, its black population increased 67 percent from 1910 to 1920, with the vast majority of these new residents concentrating in the eight largest cities – Cleveland, Cincinnati, Toledo, Columbus, Akron, Dayton, Youngstown, and Canton. Columbus itself hosted nearly 9,500 more black residents than it had only a decade earlier. The black community soon took up nearly one tenth of the city's population. While the relationship between black and white residents had never been perfectly cohesive, often-times resulting in white antipathy and vitriolic condemnation of the city's black community, this unprecedented demographic surge only further inflamed the negative outlook of many white residents. A growing number of white residents portrayed the influx of black residents as a black deluge that was pouring in from the South and washing away Columbus's white majority. This fear spurred the solidification of social and geographic segregation. Despite state laws banning discrimination in public accommodation and segregation in public education, black access to hospitals, movie houses, hotels, restaurants, and schools was uniformly restricted by the 1920s. Consequently, one of the main effects of the Great Migration was

a far more pronounced and increased level of segregation in housing, employment, and schools.[23]

White developers during the real-estate boom of the interwar period only exacerbated the spatial segregation of the black community within the city. Through the use of restrictive covenants, deeds, and exclusionary zones, developers sought to protect the racial homogeneity of the new suburbs and subdivisions that grew around Columbus's periphery, confining the burgeoning black population to the city itself. Black residents were deemed "nuisances, as detrimental to property values as saloons, slaughterhouses, and chicken coops." Realtors' took advantage of this through their unchecked and widespread use of "block-busting," the act of secretly selling a white family's home to a black family in order to lower property values, drive out white residents from previously valuable urban property, and subdividing the housing of fleeing white residents into smaller residential homes, "renting them at exorbitant rates" to needy working-class families, and "leaving overcrowded neighborhoods to fall into disrepair." This opportunistic tactic led to the unprecedented departure of white middle-class residents to the suburbs. Effectively, "Real estate developers, particularly professional developers, determined the spatial and social structure of the city," and ultimately "decided who would live where in the growing metropolis." Black residents were left constricted in an ever-shrinking enclave on the city's Near East Side, depriving them of

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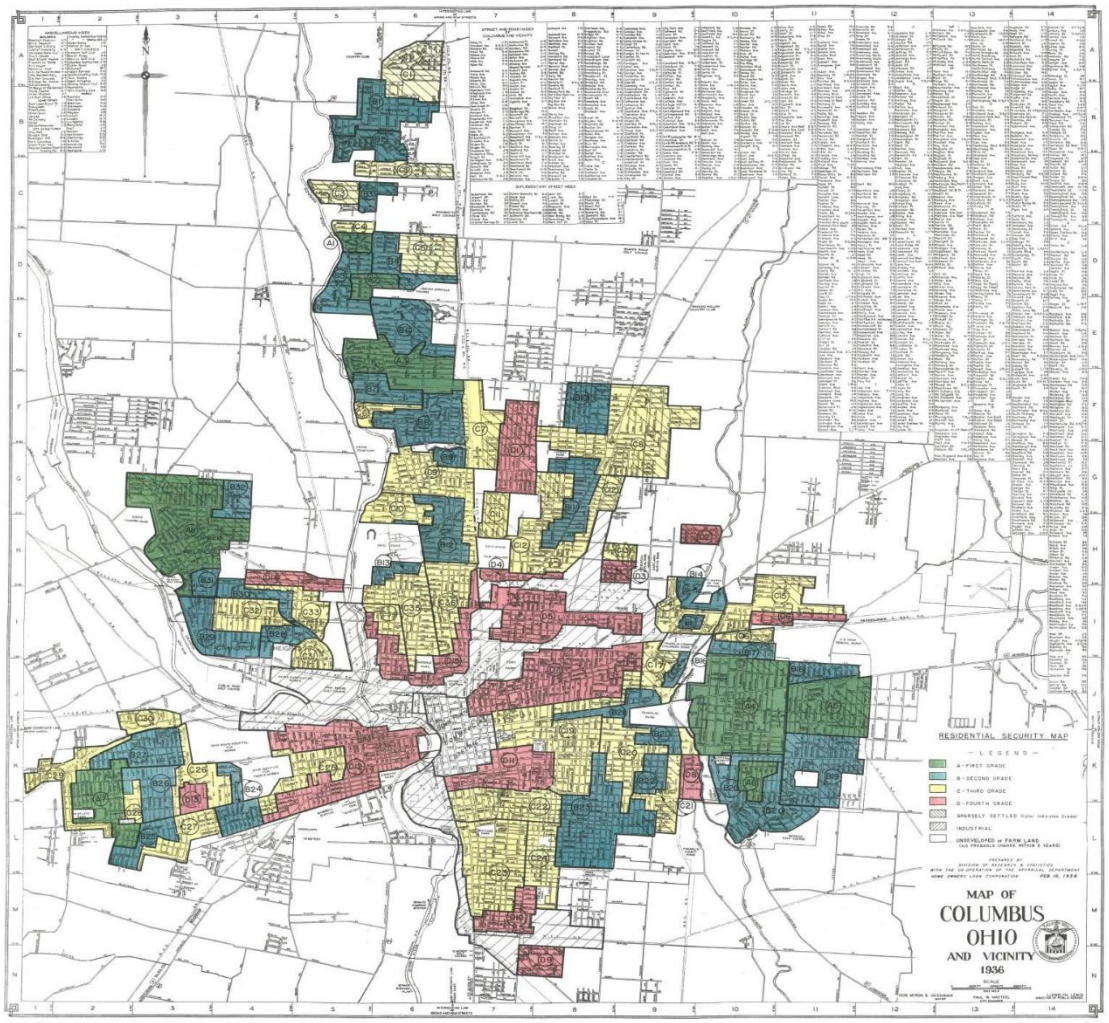
[23] Rodabaugh, "Negro in Ohio," 22-25; Frank U. Quillen, *The Color Line in Ohio*, University of Michigan Historical Series (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1913), 145; Himes, "Forty Years," 150; Columbus Landmarks Foundation, *African American Settlements*, 28.

access to representation, newly constructed homes, and the means to better their community.[24]

[24] Map of Columbus Ohio and Vicinity 1936: Residential Security Map, Division of Research and Statistics and the Appraisal Department of the Home Owners Loan Corporation, 1936; Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 8; Patricia Burgess, *Planning for the Private Interest: Land Use Controls and Residential Patterns in Columbus, Ohio, 1900–1970* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1994), 31, 45, 58; Mike Curtin, "Step by Step," *Columbus Dispatch*, January 29, 1993; Adolphus Andrews, "Urban Redevelopment and the Structure of Power: The Impact of Private Interests on the Policy-Making Process in Columbus, Ohio" (PhD Diss., Ohio State University, 1982), 639-641; Mark, *Negroes in Columbus*, 17.



Map 2. This map was created by the Federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) to determine the aid with refinancing mortgages to prevent foreclosure and determine "residential security." On the map, the newest areas - those considered desirable for lending purposes - were outlined in blue and referred to as Type A. Type A areas were typically affluent suburbs on the outskirts of cities. Type B neighborhoods were considered 'Still Desirable,' whereas older Type C neighborhoods were labeled 'Declining' and outlined in yellow. Type D neighborhoods were outlined in red and were considered the most risky for mortgage support." These maps were often used to deny or "redline" mortgages to minorities and lower income borrowers. Source: Federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation Maps for Ohio Cities, "Columbus Residential Security Map," February 19, 1936, Ohio State University Library.

The influx of southern black populations and the segregation imposed upon many of the long-time black residents created for the first time in Columbus a self-contained black community, the East Long Street District, or as it was known colloquially, Bronzeville or the Near East Side. Located to the east of downtown, north of the exclusive Broad Street, and neighboring the city's central railway station, this area throughout the 1920s became the preeminent economic and social center of black Columbus. Constrained by economic and social restrictions and de facto discriminatory housing policies, black residents in Columbus's Near East Side established a flourishing "economy within an economy." Forced to live and work in a shrinking portion of the city's center, black entrepreneurs created "insurance, mortgage, lending, and real estate companies" while "doctors, dentists, lawyers, printers, caterers and other professionals" opened their doors on the Near East Side. It was here, in the heart of the city, that the black community finally had an opportunity to create something uniquely theirs. It was here, on nearly two and half square miles, that the music halls, social clubs, and theaters lining Long Street "lit up at night." Despite escalating economic, political, and geographic segregation, the city's black residents fostered a vibrant community and energetic professional class during the 1920s. While persistent discrimination and segmentation isolated them from the larger market of the white majority, it empowered them to construct a culture of self-reliance and "institutional independence."[25]

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[25] Mark, *Negroes in Columbus*, 16-19; Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 8-9; Lovell Beaulieu, "For Some, Black History Is a Way of Life," *Columbus Dispatch*, February 22, 1989; Curtin, "Step by Step"; Himes, "Forty Years," 145-146.

The emergence of a thriving and vigorous black business and professional middle-class, however, gave rise to class divisions within the community itself. Long established and native black "Buckeyes" commonly viewed the newly arrived southern "North Carolina Negroes" with disdain for their southern customs. This distaste towards the newly arrived migrants soon turned into resentment as some longtime black residents argued that it was the "embarrassing" behavior of these migrants that contributed to the rise in white antagonism during the 1920s. The development of a black middle-class occurred during the same era as the major nationwide race riots during the Red Summer of 1919, the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan throughout Ohio and the Midwest, and the controversial black nationalist Garvey Movement. In Columbus, there were fears that the unrest would escalate into a violent retaliation against the prospering black community. Tensions peaked following the usage of black strikebreakers in a nearby Pennsylvania Railroad strike, and many feared that this event could incite a race riot. While tensions dissipated in the following months, the threat of violence loomed over those seeking to improve their lives and their community. Furthermore, the comparative affluence of this burgeoning black professional class, in conjunction with the city's stable economy, produced a relatively conservative and complacent black leadership. Problems were addressed with incremental social service solutions rather than the transformative and redistributive economic and political solutions often pursued by their counterparts in other more industrialized northern cities. As a result, organizations like the CUL and the NAACP grew increasingly reliant on white political and philanthropic benevolence. Consequently, the conservative nature of these groups facilitated a "racial milieu in

which confrontation was kept quiet, civic order maintained, and African Americans received more than the crumbs but less than the loaf."[26]

The onset of the Great Depression in 1929 sent shockwaves throughout the city and effectively smothered the nascent black middle-class. While the effects of the depression were less severe in Columbus, where a diversified economy helped it fare better than its Rust Belt neighbors, the Depression swiftly demonstrated the fragility of the separate black economy. Black-owned businesses closed their doors in the wake of the economic disaster, black workers were the first fired and last re-hired, and impoverished white residents occupied many of the domestic and menial jobs previously held by black Americans. By 1931, black unemployment had reached a staggering 37.6 percent, and as the depression ground on, "as few as 30 percent of black wage earners held full-time jobs in the private sector." Tensions over the overt discrimination black workers faced boiled over into protests and strikes against businesses that refused to hire them beyond entry-level positions. In 1937, black residents on the Near East Side conducted a strike against the Kroger chain of grocery stores for refusing to hire black workers above the position of carry-out boy. Not only had the Depression decimated much of the once vibrant black middle-class, the economic woes and the simultaneous redrawing of school districts only compounded concerns about disparate conditions and

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[26] For additional information on the wider northern civil rights movement, see Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008). Bryant, "Great Migration," 18; Himes, "Forty Years," 151; Starita Smith, "Woman's Life Could Be a Chapter in the History of Black Americans," *Columbus Dispatch*, February 3, 1988; Moreland, "Black Community," 72; Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 9.

unequal resource allocation to black schools. Columbus's segregative boundary changes in 1932 reached a point where national NAACP officials threatened lawsuits and deemed the city's successive efforts to isolate the black community as "cruel and unjust." While the East Long Street area persisted as the commercial and cultural heart of black Columbus up until the 1960s, it never quite regained the pre-depression vibrancy that it had once so proudly flaunted in the face of repression and inequality.[27]

Relief for the black community came in the form of public housing projects like Poindexter Village, one of the nation's first. The village, named after Reverend Poindexter, the first black City Council Member of Columbus, was the result of President Roosevelt's late New Deal legislation, the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act. The Act itself, signed into law on September 1, 1937, established the United States Housing Authority (USHA) and sought to provide an ameliorative solution to the economic strain on countless urban residents through an initiative that provided $500 million in federal loans for low-cost public housing projects across the country. Poindexter Village, one of the first models in the country, was constructed on Columbus's Near East Side and was designed by Howard Dwight Smith, one of Columbus's most prolific architects and the designer of the Ohio State University's famous Ohio "Horseshoe" Stadium. The village was designed to provide ample space for families to interact with one another as courtyards weaved between units and joined the space between the rows of brick

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[27] Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 9; Melvin L. Murphy, "The Columbus Urban League: A History, 1917-1967" (PhD Diss., Ohio State University, 1970), 53-56; "American Addition," 67; Moreland, "Black Community," 72; Micki Seltzer, "Novice Fawcett Is First School Board Witness," *Call and Post*, June 5, 1976.

townhouses. This public housing was in response to the needs of those recovering from the transition of the first Great Migration and as a respite from the deprivations of the Great Depression in the 1930s. Furthermore, the public housing units were created to provide affordable and quality housing to servicemen and federal workers. Once the pride of the community, the Poindexter Village provided dignified housing for the "future artists, teachers, college professors, professionals, politicians, social activists, government workers, writers, film makers, coaches, doctors, dentists, and families who lived there." Today, only a few of the original units remain standing – a grim reminder of the cost of decades of neglect by the local government.[28]

The Great Depression harmed not only many of the city's most vulnerable residents, but also those in the capital's university. While the US's intervention in the First World War had strained the university's ability to attract prospective students and keep those already on campus in the classroom, the economic hardships brought about by the Depression proved the toughest challenge faced by the university since its inception. Rapidly falling attendance rates from students forced to return home to support their families and the tightening of federal purse strings to combat the crisis depleted the university's coffers. This decline in attendance and dissipation of federal funds created a cascading series of financial woes for OSU's students, faculty members, and

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[28] Martha Simmons, *Preaching with Sacred Fire: An Anthology of African American Sermons, 1750 to Present*, (New York: Norton, 2010), 322-323; Columbus Landmarks Foundation, *African American Settlements and Communities in Columbus, Ohio: A Report* (Columbus: Columbus Landmarks Foundation Press, 2014), 10; Chris Gaitten, "The Second Life of Poindexter Village," *Columbus Monthly*, June 18, 2021.

administrators. Some of the most dramatic effects were the forced reduction of a "sizable" number of faculty and salary cuts for those who remained. The situation had become so dire that by 1935 the university was even unable to afford gasoline for its staff vehicles. The university's president, George W. Rightmire, declared that this time of troubles had been a "disabling experience" for the university. With little other choice in the matter, Rightmire openly lobbied for the state to allocate $1.2 million to rescue the university from its financial woes, but this plea was rejected by the state legislature. Rightmire lamented that the university was, perhaps for the first time in its history, no longer the "favored child of the state." Relief finally arrived with intervention of the federal government through Roosevelt's Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and National Youth Administration (NYA), the latter. Providing financial aid in the form of "work study" to those pursuing an education between the ages of 16 – 25. Federal intervention alleviated much of the stress on universities like OSU, allowing them to staunch the flow of students unable to afford tuition, maintain a core of student workers, and even support OSU's black students through an early, albeit symbolic, form of affirmative action, NYA's "Special Negro Fund." The federal monetary fund was reserved exclusively for black university students facing discrimination in financial assistance by college administrators and allowed these same students to weather the crisis that might have otherwise resulted in the loss of their scholarships and financial aid.[29]

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[29] Kevin P. Bower, "'A Favored Child of the State': Federal Student Aid at Ohio Colleges and Universities, 1934–1943," *History of Education Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (2004), 364-387; Pollard, *History of the Ohio State University*, 311–313; Rightmire from Sixty-Fifth Annual Report … of the Ohio State University, 1935, 15.

The Post-War Period and the Solidification of De-Facto Segregation, 1945-1950

The end of the Great Depression and the conclusion of the Second World War brought about an influx of new jobs and yet another population surge. This time, most new arrivals were migrants from the "extraordinarily depressed rural areas" of Appalachia, who would soon account for more than a third of Columbus's growing white population. Columbus was unlike many large, northern cities at the time of the depression because it was not encircled by suburbs. The city's mayor, James "Jim" Rhodes, a former Board of Education member who later became the governor to order the infamous National Guard intervention at Kent State in 1970, saw in this period of economic prosperity an opportunity for Columbus to take advantage of the rapidly developing suburbs and capitalize on the city's growing financial resources to transform the inner-city as well. In 1945, he organized a group of the city's 100 most influential citizens and formed the Metropolitan Committee. This organization served to advise the mayor on many of Columbus's most pressing issues and oversaw the re-development of significant portions of the downtown through demolition of older buildings and neighborhoods and their reconstruction to suit the evolving needs of the burgeoning metropolis. When low housing construction costs, pent-up demand, and federally underwritten long-term loans from the Depression sparked an explosion of single-family home building, Rhodes used this opportunity to implement an aggressive annexation policy to greatly expand the borders of the city. This policy utilized a water and sewer monopoly to rapidly incorporate much of the new development that in other metropolitan areas occurred largely in the suburbs, with the caveat that these new developments would become part of

the city and send their children and tax dollars to the Columbus Public Schools District. While this proved beneficial to many of the white residents and newly arrived white Appalachian migrants who had the ability to move into the modern and affordable suburbs, the city's growing black population, even in the absence of legalized segregation, was unable to purchase homes in these newly constructed suburban developments or even the redeveloped neighborhoods that had once been historically black.[30]

Despite this restriction on housing, integration progressed on certain fronts between the 1940s and early 1960s. The city's local businesses, such as hotels, movie theaters, and restaurants, began opening their doors to both black and white residents. Downtown office buildings started renting to black Americans for the first time in the city's history. Columbus's public sector hired its first black police inspector, fire chief, and bus driver, and black residents integrated into the service sector as salespeople, secretaries, and bank tellers. While symbolically significant, these token advances were primarily cosmetic and accomplished with little pressure from black residents and minimal white resistance. Just as the city was taking its first tentative steps toward wider integration, local policies reshaped the landscape of the city, clustering black residents closer together and driving the races farther apart.[31]

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[30] Lentz, *Columbus*, 116-118; Richard Z. Zimmerman, Alexander P. Lamis, Brian Usher, *Ohio Politics: Revised and Updated* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2007), 85-108; Lentz, *Columbus*, 129; Leonard Lee, "Ohio Loses Political Icon," *Columbus Dispatch*, March 5, 2001; John B. Combs, "Capital City Blacks Slowly Winning Political Struggle in Bicentennial," *Columbus Dispatch*, July 3, 1976.
[31] Curtin, "Step by Step"; "Local Black History Spans Two Centuries," *Columbus Dispatch*, February 18, 1987; Moreland, "Black Community," 76-78; Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 10.

The end of the Second World War represented a turning for OSU's struggling financial situation and a return to the university's coveted position as the state's "favored child." The university in the preceding decade had dropped from the lowest attendance of the Depression (9,512 in 1933) to a crippling wartime low of 6,499 by the fall of 1943. The saving grace for the university came with the influx of returning GIs armed with federal aid who bolstered OSU's student numbers. Registration increased to 13,434 in 1945 and peaked at 25,403 by 1947. Despite the growing pains of the post-war era, the late 1940s through to the 1950s was a relatively quiet period in the university's history as administrators, still reeling from the past decade, focused their attention on recovery and further expansion. In 1956, Novice Gail Fawcett, a capable administrator and former superintendent of multiple public-school districts including the Columbus Public Schools District, took the helm as OSU's president. His election proved rather controversial at the time, as multiple faculty members had criticized his lack of academic credentials and experience overseeing a major research university. But he had the support of the trustees, who believed that Fawcett was exactly what the university required during this period of growth and transition. They valued the extensive influence he accrued as the superintendent of Columbus schools, which, together with his skills as an administrator, would help him to manage the explosive growth of the university without openly challenging the existing order. For Fawcett, they envisioned a continuation of the quiet development of the past decade, one where the university would grow "carefully, thoughtfully, and without drama." Little did either party know that in the coming years President Fawcett would serve during the most tumultuous period in the university's

history, when the direction of the university, its role in the educational politics of its parent city, and the university's relationship to its surrounding communities would be truly tested.[32]

While the city had seen a significant expansion of both financial resources and space following the end of the war, the same could not be said for the city's strained education system. Years of depression-era and wartime neglect had left the city's education system in a precarious position. The district strained under the weight of 40,000 students even as it faced an influx of new school-aged children in the coming years. According to the Columbus City Health Department, there were 4,830 children born in Columbus in 1940: that number rose to 7,827 in 1946, and to 12,830 by 1957. Enrollment within the already buckling school system grew by 87 percent during the 1950s and would continue to grow until its peak of 110,725 students in 1971. It was during this period, that the changing beliefs of black residents shifted the focus of local civil rights efforts from black independence toward integration. With these departures from older notions of black mobilization relatively young upstart organizations like the Vanguard League (VL), a comparatively radical spinoff of the city's more conservative NAACP, began to hold sit-ins and demonstrations demanding an end to the segregative customs that had taken root throughout the city during the preceding half-century. Over

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[32] Office of the University Registrar, "The Ohio State University Autumn Quarter Enrollment Total University 1922-1944," August 27, 2007; Office of the University Registrar, "The Ohio State University Autumn Quarter Enrollment Total University 1945-1951," August 27, 2007; Shkurti, *The Ohio State University in the Sixties*, 4-8; Francis P. Weisenburger, *History of the Ohio State University: The Fawcett Years, 1956-1972* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1975), 1-9.

the next three decades, this innovative approach to civil rights slowly but surely eroded many of the long-established barriers between black and white Columbus. The most dramatic and glaring examples of race-focused assignments were in Garfield, Felton, and Mt. Vernon schools, where during the early 1940s 100 percent of faculty transfers were white-to-black. Following the passage of *Brown v. Board* in 1954, there were no black high school principals in the entire district and no black administrators within white majority schools. Furthermore, black student teachers were limited to completing their practice teaching solely within black schools, where the only jobs for black educators were offered. The VL published a booklet in 1943 that outlined the district's race-based faculty assignment policy and gerrymandered attendance zones that denied the black community the educational resources afforded to the white majority. The booklet lambasted the city's attendance zones as "skipping about as capriciously as a child at play." Regardless of black objections, by the end of the Second World War, the school board had cemented a de facto separation of the district, with the bulk of the city's black school children confined to a handful of crumbling and crowded buildings in the city's center and East Side.[33]

According to the United States Census, 46,611 (12.4%) of Columbus's 375,901 residents were black. From the time of Columbus's first recorded annexation in 1834 to

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[33] "The Story of the Columbus Public Schools" (Columbus Public School District 1958 Annual Report), 25; Anna Mae Durham, Anna Mae and Barbee Durham Interview, October 2, 1991, Durham, Mae, and Durham quoted in Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 14; Paul R. Dimond, *Beyond Busing: Inside the Challenge to Urban Segregation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985), 241; *Penick* (1977), 236.

1954, the city grew from a measly .92 square miles to 41.73 square miles. From 1954 to 1959 alone, it grew 47.29 miles. This ingenious method of metropolitan expansion did not, however, stem the tide of inner-city abandonment by the burgeoning white middle-class, as discriminatory federal lending policies funneled funds further and further away from the city's heart and towards newly constructed subdivisions. The birth of the interstate highway system only accelerated Columbus's white exodus, as crucial professions, services, and commercial activity shifted to the city's booming periphery. Urban renewal programs and freeway construction bulldozed a sizable portion of the city's most affordable (albeit often most dilapidated) housing and plowed through long-standing black neighborhoods. In turn, this dramatic reconstruction of the city to accommodate the increasingly surbanized white population in newly incorporated housing developments only further exacerbated the concentration of black residents in the deteriorating districts east of downtown. The Near East Side, once the heart of black culture and prosperity, was bisected by Interstates 70 and 71. Consequently, nearly a quarter of its residents were displaced by "Negro removal" during the 1960s.[34]

To minimize protest during the re-development, authorities made some overtures to the black community. The construction of I-70 north spared two of Columbus's oldest and most powerful black churches, knifing in between Shiloh Baptist Church on Mt. Vernon Avenue and St. Paul A.M.E on Long Street. The residential population in the neighborhoods surrounding downtown, however, dropped by fifty percent between 1950

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[34] Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 10.

and 1964, due in large part to the demolition of the residential and industrial districts like that of Flytown, a neighborhood north of the downtown. Named for the speed at which the neighborhood was built during the mid-19th century, the district itself was seen as an "entry-point community" for thousands of low to middle income migrants who arrived by train to Union Station, a major railway hub for the city. The neighborhood itself was not only home to a sizable portion of the city's industrial workers employed by the various factories along the river, such as the Indianapolis Paper Stock Company, the United States Pipe and Foundry Company, the Columbus Forge and Iron Company, and the Franklin Lumber and Furniture Company. It was also home to a diverse population of European and southern black migrants. The bulk of the neighborhood's population was made up of a largely integrated Irish, Italian, German, Welsh, Eastern Europeans, along with a black migrant community made up predominantly of families that fled the South during the first Great Migration. The neighborhood itself became the heart of the city's Irish American community. This influx of black southerners, however, led to increased racial tension, and segregation became commonplace during the 1910s. The depression hit the area especially hard, as many of the already low-income industrial workers lost their jobs and the economic lifeblood drained from the community.[35]

Between 1950 and 1970, Columbus's black population increased 112 percent, from approximately 47,000 (12.5 percent of the city's total) to 99,627 (18.5 percent), but

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[35] Curtin, "Step by Step"; Adolphus Andrews, "Urban Redevelopment and the Structure of Power: The Impact of Private Interests on the Policy-Making Process in Columbus, Ohio," 639-641.

by 1970, only 15 percent of the city's black residents lived outside of the 1950's boundaries. Though some public housing had been built to warehouse the displaced in previous years, Columbus's rapidly growing black population could not be entirely compacted within the previously established borders of the Near East Side. As in the 1920s, when overcrowded black residents began moving into older white neighborhoods, blockbusting and panic selling ensued, followed inexorably by capital flight and physical decay. Neighborhoods like South Linden, for example, a once prosperous area along Cleveland Avenue northeast of downtown, turned from only 6.8 percent non-white in 1950 to 84.6 percent by 1970. During the wave of urban renewal projects in 1953, neighborhoods like Flytown were declared blighted by the Columbus Redevelopment Authority (CRA). The construction of State Route 315 and I-670, of the larger "Innerbelt" highway system, cut through the heart of these neighborhoods and all but assured their eventual destruction. Residents within these neighborhoods and the surrounding areas were displaced, and the areas were subsequently razed and restructured. Flytown was destroyed to make way for the overwhelmingly white Victorian Village and Short North neighborhoods. Hanford Village was yet another one decimated by the city in the post-war period, as the expansion of I-70 east bisected the neighborhood that had promised newly constructed and quality middle-class homes to dozens of black servicemen and their families only a few years prior. The neighborhood is now little more than small clusters of single-family homes, hidden in the shadow of I-70's Alum Creek curve. The poorest black residents of neighborhoods like these had little

choice other than to resettle within the now claustrophobic Near East Side, only furthering the strained neighborhood's overcrowding and deterioration.[36]

As the 1950s came to a close, the racial divisions that had plagued the city since its inception became unbearable for the city's black community. With the continued destruction of black neighborhoods in the wake of urban renewal and highway construction, black families that could purchase homes outside of the East Side increasingly moved into nearby majority white neighborhoods. Despite the dramatic change from the strict redlining practices of previous decades, the growing number of black families sparked conflicts with white neighbors and only exacerbated the white flight from the inner-city and nearby suburbs in the following decades. Those few black families who did successfully cross the racial divide in Columbus's heavily segregated suburbs faced acts of continual harassment like cut telephone lines and frequently awoke to the sight of burning crosses late into the night. Furthermore, the dramatic loss of a considerable number of white urban homeowners who were willing and able to support increased taxes for financing public education proved catastrophic to the district's capacity to handle record-breaking numbers of students that continued to rise into the

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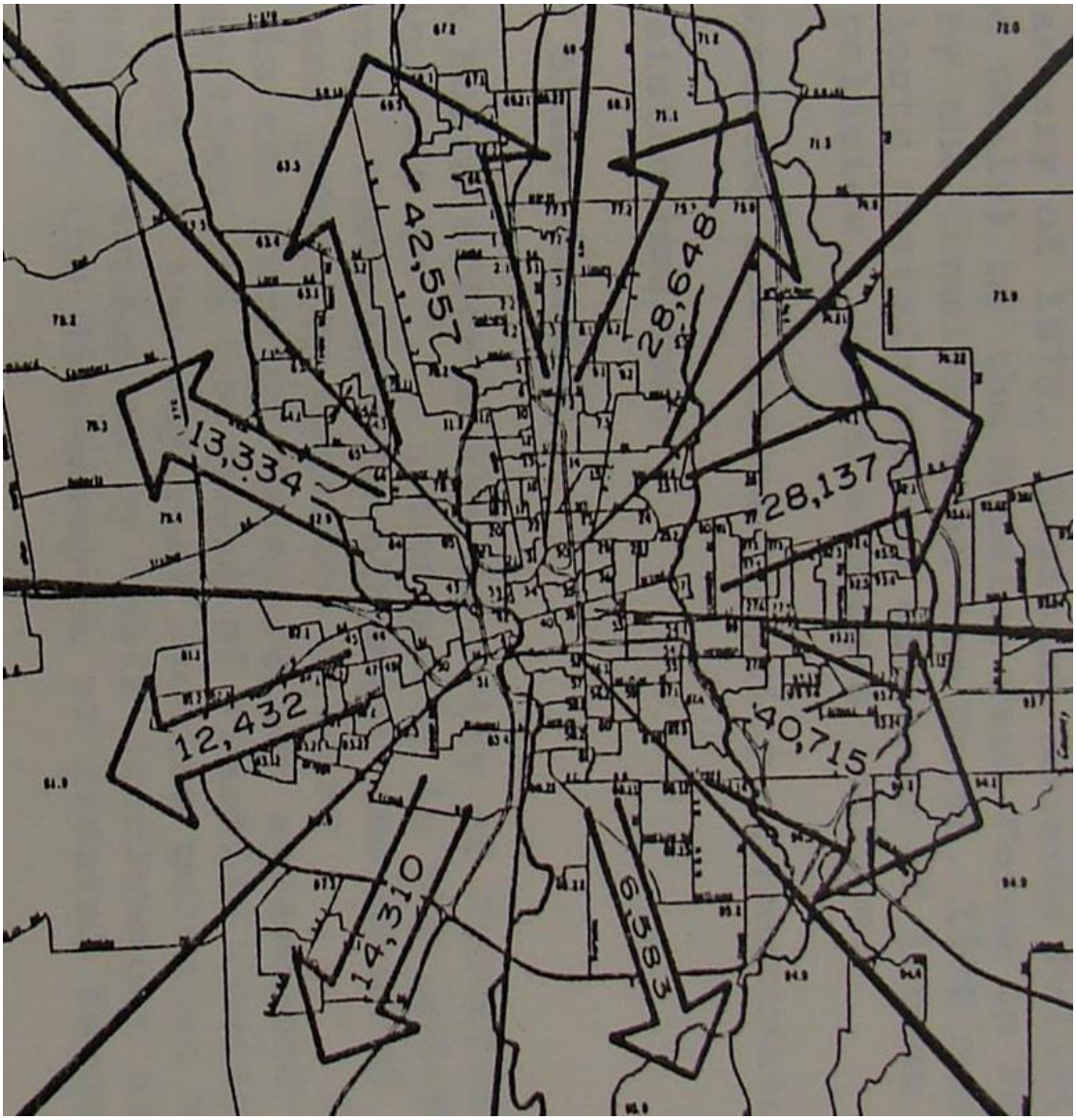
[36] Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 11; Census figures from City of Columbus Development Department, Planning Division; Andrew Hacker, *Two Nations; Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*, 229; Richard M. Bernard, ed. *Snowbelt Cities: Metropolitan Politics in the Northeast and Midwest since World War II*, 268-73; Alan D. Miller and Jonathan Riskind, "Areas in City Sinking," *Columbus Dispatch*, February 23, 1992; Ray Paprocki, "The Struggle to Save South Linden," *Columbus Monthly* 8, no.4 (Apr. 1982): 80-88; John B. Williams, "South Linden: From Grandeur to Ghetto!" *Call and Post*, Apr. 11, 1991; "Columbus '76" Chamber of Commerce Economic Symposium, October 19, 1966; Betty Daft, "There Stands Hanford Village, Decimated but Undaunted," *Columbus Dispatch Magazine*, July 22, 1979, 30-31; Henry L. Hunker, *Columbus, Ohio: A Personal Geography* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000), 113-114; Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 25.

1970s. Although the school district continued to construct new facilities, the inequality of the neighborhood system relegated black children to the oldest and least equipped buildings. Not only had black children been segregated from their white counterparts by 1960, but nearly the entire black community had been economically and racially isolated from the middle-class. In turn, Columbus became far poorer and disproportionately black despite the rise in economic opportunities in the city as whole. As a new decade dawned on Columbus, the decades of racial isolation in neglected neighborhoods and school district gerrymandering that consolidated their children into crumbling classrooms pushed black residents to a breaking point. As such, the following two decades marked a radical departure from the incremental approach to civil rights of previous decades as activists pursued direct action and vocal resistance against the status quo that had confined them for over a century.[37]

[37] Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty,* 229.



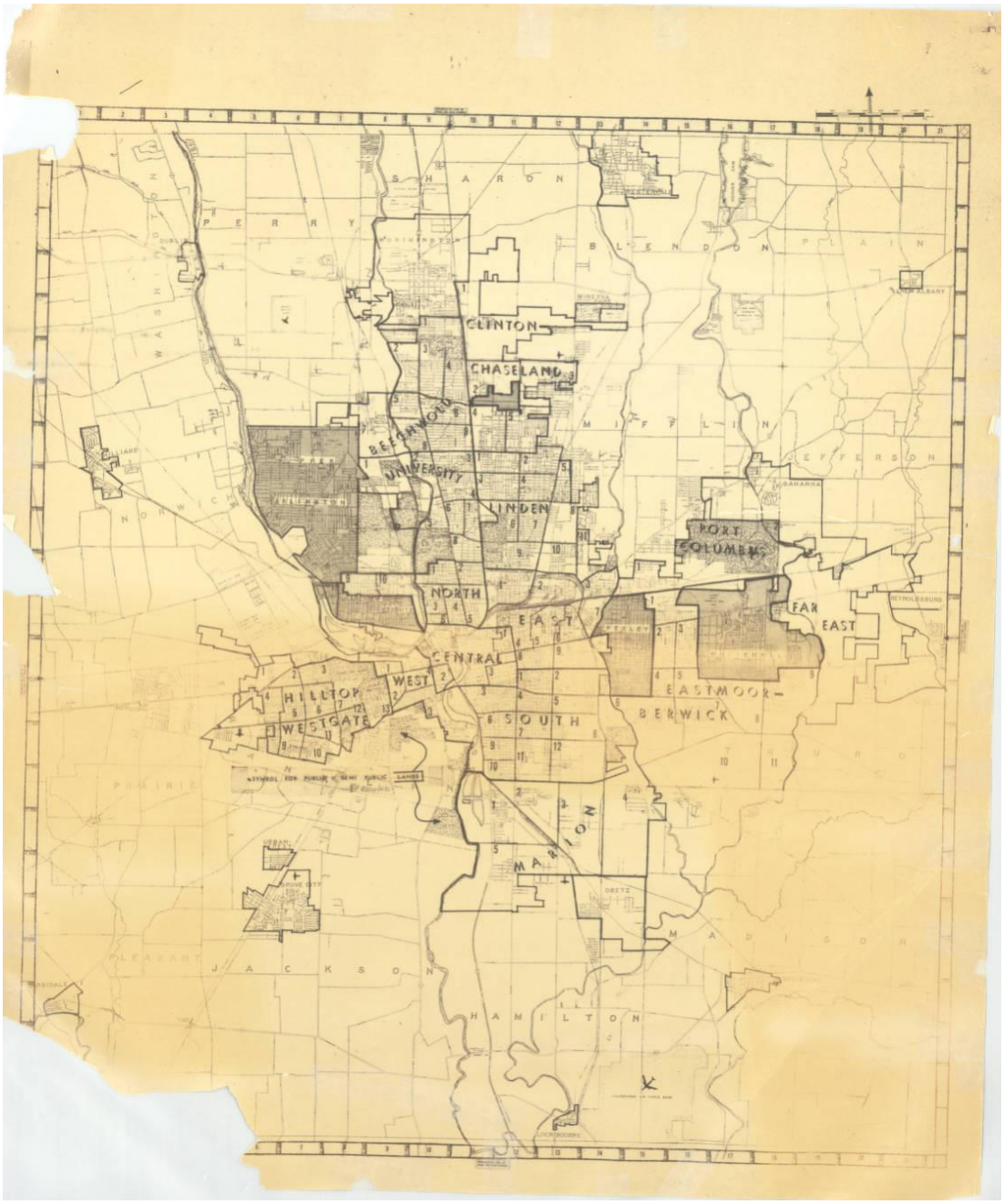
Map 3. “Population Movement by Sector, Franklin County, Ohio, 1960-1970.” It has been focused on the Columbus Metropolitan Area to make the population figures visible. Each arrow denotes “population movement direction and amount.”
Source: Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, “Franklin County Housing and Community Development Third Year Program,” (1975), 30, Columbus Metropolitan Library.

Chapter Two: Breaking Down the Status Quo, 1960 - 1970

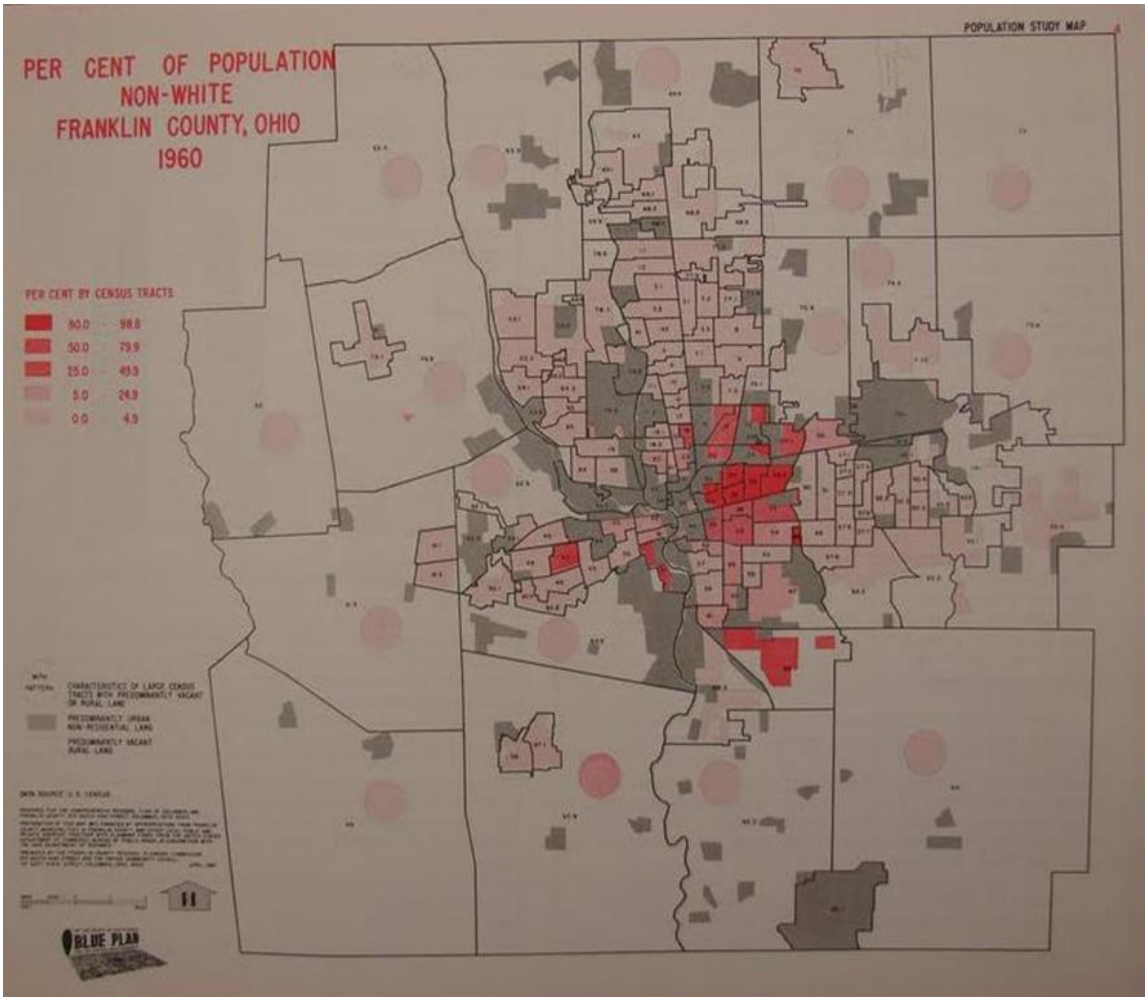
By the 1960s, Columbus had experienced an unprecedented era of growth in which the influx of new residents had outpaced the housing and educational capacities of the city. The population of Columbus's metro area rose from approximately 500,000 in 1950 to nearly 750,000 by 1970, making it one of the largest and most influential cities in Ohio. Black Americans, comprising nearly one-fifth of the population of Columbus by 1960, had frequently faced significant discrimination and racialized attacks from the city's dominant white population. By the 1960s, black families increasingly bridged the color-line into white neighborhoods and faced continued resistance from white neighbors. Newly arrived black residents in these neighborhoods were met with threatening phone calls late into the night, destruction of property and landscape, unordered taxis and emergency services, and burning crosses in their front yards. When faced with such blatant racist rhetoric and terrorism, the black community often turned to local organizations to provide guidance and unity. Columbus's civil rights groups had long promoted gradual reform, moderation, and local community-based uplift programs. This moderate position soon proved untenable. Increased racial tensions within the city, resulting from the wider civil rights movement and the city's inability to provide sufficient education to black neighborhoods, forced these groups to adapt their rhetoric and prioritize wider reform over individual uplift. Following their change in direction, the Columbus branches of the NAACP, CORE, and the CUL focused their efforts on desegregation, democratization, and top-down urban reform. Of particular interest to these civil rights organizations was the Columbus Public Schools District, which, while

not segregated by law, exhibited de facto segregation enabled by neighborhood redlining and gerrymandering. These tactics were employed to deny significant educational resources, such as quality teachers and well-equipped facilities, to the black community. Ultimately, frustration with the status quo and rising aspirations prompted greater mobilization among integrationists throughout the 1960s and 1970s.[38]

[38] "North Side Stirred By Fiery Cross," *Columbus Dispatch*, July 13, 1960; "Police Probe Cross Fire At Negro Home," *Columbus Dispatch*, December 9, 1960; "Blames Neighbors In Cross Burning," *Columbus Dispatch*, July 19, 1963; "Juveniles Are Believed Behind Cross Burning," *Columbus Dispatch*, March 26, 1964.



Map 4. A map of Columbus depicting the major neighborhoods of the city during the 1960s.
Source: "1960s Columbus Neighborhoods Map," Columbus and Ohio Map Collection, Columbus Metropolitan Library.



Map 5. Columbus Racial Distribution in 1960. Darker red areas denote sectors where residents were 80 to 98.8 percent "non-white." With red, light red, pink, and light pink areas representing sectors where residents were 50 to 79.9 percent, 25 to 49.9 percent, 5 to 24.9 percent, and 0 to 4.9 percent "non-white," respectively. Gray areas indicate sectors that were non-residential.
Source: United Community Council and The Franklin County Regional Planning Commission, "The Population Characteristics of Franklin County 1950-1960," Prepared for The Comprehensive Regional Plan, (April 1967), Population Study Map 4, Columbus Metropolitan Library.

Local civil rights activists faced significant resistance not only in their front yards but nearly any time they voiced their dissatisfaction and frustration with the system

during school board meetings. The Columbus Board of Education, or school board, was far from expansive or representative of the changing nature of the district and consisted of only seven unsalaried and relatively nonpartisan members who were elected to unlimited four-year terms in staggered, biannual, and at-large elections. Perhaps the most influential figure on the school board was the immovable Columbus Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Harold Eibling. Focused less on the slow and steady growth than his predecessor, Fawcett, and more on resistance to the efforts of civil rights activists, his tenure as superintendent from 1956 to 1971 marked a period of immense frustration for black parents and those who sought to break down the barriers of segregation in Columbus's public school system. Through his crackdown of dissenting voices in the district and the board itself and sympathetic attitudes towards anti-integrationists, school board meetings became a battlefield between the intransigent board members and vocal activists on both sides of the issue. Anti-integrationist parents commonly branded civil rights activists and organizations as little more than "willful lawbreakers" who blatantly disregarded the rule of law in favor of their own political agenda. Not only were these black majority groups portrayed as criminals by frustrated white parents, one such parent compared them to little more than petulant children, remarking that "most children who kick, scream and throw tantrums to get their way usually wind up wishing they hadn't." This resistance went so far as a member of the school board openly deriding leading members of the NAACP and CORE as "rabble rousers" in a public meeting. As resistance to change mounted, local white parents formed organizations that directly opposed the integrationist efforts of activists. One particularly reactionary group was that

of the Franklin County Anti-Communist Study Group led by the uncompromising and dogmatic Julio Suarez. Not only was he a staunch opponent of school integration, but also the larger group under his direction frequently attended local school board meetings and forcefully defended the neighborhood system in the face of what he described as minority rights infringing upon the rights of parents and intent on damaging Columbus's traditional school system.[39]

During the summer of 1963, the Columbus chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of White People (NAAWP) obtained non-profit status "to promote the social, educational, and general welfare of the Caucasian race." The adoption of this cruel inversion of the NAACP by the local frustrated white residents was a direct response to the civil rights activism and push for community-based organization that had been employed by the black community. The NAAWP, who Eibling declared had a right to protest, continually stifled the efforts of local civil rights activists to bridge the divide between black and white citizens through inflammatory counter-protests and smear tactics, all under the guise of social and educational welfare for whites. During counter-protests and rallies against public school integration, NAAWP members brandished signs that read: "This present trend can only end in communism;" "Your kids have rights too;" and "The civil rights bill deprives you of your inherent basic American rights." Furthermore, the Ku Klux Klan, which had witnessed a resurgence in the Midwest during

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[39] "Who Has the Right?" *Columbus Dispatch*, May 2, 1964; "Mrs. H.J.M.'s Letter to the Editor," *Columbus Dispatch*, March 11, 1964; "School Board Hotly Debates Rights Issues," *Columbus Dispatch*, July 8, 1964; William Fulwilder, "School Board Plans Rights Council / CORE Head Hails Move as Big Step," *Columbus Dispatch*, October 20, 1965.

the Great Migrations of earlier decades, joined later NAAWP rallies and voiced their support for agitated white residents and the city's continued resistance to housing and educational reform.[40]

The school board itself, similar to the multitude of conservative factions and alleged parent advocacy groups, maintained the position of either willful ignorance or outright denial of any form of race-based discrimination. When faced with significant backlash from the black community, it followed many of the same segregationist tactics conducted in other similar urban centers. Local groups and school districts framed educational reform as either a yes-no vote on busing with the implicit aim of integration or the rejection of any existing racial discrepancy in education quality regardless of neighborhood. As protests with the inadequacy of schooling as a focal point began to gain momentum, Superintendent Eibling asserted that "we have no schools in Columbus that are segregated by law or by any board policy, regulation or design." Furthermore, the school board president, Dr. Watson Walker, in an effort to calm local agitated white residents, declared that he was "definitely against" using busing to achieve racial integration. This method of mass resistance and denial echoes the "reactionary populism" first identified in Boston during its struggle for desegregation and supports the notion that the conflict in Columbus comprised but one part of a wider nationwide phenomenon.

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[40] "Columbus Chapter NAAWP Gets Charter as Non-Profit Organization," *Columbus Dispatch*, July 24, 1963; Potyondy, "Chapter Two: Reimagining Urban Education," 34; "Eibling Says NAAWP Rally Can't be Barred at North," *Columbus Dispatch*, May 22, 1964; "Threatened Sale of Home to Negro Brings Protest," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 2, 1963; "NAAWP Rally Can't be Barred," *Columbus Dispatch*, 1964.

Citizens and governmental officials rejected the evidence of their own eyes and ears, rather than admit that the current system harmed the development of black children.[41]

The civil rights movement had taken root and blossomed in Columbus by 1963, as local groups focused on the prevalent discrimination in public accommodations, housing, and employment. Alongside these aims, Columbus activists also placed great emphasis on liberalization of public institutions and the protection of individual rights during both the 1960s and 1970s. By the spring of 1964, however, the tides began to change as the local chapter of CORE, which had formed in the city in 1960 and was composed of a number of former Vanguard League activists, directly challenged the school district well before the more moderate NAACP. Led by the charismatic and out-spoken Reverend Arthur Zebbs of Aldersgate Methodist Church, CORE threatened to mobilize the black community to boycott the city's schools unless the district openly discussed and addressed the rampant de facto segregation. It was in solidarity with the demonstrations from more established groups, that the six young activists walked out into the rush hour traffic on April 30th, 1964 at the intersection of High and Broad Streets, the two main arteries in downtown Columbus, and staged the famous sit-in protest, handed out leaflets decrying "de facto segregation," and sung "We Shall Overcome" when arrested by police. That summer the Teenage Action Group (TAG) took charge of a large black and white 350 person "peaceful civil rights rally" in front of a local junior-high school. The

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[41] "NAACP President Cites School Board for Civil Rights Steps," *Columbus Dispatch*, March 1, 1964; R. P. Formisano, B*oston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

student protest was led by Phale D. Hale, Jr., the son of Reverend Phale Hale of the NAACP, who spoke on behalf of TAG and highlighted the district's proposed construction projects that placed new schools in black neighborhoods on less than two-acres of land and new schools in white neighborhoods on ten-acre sites. He connected these policies to national politics, boldly declaring that the upsurge in white backlash was "for Goldwater" and urged people to vote for upcoming school construction bond issues if they favored "this unequal educational system." Rev. Hale and Rev. Zebbs joined in the protest and emphasized the social benefits of inter-racial classrooms. The injustice of the city's education had mobilized citizens from all strata and across disparate age ranges to combat a system that favored white neighborhoods and robbed black youth of the education they deserved.[42]

In 1964, the Columbus Board of Education stoked the fires of an increasingly volatile relationship between themselves and black parents. The board sought to address the perception that schools were segregated based purely on race and issued a statement opposing segregation, but maintained that the district would continue to support "neighborhood schools" and refused to use transportation to solve "social issues." This statement led to an approximately four-hundred-person protest outside of the recently opened and nearly all-black Monroe Junior High. Protesters asserted that the opening of

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[42] "Police Here Put on Alert For Rights Demonstrations," *Columbus Dispatch*, May 1, 1964, 1, 3; Potyondy, "Chapter Two: Reimagining Urban Education," 34-36; William Fulwider, "CORE Chief Eyes School Boycott Here," *Columbus Dispatch*, March 3, 1964; "Police Here Put on Alert For Rights Demonstrations," *Columbus Dispatch*, May 1, 1964; "Schools and Goldwater Rapped at Rally Before Monroe School," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 2, 1964.

the new school only reinforced de facto segregation in Columbus. During the summer of 1965, the Columbus black community began to focus its efforts on broader educational reforms. Led by a nucleus of activists from the local chapters of CORE, the NAACP, and CUL, the city's leading organizations staged sit-ins and protests inside the state capitol, in front of businesses, and around public schools as even high school students took direct action against district policies. Despite the departure of many white families to the suburbs in previous decades, the overall student population of the Columbus School District continued to climb as a result of the mass incorporation of new housing developments during the 1940s and 1950s. This rapid growth in the city and its suburbs, however, left the school board woefully under equipped in terms of facilities. The inability of the school district to provide for the significantly expanded student population had left the board with two options: expand the status quo system of neighborhood schools that had historically favored white neighborhoods over their black counterparts or attempt something ambitious and transformative. White parents favored the neighborhood system as it existed within the city, viewing it as the best way to preserve their communities and their cultural values. Black parents, on the other hand, had long suspected that the district's segregationist policies had taken a terrible toll on the intellectual development of their children.[43]

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[43] Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 20; Education Committee, Columbus Urban League, "Historical Fact Sheet of Racial Integration Commitments and Plans by Columbus Public Schools, 1964-1975," Columbus Public School District files, I; Micki Seltzer, "Expert Cites School Board Role in Black Containment," *Call and Post*, May 29, 1976.

This fear turned into a frightening reality when Dr. Charles Glatt, a professor of education at The Ohio State University and the director of the Midwest Institute for Equal Education Opportunities, reported that in Columbus, no black children – not one – at predominantly black schools performed at or above their grade level in the late 1960s. Glatt, a white southerner from Frost, Louisiana was a leading figure at OSU who used his skills as an educator to support integration efforts in cities like Columbus, the neighboring city of Dayton, and Indianapolis during the 1960s and 1970s. He was famous for using his southern upbringing to relate to many white parents who feared black children integrating into their traditionally all-white schools. During a discussion on integration with a church group in 1971, Glatt spoke for many white residents who supported integration when he empathized that "We [Southerners] are a part of you. Midwestern cities are filled with folks like us from the swamps and hills and valleys, [and] I pledge to you as an educator and a gentleman that there are some of us who are going to change your school systems. And your children and others can come out better because of it." Following a desegregation lawsuit filed by the NAACP, Glatt was appointed by Federal District Judge Carl B. Rubin as a consultant on the desegregation of the Dayton Public Schools District in 1975. It was during his service as a desegregation planner in the preliminary stages of the city school's integration that Dr. Glatt became a target for anti-integrationist radicals. On the afternoon of September 20th, 1975, Glatt was murdered in his Dayton office by a white anti-integrationist wielding a firearm who was later found to have also murdered at least six black adults the previous summer. Glatt's murder shocked the community and made national headlines, exposing the violent

means some were willing to stoop to in order to prevent the destruction of racially segregated schools.[44]

Glatt's investigation in the Columbus Public Schools District contained another damning revelation underscoring the system's inequity: while black students had seriously underperformed, the vast majority of white students had met or exceeded their grade level. This stark contrast presented a significant opportunity for local civil rights organizations, students, and the wider black community to air their grievances and advocate for change. In reaction to the significant pressure from these groups, the board chose to focus their efforts on small-scale, targeted reforms that aimed to address specific issues. Of these incremental changes, the board utilized federal funds for Head Start programs for preschoolers and a one-million-dollar grant from the Ford Foundation for a "special program for needy children." While these efforts proved particularly popular with white parents, who often praised the district but condemned the work of activists, these piecemeal efforts fostered resentment within the black community because they failed to address the structural inequalities of the city's educational system. To add fuel to the fire, while Columbus and its suburbs had continued to grow both in terms of population and economic opportunity, a survey conducted earlier in 1965 by the *Lantern* had shown that Columbus had an unemployment rate and poverty rate of non-white workers and their families at or above the rates of the five cities that had experienced

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[44] Potyondy, "Chapter Two: Reimagining Urban Education," 28, 36; Average Achievement Scores by Grade Level 1969-70, 1970, Charles Glatt Papers, Ohio State Archives, Columbus, OH; "Possible Link to Blacks Killing Investigated in Dayton Slaying, *New York Times*, September 21, 1975

inner-city riots during the past year, including Los Angeles. Zebbs warned that "Until this [unemployment] problem is taken care of there will always be demonstrations and riots." Later that year, unsatisfied with the pitiful overtures, he admonished the school board and declared that "we live in an urban society, but we are still building little red schoolhouses … you can't effectively teach when you keep on building little red schoolhouses." Zebbs then pushed for systematic reform, a plan that redistricted the city and established larger mixed-race schools, and threatened further demonstrations if wider change continued to be stifled, "Let us [discuss it] around the conference table … I have three kids … You ought to take some positive action … We have our backs against the wall. When you find people like that, it's hard to tell what they might do." To activists such as Zebbs, this was a just cause worth fighting and sacrificing for.[45]

This was not simply a minor adjustment in school policy to civil rights activists, but a notable change in direction from their previous focus on smaller classroom sizes and student-teacher ratios to one that favored an economy of scale approach to education. To them, bigger schools offered greater efficiency, integration, and improved educational opportunities for all students. Not only would this type of reform entail a greater degree of "interracial and interclass exposure," but it also had the potential of recasting the city's culture as a diverse yet cohesive beloved community. The issue over newly constructed

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[45] "Schools Expand Plan for Needy Children," *Columbus Dispatch*, Apr. 22, 1965. "Local Schools Planning Pre-Kindergarten Set-Up," *Columbus Dispatch*, Apr. 7, 1965; Paul Yalsovac, "Negro Leaders See Columbus as Ripe for Racial Outbursts," *Lantern*, August 26, 1965, 1; Shkurti, *The Ohio State University in the Sixties*, 134-135; Fulwider, "Zebbs Likes the 'Campus' Plan to Mix Schools," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 23, 1965; Fulwider, "School Boards Admonished: Integrate Now … or Else," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 22, 1965.

segregated schools and the perpetuation of the neighborhood system served as a lightning rod for local activists. When the school board decided to approve its original $11 million, nine-school construction plan from 1959 in which three of the new schools would be segregated, Zebbs addressed the board, threatening "I promise you there will be conflict, and I'll be a part of that conflict. We'll tolerate no more Jim Crow schools in Columbus." CORE would no longer be alone in this fight, however, as soon after groups like the NAACP and CUL joined them in their push for redistricting and the abolishment of the neighborhood system. In the lead-up to the 1966-1967 academic year, former NAACP president, Rev. Hale, and their co-chair on education, Ken Fickle, addressed the heart of Columbus's racial issues as the "twin problems" of "housing and education," and declared that "so far the power structure of this town is supporting segregation in education." Similar to the demands of CORE a year earlier, the NAACP leaders advocated for the dissolution of the neighborhood school system. The CUL grasped on to the idea of large-scale integrated facilities with vigor, channeling their efforts towards the creation of a comprehensive and transformative plan that they hoped would provide the foundation for integration across the district. As local organizations focused their attention on dismantling the neighborhood system across the district, a new generation of young activists, fueled by the discrimination faced by fellow students and those

marginalized in neighboring communities, organized on OSU's main campus against the inequality that plagued their city.[46]

The Beginnings of Student Activism and Parallels to the Wider Movement

If the school board served as the crucible of the desegregation struggle, the university exemplified the wider frustration and tension experienced by the city's residents. Administrators at OSU attempted to combat the rising tide of unrest among both students and professors who vocally disparaged the city's and university's educational policies. Dissent among the student population had been evidenced earlier in the decade by the increasing vocal protest of student-run newspapers and university organizations. William Fulwilder, the education reporter for the *Columbus Dispatch*, noted the tension on campus: "Like a bolt of lightning, and in some ways almost as potent, student opinion on the Ohio State University campus has become something with which to reckon." Up until this point, the university had allowed its students a certain degree of autonomy and the freedom to express themselves even when they vehemently disagreed with the actions of the institution. When faced with rising student activism, particularly against university policy, Fawcett remarked that "It is better that issues be discussed in the open and explored with reasonable objectivity under reasonable guidance than under cover." Behind the scenes, however, university administrators like the executive dean for student relations, William Guthrie, warned his colleagues at the annual

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[46] "Zebbs "Declares War" on School Plan / Segregation Claim Made," *Columbus Dispatch*, November 17, 1965; Lore, "Cultural Council Hears Demands of Local NAACP," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 11, 1966; Fulwider, "School Board Sets Up Race-Advice Council," *Columbus Dispatch*, December 8, 1965; Potyondy, "Chapter Two: Reimagining Urban Education," 36-37.

meeting of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators in April of 1961 that individuals with ulterior motives might attempt to hijack popular causes and manipulate students for their own agendas. In order to combat these subversive elements, Guthrie encouraged administrators to be open to change and to shepherd student bodies towards "responsible actions" in an effort to preempt the alternative of "irresponsible student rioting as already seen in various forms around the world." Whether administrators followed the recommendations remained to be seen, as the civil rights movement and student protests only accelerated as the decade progressed.[47]

The university, much like Columbus, was no stranger to the unequal treatment of black students in both on and off-campus housing. The first act of student civil disobedience occurred in October of 1963, just two months after the March on Washington, when a group of black and white student activists organized into a group called Students for Human Rights to investigate and bring attention to the discrimination faced by black students. They split into two teams, each made-up of two white students and one black student, to inquire about renting from two nearby apartment complexes west of campus. The white students, unsurprisingly, were informed that they could move-in immediately after they paid their deposit, whereas the black students were rebuffed and were told they would need to fill-out an application and wait an indefinite amount of time for their paperwork to be approved. Furthermore, when the white activists informed the

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[47] Fulwider, "OSU Students Free to Voice Controversial Opinions," *Columbus Dispatch*, Apr. 2, 1961, 27A; "Apathy," *Lantern*, Apr. 20, 1962, 2; Shkurti, *The Ohio State University in the Sixties*, 25-26; "Guthrie Says Student Apathy Declining on College Campuses," *Lantern*, Apr. 4, 1961, 1.

resident manager that they were acting as an intermediary for a black student, they were informed that said black student would receive an eviction notice at the slightest provocation or if any of the other tenants so much as objected to their presence. The next day, picket-lines surrounded the two apartment complexes and demanded that the owners, Buckeye Property Management and their co-owner, Leo Yassenoff, affirm that they would no longer discriminate against black tenants. Yassenoff, no ordinary, faceless landlord, was a prominent community member, former Ohio State football player, and real estate developer. When he refused to respond, demonstrators gritted their teeth and redoubled their efforts. The pick-line continued for another thirteen days, before students and local activists staged a sit-in protest in front of Yassenoff's home on October 22nd. Police then arrived shortly thereafter and arrested the vocal CORE leader Rev. Zebbs, David McConnell, an associate professor of optometry, and seven students on charges of trespassing and disturbing the peace. A subsequent sit-in protest in November also led to the arrests of several activists, with a total of eleven being found guilty of trespassing and related charges with large fines and time in the city workhouse. This placed the university in a difficult position as it had purportedly supported nondiscrimination in student housing, but following through on this pledge would mean disavowing a prominent figure in the community and a supporter of the university. Following these arrests, the university decided that the best course of action would be to remain neutral; they would not punish the students involved, but they would also not interfere with the policies of the landlord. While this disheartening defeat led to the dissolution of Students for Human Rights, new groups took their place with more members and greater experience.

Ultimately, this act of civil disobedience served to bring awareness to both students and faculty, much like demonstrations in school board meetings had for the wider community, to the racial injustices perpetrated in Columbus and as a call to action against those who perpetuated it. No longer would OSU students and the faculty that supported them sit back and remain apathetic to the world outside of campus, especially not to the injustices that affected minority students and those in the neighborhoods that surrounded them.[48]

Targeted Solutions to Widespread Issues

By 1966, the ability of educators and school boards to correct generations of racial disparity came to the forefront of national attention following the release of the federal Office of Education's *Equality of Educational Opportunity* study. The *Equality of Educational Opportunity* study, better known as the Coleman Report, was commissioned under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and represents one of the most expansive and authoritative social scientific investigations of American educational inequality in the twentieth century. The team of researchers, led by Johns Hopkins sociologist Dr. James S. Coleman, set out to document the level of segregation faced by minority teachers and students, achievement levels between various groups, and "the availability of educational opportunities in the public schools for minority group Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexican-

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[48] Shkurti, *The Ohio State University in the Sixties*, 88-89; Goerler, *The Ohio State University*, 160-161; "Housing Bias Charged by Civil Rights Pickets," *Lantern*, October 10, 1963, 1; "Police Arrest Sit-Ins During Bias Protest," *Lantern*, November 19, 1963; "OSU Will Not Discipline Seven Convicted of Trespassing in Buckeye Property Sit-In," *Lantern*, January 6, 1964, 12; "Students for Human Rights Disbands, New Group Forms," *Lantern*, January 16, 1964, 12.

Americans, Oriental-Americans, and American-Indians, as compared with opportunities for majority group Whites." The team surveyed approximately 600,000 children, 60,000 teachers, and 4,000 schools to analyze the effectiveness of educational inputs versus educational outputs on overall achievement of students across the nation. In terms of educational inputs, the researchers focused on varying levels of funding, facilities, and degrees of teacher quality, curricular rigor, and extra-curricular opportunities. The educational outputs, however, centered on overall academic achievement measured through test scores to determine a school's "educational effectiveness." Specifically, the team analyzed each school's ability to educate students with diverse geographic, racial, and socio-economic backgrounds.[49]

The results of the survey were surprising, especially to Coleman and his team, as researchers were unable to answer the initial query on which their project began: which educational inputs could improve the academic performance of working-class, minority students? The report posited that "For most minority groups, then, and most particularly the Negro, schools provide little opportunity for them to overcome this initial deficiency; in fact they fall farther behind the white majority in the development of several skills which are critical to making a living and participating fully in modern society." The team was, however, able to identify several factors that could explain the lower achievement of minority children that went far beyond school funding and the skill of their teachers.

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[49] James S. Coleman et al., *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1966), i, 21.

"Whatever may be the combination of non-school factors – poverty, community attitudes, low educational level of parents – which put minority children at a disadvantage in verbal and nonverbal skills when they enter the first grade, the fact is the schools have not overcome it." They concluded that, irrespective of levels of funding or various other educational inputs, a racial gap persisted in academic achievement and that a combination of outside factors had a tangible negative influence on minority students across the nation. While this revelation was downplayed in the report, the results sent "seismic shocks through the academic and bureaucratic worlds of education" and fundamentally challenged liberals' belief that funneling more resources to poorer schools would improve pupil achievement.[50]

The impact of the Coleman Report, and the integration of social science research into educational policy reflect the growing role of universities in American public life and governance after the Second World War. In the wake of the war, the federal government, spurred by the start of the Cold War, supported significant financial initiatives that enabled large numbers of Americans, particularly veterans, to enroll in colleges across the country. Whereas a college degree was previously seen as a privilege of the wealthy, the influx of middle and low-income students shifted perceptions on

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[50] James S. Coleman, "The Concept of Equality of Educational Opportunity," *Harvard Educational Review* 38, no. 1 (1968), 14-16; Peter V. Marsden, "The Sociology of James S. Coleman." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31 (2005): 1-24, 2-3; Godfrey Hodgson, "Do Schools Make a Difference?" in Donald M. Levine and Mary Jo Bane, eds., *The 'Inequality' Controversy: Schooling and Distributive Justice* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), 22-44, 26; Joseph F. Kett, *Merit: The History of a Founding Ideal from the American Revolution to the 21st Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 240; Hodgson, "Do Schools Make a Difference?" 27.

higher education. The multiversity model, as articulated by University of California President, Clark Kerr, envisioned universities as a place where young minds would be molded through a liberal education into educated citizens prepared to enter the workforce. In turn, universities focused on efficiently churning out students to meet the rising demand for educated professionals in large organizations such as the government, universities, and corporations. Christopher Loss, in *Between Citizens and the State*, posits that higher education served as "the key institutional embodiment of the American state and the central intellectual construct that helped policymakers and the American people define the vary meanings of government, knowledge and democratic citizenship in the twentieth century." Perhaps the most significant outcome of this symbiotic relationship was the creation of a "parastate," or an entity distinct from the state but employed by it, between the government and universities that enabled the state to "mete out federal authority at the local level." In turn, this connection allowed the state to subtly convey its interests to the populace while circumventing anti-government backlash among citizens averse to governmental intervention. In conjunction, universities through their expertise in social science utilized a "therapeutic ethos," or a greater focus on self-fulfillment and wellbeing, and effectively shaped both higher education's and the state's definition and promotion of good citizenship. While this framework had the intended effect of filling the burgeoning ranks of these large organizations, the large-scale impersonal, and often indifferent approach to undergraduate education rankled many students who resented the institutional emphasis on government and corporate funded research. Kerr noted that "the

cruel paradox that a superior faculty results in an inferior concern for undergraduate teaching" and identified it as "one of our more pressing concerns."[51]

Despite decreased social and financial barriers to entry and greater willingness to engage with the civil rights movement, universities were double-edged swords for minority communities. The great social influence afforded to universities through their ever-growing student population had the unintended consequence of exposing Americans to the injustices of racial inequality and creating a more socially aware white student body. Social science research into the consequences of segregation spurred professors to become more influential to government agenda-setting on civil rights. Furthermore, a greater number of students were from minority communities that had been discriminated against in higher education in previous decades. With their inclusion, particularly those that had engaged in activism outside of campus, issues surrounding civil rights gained momentum. As a result, the bulk of young civil rights activists, particularly those willing to engage in direct action against inequality like SNCC and CORE, originated on college campuses. In turn, greater student activism forced university administrations to acknowledge the changing world outside of campus. The greater influence and physical presence of universities came at a cost, however, as the manifest destiny of dynamic urban campuses often encroached upon low-income minority neighborhoods. It is for

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[51] Matusow, *The Unravelling of America*, 32-42; Christopher P. Loss, *Between Citizens and the State: The Politics of American Higher Education in the Twentieth Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 2-16; Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 49.

these reasons that the complicated relationship between universities and the communities that surround them is vital to understanding the civil rights movement in urban centers.

As the "long hot summers" of the mid-1960s began, Black Power organizations gained strength, and increased demands for school boards controlled by local communities. In response, social science researchers were compelled to confront the practicality and shortcomings of school desegregation, the persistence of achievement gaps, and the correlation between opportunity in school and opportunity in life. The controversial *The Negro Family: The Case For National Action* by Daniel P. Moynihan, Lyndon Johnson's Assistant Secretary of Labor, arrived at similar conclusions in 1965. In his report Moynihan argued that the rise in black single-mother families stemmed not from a lack of opportunity, but by the destructive nature of "ghetto culture." Scholars such as Henry Dyer, a participant in the Harvard seminar that Moynihan organized to consider the report in 1968, stated, "the Coleman results have the unfortunate, though perhaps inadvertent, effect of giving school systems the false impression that there is not much they can do to improve the achievement of their pupils." As a result of these influential reports, Neoconservatives used the Coleman Report and Moynihan Report as ammunition in their argument that poor black academic achievement stemmed from a "culture of poverty" and questioned the efficacy of government funding to close the achievement gap. Liberals, including Johnson, also embraced Moynihan's conclusion, but focused on the study's conclusion that black achievement levels rose when working-class black students were educated with middle-class white counterparts as evidence of

the advantages of desegregation. To liberals, the black "culture of poverty" could be overcome through governmental programs guided by breakthroughs in social science.[52]

Quality Integrated Education for Columbus, 1966-1967

The rising tempo of the national civil rights movement was reflected in the more active and ambitious agenda of local Columbus organizations. In 1966, the Columbus chapter of the NAACP published a statement that accused the school board of promoting "separate educational standards for Negroes and Caucasians." Furthermore, the report accused the district of explicitly and "systematically" segregating staff, providing fewer teachers, less space, less financial resources to black schools, inadequately administering compensatory programs, and "hid[ing] behind the so-called 'neighborhood school concept,' especially when the board invokes the concept only when necessary to confine Negro Children to substandard schools." In the same report, the NAACP proposed several measures to overcome inequalities in the district, like white-black school pairings and altered attendance zones to break down racial barriers. It also sought to redirect resource allocations through a "massive 'saturation' program to bring quality instruction to the inner-city schools." To support the work of these fellow activists, the CUL, under director Robert Brown, attacked what it perceived to be the root of the city's inequality,

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[52] Leah Gordon, "The Coleman Report and Its Critics: The Contested Meanings of Educational Equality in the 1960s and 1970s," *Process* (2017); Henry S. Dyer, "School Factors and Equal Educational Opportunity," Harvard Educational Review, ed. *Equal Educational Opportunity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969) 41-59; Coleman et al., *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, 22; Daniel P. Moynihan, "Sources of Resistance to the Coleman Report," *Harvard Educational Review*, v38, no. 1: 1968, 23-36, 24. Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 211; Allen J. Matusow, *The Unravelling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 195-198.

the restriction of the black community to de facto ghettos on the decaying East Side of the city, and instigated legal action against real estate agents who segregated black Americans in the fringes of older neighborhoods, denying them access to traditionally white schools. At a school board meeting in the fall of 1966, Brown articulated what he believed to be the primary inhibitor of equal education within the current de facto segregated system: "The issue is whether or not a public service, namely public schools, when access to such service is based on residence, may legally build and operate a school in privately developed segregated neighborhoods. Hopefully in the future we will have recourse to present a plan to the school board." This marked a notable shift in the vision and role of the organization. No longer did the CUL envision itself as a group solely dedicated to the economic uplift of previous decades, but one that would dismantle inequality at its source: racial isolation. In the following months, the organization focused its efforts on a proposal that could finally circumvent the impediments posed to integration by the neighborhood system. While Brown and the League had in many ways still upheld the moderate and gradualist principles of previous civil rights leaders such as Washington, this new plan promised not only to improve the lives of the marginalized black community, but also the entire city.[53]

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[53] Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 20-21; Education Committee, Columbus NAACP, "Racial Segregation in the Columbus Public Schools," August 10, 1966; "Hits Fringe Area Housing for Negroes," *Columbus Dispatch*, March 26, 1964; David Lore, "City Council Delays Busing Decision," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 15, 1966.

The Educational Symposium on Urban Problems, hosted by the State Board of Education of Ohio and the Northeast Region of the National Association of State Boards of Education in December of 1966, had an undeniable influence in the CUL's ultimate synthesis of ideas the following spring. The event focused on addressing many of the core issues plaguing urban centers and hosted several national figures including NAACP executive secretary Roy Wilkins and leading Pittsburgh educational administrator and later US commissioner of education during the Nixon administration, Sidney Marland. During the conference, Marland highlighted the importance of civil rights activists to force change on a societal level. He argued that while the path to progress might have seemed obscured at that movement, there was a path in which the dreams of the urban black community could be realized – education. He posited that the best place in which to enact wider societal change and solve many of urban America's problems lay within the local school system, as the black community's "compensation is long overdue." Pittsburgh's school district at this time faced a similarly segregated system of neighborhood schools, and under the direction of Marland sought to consolidate them into a handful of campuses that housed thousands of students each. Of this campus approach to urban educational inequality, he argued, "This will be a rational and reasonable and logical approach to integration." He posited that within Columbus, "during the next three years, our entire city will go through a major revolution … These will be schools for the use of thousands, they will be concerned with excellence, they will be concerned with individuality." Much like the demands of CORE in 1965, Marland's

proposal favored larger integrated campuses rather than small-scale locally controlled schools and soon proved to be the guiding vision for future integration initiatives.[54]

During the summer of 1967, protestors took to the streets throughout the city in support of the CUL's plan for "Quality Integrated Education for Columbus, Ohio" to the Columbus Board of Education in April of that year. The League's plan had come about following nearly a decade of heated debates between civil rights organizations and the school board, as the ever-expanding educational needs of the city clashed with the conservative board's reluctance to challenge the de facto segregation and inequality of the district's traditional neighborhood schools. This reluctance of the board to alter the existing system had pushed the city's black parents, community leaders, and civil rights organizations to the breaking point. Directly inspired by the transformative conceptualization of an educational park by Philadelphia Urban League's Sylvia Meek and Dr. Robert Rutman, the CUL sought to emulate its sister organization's ideas within Columbus. The League had constructed an extensive proposal with radical, democratic goals for its city's public schools in an effort to "bring quality-integrated education to each and every child in Columbus, Ohio." The League convened a diverse education committee, which presented a six-point plan to the district for consideration: (1) establishment of a division of planning for integration; (2) changing "feeder patterns" of how children move from elementary to junior high to high school; (3) redistricting; (4)

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[54] "U.S. Schools, Slums Scored in Negro Riots," *Columbus Dispatch*, December 14, 1966; Sidney Marland, "The Big Issues in the Big City Schools," *A Report Education Symposium on Urban Problems*, State Board of Education of Ohio and the Northeast Region of the National Association of State Boards of Education, (December 13-14, 1966); Potyondy, "Chapter Two: Reimagining Urban Education," 39.

phasing out Head Start programs; (5) the conversion of predominantly black schools to "special purpose facilities" and assigning those students to new schools; (6) and the creation of educational parks across the city.[55]

At the heart of the proposal, the League had envisioned a pragmatic, democratic, and integrated space that would break down the racial and economic barriers that had divided and weakened the city for decades. This plan took the form of a radical restructuring of the school district into several large-scale campuses, or educational parks, which would bus and house thousands of students regardless of racial makeup or class in order to promote equality and integration throughout the city. By focusing their efforts on education, the League sought to heal many of the societal wounds that had festered over the past decade and address the inequality of public schools within the city. Students, regardless of race, would be offered "competition, cooperation, and self-government ... in an environment which realistically denotes the multi-racial and ethnic makeup of our community, country, and world." Through careful and equitable placement of the campuses across the city, the group argued that these institutions would ensure "all population segments equal access to uniform, high quality education geared to individual needs and not dependent upon special compensatory or selective devices." Through their refusal to accept federal and private funds for small-scale targeted solutions or what they deemed "compensatory education," the organization instead

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[55] Quality Integrated Schools for Columbus, Ohio: A Report by the Columbus Urban League, Education Committee, September 1967, Columbus African American Collection, Columbus Metropolitan Library, Columbus, OH, 2, 38, 51, 59; Potyondy, "Chapter Two: Reimagining Urban Education," 39-40.

sought a radical restructuring of the city that had for decades stifled change and denied opportunities to the black community. The League argued that educational inequalities would not be overcome through purely economic and employment-based half-measures. Only through the systematic dissolution of the separate and unequal neighborhood system, would the perpetuation of separate and unequal economic outcomes end.[56]

The new system that they envisioned, while a radical and dramatic solution to the city's inequality, still utilized several of the core tenets and goals of the organization since 1917. Of these guiding principles, the professionalization of the black community through high quality and non-discriminatory education remained an overarching goal. While the notion of centralizing education within urban centers was not a new idea by the late 1960s, this proposal represented something quite different from what had come before. Not only was this plan nuanced, but it also deftly circumvented many of the factors that had inhibited educational and civil rights reform in previous decades. The proposal dodged the potential roadblock of housing reform and might have even fostered a new holistic sense of community among the residents as students from white and black families would have a better chance to interact and form friendships outside of their own race than in the previous system. In turn, making it increasingly more difficult for future generations to ignore the disparity in segregated sections of the city. Second, the plan sought to undercut unease concerning busing purely for the purpose of racial integration,

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[56] Quality Integrated Schools for Columbus, 58, 69-70, 60-62, 3, 4, 12, 13, 29, 30; Potyondy, "Chapter Two: Reimagining Urban Education," 40-41.

which produced immediate backlash within Columbus. The CUL attempted to assuage the concerns of white parents by stating "We do not advocate the transportation of students from outer-city schools to inner-city facilities." They argued that these facilities would utilize local busing to maintain neighborhood cohesion and create a "community school" rather than a traditional neighborhood school. Lastly, educational parks had the potential to improve every individual's education by centralizing resources that reformers hoped would foster improved curricula, instruction, counseling, food, health, and extracurricular services, just as the reformers of the first half of the twentieth century had envisioned. This guiding notion is well articulated in their statement that "the park is the physical manifestation of egalitarian education … The premise of education in the park is a respect of human dignity and individual worth. Conversely, the park rejects invidious distinctions based upon race, class, religion, or national origin as well as any notion of inferiority of individuals or groups of individuals." The proposed restructuring of Columbus by the League represented a genuine attempt to imbue an unequal and segregated society with equal educational opportunity, not only rhetoric, but in action. Civil rights activists had re-imagined the district, and thus, the entire city.[57]

While this proposal never came to fruition, likely as a result of the entrenched incrementalism and the school board's hesitancy to undertake such a dramatic

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[57] William Reese, *America's Public Schools: From the Common School to 'No Child Left Behind'* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 296; Columbus Area Civil Rights Council, March 1972, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Records, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, OH; Quality Integrated Schools for Columbus, 55-56; Potyondy, "Chapter Two: Reimagining Urban Education," 39, 41.

restructuring of the city, it laid the groundwork for full desegregation of the district. Furthermore, the idea of the neighborhood system, despite the increasing number of studies lamenting its racial and economic disparities, still proved popular among many white parents who, even decades later, still rallied against the busing of their children to other schools for the express purpose of racial integration. The idea of large-scale educational campuses would not simply fade away however, as several metropolitan centers including New York, Berkeley, Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Washington DC incorporated the model to varying degrees to combat de facto segregation. By 1969, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), following the sponsorship of several local districts, concluded that the educational park model of urban education was "one of the most dramatic solutions offered to meet the educational needs of students in metropolitan areas today." Within a few short years of the League's failed proposal for Columbus, the transformative ideas of educational radicals and civil rights activists had been vindicated. Regardless of the final decision of the school board, the frustration of a marginalized community that had been "pushed to the brink by the near-complete refusal of the district to meet them halfway," inspired the Columbus Urban League to create "a vision of school reform in 1967 that threatened–if only for a moment–to radically transform the economic, cultural, and physical layout of the city."[58]

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[58] John A. Klebe, "Selected Bibliography on Educational Parks," (July 1969), (ERIC Database), vii; Tim Doulin, "Judge Behind Busing Order Hails Change," *Columbus Dispatch*, February 9, 1996; Potyondy, "Chapter Two: Reimagining Urban Education," 28.

As grassroots black activism clashed with decades of district inflexibility, black parents began to take matters into their own hands. On September 13, 1967, frustrated by the seemingly immovable school board and inspired by the proliferation of "community control" movements that had taken root in other northern cities, parents at the nearly all black Ohio Avenue Elementary staged a one-day student boycott of the school, the first in the district's history. At the boycott, parents delivered a list of twenty-seven demands to the Board of Education in reaction to the lackluster response of the district to both the CUL's and NAACP's reports. The most significant demands had been the organization of a breakfast and hot lunch program, smaller class sizes, increased transparency of test scores, "intercultural textbooks," "human relations" training for administrators and teaching staff, and a school library that could lend out books to students. Surprisingly, the demands did not include community control of the school board, but instead focused on specific issues and greater transparency for parents. Marian Craig, the leader of the Ohio Avenue boycott, stated in a later interview that theirs was "a movement on the part of black parents to be involved in the total operation of schools where black students attend … whether in an all-black school or an integrated school."[59]

By the fall of 1967, the resistance of the previously insurmountable school board began to crumble. To ease rising tensions and pressure from activists, the board presented a peace offering: the Council on Intercultural Education. The Council was tasked with

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[59] Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 24; "Historical Fact Sheet," Columbus Urban League, 5-6; Nancy McVicar, "Boundary Changes Explained," *Columbus Citizen-Journal*, Apr. 24, 1976; Craig quoted in Harold Lloyd Carter, "Domestic Colonialism and Problems of Black Education with Special Reference to Columbus, Ohio" (Master's Thesis, Ohio State University, 1976), 204.

investigating alleged racial inequality and discrimination within the district. While this development was hailed as a victory for civil rights, conservative figures such as Suarez of the Anti-Communist Study Group warned that "Sooner or later the line will be drawn: are we going to destroy our present system of education? I hope the public is given notice through the press of that meeting because many representatives of many organizations will be here to oppose it." Despite the criticism from conservatives towards the new group of intercultural advisors, the Council ended up ironically becoming much the same as other status quo organizations during this period. Richard M. Mall, an Intercultural Council chairperson and OSU speech professor, patronized the efforts of the NAACP at a public meeting and declared that "if you want us to solve the problems of the world, then we should probably take up what to do about Vietnam as well." In September 1966, the NAACP released a terse statement criticizing the school board and the Council for its "obscure, petty, and most ridiculous reasons for doing nothing" to end segregation. At another meeting with the Council the following year, Reverend Larry McCollough of Mount Zion Baptist Church lost all patience and referred to the school board as little more than "a bunch of bigots." Local leaders had lost hope in the ability of local councils and the school board to end segregation.[60]

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[60] Fulwider, "School Board Plans Rights Council / CORE Head Hails Move as Big Step;" "Cultural Council Hears Demands of Local NAACP," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 11, 1966; Lore, "City Council Delays Busing Decision;" David Cain, "Intercultural Council Holds Against Attack," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 10, 1967.

A Report to the Columbus Board of Education, 1968

Local civil rights groups were not the only ones to submit a comprehensive plan for the educational transformation of the city. In 1968, at the behest of the school board, leading figures and professors selected by Fawcett from OSU had been tasked by the school board to create an advisory task force, deemed the OSU Advisory Commission, to report on the current state of the district and to subsequently provide a technocratic, incremental, and significantly less radical solution to the issues plaguing education within the city. The Commission was headed by the dean of the College of Education and later facilitator of district desegregation efforts in 1979, Dr. Luvern L. Cunningham. It issued a report and series of recommendations after a comprehensive three-month examination of the district. The Cunningham Report focused on the average reading and math achievement test scores of the district's various schools, which were divided using a "priority" ranking system to direct federal Title I funds granted by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965 to the district's most needy schools. This act sought to alleviate the financial pressure faced by schools and districts with high numbers of students from low-income households through directed federal funding. In the Columbus Public Schools District, sixty-six priority schools were ranked from I (most needy) to V (least needy). There were ninety-four non-priority schools in 1968. Their research revealed that the district's poorest ("priority I to V") schools, whose student demographics were frequently between 95 percent to 100 percent black, and its most affluent ("non-priority") schools, whose student demographics were frequently between 95 percent to 100 percent white, possessed significant disparity in terms of educational

aptitude. “At every grade level on each of the tests the priority I and II school averages fall far below expectation. The non-priority school averages fall at or above expectation … Priority I, II, and III schools start out in first grade at three, two, and two months below the 1.0 grade point equivalent; by the sixth grade they are between four and eight months below the expectation. And by the ninth grade they are from two years, three months to two years, six months below expectation.” The Cunningham Report further highlighted that “non-school (environmental) factors undoubtedly contribute to low achievement in priority schools,” and furthermore, that “equality of educational opportunity cannot exist unless there are members of the black and white communities attending school together.” Ultimately, the commission argued for “managed school integration” through incremental “boundary revision” as new schools were constructed, “pre-construction open housing agreements,” and compensatory programs “as a supplement to but not as an alternative to school integration.”[61]

The commission’s recommendations, particularly the attention on a student’s non-school related factors like their home environment, illustrated the ongoing debate regarding the impact of the Coleman Report from two years prior and sought to alleviate the struggles that many black students faced not only at school, but in their communities as well. The board’s response to these reports fell well below the transformative actions demanded by such damning conclusions, further damaging the already tenuous racial

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[61] “A Report to the Columbus Board of Education,” Ohio State University Advisory Commission on Problems Facing the Columbus Public Schools, June 15, 1968, 20-21, 24-29, 269, 300, 18, 19-22.

tension between white and black parents. While the board did allocate funds to poorer schools through Title I and Head Start programs, its response to integration in the district's teaching staff, curricula, and student assignments was lackluster at best and only superficially addressed the rising demand for transformative change among black parents. The report also posited that "Critics of the schools who have taken the trouble to bring their criticisms to their elected representatives often leave Board meetings angry and frustrated because they perceived their appearance was treated with resentment and disrespect or, at best, indifference." This is no surprise given the heavily centralized, intransigent, and autocratic administrative structures that dominated education administrations nationwide. "Challenges to the authority of educational professionals, whether in the boardroom or the buildings themselves, were unusual and unwelcome. Like the American industries whose labor force they churned out, public schools faced few competitive pressures; unwieldy and unresponsive, they were often woefully unprepared to confront the conflicts that emerged in the 1960s." According to the report, standard board meetings proceeded "rapidly in this way … the Superintendent reading in a loud clear voice, the Board members voting yeas when their names are called on each motion. The Superintendent does most of the talking and his recommendations are virtually always approved by unanimous vote … members of the board do not disagree in public. Last April, one member voted against a recommendation of the Superintendent and the curriculum committee; this reportedly was the first negative vote in years." Before the upheaval of the mid-1960s, the report noted, "the Board was not accustomed to dealing with any organized opposition, and certainly not from the ranks of Negroes

and the disadvantaged." Superintendent Eibling demanded that administrators follow his orders with military-like discipline and adherence to authority. "To be a Columbus administrator," remarked teacher Don Pierce, "you had to have the mentality of a Nazi soldier. You had to take orders and not question."[62]

Even as Columbus was spared from the devastating race riots and mass destruction that raged through the black communities in cities like Watts and Detroit in the mid-1960s, the Ohio Avenue boycott and corresponding riot on the Near East Side marked the beginning of a significant rise in outright black-white animosity in Columbus. While racial antagonism had been present in school board meetings and public demonstrations, this new form of resistance found its greatest supporters among more radical black students and young adults. Many of them had become impatient with the blatant slander, perceived racial inferiority, and overt discrimination faced by the black community. This clear disregard for social norms and open challenge to the operation of Columbus schools provoked defensive, fearful, and angry reactions from white students and staff. The reaction of students in the Columbus Public Schools district was not isolated to those in primary and secondary education. Black students, especially in higher grades, were influenced by the activism of radical student and faculty members at OSU,

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[62] "Historical Fact Sheet," Columbus Urban League; "Plans for Developing Better Ethnic Understandings," Columbus Public Schools Policy Statement, July 18, 1967; "A Report to the Columbus Board of Education," 159; "A Report to the Columbus Board of Education," 154-156, 163-64; For case studies of the tension between desegregation and school district organization, see Daniel J. Monti, *A Semblance of Justice: St. Louis Desegregation and Order in Urban America*; and Doris Fine, *When Leadership Fails: Desegregation and Demoralization in the San Francisco Schools*. John Ellis Interview, January 26, 1994, Ellis quoted in Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 22; Don Pierce Interview, Apr. 21, 1994, Pierce quoted in Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 22.

where the intensity of black and white frustration led to the largest protest in the university's history a few years later in May of 1970. Student criticism and worsening racial hostility was most apparent in the larger high schools, particularly those with a mixed black-white student body as a result of racially transitioning neighborhoods or whose residents occupied a similar socioeconomic stratum. "You could almost pinpoint the disruptions with where the boundary lines of housing were," said the then district chief psychologist, Damon Ashbury. "The schools that had difficulty were the schools that were in transition modes from being majority white students or predominantly white students to that range where the numbers were more equal."[63]

The OSU Advisory Commission recommended market-oriented school reforms such as partnerships between schools and private industry, a greater focus on the "expansion of technical and vocational education," and a greater emphasis on occupational education in order to elevate those in impoverished districts. Furthermore, the Commission highlighted what "may well be the most important [recommendation] in the report," the formation of an "urban education coalition." This envisioned coalition would serve to facilitate dialogue between the district and the city's diverse communities much like the Community Relations Commission proposed by activists years earlier. In the summer of 1968, the school board adopted many of these employment-based solutions and created the Urban Education Coalition to alleviate rising tension from the

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[63] "Proposal – By Marion Franklin High School Black Parents," March 18, 1969, and administrative responses, March 21, 1969, Columbus Public District Files; Will Anderson Interview, February 27, 1994, Anderson quoted in Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 24; Damon Asbury Interview, February 15, 1994, Asbury quoted in Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 24.

black community. While the League's proposal had failed to gain traction as a suitable alternative to the current neighborhood school system, the Commission's fifty recommendations adopted by the board and subsequent cooperation between these two institutions ultimately enabled further desegregation efforts across the district. Following the publication of OSU's proposal for the future of public education within the city, the school board released a public statement remarking that "the Board and administration staff gave immediate and top-priority attention to the university's report and recommendations," and that they had taken "positive action on fifty recommendations that could be carried out within available funds." Despite the clear shift towards integration, local civil rights activists bristled following the Advisory Commission's exclusive praise of the "community in general–and business and industrial leaders in particular" for bringing about these changes.[64]

In terms of actual effect on the city's education landscape, efforts simply mirrored the piecemeal modifications to existing policy outlined in the original report, such as larger library spaces for students and a greater focus on the "expansion of technical and vocational education." The Board, in the same statement did, however, stress the hiring "of Negro teachers, supervisors, and administrators" for positions within black schools. It was not the black community who originally turned toward local control as might have

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[64] Urban Education Coalition, "The Schools: Community Recommendations," *Newsletter of the Urban Education Coalition*, February 1970, Columbus Area Civil Rights Council Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, OH; "A Report to the Columbus Board of Education," Ohio State University Advisory Commission on Problems Facing the Columbus Public Schools," June 15, 1968, 12-13; Edward N. Sloan, "Statement of Edward N. Sloan, President Columbus Board of Education," August 6, 1968, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Records, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, OH, 1-2.

been previously assumed, but rather the school board's immense reluctance to affect systemic change over the color-line that compelled this change in direction. Instead, the school district, having spurned the chance for broad-based reform - offered meager incremental policy changes, leaving local control as the only option. A similar scenario was also present in other urban centers like New York City's Ocean Hill-Brownsville neighborhood, where conflicts over between the neighborhood's multitude of cultures, political groups, and classes forced the black community's hand from incrementalism to local control and led to a racially charged teacher's strike in 1968. While in Columbus it was not until the early 1970s that the city's black community demanded autonomous "community control of black schools." Regardless of the school board's adoption of OSU's proposal, the NAACP, CORE, CUL, and TAG had forced the district to acknowledge some of the inequalities present in the Columbus Public School District, even if the League's proposal was still sidelined in favor of the status quo.[65]

Four months after rejection of the CUL's proposal and the adoption of the moderate Advisory Council's plan, protests ignited in opposition to the seemingly recalcitrant board. School reform had become such a heated and divisive topic. Many members of the black community supported ideas of community control and black nationalism, rather than continue to engage fruitlessly with Superintendent Eibling and

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[65] Sloan, "Statement of Edward N. Sloan," 1-2, 3, 6; Urban Education Coalition, "The Schools: Community Recommendations," *Newsletter of the Urban Education Coalition*, February 1970, Columbus Area Civil Rights Council Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, OH; Jerald E. Podair, *The Strike That Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 182, 206-214; Desegregation Columbus: Black Demands - Public Schools, 1974, Charles Glatt Papers, Ohio State Archives, Columbus, OH.

his intractable school board. Columbus's white residents, however, often supported many of the proposals of the school board and the University, particularly when it came to recommendations that protected the neighborhood system and proscribed individualistic solutions for systematic issues. The city's more financially vulnerable residents, however, often viewed these proposals and policies as half-measures that failed to address the root causes of economic and educational inequality. At a meeting that summer, Rev. McCollough told the board members, "If you seven white people who compose the school board think Negroes are going to accept your policies, you should be reminded of Stokely Carmichael's statement of, 'hell no, they ain't gonna.'" Gene Robinson, a member of the United Student Action Committee, supported Rev. McCollough, saying, "One way or another, black power will prevail." When Dr. Watson Walker, the only black member of the school board, protested that he could not be mistaken for being white, Rev. McCollough interrupted him and demanded, "Then act like a Negro and stand up for us." A large crowd then stormed out of the public meeting after someone yelled, "Black people, let's get out of here and unite," alongside shouts of "Go back to Georgia," and "Go to hell whites," mingled with the rallying cry of "Black power!" A few weeks after the initial wave of protests, the local NAACP chapter organized a picket-line protest of the subsequent board meeting in retaliation for the inaction on either the CUL's plan or even the moderate OSU proposal. Waldo Tyler, the NAACP's educational

chairman, remarked that "there are so many people involved and some of them want to go to extremes."[66]

By 1968, tensions between activists and the school board had reached a new high. Years of demands and protests had yielded only small-scale changes focused on easing frustration rather than addressing endemic inequality. Although the school board was presented with a comprehensive proposal that attempted to remove racial segregation in education without the use of busing, the plan had been ignored and sidelined in favor of recommendations that focused less on systematic inequality and more on individualistic remedies. The black community had lost faith in the ability of the school board to actually address persistent discrepancies in black education and marked a turning point for Columbus's civil rights movement. While racial tensions rose across Columbus, OSU's campus and the Near East Side suffered the worst outbreaks of violent protests with several deaths as a result of rising racial animosity. In the following years, activists shifted from the non-violent direct action in the early 1960s to increasingly clashing with police, advocating community control of their schools, and championing black power by the late 1960s.

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[66] David Cain, "School Policy Protested / Shouts of 'Black Power' Accompany Walk-Out," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 16, 1967; "NAACP to Picket Board," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 2, 1967.

The Turning Point, 1968-1970

The aftermath of the assassinations of King on April 4th, and Robert F. Kennedy only two months later, marked an especially contentious time in Columbus, both across the city's black neighborhoods and on OSU's campus. The university experienced a whiplash of events and policy changes in the months following King's murder, as the university desperately sought a panacea to soothe student and faculty unrest. On the morning of April 5th, Dr. David E. Green, an assistant professor of history and well-regarded educator among his peers and his students, canceled the lecture he had planned and instead spoke openly with his students about nonviolence and the changing nature of the civil rights movement and the nation. He remarked that Americans had two paths before them: commit to nonviolence or allow black citizens to purchase firearms for self-defense. He asked students to choose the path forward by holding up two envelopes – one labeled "nonviolence" and the other labeled "standard American solution." He then told his students that he chose nonviolence, burned his draft card in-front of his students, and placed the charred remains in the respective envelope. He then invited those students to either burn their draft cards and put them in the first envelope or donate funds for black students to purchase guns with the second envelope. While some students participated, many declined and silently passed the envelopes to their fellow classmates. Green then proceeded to join a rally on the university's Oval before repeating the demonstration for his noon class. Word quickly spread of his actions and on the 8th his presentation made local headlines, leading to an investigation by the university officials into his conduct and the FBI for the burning of his draft card. The investigative committee recommended

Green be placed on probation given it was an emotional time, Fawcett recommended he be let go a year from now after the probationary period, and the board of trustees, however, voted unanimously for his expulsion. Green was fired that same day.[67]

As faculty members protested the state of the nation, so too did the university's newly formed Black Student Union (BSU). While the group had met with university administrators earlier in the year to discuss issues like affirmative action, anti-discrimination, and the increased recognition of the accomplishments and contributions black Americans in their courses, the violent death of such a leading figure for nonviolence and growing militancy of some black activists escalated the racial divide both on and off campus. To many civil rights activists, the assassination of King was a symbolic and forceful end to King's gospel of nonviolent civil disobedience. At a rally dedicated to honor King, an unidentified black man told the crowd that "The time for people to pick up a gun is now." Tensions came to a head on campus when a verbal altercation between four black students and a university bus driver led to the removal of the students by police officers. This sparked a backlash from students, particularly members of the BSU, who decided to take action. Under the pretext of a small meeting with the vice president for business and finance, Gordon Carson, to whom the bus service and police reported, a group of approximately forty black students entered his office on the morning of April 26th. Upon arrival the students began a lock-in of said office by

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[67] Shkurti, *The Ohio State University in the Sixties*, 244-247; C. William Ashley, "Prof Burns Draft Card during Class," *Lantern*, April 8, 1968; Brian J. Patterson, "Green Raps U.S. Racism; Photographer Attacked," *Lantern*, May 1, 1968, 8.

sealing doors with wire and refused to leave until Carson issued an apology on behalf of the university for the incident, alongside the removal of the offending bus driver and police officers. After nearly six hours of negotiation, Carson and the students, with the support of local black community leaders, had drafted a non-binding conciliatory statement about the need to improve conditions for black students. While the lock-in ended by late that afternoon, it immediately garnered both admiration from fellow student organizations and condemnation from local media outlets. Fawcett, in agreement with the board of trustees, supported an investigation into the incident by university officials and disciplinary and even potential criminal punishments for those involved. The investigation and subsequent grand jury probe by the Franklin County prosecutor led to thirty-four students being charged with unlawful detention, kidnapping, making menacing threats, blackmail, and conspiracy to abduct for their involvement in the demonstration. The local NAACP provided legal services to those involved. The BSU, in solidarity with this support, announced lawsuits against thirteen university officials and trustees for the violation of their civil rights.[68]

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[68] Shkurti, *The Ohio State University in the Sixties*, 232-239; Kay Burtscher, "Students Want Changes in Counseling, Teaching," *Lantern*, February 2, 1968, 1; Neil Huelsman, "Negroes Want Voice on Campus," *Lantern*, February 2, 1968, 1; John D. Hofheimer, "Rioting Called for in Demonstration," *Lantern*, April 8, 1968, 1; "Correction," *Lantern*, April 12, 1968, 8; "Police Hear Complaints of Alleged Bus Incident," *Lantern*, April 26, 1968, 1; "Administration Building 'Lock-In,' April 26, 1968," Revised June 26, 1968, Office of the President, Student Demonstration 1968 (Archives: RG 3/i/66); Christine Patronik, "Students Were Set for Extended Siege," *Lantern*, April 29, 1968, 1; Duane St. Clair, "OSU Trustees Asks Siege Student Dismissal," *Columbus Dispatch*, April 28, 1968, 1A, C. William Ashley, "Accord with Negroes Is Challenged," *Lantern*, April 29, 1968; "34 Negro Students Are Facing Trial over April 26 Lock-In," *Lantern*, June 18, 1968; Roger Myers, "Expulsions Bring Protest by BSU," *Lantern*, July 11, 1968, 10.

Facing escalating protests from both students, faculty, and local civil rights organizations, OSU administrators attempted to radically alter both black students and the black community's perception of the university through a rapid-fire series of initiatives between the fall of 1968 and the spring of 1969. The most impactful of these initiatives was the hirings of an additional black academic counselor and the university's first black administrator, the introduction of several courses on the topics of black history, economics of the ghetto, and white racism, a new affirmative action committee for both students and faculty, and promises to establish a Black Studies Department in the fall of 1969. To reach across the rift that had grown between OSU and the local black community, the university began to provide "summer recreation for inner-city youths, job training for adolescents, and construction jobs for adults." While the university made progress in many areas, the issue over housing discrimination still remained nearly a decade after initial efforts petered out due to institutional neutrality. Two years earlier in 1966, the unequal treatment of black tenants arose yet again as student activists affiliated with the NAACP rallied against the continuing racial preference for tenants by multiple university-approved landlords and a general lack of black workers hired to construct the slew of new student housing units. While the NAACP was able to secure an agreement with the university to pursue affirmative action, the wording was vague, and the terms did not apply to the current construction that had been the impetus behind the renewed offensive on student housing in the first place. Following this change in direction and after nearly a decade of indecision, however, the university finally decided to crack down on the practices of racially biased landlords. When a report published by law students and

faculty in November of 1968 demonstrated that landlords were charging black renters higher rates than white renters, Fawcett and other university officials put forth a proposal that forbade students from renting from landlords that employed discriminatory policies. The proposal was then passed unanimously by the board of trustees, and it seemed as though the university was finally making the progress long desired by both those at OSU and the local black community.[69]

As students returned home and the tensions of the past year dissipated during the summer of 1969, racial strife was only heating up in the wider city. On July 21st, a white store owner, David E. Chestnut shot and killed Roy Beasley, a black father of three, over a dispute concerning the children playing in Chestnut's backyard on Columbus's Near East Side. This event triggered widespread rioting and arson for the next three days. It took the presence of approximately 1,500 Ohio National Guardsmen to quell the riot and restore order. As the fires died down, one white man had been killed by a sniper, 250 people had been arrested, the majority being black, and a significant portion of the three-square mile area in which the riot was centered had been burned to the ground. Although

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[69] Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 24-25, 212; Martha Brian and Mary Carran Webster, "The Campus Radicals: Where Are They Now?" *Columbus Monthly*, February 1977; Michael Norman, "The Struggle for Control of Black Studies at OSU," *Columbus Monthly*, March 1985; Timeline, 1968 – Here and Elsewhere," *Columbus Monthly*, June 1988; Shkurti, *The Ohio State University in the Sixties*, 265-267; William G. Shofner, "NAACP Unit Spurs Fight For Housing," *Lantern*, January 5, 1966, 1; Employment Settlement Announced by NAACP," *Lantern*, June 30, 1966, 1; Memo to members of the university faculty from Robert Fischer et al., "Report of the Special Faculty Hearing Committee with Regard to David E. Green" July 12, 1968, in Vice President of Academic Affairs, Green (David) Case (Archives: RG 5/a/25); Roger Myers, "Board of Trustees Fires Green," *Lantern*, July 12, 1968; Donald L. Cook, "Report Cites Black Housing Bias," *Lantern*, November 19, 1968; Jay R. Smith, "Prompt Housing Action Pledged," *Lantern*, May 9, 1969.

the Near East Side was seven miles from campus, the flames of the riot licked out; igniting OSU like a powder keg.[70]

[70] Rick Pilsbury, "Riot Was Justified, Say City Residents," *Lantern*, August 21, 1969, 8; "Killing of Black Man Led to Race Riots," *Columbus Dispatch*, July 21, 2012.

Chapter Three: The Long Civil Rights Movement, 1970-1979

In 1970, OSU suffered its largest student protest during its centennial year, as students frustrated by racial injustice and alienated by the impersonal "megaversity" model poured onto the streets and demanded change. The multi-week long student-led protest began in late April and continued into mid-May as black and white students rallied together to strike against the university for what they deemed as "100 years of racism." On the first day, Lorraine Cohen, spokesperson for the student group behind the strike known as the Ad Hoc Committee, told an audience of nearly 2,000 students that "Apathetic students are finally getting together and showing their power on this campus … Today the time is right. I didn't believe a violent confrontation was a way to achieve these demands and I still don't. We must set-up a long-term program of action. We must have faith in each other and come out here day after day." The committee was made up primarily of white anti-war activists and black civil rights activists. The group focused primarily on amnesty for students who had been arrested during previous protests, an end to the administrative discipline committee for dissident students, and holding the university to its pledge on greater inclusion and recognition of black history, students, and faculty. While the rally quietly dispersed after several speeches from other leading members of the Committee, violent confrontations erupted across campus as protestors clashed with police officers. The resulting campus-wide brawl involved hundreds of student protestors and over two hundred police officers, many in riot gear, before law enforcement used tear gas to disperse the crowd. Skirmishes continued into the night as protestors vented their frustration with the administration by shattering windows of

administration buildings. While roughly fifty students had been arrested only a few hours into the protest, more and more students poured from their dorms and onto the green. Unable to calm the students, Fawcett phoned Governor Rhodes and requested the deployment of National Guardsmen to quell the unrest. By the next morning, eighteen students and twenty-five police officers had been injured as approximately five-hundred Ohio National Guardsmen arrived on campus to keep order among the nearly 4,000 students that had now joined the strikers. As guardsmen were ordered to disperse the crowd using more tear gas, students would dissipate and then reconvene in even greater numbers shortly thereafter. This response by the guardsman seemed only to strengthen the resolve of those involved, with many tending to the injured and throwing canisters back at guardsmen and turning students from observers into demonstrators. Later that evening a firebomb erupted in one of the university's halls, damaging the building. The second day ended with 400 arrests and 131 injuries.[71]

The second week of the strike coincided with the eruption of protests across campuses nationwide following the US's military actions in Cambodia and the murder of four students by Ohio National Guard forces in the nearby Kent State University on the 4th. While there had been periods of relative peace, the killing of four students at Kent

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[71] Shkurti, *The Ohio State University in the Sixties*, 207, 312-321; Bonnie Schwartz, "Student Rioter Battle Police," *Lantern*, April 30, 1970; Bonnie Schwartz, "Student Rally against Union Protests," *Lantern*, April 24, 1970; "Assembly Opposed Disruption Rule," *Lantern*, April 24, 1970; "Chronology of Day's Events," *Lantern*, April 30, 1970, 9; Robert Westwood, "50 Injured in Campus Riot," *Lantern*, April 30, 1970, 9; LTC James M. Abraham, "Commander's Confidential Report on Aid to Civil Authority at Ohio State University (Columbus, Ohio), 29 April to 2 May, 1970," 5, 44, 9-13; Bonnie Schwartz, "Violence, Gas, Fire Bombs," *Lantern*, May 1, 1970; Brian Patterson, "Many Were Gassed," *Columbus Dispatch*, April 30, 1970, 8; Elise Schmetzer, "Dorm Directors Comment," *Lantern*, May 1, 1970, 10;

led to increased conflict between protestors and guardsmen armed with loaded weapons and authorized to use them. During a particularly “tense” face-off the next afternoon in front of the Administrative building, further tragedy was only narrowly averted when a group of students locked arms between the two groups to prevent conflict, even as bricks and rock flew over their heads. Tensions continued to escalate as several individuals decided to take a more drastic approach. In the coming days over twenty fires had broken out across campus and at least two students had been arrested for possession of gasoline, fuses, and a small container in their car. Fawcett and the board of trustees elected to close down the university on the 6th in hopes of ending the strike. By the time the campus reopened two weeks later, the administration had negotiated with both the strike leaders and the faculty council in order to reopen the campus with minimal conflict. By the time classes began again on the 19th, the administration had conceded to many of the demands of the strikers including the creation of a new minority affairs office, establishing a black studies department, greater inclusion of students on university committees, and a reconsideration of the discipline committee for students involved in the protests. But the board of trustees for the university had other plans. While they agreed to support the creation of a minority affairs office, albeit with less funds than originally promised, they were torn on the black studies department and discipline committee. In turn, the board removed its previously included student representative and four faculty members from the disciplinary committee in an effort to punish those involved without oversight and failed to approve the creation of the new department. This reignited protests from students and faculty in the coming weeks before they ultimately fizzled in the face of

increased police and national guard suppression, student fatigue, and upcoming commencement ceremonies. The *Lantern* declared that the board of trustees had succeeded in "further alienat[ing] an already tired and tense campus." In the aftermath of the riot, 844 people had been arrested, nineteen faced disciplinary hearings, thirty-two faced trials in civil court, and both the university and Columbus were left with $480,000 in property damage. Soon after, Fawcett organized an impromptu meeting of the trustees to avert further outrage and finally approved the black studies program on June 19th. By the summer of 1970, Fawcett's credibility, and that of the university, after being continually undercut by the board of trustees, had been severely tarnished with both black students and the black community.[72]

As a new decade dawned in Columbus, and the city reeled from the OSU riot that had engulfed the city from late Spring until the early summer, the black community found itself in an increasingly precarious situation. While the black population continued to rise both in terms of total number of residents and in proportion to the white population (99,267 of Columbus's 437,225, or 18.5%), they still faced considerable barriers in education and employment. Black students were still largely isolated to a handful of schools, and those that had been partially integrated, particularly high schools such as

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[72] Report to the Committee of Inquiry to the Faculty Council, "The Spring Events at Ohio State," November 10, 1970, 81-82; "24 Fires Reported in 9 Days," *Lantern*, May 19, 1970, 12; Shkurti, *The Ohio State University in the Sixties*, 207, 321-334; "Negotiations Progressing," *Lantern*, May 19, 1970; Roger J. Mezger, "Trustees Reject Ross, Approve Fee Hike," *Lantern*, June 12, 1970; "Summer Justice," *Lantern*, June 12, 1970; Milt Miller, "844 Arrest Tally Includes 258 on Campus," *Lantern*, September 30, 1970, 2; Roger J. Mezger, "Trustees Reconsider, Approve Ross," *Lantern*, June 23, 1970; Francis P. Weisenburger, *History of the Ohio State University: The Fawcett Years, 1956-1972* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1975), 181-182.

West (12 percent non-white in 1967), Eastmoor (13 percent non-white), Central (33 percent non-white), and Marion-Franklin (22 percent non-white) experienced boycotts, sit-ins, protests, and, in Central's case, the shooting of two black youths by a white student. Meanwhile, black unemployment in Columbus was 50 percent higher than that of the city as a whole (5.7 percent to 3.8 percent), while unemployment in Franklin County was 65 percent higher for black jobseekers than it was for the country overall (5.6 percent to 3.4 percent). Columbus itself still fared relatively well, surpassing the national unemployment rate of 8.2 percent for the black jobseekers and 4.9 percent overall.[73]

Seeing little progress throughout the 1960s with the tactics of organized civil disobedience, demonstrations at school board meetings, and appeals to white board members and trustees, the turn of the decade was yet another turning point for civil rights activism in Columbus. The next ten years bore witness to a flurry of institutional and legal challenges to the school board on the part of the NAACP and CUL. Activists saw that the only way to achieve their desired goals would be to integrate themselves into local boards and committees, overtake the institutions that perpetuated the neighborhood system, and challenge de facto segregation through the judicial system. While protests

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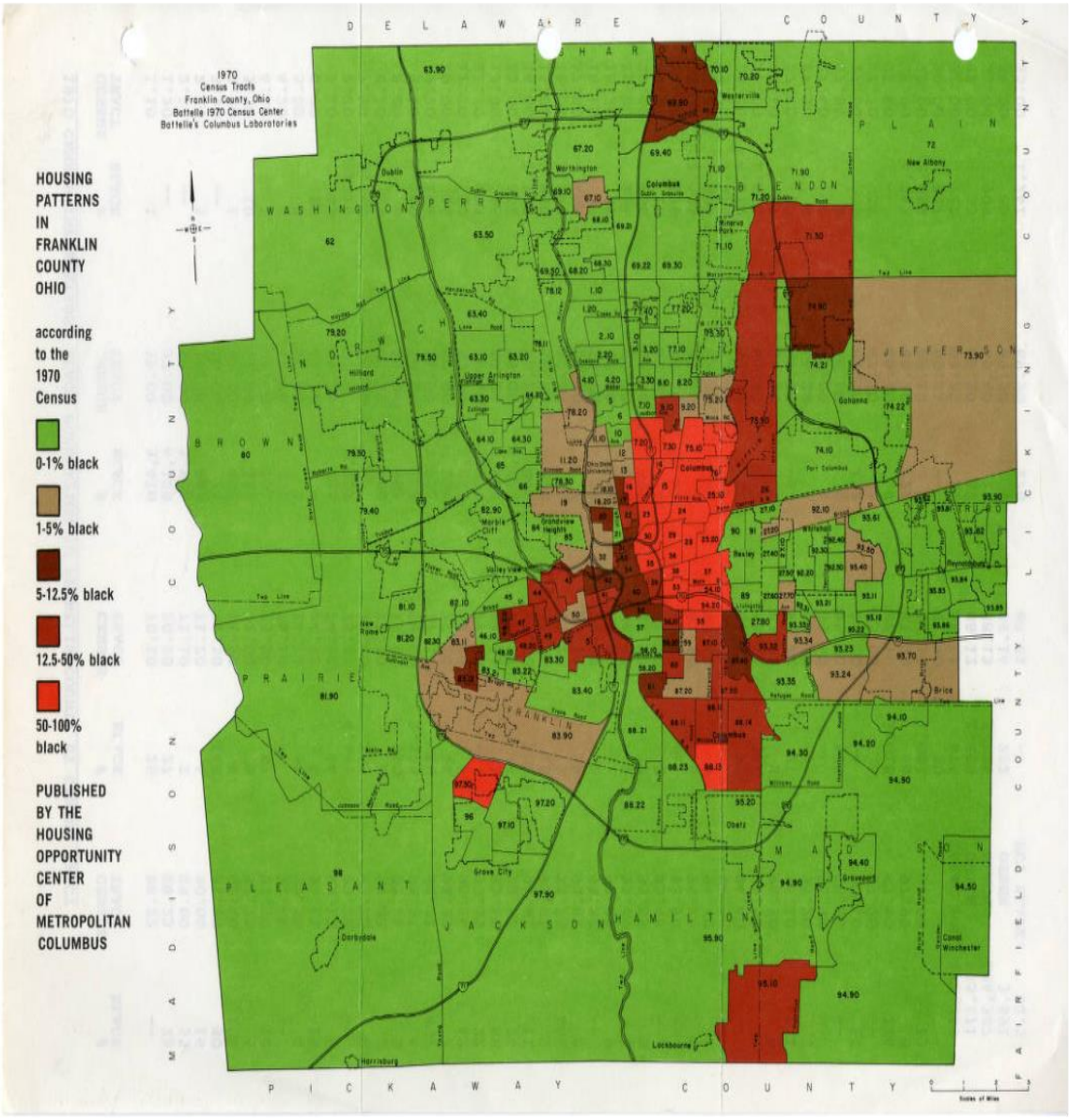
[73] U.S. Census Bureau, "Census of Population and Housing: 1970 Census Tracts, Final Report PHC(1)-50 Columbus, Ohio SMSA," May, 1972; 1970 Franklin County Census Tracts, The Housing Opportunity Center of Metropolitan Columbus, Columbus Area Civil Rights Council Collection, Ohio History Connection; "Administrative Guidelines for the Program of Voluntary Registration," July 17, 1967, Columbus Public School District Files; Education Committee, Columbus Urban League, "Historical Fact Sheet of Racial Integration Commitments and Plans by Columbus Public Schools, 1964-1975," Columbus Public School District Files, I, 8; "Proposal – By Marion Franklin High School Black Parents;" Carter, "Domestic Colonialism," 209-213; Overall Economic Development Plan," City of Columbus Department of Development (October, 1976), 288-290.

continued in the streets, particularly from young activists and student groups, the city's civil rights organizations increasingly turned their attention towards the local committees and state and federal courts to enact sweeping change and wide-scale integration. Activists aggressively sought to transform local boards and filed lawsuits on everything from increased student rights and autonomous community control to enforcing racial integration via busing initiatives. In a flurry of statements following the glacial rate of integration, the NAACP declared that its goal was to "challenge [the] neighborhood schools concept, and end school segregation by all means available." The CUL reiterated that only through integrated education could students receive quality education. Finally, the Columbus Area Civil Rights Council (CACRC), called for "massive, countrywide integration of the public schools," and declared that busing was "the only practical means to achieve that in the near future."[74]

[74] Jack Wittenmeir, "Court-Order Integration Urged for Columbus Public Schools," *Spectator*, December 1, 1971; "Rights Council Reiterates Strong School Busing Stand," *Call and Post*, September 30, 1972; Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 35-40.



Map 6. Racial housing segregation in Columbus and its suburbs in 1970. Bright red denotes areas that are 50 to 100 percent black, with red, dark red, brown, and green indicating sections that are 12.5 to 50 percent, 5 to 12.5 percent, 1 to 5 percent, and 0 to 1 percent black, respectively.
Source: Housing Opportunity Center of Metropolitan Columbus, "1970 Franklin County Census Tracts," in Columbus Area Civil Rights Council Collection, Box 2, Folder 1, Ohio Historical Society.

By 1971, the violence and racial animosity that flared on OSU's campus and smoldered in neighboring black and white communities came to a head as several schools in the district ignited. Local newspapers reported attempted fire bombings at McGuffey Elementary and Monroe Junior High, as racial conflagration temporarily shut down Roosevelt Junior High and Central High and police officers were posted at both Linmoor Junior High and Monroe. The disruption of the district's schools reached a peak at Linden-McKinley High, a racially balanced school situated in the rapidly racially transitioning blue-collar residential area of South Lindon. The school, and the neighborhood itself, was in the process of quite a dramatic racial shift. While the school had been approximately 60 percent white in 1967, it had reached nearly 90 percent black by 1973. The conflict arose when several black students attempted to replace an American flag on the school's stage with the red, black, and green Pan-African flag, a symbol commonly associated with black nationalism. The incident sparked resistance from white students and concerned administrators, who closed the building fearing an all-out altercation. Continued conflict between the students foiled any attempts to reopen the school, leading to the staff alerting the authorities. More than fifty Columbus police officers garrisoned the building as seniors returned to complete their final exams.[75]

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[75] "Administrative Guidelines for the Program of Voluntary Registration;" "Transfer Denied Youth Who Claims Beating," *Columbus Dispatch*, October 25, 1973; "Ellis Transfers Linden Student," *Columbus Dispatch*, Nov 21, 1973; Will Anderson Interview, February 27, 1994, Anderson quoted in Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 25; Damon Asbury Interview, February 15, 1994, Asbury quoted in Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 25.

The consequences of the lockdown and police presence at Linden-McKinley were swift, with the most significant being the resignation of Superintendent Eibling. Eibling, the staunch defender of the status quo, resigned after fifteen years as the formidable head of the district. From 1945 to 1968, the Columbus Public School District passed all twenty-two ballot issues, but beginning in 1968 the once impressive support for education levies waned as parents and voters became increasingly disillusioned with the public school system and its leaders. The 1968 levy increase passed by only the smallest margin (51 percent to 49 percent), setting the stage for decisive bond issue defeats in 1969 (29 to 71 percent), 1971 (34 to 66 percent), and in a subsequent 9.7 million levy increase attempt (31 to 69 percent). Resounding defeats on ballot measures revealed that Eibling and his loyal cadre of administrators, rooted in strict adherence to hierarchy and a firm refusal to change course, were ultimately inflexible and unable to adapt to the rising pressures that threatened to upend the entire system. In the face of increasing financial problems, overt black protest in the streets and in the schools, racial tension, and the threats of teacher unionization, Eibling had lost the support of parents, teachers, and the electorate.[76]

Following the altercation, the protest, and even the name *Linden-McKinley*, represented an unspoken fear and disdain with which white residents perceived the ever-increasing population of black students in once white majority schools. Black students were seen as an implicit confirmation of many of the stereotypes long associated with the

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[76] Kathy Gray Foster, "School Levies Once Sailed Past Voters," *Columbus Dispatch*, Apr. 29, 1986; Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 25, 212-213.

black community – physically violent, insufficiently disciplined, lacking in moral standards, poor academic achievement, and generally inferior to their white counterparts. The following school board elections in the fall of 1971 reflected the divisive nature of desegregation both in Columbus and nationwide. The board was split between three anti-busing white members, an unprecedented three black members, known as the "black-bloc," who supported busing initiatives, and a fourth white economic conservative that often acted as a tiebreaker between the two factions. As both factions clashed on integration, anti-busing members grew increasingly fearful of the deadlock resulting in lawsuits as they desperately tried to keep their district out of the federal court. It was in this environment of tension that the new Superintendent, Dr. John Ellis, grasped at a district coming apart at the seams. Whereas his predecessor, had been a staunch defender for the status quo, refusing to concede any ground for fear of the entire system collapsing beneath him, Ellis would reform the district through gradual and deliberate integration, all the while keeping Columbus out of the courts.[77]

In 1972, the board passed one of the largest school bonds in the district's history at a staggering 89.5 million dollars. The main provisions of the bond included the construction of six new secondary education facilities and ten new elementaries, four new "developmental learning centers" or magnet schools, the modernization or replacement of several of the districts oldest buildings, four new "career centers" or trade schools,

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[77] Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 26; Desegregation Columbus: Black Demands - Public Schools, 1974, Charles Glatt Papers, Ohio State Archives, Columbus, OH.

additional space and funds for special education classes, and the construction or upgrade of the district's school libraries. The crux of this massive project, however, was whether these facilities would follow the traditional neighborhood system or if they would finally address the recommendations of the Cunningham Report of four years earlier and use these new buildings as the foundation of a truly integrated district. With the newfound power of the board's pro-integration "black-bloc" and the need to pass the bond through a divided and increasingly tax-hostile voter base, the final bond was firmly a compromise, but one that favored integration at long last. The board, after extensive rewrites, unanimously supported the new bond and pledged in a late July statement that "It shall be the goal and policy of the Columbus Public Schools to prepare every student for life in an integrated society by giving each student the opportunity of integrated educational experiences. Such a goal does not imply the mandatory forced transportation of students to achieve a racial balance in any or all schools." Additionally, the compromise promised a $180,000 staff development and human relations program sponsored by Ellis to further entice its acceptance by constituents. While this was far from the complete integration of the district that many black parents had desired, these initiatives were viewed as the start of a series of reforms towards the complete integration of the district and the ability to ensure equal educational opportunities for all of Columbus's children. While integrationist organizations, media outlets, and black parents ultimately endorsed the bond issue, many were wary of the follow through of the school board given its recent track record on desegregation. The CUL president, Napoleon Bell, remarked that "Even though the basic content of the building proposal varies little from previous ones … this

proposal left doors open for innovative buildings and the beginning steps towards quality integrated education." Furthermore, influential black newspapers like the *Call and Post* endorsed the bond issue but cautioned its readers that "we are unimpressed with the possibility that enough of the right people in the administration and the white leadership community had black folks in mind when the plans were conceived … be prepared to fight for whatever change you believe is necessary."[78]

The bond issue, given its support from the black community and its endorsement by all members of the school board, passed on November 7th with a respectable 55 percent of the vote. In the coming weeks, however, what had seemed like the first steps towards quality integrated education collapsed due to in-fighting among board members and differing interpretations of integration. Shortly after the election, Marie Castleman, a member of the "black-bloc," proposed the establishment of an advisory committee of educators, business-owners, community leaders, and real estate agents to analyze the racial impact of new school locations, the availability of open housing, and equal employment opportunities for minorities in these same locations. Her proposal stated that "No education system is independent of the social, financial, legal, political, and religious

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[78] Columbus Public Schools, "Promises Made – The 1972 Bond Issue," Columbus Public School District Files; bond issue campaign ad, *Columbus Dispatch*, September 26, 1972; "Overcrowding Hits Schools," *Booster*, August 31, 1972; Mary McGarey, "Old Schools Tie Educators' Hands," *Columbus Dispatch*, October 12, 1972; "Sweet Compromise," *Spectator* editorial, July 5, 1972; Graydon Hambrick, "Board Splits over Policy," *Columbus Dispatch*, July 2, 1972; George Sweda, "School Pack Put on Ballot," *Citizen-Journal*, July 19, 1972; Graydon Hambrick, "School Board Agrees on Bond Issue Need," *Columbus Dispatch*, July 19, 1972; Columbus Board of Education Statement on Integration, July 18, 1972; Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 42; George Sweda, "School Board Issue Given Big Boost," *Citizen-Journal*, October 5, 1972; "We Support the Bond Issue, But …," *Call and Post* editorial, October 21, 1972.

institutions of our society." By acknowledging and working within these interlocking institutions, the committee would enable the district to "provide quality integrated education within the neighborhood concept." Her proposal immediately sparked backlash from the same four conservative board members that had agreed on the proposal's tenets of "integrated education." White members argued that they had promised white voters that they would build the new buildings in surrounding farmland in advance of the expanding suburbs rather than in existing neighborhoods, despite the board's statement before the election that "New buildings will be located whenever possible to favor integration." With conservative member Virginia Prentice remarking that they "would withhold the building of schools for the purpose of bringing about social change." With this rejection of Castleman's proposal, the anti-integrationist board members clearly indicated that they had no intention of using the construction of new schools and the resulting changes in attendance boundaries to facilitate desegregation. The *Call and Post* lamented the board's decision and perfectly voiced the disillusionment of Columbus's black community: "The Columbus Board of Education has once again openly betrayed the confidence of the black voters of Columbus." Perhaps the district's last opportunity to avoid a contentious legal battle over desegregation had failed spectacularly. Seeing little alternative in the aftermath of such a betrayal, activists set their sights on the courtroom.[79]

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[79] Columbus Public Schools, "Promises Made;" George Sweda, "School Board Studies Priorities," *Citizen-Journal*, November 9, 1972; Graydon Hambrick, "School Board Rejects Committee Proposal," *Columbus Dispatch*, November 30, 1972; John Meekins, "School Proposal Rejected," *Citizen-Journal*, November 29, 1972; Thomas B. Connery, "Racism Board Issue," *Spectator*, December 13, 1972; "Betraying Our Confidence," *Call and Post* editorial, December 16, 1972.

Penick v. Board of Education, 1973-1979

Beginning in 1973, a coalition of students and student advocates filed a class action lawsuit against the Columbus Board of Education in the 6th District Court, claiming that the organization and its officials had caused and perpetuated racial segregation in the Columbus Public Schools district, contrary to the Fourteenth Amendment, and was guilty of a "lack of good faith in carrying out its adopted resolution for integrated educational experiences." The coalition involved in the suit named themselves Quality Integrated Education Tomorrow or Project QUIET and was made up of the Columbus Area Civil Rights Council (CACRC), North-west Area Council on Human Rights (NWACHR), and the Columbus chapter of the NAACP. The lawsuit, *Penick* v. *Columbus Board of Education*, named after its lead plaintiff, thirteen-year-old Gary L. Penick, marked the beginning of twelve bitter years of school desegregation litigation in Columbus. The suit itself was a direct result of the refusal of the school board to carry out the original promises of the $89.5 million earmarked for the construction of new integrated schools in the 1971 bond. The plaintiffs' attorney was the former NAACP chapter president, William "Wild Bill" Davis who declared that "We're getting ready to build edifices which could set the pattern of attendance for two generations or more … if the board doesn't start doin', we'll start suin'." The coalition quickly gathered support from black media outlets who viewed the lawsuit as a way to finally hold the school board accountable for their actions, or rather inaction regarding the future of quality education for black students. The *Call and Post* once again voiced its frustration with the board and accused them of "playing sadistic racial games with the black community"

through a "construction program covertly planned to continue, forever, racial segregation of Columbus schoolchildren."[80]

In reaction to the lawsuit, the school board fractured into two distinct factions with white members desperately hiring lawyers to weather the suit, black members who supported the coalition and cheered as the district marched inexorably towards court-ordered desegregation, and Superintendent Ellis who was stuck in a tenuous middle-ground. It was in this precarious situation that Ellis saw the writing on the wall. What could once have been avoided through proactive integration, adoption of the recommendations of social scientists, and open communication with the city's black community, was now about to be imposed by legal fiat. The Columbus Public Schools District would be integrated, even if it had to be dragged kicking and screaming the whole way. In an effort to soothe this transition, Ellis used his limited power in the divided district to avoid a larger catastrophe by granting small doses of integration to ease the frustrations of the black community and simultaneously preparing the white community for the inevitable judicial decision. He began the process by expanding the so-called "Columbus Plan," originally created in 1967 for high school students to enroll in a voluntary transfer program to promote a "better ethnic distribution," which had initially been ignored by students (only .5 percent had enrolled by 1976). Ellis's updated

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[80] Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 45-64; "Suit Charges Bias in School Plans," *Columbus Dispatch*, June 22, 1973; Charles Fenton, "Parents Suit Alleges Race Imbalance in City Schools," *Citizen-Journal*, June 22, 1973; Eric Rozenmann, "No Vacation for School Officials," *Linden News*, July 12, 1973; Sandy Smith, "Racial Suit Looms in City Schools," *Citizen-Journal*, March 6, 1974; "Expanded School Suit Eyes," *Call and Post*, March 9, 1974; "School Executives Play Games," *Call and Post* editorial, March 16, 1974.

version of the plan, however, aimed to entice a greater number of students to the program through the inclusion of transportation provided by the district to a student's desired school. Additionally, he hoped that this might kickstart integration efforts across the district and serve as a microcosm to be studied and learned for future efforts, even if it drew the ire of the school board's four-person conservative majority. Following up on the update to the otherwise pitiful "Columbus Plan," the superintendent negotiated a teacher integration transfer with the Ohio Civil Rights Council later that year, and established the first alternative schools in the district two years later with specialized curricula and chosen facilities that were open to students across Columbus. Despite the efforts of the white board members to quell the lawsuit and even remove Ellis from his position as superintendent, *Penick* had only gathered increased support from black parents, board members, and civil rights activists. On March 10, 1975, the plaintiffs secured their strongest ally and one that would carry the litigation over the finish line, the national NAACP. Fresh off of its success in the *Keyes* v. *Denver School District no. 1*, a desegregation case that ruled segregative acts of board members and administrators constituted unconstitutional state action, the group's support of the Columbus struggle for desegregation resulted in the "most concentrated campaign of urban school litigation" in the organization's history. Armed with the support and experience of the NAACP's team of legal experts, *Penick* went to trial on April 19, 1976. Ellis, who would leave his position as Columbus's superintendent in February of 1977, later remarked on the whole situation that "I had studied other communities around the country. I had looked at our

own data and I realized that the court would find Columbus segregated. There was no question in my mind."[81]

The trial began in mid-April and lasted until the closing arguments in early September, but it took six months for District Judge Robert Duncan to render his decision on the state of education in Columbus. On March 8, 1977, a week after the departure of John Ellis, Duncan released a thirty-six-page opinion and order:"[The] delay in reaching a decision, should not be construed to reflect a hesitancy on the part of the Court in determining the basic result required by evidence and the law. I am firmly convinced that the evidence clearly and convincingly weighs in favor of the plaintiffs." His decision stated that school officials were intentionally and unequivocally using school and neighborhood boundaries to illegally segregate black and white students. Duncan's statement then outlined the tools of segregation utilized by the board to maintain the system of racial neighborhood schools through race-based employment practices, gerrymandered student assignment boundaries, plans for future school placements, and optional and discontiguous attendance zones. The de-facto segregation of the district, the judge wrote, was compounded by the inability and unwillingness on behalf of the board

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[81] "Plans for Developing Better Ethnic Understandings," Columbus Board of Education Policy Statement, July 18, 1967, Columbus Public School District Files; *Keyes* v. *Denver School District No. 1*, 413 U.S. 189 (1973); Gary Orfield, *Must We Bus? Segregated Schools and National Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 277; "Desegregation in Ohio: Background for Current Litigation," Citizens' Council for Ohio Schools, January 1976; "Desegregation Update," Citizens' Council for Ohio Schools, August 1979, 9-11, Joe McKnight, "Desegregation Affects 10 School Systems," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 26, 1979; Ellis Interview, quoted in Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, 51.

to remedy these issues as "neither the magnet alternative school nor the Columbus plan will predictably provide students at segregated schools with their constitutional rights."[82]

On June 23, 1977, Duncan appointed OSU's professor of educational administration and leading figure in the 1968 Cunningham Report, Dr. Luvern Cunningham, as special master in the Columbus desegregation order. As special master, he would utilize his extensive social-scientific knowledge of the district to analyze the financial feasibility, address the impact on local communities and their relationships in the wider city, advise Duncan on educational issues, review all proposals put forth by the school board, and monitor the district's compliance with the order. After his appointment, Cunningham remarked that given his experience in school districts such as St. Louis, Chicago, Detroit, and San Francisco, he felt he had to contribute in any way he could. "I truly care about the school district and the kind of education all our children receive," when asked about his involvement with the order, "We must guarantee quality education for all." He went on to encapsulate the crux of the court order and its necessity noting that, "The federal courts have assumed the responsibility of abolishing segregated school systems because the public and politicians have not." He decried that the "majority of Americans" intensely disliked court-ordered integration, particularly when said order involves busing. Furthermore, he argued that politicians in de-facto segregated districts were aware that the system was unconstitutional and would eventually land them in court, but that acknowledging the injustice of the system and working to abolish it in any

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[82] *Gary L. Penick et al.* v. *Columbus Board of Education et al.*, 429 F. Supp. 229 (1977), 232, 260.

meaningful way would be "political suicide." He posited that Columbus, and Ohio itself, faced "more active desegregation orders … than in any other state," and that "There are more HEW directives," or federal guidelines for schools to receive federal funds, "than in any other state. School boards just haven't faced the problem." At the time there were seven active desegregation cases in the state, with four of twenty directives issued nationally by HEW in 1976 in Ohio alone. In overcoming these obstacles, Cunningham declared that he was cautiously optimistic, because while the district had struggled with this issue for quite some time, there had been some progress in the last decade, specifically the higher number of integrated vocational centers and the rising number of black teachers in the district, which grew from 632 in 1969 to 949 by 1976. His role in 1968 study, history as a proponent of desegregation, and extensive authority granted to him as special master evoked fierce criticism from the conservative members of the school board. But Cunningham hoped that through his work, the district's recent turn towards progressive education policies, and the continued support of integrationists, Columbus could serve as model for desegregation across the country.[83]

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[83] Reggie Bashur, "Cunningham Optimistic about Desegregation Plans," *The Lantern*, Jul. 8, 1977; Micki Seltzer, "Board to Change Remedy Plan; Objects to Court Appointment," *Call and Post*, July 2, 1977; Luvern Cunningham Papers, Ohio State University Archives; Seltzer, "Court to Require New Remedy Plans From City, State," *Call and Post*, July 23, 1977.

Legacy, 1979-Present

In the summer of 1979, the Columbus Board of Education, despite having appealed Duncan's decision to the Federal Supreme Court, failed to escape forced desegregation when the court affirmed Duncan's and ruled against the school board. Its verdict declared that the Columbus Board of Education must take greater steps to recognize the ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* and rectify the city's intentional unequal education policies. To Duncan and the Supreme Court, race could not be removed from the realities of the district's failure to carry out its affirmative responsibility to the students of Columbus. In response to the integrationist mandate from Duncan and the Supreme Court, the school board proposed a slow multi-phased integration plan through busing. This plan faced immediate criticism as the perceived half-measures and governmental overreach drew the ire of both frustrated civil rights organizations and cantankerous anti-integrationists, respectively. Alongside the plethora of anti-busing advocates within the city, the newly formed Citizens Against Forced Busing stood as a significant impediment to more transformative efforts. Serving as both the originator and leading representative for this group, William Halley, a Worthington realtor, remarked that his group would oppose and defeat any new tax for the schools and declared that "there is no way a school levy is going to pass in Columbus." Furthermore, he contended that if such a proposal were to pass it would bankrupt the district, lead to school shutdowns, and ultimately "destroy the school system." Halley stated that he would "personally urge others not to comply with the order," that "public officials who

let the public down should be replaced," and that his group would sponsor candidates that aligned with their policy goals.[84]

Following his involvement as a member of the prosecution in the landmark *Penick* v. *Columbus Board of Education* case, Leo Ross, a lawyer for the Columbus Chapter of the NAACP, argued that the school board was intentionally dragging its feet on reform, slowing down the process, and overstating the proposed cost of busing in an effort to sway the public against the measure and maintain the status quo. Ross contended that not only did the school board actively work against reform, but leading white members of the board had created "pockets of privilege" for their children and grandchildren that placed them in all-white schools with access to the best public education the city could offer. Frank Lomax III, executive director of the CUL criticized the plan's inadequacies regarding crucial factors in the long-term success of the program. Of the schools within the district, twenty-one had been completely excluded from the plan, the proposal lacked oversight necessary for yearly reviews and efficient adaptation in response to changing enrollment numbers, and the reliance upon the heavily white 1977 teacher's union, the Columbus Education Association, would hurt black educators who lacked the seniority necessary to wield significant influence within the organization. The most damning criticism came from Olas Dunson, President of the Columbus Chapter of the NAACP, who condemned the district's unwillingness to properly provide for black

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[84] *Columbus Board of Education* v. *Penick*, 443, US 449 (1979); "Busing Opponents Differ on Columbus School Board Plan," *Columbus Dispatch*, June 11, 1977.

children and implored that "this community ought to wake up and get serious about educating kids. A segregated education doesn't usually lend itself to a good education. I want to see this community healed, not torn apart."[85]

On September 6, 1979, black and white students, in accordance with the new mandate, boarded the same school buses on their way to some of the first fully integrated public schools in the nation. Much to the surprise of many conservative parents and officials, the school system did not collapse, nor did the district face bankruptcy as a result of the additional buses and new routes. Everything proceeded efficiently and without protest. Several small anti-busing pickets cropped up around schools but were peacefully dispersed when asked by police officers. The city had stationed fifty officers on stand-by in the event of significant protests, and approximately 4,000 volunteers were on hand to aid students in navigating their new schools. Of the roughly 78,000 students, around 35,000 were bused on that fateful morning to achieve district-wide racial integration. On the city's east side, East High School went from 90 percent black the previous year to 62 percent white by 1979. In the northern neighborhood of Clintonville, Clinton Elementary School went from a staggering 99 percent white to 48 percent black in the course of a year.[86]

After over a decade of pressure from local and national civil rights activists, OSU students and faculty, social scientists, and the judicial decision of the Federal Supreme

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[85] "Busing Opponents Differ on Columbus School Board Plan," 1977.
[86] Potyondy, "Chapter Two: Reimagining Urban Education," 27-29; "Columbus Milestones: September 6, 1979: First Day of School Busing Accomplished Quietly," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 6, 2012.

Court, the seemingly impossible task of desegregation had been achieved in Columbus. Following the successful efforts to deconstruct the color barrier in schools, Duncan remarked that, above all, the new public school system needed to be successful in order for Columbus' diverse community to come together and hold an honest discussion about the problems facing the black community to ensure a brighter and more fulfilling future for their children. Following the conclusion of the district's first year of desegregation, the school board published an assessment of the district's progress and identified strengths and weaknesses within their integration policies. Of significant importance to the success of integration, the board cited the invaluable work of local concerned organizations, such as various school committees, parent teacher associations, and the Columbus Urban League. It stated that the cooperation and utilization of such broad community groups were "essential to the desegregation process." While there were certainly issues with the degree of integration that occurred within that first year, such as multiple black students facing harassment from both white students and teachers, it was progress for the future of equal education in Columbus.[87]

While civil rights activists hailed this as a victory in Columbus, the damage of nearly three decades of political unrest, racial strife, and the destruction of many vulnerable inter-racial working-class neighborhoods, however, would prove far more

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[87] "Columbus Among First Districts in the Nation to Desegregate," *CBS WBNS-TV*, February 17, 2011; Potyondy, "Chapter Two: Reimagining Urban Education," 27-29; Final Report of the First Year of Desegregation 1979-80, August 1979, Columbus African American Collection, Columbus Metropolitan Library, Columbus, OH; Mike Wagner, "Stories of Desegregation in Columbus Schools, as Told by Black Residents Who Were There," *Columbus Dispatch*, December 3, 2020.

difficult to reconcile. By the end of the 1980s, the Columbus Public Schools District was bankrupt and unable even to scrounge enough voter support to pass a school levy to keep the system afloat, let alone successfully undergo transformational desegregation efforts. The hopes of *Penick* died on January 31, 1996, when the Columbus Board of Education ushered in a new, yet strikingly familiar, student assignment scheme. Local newspapers cited the plan as an "end to forced busing" after nearly ten years of voluntary adherence to the court desegregation order. The board's solution to busing was a return to the neighborhood school system of decades prior coupled with districtwide choice, an application process for parents who wished for their children to go to a preferred school in the district over their assigned neighborhood school. In support of this return to form, Rhonda Whitlow, the president of the Columbus chapter of the NAACP, remarked that "This is not an end but a beginning." Judge Duncan who had issued the original desegregation order in 1977, woefully reflected in 1999 that "If you're going to have neighborhood schools, you're going to have one-race schools in urban America."[88] Columbus represents a convergence of American cultures and peoples. Despite serving as the capital of a prototypical Rustbelt state during a period of economic hardship and decline of other once prosperous neighboring Rustbelt cities, its history is rather separate from those of its peers. The strife experienced by the city during the 1960s and 1970s arose not from the collapse of its industrial districts, a dwindling white ethnic population,

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[88] Doulin, "Judge Behind Busing Order Hails Change," *Columbus Dispatch*, February 9, 1996; "First Day of School Busing Accomplished Quietly," *Columbus Dispatch*, September 6, 2012.

or the dilapidation of its infrastructure, but quite the opposite. Columbus's history is one of a city and an education system unable and unwilling to adapt with the changing racial and economic make-up of a rapidly developing urban center. Since the city's inception on the banks of the Scioto River in 1812, black Americans have fought to be treated with the same respect and dignity of their white neighbors. In turn, the city of Columbus and its Board of Education engineered and perpetuated the isolation and impoverishment of black residents to various ghettos across the city in order to contain and constrict the ever-growing black population that threatened to disrupt the status quo. Deprived by decades of neglect and injustice, Columbus's black community sought to tear down the racial barriers constructed through neighborhood gerrymandering and attendance zones, economic, social, and political isolation, and unequal access to educational resources and facilities that had denied their children a quality education. This responsibility ultimately fell to civil rights activists, parents, students, and educators who struggled for decades against indecisive administrators, intransigent board members and trustees, recalcitrant white parents, and over one-hundred years of purposeful separation of the city's black and white communities through a system of de-facto racial segregation. Regardless of the ultimate outcome of their struggle, the fight to desegregate the Columbus Public Schools system serves as an exemplary example of the determination of marginalized activists to achieve social change and better their community. Through their struggle, these activists sought to create a more equal society at a crossroads of American culture and politics, where citizens, northern and southern, black and white, clashed along racial and ideological divides in an effort to shape the future of their city and to improve their lives

and the lives of their children. Despite their struggle and the aid of local and national civil rights organizations, social scientists, and the Supreme Court of the United States, the progress achieved during the 1960s and 1970s and the court-ordered desegregation at the end of the decade was largely overshadowed by the betrayal of their efforts in 1996. The neighborhood system that activists had fought so long to abolish, or at least reimagined as one that benefited children regardless of race, had returned, albeit with a new coat of paint. The struggle for equal education that had been so bitterly contested had unraveled unceremoniously and with little protest less than two decades after the triumph of 1979. And so, Columbus marched ever onwards towards the 21st century; facing backwards the whole time.

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