



Equity and Empowerment Commission
Thursday, July 16, 2020
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center 6:30 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING LINK ON THE EQUITY AND EMPOWERMENT COMMISSION WEBSITE:
<https://www.cityofevanston.org/government/equity-empowerment/equity-and-empowerment-commission>

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

A. Welcome of New Commissioners

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. [Meeting Minutes](#)

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

4. CONSIDERATION

A. [A Resolution to Support Environmental Justice](#)

5. DISCUSSION

A. Community Engagement Survey to Staff
[Staff Survey Questions](#)

6. COMMUNICATION

7. REPORTS

A. [Reparations Subcommittee Update](#)

[Evanston Policies and Practices Directly Affecting the African American Community, 1900 - 1960](#)

B. Evanston Truths Working Group

8. ADJOURNMENT



Equity and Empowerment Commission Meeting

Thursday, June 18, 2020

6:30 p.m.

Zoom Virtual Meeting

Minutes

Present: Chair Jane Grover, Alejandra Ibanez, Delores Holmes, Ald. Melissa Wynne, Kathy Lyons, Max Weinberg and Timothy Eberhart

Staff Present: Kimberly Richardson, Interim Assistant City Manager; Shenicka Hohenkirk, ICMA Management Fellow

Others Present: Paulina Martinez, Interim Deputy City Manager; and Sarah Vanderwicken

1. Called to order/Declaration of Quorum:

The meeting called to order by Chair Grover at 6:30 p.m. and a quorum declared.

2. Approval of the February 20, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Kathy Lyons moved to approve the February 20, 2020 meeting minutes; Delores Holmes seconded; minutes approved.

3. Public Comment

No public comment

4. For Discussion

a. Reflection on Racial Inequality

The discussion centered on commission members along with staff sharing their concerns, emotions, ideas and thoughts around racial inequality taking place currently. Everyone shared their wellbeing about the racial injustice and the coronavirus pandemic and how all of it is impacting us as a commission, but also in our communities and families.

5. For Consideration

No Consideration

6. Communications

A Reminder was made, for those who can, to participate in Evanston's first virtual Juneteenth Celebration/Parade.

7. Reports

a. Language Access Guidelines Update

Paulina Martinez provided an update on the Language Access Guidelines held in October 2019 at the Human Service Committee meeting. During the Human Service meeting there were discussions around implementing a written internal Citywide Access Guidelines document for staff to make decisions on services and programs available for residents.

Recently a new contract was signed with City Fronts/Voice, which is a technology company that offers over the phone interpretation services. This program has truly been beneficial for the Public Health department's engagement with the non-English speaking residents in Evanston during this pandemic.

The translation of vital documents is currently on hold due to the volume of work that it requires along with the budget that is necessary for the translations.

Some of the next steps for the Language Access Guidelines are to provide training to some City staff that will use the guidelines within their roles; and communicating to the community about this program and how they can access this service.

b. Operationalize Equity Update

Interim Assistant City manager, Kimberly Richardson, discussed how to operationalize equity within Evanston by transforming city government. Looking at the internal structure of Evanston through our policies, but also having the training and the accountability are vital in making Evanston equitable.

Moving forward on the work to operationalize equity in Evanston, Kimberly will use three concepts from GARE: **Normalizing, Organizing and Operationalizing** to begin the work, as well as, community Indicators.

Equity focus for Evanston is that our policy making, service delivery and distribution of resources accounts for the different history, challenges and needs of the people we serve. In order to achieve this, Kimberly will create a Citywide Employee Equity Committee that will be an internal group that will accompany the external group (Equity and Empowerment Commission). The Employee Equity Committee will embark upon trainings, learning and understanding the history of Evanston and going through department assessment in creation action goals for that department.

c. Reparations Subcommittee Report

The reparations subcommittee will present an update to City Council regarding their progress with community and what the futures steps will be for the subcommittee. Having the conversation about the racial repair for Evanston and those next steps will look like for the community.

d. Environmental Justice Resolution Update

There will be a formalized update coming to the Equity and Empowerment Commission for the July 16, 2020 meeting. Staff is still making some progress and adjustments to the resolution and ordinance.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.



Memorandum

To: Members of Equity and Empowerment
From: Kimberly Richardson, Interim Assistant City Manager
CC: Kumar Jensen, Chief Sustainability and Resilience Officer
Subject: A Resolution to Support Environmental Justice
Date: July 16, 2020

Summary:

Staff seeks feedback and approval from the members of the Equity and Empowerment Commission on the updated draft language of a Resolution to Support Environmental Justice.

At the February 20, 2020 meeting, the Equity and Empowerment Commission and the Environment Board jointly met to review and provide feedback to the resolution. From the meeting, the attached draft resolution reflects those changes.

Following approval from both the Equity and Empowerment Commission and Environment Board, staff will work with the Law Department to create a final version that will travel to the City Council's Planning & Development Committee for further discussion.

Attachments:

[Draft EJ Resolution](#)

A Resolution to Support Environmental Justice

WHEREAS, the City of Evanston recognizes that Environmental Justice (EJ) is concerned with the equity and empowerment of all community members such that every resident experiences ~~equitable the same degree of~~ access to environmental assets, protection from environmental hazards and health risks, and an opportunity to play a ~~meaningful & effective~~ role in making decisions that affect the quality of life in this community;

WHEREAS, the City of Evanston ~~seeks to foster prides itself on being a community that cares about~~ ~~fostering equity equality~~, community ~~engagement involvement~~, sustainability, community cohesion, and transparent decision-making;

WHEREAS, the City of Evanston aspires to mitigate negative environmental consequences and health risks resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations in all of its neighborhoods;

WHEREAS, the City of Evanston seeks to support the delivery of an equitable share of environmental benefits and community assets in all neighborhoods that enhance the quality of life, such as parks and open spaces, trees, natural areas, community gardens, and the lakefront as well as equal access to the City's environmental and infrastructure investments that support health, well-being and a sense of community; ~~and~~

WHEREAS, the City of Evanston aspires to engage all Evanston ~~all~~ residents regardless of race, ethnicity, or language, ~~age, ability, and address for in order to experience~~ equal access to information about, and opportunities for meaningful involvement in, local decision-making that affects their quality of life; ~~and~~

~~WHEREAS, the City of Evanston recognizes the climate crisis change and its disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations. -~~

Section 1: Purpose

~~The purpose of this Resolution is to establish~~ es the City of Evanston's policy for environmental justice and to put in motion the development of ordinances to ensure active consideration of environmental justice and meaningful public participation in City policies, practices, procedures, and other decision-making.

Section 2: Definitions

Environmental Justice (Evanston): Environmental Justice (EJ) is when equity and empowerment are achieved for all community members such that every resident experiences s the same degree of access to environmental assets, protection from environmental hazards and health risks, and an opportunity to play an effective role in making decisions that affect the quality of life in this community.

Public Participation: Public participation is any process that ~~meaningfully and inclusively directly~~ engages ~~residents the public~~ and stakeholders ~~to varying degrees in the development and enactment of public policy to produce decisions that reflect the values and priorities of Evanston residents. in taking an action or making a decision and gives full~~ consideration to public input in making that decision. ~~The City would publicize such issues and give residents enough time to educate themselves, participate in meetings and provide input on the issue. In response, the City would give due consideration to all~~ public comment provided by involved individuals, summarize and respond to major public comments, and make its best effort to incorporate their ideas, concerns and criticisms into the final decision-making.

~~Meaningful and inclusive P~~ublic participation is a process, not a single event. It consists of a series of activities and actions by the City over the full lifespan of a project to both inform the public and obtain input from them. Public participation affords stakeholders (those that have an interest or stake in an issue, such as individuals, interest groups, and communities) the opportunity to influence decisions that affect their lives.

Section 3: Declaration of Environmental Justice and Public ~~Engagement Participation~~-Policy
The City of Evanston is ~~meaningful and inclusive public committed to good public participation practices engagement~~ that provides the foundation for making better decisions around environmental justice issues. Decision-makers will have more complete information to understand any potential impact a project or program may have ~~on a~~ marginalized community, decisions are more implementable and sustainable, decisions are perceived as more legitimate, and decision-makers become better communicators.

Section 4: Intent to Incorporate Environmental Justice Practices into City Code, Policies, and ~~Processes Practices~~

The City of Evanston will incorporate environmental justice into City of Evanston ordinances, codes, policies, and processes. ~~Which could include P~~review of existing codes ~~which~~ will be conducted ~~with and~~ appropriate revisions to bolster and improve environmental justice outcomes. This work will be done in consultation with Environmental Justice Evanston, Evanston Environment Board, the Equity and Empowerment Commission, relevant City departments and other ~~applicable~~ community organizations.

Commented [1]: Fragment

Commented [2]: I would say "...which may include..."

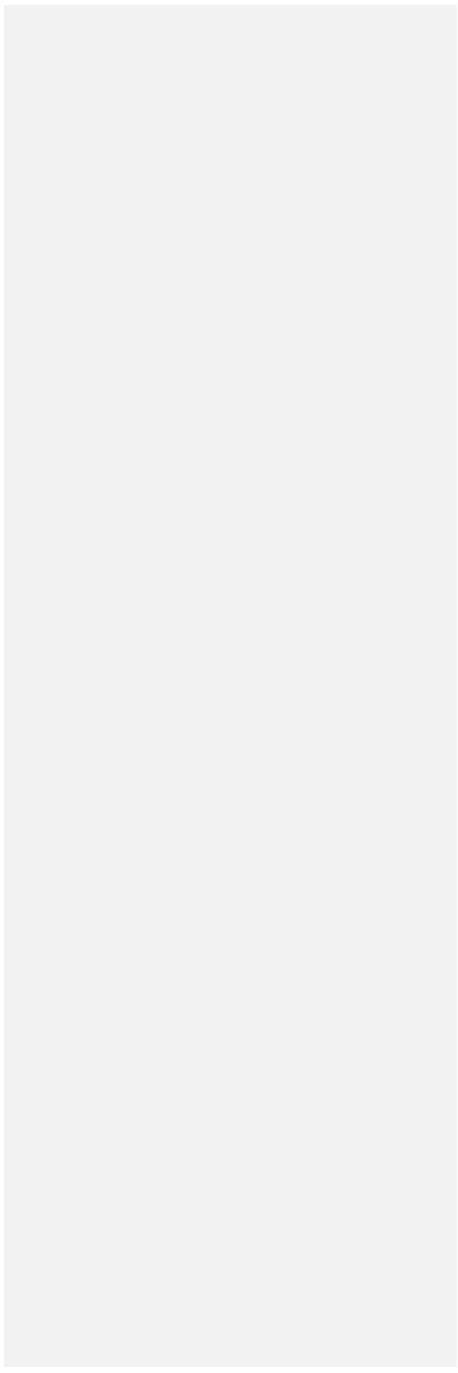
Section 5: Intent to Develop a Public ~~Engagement Participation~~(Policy)

The City ~~of Evanston~~ is committed to developing a policy that specifies ~~clear goals for clear~~ procedures defining meaningful public ~~engagement participation for projects~~, policies and decision-making processes, ~~carried out by the City~~. These ~~engagements procedures~~ are intended to ensure that all decisions with the potential to affect the quality of life for residents and entire neighborhoods in Evanston are supported by public participation that is pursuant to the City's policy on meaningful, timely, inclusive, accessible and compliant public comment" as well as responsiveness to public comment. The public participation policy shall be developed in consultation with the Equity and Empowerment Commission and with the input and

concurrence of Environmental Justice Evanston and other community stakeholders.

Section 6: Mapping of Environmental Justice Areas

The City will develop and maintain an active GIS-based inventory of environmental justice areas in Evanston. That inventory will be made public through online mapping platforms. The Environmental Justice Areas will, at a minimum, include areas already identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's EJ Screen Tool, but will be supplemented with locally relevant information gathered from City departments and community stakeholders.



1. How much public engagement do you conduct for your work? *

- None
- Rarely work with Public Engagement
- Work with Public Engagement a few times
- Work closely with Public Engagement
- Public Engagement is my Day to Day

2. For what purpose do you mostly engage Evanston constituencies (residents, businesses, etc.)? *

- To provide information
- To seek input
- To collaborate on decisions
- Other:

3. Are most of your public engagement activities required by Evanston ordinance, state, or federal law? *

- Yes
- No

4. What activities does your public engagement include? (check all that apply) *

- Advisory Forums
- Public Information
- Surveys
- Community Convening
- Notifications
- Educational Programs
- Other:

5. What tools and methods do you use for your public engagement? (check all that apply) *

- In-Person Meetings
- Virtual Meetings
- Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Linked In)
- Open Houses
- Focus Groups
- Conferences
- Workshops

- Telephone Town Halls
- Webinars
- Facebook Live
- Google Meet/Zoom
- Surveys
- Advertising
- Press Releases
- Publications
- Videos
- Websites/Web pages
- Other:

6. Which of the following do you use to help you identify your target audience(s) for engagement? (check all that apply) *

- Previous Engagement
- Personal Contact Lists
- Project sign-in lists
- GIS Data
- Census Data
- Surveys
- Historical Data
- Other:

7. Which audiences do you typically try to reach for your public engagement? (check all that apply) *

- Residents in a specific location/Ward
- Seniors
- Youth
- College Students
- Adults
- Low-Income residents
- Residents with Disabilities
- Homeless
- Residents with limited English proficiency
- Other:

8. How successful are your engagement activities in reaching constituents who are most affected by your project or proposal? *

1 2 3 4 5

Not Successful Highly Successful

9. How successful are your engagement activities in reaching a representative sampling of Evanston constituents? *

1 2 3 4 5

Not Successful Highly Successful

10. Are you satisfied with the public input your public engagement activities generate? *

- Yes
- No
- It Depends

11. If “No” or “It Depends”, why not? *

12. What are the impediments to conducting more meaningful and inclusive public engagement in your work? *

13. Where is there more opportunity for meaningful public engagement in your work? *

14. What additional resources do you need to conduct more meaningful and inclusive public engagement? *



Memorandum

To: Members of Equity and Empowerment
From: Kimberly Richardson, Interim Assistant City Manager
Subject: Reparations Subcommittee Update
Date: July 16, 2020

Summary:

At the July 10, 2020, Reparations Subcommittee Meeting, Dino Robinson, Executive Director, of Shorefront Legacy Center presented to the committee an excerpt draft of the Evanston Policies and Practices Directly Affecting the African American Community, 1900 - 1960. Attached is a copy of the draft documented authored by both Mr. Robinson and Dr. Jenny Thompson, Director of Education, Evanston History Center. Draft excerpt attached.

Attachments:

[Excerpt of Evanston Policies and Practices](#)

**Evanston Policies and Practices Directly Affecting the
African American Community, 1900 - 1960**

Report Generated by:

Morris (Dino) Robinson, Jr.
Executive Director
Shorefront Legacy Center

Jenny Thompson, PhD
Director of Education
Evanston History Center

July, 2020 (Draft)

Excerpt: On Housing

REDLINING

(Portions of the article “Developing a Segregated Town, 1900-1960” from the *Evanston Roundtable*, Dec 5, 2019 have been adapted here.)

Historical Context

Evanston’s first African American residents arrived in the 1850s, and by 1880 there were approximately 125 African Americans in Evanston. The number grew to 737 in 1900. At that time, many of the African Americans in Evanston worked in domestic and personal service.

With the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural south to the urban north, the black population in Evanston grew to 6,026 in 1940.

Unlike many suburbs that sought to exclude African Americans altogether, leading members of Evanston’s real estate establishment played a role in the growth of Evanston’s African American community, said historian Andrew Wiese in an article about segregation in Evanston in 1999. (“Black Housing, White Finance: African American Housing and Home Ownership in Evanston, Illinois, Before 1940, *Journal of Social History*, Winter 1999)

He theorizes that Evanston was different in this respect from other suburbs, because Evanston was already home to a well-established African American community by the time of the Great Migration that began in about 1910. In addition, he says, African American workers supplied labor that was in demand by white elites in Evanston, and they had personal ties with white families all over town.

There was a major caveat, though. Mr. Wiese says, “Evanston’s white real estate brokers apparently developed a practice of informal racial zoning. In effect, they treated a section of west Evanston as open to African Americans, while excluding them from the rest of town.”

Impact

Evanston banks generally refused to make mortgage loans to black households seeking to buy homes on blocks that were not viewed as “acceptable” for black people, said Mr. Robinson. As an example, black people who owned vacant lots near the lake were denied loans to build on their properties, and were eventually forced to sell them.

Builders did not sell properties to black households if the homes were outside the area set aside for black people. Builders constructed more than 1,400 new homes in northwest Evanston during the 1920s and 1930s, none of which was sold to black households, according to Mr. Wiese.

White homeowners at times recorded racially restrictive covenants that provided that their homes “shall not be conveyed, leased to, or occupied by anyone not a Caucasian (servants

excepted).” These were effective until 1948, when the U.S. Supreme Court held them unenforceable.

South of Church Street and west of Asbury Avenue, white homeowners formed the West Side Improvement Association “to preserve [the neighborhood] as a place for white people to live.” As part of the plan, they formed a syndicate to buy homes that were at risk of being sold to a black family. At times, white homeowners got together and offered to buy back homes that had just been sold to a black household.

African American families were also displaced from neighborhoods outside the west side of Evanston. In 1921, the City passed a zoning ordinance that zoned for commercial use almost every block where black people lived outside of the west side of town. As these areas were converted to commercial use, “black families were dislocated to the west,” said Mr. Wiese.

The effect of all these practices was stark. “Between 1910 and 1940, there was not a single area of African American expansion outside of west Evanston, in spite of black population growth of almost 5,000,” said Mr. Wiese. “To the contrary, public and private actions reduced the number of African American housing units outside these boundaries.”

By 1940, census data showed that 84% of black households in Evanston lived in the triangular area that is shaded light red in the map below. This area was highly segregated – 95% black. Beyond these bounds, black families lived on Garnett Place (then called Ayars) and in a few pockets of older homes purchased before 1900.

While black people were segregated into the triangular area, Mr. Wiese points out that black Evanstonians “were almost as likely to own their own homes as middle class and elite whites.” Some white members of the Evanston and the Chicago real estate establishments and some financial institutions from Evanston and Chicago provided mortgages and construction loans to black people who were building or purchasing homes in the triangular area and on Garnett Place.

To help with the purchase of their homes, many black households shared housing costs with extended families or rented rooms or apartments for extra income. In 1920, about 30% of black households in Evanston included multigenerational and extended family members. The percentage grew to about 50% by 1940.

As in Chicago, segregation had the effect of limiting the supply of housing available to black families in Evanston. This resulted in over-crowding and higher housing prices. Mr. Wiese summed up the racial transition in Evanston through 1940 as follows:

“Ironically, evidence suggests that racial segregation in Evanston facilitated black suburbanization. Although the development of residential segregation in the suburb testifies to the unease local whites felt about black migration, the establishment of clear geographic limits to black community building appears to have calmed white fears. Race relations in Evanston were structured by a high degree of inequality that favored (and flattered) local whites and minimized conflict through patterns of paternalism and deference symbolized by the relationship

of domestic service. Separated as they were by income, occupation, and power, as well as clear geographic barriers, such as railroad tracks and a wide sanitary channel, African Americans posed little threat to the social status or perceived property values of Evans-ton's economic elite. Meanwhile, as workers, they provided services that were in high demand. As a result, the dynamics of local race relations combined with the aspirations of black southerners to shape a housing market that both supported black home ownership and accommodated the growth of a large black community in an otherwise affluent and white suburb."

In 1940, the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), an arm of the Federal Loan Bank Board, prepared a map showing the risk of making mortgage loans in different neighborhoods in Evanston. A portion of HOLC's Evanston map is shown below. The HOLC prepared this and similar maps for more than 200 cities in the United States to show the risk of making mortgage loans in different neighborhoods in these cities. The process took into account the age and quality of housing, the racial and ethnic makeup of the neighborhood and other factors.

Areas were given one of four grades: "A" areas – shaded green – were deemed "homogeneous" and in demand as residential areas; "B" areas – shaded blue – were "still desirable;" "C" areas – shaded yellow – were characterized as old and at risk of an "infiltration of a lower grade of population;" and "D" – shaded red – were said to have detrimental influences and an "undesirable population or an infiltration of it."

Black neighborhoods "were invariably rated" in the D category, said researchers Kenneth Jackson and Jacob Kimmel.

HOLC's map of Evanston rated the segregated black triangular area of Evanston in the "D" category.

The HOLC also wrote a narrative description of the area shaded red in the Evanston map it prepared. The narrative, ... said: "This neighborhood houses the large negro population living in Evanston. It is somewhat better than the average negro district for this class of population. Here live the servants for many of the families all along the north shore. There is not a vacant house in the territory, and occupancy, moreover is about 150 per cent, for most houses have more than one family living in them. Sales have been very good where liberal financing terms are available, but on other sales mortgage financing is virtually impossible to obtain. This concentration of negroes in Evanston is quite a serious problem for the town as they seem to be growing steadily and encroaching into adjoining neighborhoods. The two-family structures are in most cases converted singles and they likewise are overflowing with occupants; these buildings are rented as unheated units. The number of persons on relief in this district is probably heavier than in any other area along the north shore. Altho the area is unattractive to other than the class of occupants already here, it is difficult to say that the section is declining, for it is in constant demand because of the limited number of areas available for negro occupancy in the north shore towns."

HOLC's description highlights several adverse economic impacts of segregation. It severely limited the supply of housing available to black people, which increased overcrowding to the

point where occupancy was 150%. In addition, the demand for housing and the steadily growing population meant that the black population was, in HOLC's words – the words of a federal agency – “encroaching into adjoining neighborhoods.”

HOUSING AND ZONING POLICIES

Housing:

Until the 1910s, the majority of Black residents in Evanston lived in neighborhoods throughout the city. In the years just prior to World War I, the city's Black population began to expand and soon rapidly increased.

The increase in the Black population was part of the Great Migration (1910-1970), a movement of what amounted to over six million people leaving the South for cities and towns in the North, West, and Midwest. Many Black southerners moved to Evanston, with promises of a better life away from the violence and oppression of the Jim Crow South.

During the first years of the Great Migration, white Evanston residents began to enact some of the policies (both public and private) that would create a deeply segregated city, and whose patterns and effects are still apparent in 2020. These policies evolved over time, and while there was some degree of opposition to them and in some cases public outcry, the opposition did not represent the majority of white city residents.

As early as 1918, there was evidence of a segregated Evanston. The *Chicago Tribune* referred to Evanston's “negro section” which it identified as: west of the Chicago and Northwestern railroad. (“Evanston Negroes Plan to Be Neighbors of Evanston Elks, *Chicago Tribune*, February 6, 1918.) Indeed, this section was precisely located in the area that would be home to the vast majority of Black residents by 1940, the fifth ward. This was not by accident; it was by design.

By 1940, Evanston had the largest Black suburban population in Illinois, with 6,026 Black residents in a total population of 64,000. “In response to black migration white Evanstonians erected a wall of segregation in public and private life, including the market for housing,” as historian Andrew Weise observed (436).

Black residents were steered toward buying and renting housing in the city's Fifth Ward; attempts among Black residents to occupy areas beyond that ward were met with strong opposition.

“Classic Evanston will be invaded by Negroes” read the headline of the *Indiana Gazette* in 1918. The paper reported on the plan of a Black membership organization in Evanston to move into a clubhouse at 1326 Chicago Avenue because club members were unable to find appropriate accommodations in the “Negro section” of the city. The clubhouse was planned to be built in the so-called “white” section of the city, and thus Evanston would be “invaded,” as the paper reported. White residents responded that they would “not permit the invasion.” (*The Indiana*

Gazette, February 23, 1918; “Negroes Plan to Be Neighbors of Evanston Elks, *Chicago Tribune*, February 6, 1918)

Between the 1910s and 1940, as historian Andrew Weise has documented in great detail, as more Black people moved into the city, real estate agents working in Evanston developed a practice of informal racial zoning, which offered Black residents housing largely on the city’s west side, largely excluding Black residents from residing in all other parts of Evanston.

“Evanston is growing!” one Evanston bank proclaimed in an ad in an Evanston newspaper in 1922. “Plans are now underway for extending boundaries and developing the open land to the west.” (Advertisement, *Evanston New Index*, January 4, 1922). For developers and realtors, steering Black residents to the west side was a financial boon, especially because that area had more vacant land and housing could be built there on land that had previously been considered undesirable (i.e. the land was on a floodplain and relatively far from the city’s downtown and transportation). And thus a Black section of Evanston began to “spread out to the west into a remote and undeveloped portion of municipal territory.” (Bruner, 47). For many Black residents this was the only choice for a place to live since many white landlords and realtors blocked access to housing in other areas of Evanston.

Between 1920 and 1929 more than 400 new homes were constructed in this area and they were built “explicitly” for Black residents (Weise, 442). As a result, by 1924, Black Evanston residents had a fairly high percentage of homeownership (about $\frac{2}{3}$ of Black residents owned their homes, according to David Bruner), largely due to the fact that they were unable to find rental housing that was open to them. As Bruner observed: “it is difficult for the colored man to get property anywhere; but many newcomers buy partly because they cannot find places to rent. One of the older colored residents of Evanston estimated that $\frac{2}{3}$ of those who have been long in Evanston own their homes . . . although until about 10 years ago few even of the older residents owned property: 60 to 75% of the homes owned have been purchased in the last 10 years, he says.” (Bruner, 35)

The percentage of Black home ownership would, however, decline by 1940, when just over one quarter of Black residents owned their own homes. (Evanston Committee on Postwar Planning, “Evanston Housing, Some Facts, Some Problems,” Evanston, 1940, np.)

Owing to a tacit agreement among realtors and others, the informal process of steering Black residents into a single area, which began around 1910, translated into the fact that by 1940, 84% of Black Evanston residents lived within a single neighborhood, which was described as:

“To the West and North, the enclave ended at the banks of a broad sanitary canal. To the East, black neighborhoods halted at the tracks of the Chicago and Northwestern railroad, with the exception of one small node, which protruded eastward on 2 streets to the tracks of the L train. To the South, Church Street formed the recognized boundary.” (Wiese, 427-438)

Excerpt: Evanston Policies and Practices Directly Affecting the African American Community, 1900 - 1960 (Draft) - 5

In 1940, a total of 1,252 housing units citywide were occupied by Black residents. Of that number, 1,010 were located in the fifth ward, with 116 in the second ward. In the remaining 6 wards only 126 units were occupied by Black residents. (Evanston Committee on Postwar Planning, "Evanston Housing, Some Facts, Some Problems," Evanston, 1940, np.)

Now, the majority of Black residents were crowded in the 5th Ward, an area in which residents often paid higher housing prices for, in many cases, substandard dwellings. In fact, when Black residents began to move to the area they found that much of the housing had no electricity, water, or sewers, and some of the streets had yet to be paved. Bruner described the area "to the West, near the drainage canal": "Here is real urban homesteading: sewers and water, gas and electricity are in, but the streets are just being graded and often families move into their houses before sewer and water are connected. The houses often look amateurish, being in many cases built apparently from wreckage of other houses. All sorts of makeshifts are adopted. In one case on the records of the housing inspector a man had built a fairly good house, then rented it to two families and taken up his own residence in the barn at the rear of the lot with his horse. In another instance four adults were found living in a two room shed without water, light or sewer connections." (Bruner, 36).

(As late as 1940, some units of housing occupied by Black Evanston tenants were documented as having no bathing facilities, no running water, and no private toilets; other units still used gas, kerosene or gasoline for lighting, while others had no cooking facilities.) (Evanston Committee on Postwar Planning, "Evanston Housing, Some Facts, Some Problems," Evanston, 1940, np.)

Also by 1940, Black families were reportedly paying higher rents for comparable properties rented by white tenants. (League of Women Voters, *This is Evanston*, 1949, 20.) Additionally, as Wiese documents, white bankers and mortgage lenders financed the mortgages of many Black-owned homes through discriminatory terms (charging higher interest rates than white mortgage holders were charged, for example.) John F. Hahn, Evanston City Clerk from 1899 to 1925 and president of the Commercial Trust and Savings Bank of Evanston, was active in financing mortgages for Black residents in Evanston. Hahn served as City Clerk at the time the city passed its first zoning ordinance, signed into law on January 19, 1921 by Mayor Harry P. Pearsons.

Zoning:

Along with the private and tacit practices that shaped a segregated city, the City of Evanston also officially supported and enabled the practice of segregation.

In January 1921, the City of Evanston officially codified this practice when the Evanston City Council passed the city's first zoning ordinance, a key piece of legislation that tacitly served as an effort by city officials to segregate the city by race. (The ordinance was revised over the years after the initial legislation was passed.)

The ordinance was designed "to classify, regulate, and restrict the locations of trades and industries and the location of buildings designed for specified uses and to regulate and limit the height and bulk of buildings hereafter erected, to regulate and limit the intensity of the use of lot

areas and to regulate and determining the area of yards, courts and other open spaces within and surrounding such buildings, and to establish the boundaries of districts for the said purposes and prescribing penalties for the violation of its provisions.” (Zoning Ordinance, Evanston, Illinois, 1921, 1.)

Evanston’s zoning ordinance was created by a nine-person city Zoning Commission, which included the consultant Harland Bartholomew, whose firm Harland Bartholomew & Associates crafted similar ordinances across the country in cities from Saint Louis, MO, to Oakland, CA. Bartholomew’s work in creating zoning ordinances (along with concurrent efforts at crafting “comprehensive city plans”) has increasingly come under scrutiny by scholars and historians who argue that one of the primary impulses behind such ordinances was to enforce segregation. And today, many scholars now view zoning ordinances as deeply damaging to the cities and towns in which they were enacted.

Indeed, some of the first zoning ordinances were designed to explicitly enforce racial segregation. Primarily in the South, some cities’ zoning ordinances established “race districts” (Atlanta) or codified “race segregation” (Dallas). (Mary T. Voorhees, “Zoning Progress in the United States,” *Engineering News-Record*, September 28, 1922, 519.)

This “racial zoning movement,” however, was impeded in 1917 when the U.S. Supreme Court declared a racial zoning ordinance in Louisville, Kentucky, to be unconstitutional. (Christopher Silver, “The Racial Origins Of Zoning In American Cities,” From: Manning Thomas, June and Marsha Ritzdorf eds. *Urban Planning and the African American Community: In the Shadows*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997, 1.)

Around 1921, the zoning movement in the United States was shifting its language, but the primary goal remained: to control land use. As historian Christopher Silver has shown, both “racial zoning practices” and their advocates were not solely located in the South. In cities in the North, Midwest, and West, “especially those where the Black population increased rapidly,” land control legislation was viewed as an “effective social control mechanism for Blacks and other ‘undesirables.’” And nearby Chicago, it should be noted, was “a bastion of racial zoning enthusiasts.” (Silver, 2)

The Negro in Chicago was a 1922 report commissioned by Illinois governor Frank Lowden and analyzed the city’s racial antipathy more generally. Charles S. Johnson, a Ph.D. student in sociology at the University of Chicago, was the director of research at the Chicago Urban League and one of the report’s key authors. It blamed inadequate housing conditions and the city’s dramatic black population increase for shifting racial boundary lines, which stoked white racial resentment. The report also detailed roundly held suppositions, by real estate brokers and laypersons alike, that a more effective system of segregation with starker lines between black and white but better conditions in the black neighborhoods would reduce racial conflict. Chicago real estate leaders took on this challenge locally as the city simultaneously became a national hub for the real estate profession and the study of real estate economics. These two developments were closely linked with Chicago’s emergence as a racial tinderbox in which

Excerpt: Evanston Policies and Practices Directly Affecting the African American Community, 1900 - 1960 (Draft) - 7

white realtors, lenders, and homeowners sought to maintain segregation as a constituent feature of residential real estate's structure and value. Many cities were experimenting with administrative forms of segregation, such as racial zoning in Saint Louis and Baltimore, while others suffered major outbreaks of anti-black violence across the color line. The imperative for racial peace was essential for cities in the midst of chaotic changes in immigration, industrialization, and urban growth. (Winling and Michney, *The Roots of Redlining: Academic, Governmental, and Professional Networks in the Making of the New Deal Lending Regime*. P. 7-8.)

Under the guise of "protecting" property values and guarding against "deterioration," zoning ordinances effectively controlled where and how city residents lived. The ordinances "sought to ensure control over the entire area of the city" and zoning itself "became an instrument that promoted spatial segregation, including racial segregation, but without directly mentioning the question of races." (Ana Cláudia Castilho Barone, "Harland Bartholomew and Racially Informed Zoning: The Case of St. Louis," *Estudos Urbanos e Regionais*, 20, 2018, 448, 454.)

In the 1920s, the practice of zoning was again challenged, most notably in the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case, *Euclid v. Ambler*, [272 US 365 \(1926\)](#). Ambler Realty filed suit against the village of Euclid, Ohio, claiming the city's zoning ordinance violated the Fourteenth Amendment's protections of liberty and property described in the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses. Although the court upheld the constitutionality of the zoning ordinance, less than two years later, the Supreme Court decided [Nectow v. City of Cambridge](#) (277 U.S. 183 (1928)) which overturned a zoning ordinance for violating the 14th Amendment due process clause.

In 1924, Northwestern University student, David Bruner, undertook a study of Black Evanston residents. Bruner's study included a survey of Black Evanston residents and an investigation of housing, aided by the work of Evanston's sanitary inspector, R.J. Lindsay. Bruner's study is valuable since it constitutes a detailed record of Black Evanston residents just three years after the city's first zoning ordinance had been passed and as the segregated city was taking shape. Bruner's approach to his work reflected the widespread attitude of many white Northerners to the influx of Black southerners. "The Negro population of Evanston," Bruner observed, presents "a very real problem." And, he asserted, "the white community regards it as such." (Bruner, 2.)

The so-called "problem" stemmed, in part, from population growth, Bruner argued. In 1920, the U.S. census recorded 2,522 Black residents in Evanston. This figure represented a more than 50% increase since 1910 when 1,160 Black residents lived in Evanston. Projecting into the future, Bruner argued that the continued influx of Black residents could mean that as many as 8,000 Black residents could soon call Evanston home. (Bruner, 18.)

"If in the space of a decade there come into a northern city growing from a population of 25,000 to 37,000, members of a socially isolated and inferior race to the number of 1,362 there may be a problem arising," wrote Bruner in 1924, "particularly when most of the number come during the last half of the decade. When the majority of the newcomers to the northern city arrive direct

from the unexacting life of Southern plantation or village without knowledge of the city and ways of living in crowds, and when at the same time little building is done and the area in which they may buy or rent is rigidly restricted, there is inevitably a problem.” (Bruner, 1.)

Bruner observed that thus far in Evanston, “race relations” had generally been positive (despite the fact that 7/8 of the Black residents he surveyed said they encountered discrimination in Evanston). But Bruner also set forth an argument concerning why the Black population in Evanston had to be addressed as problematic. “The problem presented by the Negro population in Evanston is of course only a phase of the whole problem of the Negro in the United States,” he wrote, “and a part of the problem arising from the great northward migration of the Negro since the beginning of the recent war.” (Bruner, 4). The “problem” was in fact a problem belonging to racist white people who viewed Black people as inferior or dangerous, and believed that their presence in a given location would have a negative impact on the city itself; a large or growing Black population, therefore, was something that white people needed to control, according to Bruner; and as Bruner’s study makes clear, methods for control were found in a number of ways, from hiring practices to city zoning ordinances.

Referring to the “use map” of Evanston’s 1921 zoning plan, Bruner explained that the map “indicates the kind of territories the Negroes find open to them: largely commercial and light industrial areas along the tracks, and districts so remote from transportation facilities as to be comparatively undesirable. It will be seen that practically no Class ‘A’ residential district is occupied by Negroes and none is likely to be opened.” (Bruner, 35.)

Indeed, it must be understood that Evanston’s 1921 zoning ordinance imposed restrictions upon a city that was already, to some degree, unofficially zoned since a majority Black neighborhood had already been established. The zoning ordinance essentially codified the process of limiting where Black residents could live, and ensured, as Bruner states clearly, that Black residents would not find “open” to them any of the areas zoned as Class A in the future. (The majority of Class A areas were found largely along the lakefront and extending several blocks west, and also in the northwest corner of Evanston. See Use Map.) “There can be no doubt that there are rather confined limits within which Negro may come to live in Evanston,” Bruner wrote. “This will be more and more true in the future. The Emerson Street district, especially in its eastern portion is most likely to be the permanent center.” (Bruner, 24-25.)

“After you have been restricted to this area (quite unintentionally of course since the main intention is to get you out of town altogether) then your troubles begin,” wrote the editor of the *Newsette*, a Black newspaper in Evanston, about the push to segregate Black residents within the city’s Fifth Ward or the west side in general. “Zoning laws permit anything short of a garbage dump to be built next door to your home, if you find one. The West side, as you know it, is zoned for industrial and commercial use. You will live, as usual, in the least desirable section of Evanston.” (“Evanston’s Housing Problem,” *Newsette*, May 22, 1947).

After the passage of the 1921 zoning ordinance, segregation was upheld through various practices. Some white landlords continued to restrict access to housing in the city through

“racially restrictive covenants” that provided that homes “shall not be conveyed, leased to, or occupied by anyone not a Caucasian (servants excepted).” Such covenants were effective until 1948, when the U.S. Supreme Court held them unenforceable. (Larry Gavin, “Developing a Segregated Town, 1900-1960,” *Evanston Roundtable*, December 5, 2019).

The Evanston Real Estate Board, organized and incorporated in 1918 and boasting a membership that included “every broker in good standing in the city,” also worked in tandem with others on restricting housing in the city. The board, led by seven white men, worked closely with Evanston city officials on various projects, including providing the zoning commission with “material assistance.” (*Evanston*, Evanston, IL: Kiwanis Club of Evanston, 1924, 23, 59.)

After the vast majority of Black residents were living in a single area, the work to complete the process of segregation continued. And, in many ways, the 1940s can be seen as the second wave of housing segregation in Evanston.

Home Demolition and the Land Clearance Commission

By 1940, roughly 6,000 Black residents lived in Evanston, and city officials saw fit to once again tackle the “problem” of “our non-white citizens.” Evanston Mayor S. G. Ingraham appointed a committee on postwar planning. In the committee’s report on Evanston housing, they outlined a list of “problems” associated with the housing of Black Evanston residents. (Evanston Committee on Postwar Planning, “Evanston Housing, Some Facts, Some Problems,” Evanston, 1940.)

“Negro groups as well as whites of low incomes do not pay enough taxes to support the services they consume,” advised the mayor’s commission. “A too large proportion in this group would soon mean poorer schools, streets and municipal services,” the commission advised. “To conserve the white market for their services Negroes should maintain their proportion of population about where it is. Otherwise taxes will go up and whites will move out or taxes will remain as is and services will go down.” (Evanston Committee on Postwar Planning, “Evanston Housing, Some Facts, Some Problems,” Evanston, 1940.)

In order to protect property values, develop Evanston, and tackle the “problem” of Black housing, the city adopted a policy of home demolition, a means by which the city and private citizens attempted to control and remove Black citizens from certain neighborhoods that lay beyond the west side (“clearing” those areas for “economic development.”)

Often the argument was made that the housing to be demolished was “substandard” or “unsanitary” or that certain areas were “blighted” or “overcrowded.” “Blighted neighborhoods must be cut out of the city before they spread,” wrote the League of Women Voters in 1949. “Slum clearance and strict enforcement of zoning to prevent future overcrowding of the land must go hand in hand with rebuilding,” the group advised.

For decades, white observers had noted the presence of what they called “substandard” housing in the Black section of Evanston. “Many places in colored [*sic*] area in particular should be condemned,” wrote a white resident in 1941. “But no place for people to go.” (“What are the

Present Housing Facilities,” 1941, Evanston History Center Archives.) But so-called “substandard” housing was the result of segregation itself. As mentioned above, many white landlords rented to Black tenants, charging more than white tenants would pay for comparable properties, and often failing to maintain the properties. Additionally, because there were so few opportunities for Black people to rent or own in the city beyond the west side, the area where the vast majority of Black residents lived became densely populated. Many residents did not wish to live in housing that they, too, considered overcrowded, too expensive, and lacking proper upkeep by landlords, but with nowhere else to go, they faced limited options. Demolition of Black owned and occupied homes was seen as a boon to the city’s tax revenues. The destruction of Black homes began in earnest in the 1940s. In 1941, roughly fifteen homes owned and occupied by Black residents in the area near Haven School were destroyed. The demolition took place in order to make way for the construction of a football field. Several other homes on Sherman Avenue were also destroyed that year to make room for an apartment building; and in south Evanston, more homes owned by Black residents were destroyed. The demolition of housing was taking place as one of the final acts of segregation. “Where will we move?” asked the editor of the *Newsette*, as the destruction was underway. “Where can we buy property? . . . Because of the massive squeeze play directed against Negroes, you can move into the area generally called the ‘west side,’ bounded by the canal and the railroad tracks.” “Eight to 10,000 of you are being herded into an area over which you can walk in less time than an hour,” the *Newsette* continued, warning Black Evanston residents. “You are compelled to live in kitchens, attics, basements, and, possibly, closets and bathrooms . . . If you do not buy, then you move out of town. That is just the exact purpose of the squeeze play against Negroes in Evanston. By their own admission, openly published, whites who are smoking Negroes out of town are interested in keeping Negroes who can serve them as maids, chauffeurs, butlers, [and] dishwashers.” (“Evanston’s Housing Problem,” *Newsette*, May 22, 1947).

In 1945, the demolition of homes was codified when the Evanston City Council established the Land Clearance Commission, a five-member board appointed by the mayor with the consent of the City Council. (Evanston’s future mayor, John Emery, chaired the commission at one point.) The commission’s mandate was to focus on identifying so-called “substandard” housing in Evanston, purchase that housing, evict the tenants, and demolish the structures. This practice was presented as a means for city beautification and “redevelopment.” This practice was similar to many other practices across the country variously known as “slum clearance” and “blighted neighborhood development.” (In 1947, Illinois passed statewide legislation that legalized the demolition of private homes and businesses: the Blighted Areas Redevelopment Act of 1947.(315 ILCS 5/1)(from Ch. 67 1/2, par. 63.)

But what of those who were forced to move out of their homes only to have them destroyed? Evanston paid low market costs to purchase the homes that were to be demolished, but those who were cast out did not necessarily have replacement housing made available to them. “Some cities have solved this dilemma,” the League of Women Voters observed in 1949, “with temporary housing for the dispossessed. Evanston, as yet, has found no solution.” (*This is Evanston*, 1949)

In August 1948, a mass meeting of Black residents was held in Evanston to address the new land clearance program. Several speakers presented an analysis of the city’s new commission

and observed that Evanston had failed to do anything constructive towards housing for Black residents. ("Hold Mass Meeting In Evanston on Housing," *Chicago Defender*, August 14, 1948).

In the fall of 1948, the Land Clearance Commission made its first condemnations. These were done in neighborhoods predominantly occupied by Black residents. The areas were: "both sides of Hovland court between Church and Emerson streets; the east side of Wesley Ave, between Emerson and Foster streets ; A portion of the east side of Elmwood Ave between Lake and Grove streets; Also both sides of Gray Ave between Church and Emerson streets." (*This is Evanston*, 1949.) This described area, it should be noted, lies within the city's Fifth Ward.

Some of the condemned areas were set aside to use as parking lots. As the city undertook this clearance project no plans were in place to finance the construction of new housing or to authorize any kind of government authority to oversee the process of land clearance. At one point the Evanston City Council reportedly undertook consideration of establishing a Housing Authority but did not take that action.

The City of Evanston was not the sole entity pursuing land clearance policies. Northwestern University also adopted this strategy. Purchasing homes and buildings, the university would then demolish them in order to construct its own (tax free) buildings.

In 1967, Northwestern University petitioned the Evanston City Council to amend the city's zoning ordinance in order to allow the university to build a \$10,000,000 graduate student complex on a lot bounded by Emerson, Maple, and Foster streets and the CTA tracks (Again, this land was located in the City's 5th Ward). Most of that land was "taken up with residences and six small businesses" and many were owned and occupied by Black residents. In the announced plans for "clearance" of the land, only brief mention was made of the "hardship cases"- the current occupants and tenants might need assistance in their "relocation effort." ("Northwestern U. Bids To Build Grad Flats: Evanston Zoning Laws Must Be Changed Though," *Chicago Defender*, October 24, 1967.)

"In order to make room for the graduate dormitories on Maple Ave between Emerson and Foster streets, Northwestern University demolished many apartment units and residential homes resulting in the displacement (removal) of over 70 families, 1/3 of which were black. The white families displaced simply moved to another area of town, but the Blacks, subject to racial discrimination, had no place to go and eventually left Evanston. In this sense the Blacks were 'removed.' " ("The Case Against Northwestern University," Northwestern University Archives, ND.)

Before beginning construction, the university petitioned the City of Evanston to amend the zoning ordinance in order to authorize the planned design. In March 1968 the Evanston City Council agreed to authorize a new zoning classification that would allow Northwestern to build the graduate housing complex according to its plan. By August 1968, all of the existing buildings had been "cleared" (demolished) after the families and business owners were bought out, save for William Spencer and his wife who had operated their business, "Foster Street Pharmacy," for

48 years. They were the last to leave. (Edith Herman, "N.U.'s Housing Project Delayed," *Chicago Tribune*, August 18, 1968.)

Construction, however, was delayed after the Evanston City Council asked Northwestern University "to make a payment to the city for fire and police protection." Because Northwestern University land is tax exempt, the university does not pay for the City's fire and police services which is funded through taxes. In October 1968, the City Council voted to accept the university's offer of "the gift of a new \$30,000 fire engine as partial compensation for fire protection and other municipal services provided by the city." The council also voted "to approve" another request from the university for the "rezoning of a tract of Northwestern University property bounded by Garnett Place, Foster St, Maple Ave and the L tracks for more graduate housing." ("Council O.K.'s Rezoning of N.U. Property," *Chicago Tribune*, October, 8, 1968.)

Critics of Northwestern University's development methods and projects objected to what was seen as the university's encroachment on Black neighborhoods. "Northwestern University is engaged in an effort to expand its boundaries into the Black community. Northwestern University is not expanding northward or southward into the white affluent community, but westward into Black and mixed communities," critics observed. Further, they charged, owing to the tax exemption status enjoyed by Northwestern University, the tax burden to pay for city services was born disproportionately by low-income residents, many of whom were Black. ("The Case against Northwestern University.")

Additionally, critics objected to Northwestern's reported "sell and lease back" arrangements, producing "large, tax-exempt incomes, while taking that much more property off the tax rolls." Such arrangements involved "wealthy homeowners, businessmen and corporations" selling their land to Northwestern University "which in turn leases the land back to the original owners for their disposition at a reasonable rate... Since the land is under the legal ownership of Northwestern University, the original owners no longer have to pay property taxes. Thus providing a 'tax dodge.' Consequently as property owned by the wealthy is removed from the tax rolls, the tax base is reduced creating a greater tax burden on low income families." ("The Case against Northwestern University; U.S. House of Representative, Hearings Before the Committee on Ways and Means, 81st Congress, Revenue Revision of 1950, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 810).

Finally, critics objected to Northwestern's often poor service as a landlord to some Black Evanston residents. In the area surrounding the new dormitory alone, Northwestern reportedly owned 25 dwelling units, all classified as income property and tax exempt, many of which reportedly had large numbers of code violations, along with defective plumbing, electrical, and heating systems, resulting in several fires. ("The Case against Northwestern University.")

Residential Housing:

Evanston African American residents had few options in purchasing a home. Evanston banks would not offer or provide home loans to Black families. Most families applied for mortgages in Chicago or had made arrangements with their employers. Andrew Wiese in ..

A resident shared his experience dealing with banks:

Being in the mortgage business now, I look back, and when my parents bought their house, like, 99 percent of the black folks then, or African Americans at that point, got their mortgages from somewhere outside this community. No banks would [lend] money to minorities to buy houses. And so when the fact banks wouldn't lend money to do anything, so when I became president of the NAACP that was one of my goals is to knock down the discriminatory practices at the banks. . . That was in 1972. (Carl Davis. Shorefront oral history collection, www.shorefrontvoice.org)

Another resident who eventually served as 5th ward alderman shared an instance that took place in 1965:

"I just looked at the signs, found an apartment, and went to a local realtor, who is very much in business still to this day, and after going into the building with my wife, and being basically ignored for a long time as we were sitting sort of in, like, a little waiting room area, finally a man came out from a side office. . . And he walked up, and sort of drew in his breath. . .and asked if there was something that he could do for us, or what we wanted, -- it was nothing along the line of "may I help you". . . And when we told him that we had found an apartment in one of the buildings that his firm managed, and that we wanted to put in an application. . . He actually jumped back like a step, almost as if I had thrown something on the ground that had blown up and had suddenly startled him. . . he drew in his breath, and he said, "Why no. We don't rent to coloreds." (Mike Summers, Shorefront oral history collection, www.shorefrontvoice.org)

Housing segregation in Evanston was documented through the city's relationship with Northwestern University, which for years offered students a list of accredited off-campus rooming houses and rentals. Many owners of those private properties, it was known, "refuse[d] to rent to Negroes." ("Discrimination Against Negro Students," *Daily Northwestern*, December 15, 1936.) It was not until 1965, when, acting under pressure from students and others, that university officials finally agreed to remove from the university's list of approved off-campus housing any landlord that was found to discriminate in renting to students. (Michael Whitney, "NU to Notify Landlords of its Policy," *Daily Northwestern*, February 4, 1965.) But discrimination against Black renters would persist.

Fair Housing

For years, Evanston residents, Northwestern students, and others brought pressure to the university to desegregate its own real estate holdings in Evanston. And pressure on the Evanston City Council to pass fair housing legislation had been ongoing for years, with numerous petitions presented before the City Council to no avail.

In October 1967, the Evanston City Council finally passed an ordinance providing a penalty for real estate agents found practicing discrimination. The ordinance created a city-issued license for real estate brokers that could be revoked if they were found to be practicing discrimination in

the rental, sale and advertising of housing. ("Vote on Open Housing is Set for Evanston." *Chicago Tribune*, October 3, 1967; "New Housing Bill Urged," *Chicago Tribune*. April 14, 1968.) The ordinance was largely seen as ineffective since it did not address the larger issues related to housing discrimination.

It was not until after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in April 1968, that the Federal Government signed into law the Fair Housing Act, expanding on existing laws and prohibiting discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, and national origin. In Evanston, the City Council still refused to pass a fair housing law. After students and hundreds of Evanston residents took part in marches, and the Fair Housing movement's leaders stated "emphatically and unequivocally" that if an ordinance was not passed on or before April 29, 1968, they would move "from non-violent protest . . . to nonviolent resistance," involving an "economic boycott of all Evanston businesses, transportation systems, and profit making operations within the city limit of Evanston," that a law was finally passed. ("Statement of Intent," Collection 57, Evanston Housing Records, 1900-1995, Evanston History Center Archives, Evanston History Center, Evanston, IL; John Maclean. "O.K. Stiffer Housing Law," *Chicago Tribune*, April 30, 1968.)

The legislation did not solve the issue of housing discrimination in Evanston. By 1985, a study of Evanston real estate practices alleged that "racial steering" was being practiced by certain realtors, whereby Black renters and buyers were "steered" toward certain properties and away from other areas of the city. "Discrimination in Evanston's real estate market is very subtle and not always apparent," the report noted. Mayor James C. Lytle appointed a committee to investigate, pledging "to correct the problem." (Robert Enstad, "Evanston Cites Realty Steering," *Chicago Tribune*, March 27, 1985.)

Veteran Housing:

After World War II, the city of Evanston, like many cities and towns across the country, experienced a severe housing shortage owing to a lack of residential construction during the war. A total of thirty-seven buildings were allotted to Evanston by the federal Public Housing Authority to be built on the shore of the sanitary district canal (on the city's west side). The new housing project was segregated: A total of 111 four-room family units were built; the majority of which were open to white families only. Just one tenth of the units were set aside for Black families. The housing units were managed by an Evanston City official, the veterans housing supervisor, a position created in 1946 by the Evanston City Council.

In 1946, Northwestern applied for a city permit to build a 280-unit housing facility for returning (white only) veterans. ("Evanston Lets N.U. Build More Huts for Ex-GIs," *Chicago Tribune*, February 5, 1946.) City Council member Jourdain urged the council to "demand that the school drop its color bar as a condition upon which permission would be granted" for the new structure. ("Northwestern Gets Ok on Jim Crow Dorm," *Chicago Defender*, May 11, 1946.) As chairman of the city's building committee, Jourdain wrote multiple correspondences to the National Housing Agency (NHA) to determine the legality of the restriction. "At this writing, nine Negro war

veterans, — some with battle stars from the European and the South Pacific theaters, some drawing disabled war vets' pensions," he wrote, "are finding that their share in World War II means little to a university which today raises against them the very Hitler racist barriers they fought to destroy."(Quoted in Beverly, Jr., *Edwin B. Jourdain*, 97.)

The NHA informed Northwestern officials of its policy to "administer its functions with racial equity." All educational institutions that sought federal aid or support for emergency construction were required "to reply that in the administration of its temporary housing program, it will provide housing for racial minority groups substantially in accordance with its proportionate needs." But university President Franklyn Bliss Snyder announced that the NHA's policy would have no impact on the planned construction. "It is not in my power to commit the university on the question of housing Negro veterans," he said, "the university recommends that they stay with Negro families in Evanston and not on the campus." This policy was, he explained, "determined by the board of trustees and the public sentiment of the community. There is no indication that it will change." By a majority vote of the Evanston City Council, the construction was approved. (R.B. Goldsberry, "Negro Vets Not Wanted in N.U. Dorms," *Chicago Defender*, July 20, 1946).

Spencer Jourdain, Edwin's youngest son, in his book wrote extensively on this as well, ended with "The permit was issued, and university housing segregation would continue for several years thereafter. The city, the local builder, and the federal government had collaboratively authorized continued racial segregation. (Jourdain, Spencer, *Dream Dancers Vol III*, p 323)

**Evanston Policies and Practices Directly Affecting the
African American Community, 1900 - 1960**

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July, 2020 (Draft)

Excerpt: On Housing

REDLINING

(Portions of the article “Developing a Segregated Town, 1900-1960” from the *Evanston Roundtable*, Dec 5, 2019 have been adapted here.)

Historical Context

Evanston’s first African American residents arrived in the 1850s, and by 1880 there were approximately 125 African Americans in Evanston. The number grew to 737 in 1900. At that time, many of the African Americans in Evanston worked in domestic and personal service.

With the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural south to the urban north, the black population in Evanston grew to 6,026 in 1940.

Unlike many suburbs that sought to exclude African Americans altogether, leading members of Evanston’s real estate establishment played a role in the growth of Evanston’s African American community, said historian Andrew Wiese in an article about segregation in Evanston in 1999. (“Black Housing, White Finance: African American Housing and Home Ownership in Evanston, Illinois, Before 1940, *Journal of Social History*, Winter 1999)

He theorizes that Evanston was different in this respect from other suburbs, because Evanston was already home to a well-established African American community by the time of the Great Migration that began in about 1910. In addition, he says, African American workers supplied labor that was in demand by white elites in Evanston, and they had personal ties with white families all over town.

There was a major caveat, though. Mr. Wiese says, “Evanston’s white real estate brokers apparently developed a practice of informal racial zoning. In effect, they treated a section of west Evanston as open to African Americans, while excluding them from the rest of town.”

Impact

Evanston banks generally refused to make mortgage loans to black households seeking to buy homes on blocks that were not viewed as “acceptable” for black people, said Mr. Robinson. As an example, black people who owned vacant lots near the lake were denied loans to build on their properties, and were eventually forced to sell them.

Builders did not sell properties to black households if the homes were outside the area set aside for black people. Builders constructed more than 1,400 new homes in northwest Evanston during the 1920s and 1930s, none of which was sold to black households, according to Mr. Wiese.

White homeowners at times recorded racially restrictive covenants that provided that their homes “shall not be conveyed, leased to, or occupied by anyone not a Caucasian (servants

excepted).” These were effective until 1948, when the U.S. Supreme Court held them unenforceable.

South of Church Street and west of Asbury Avenue, white homeowners formed the West Side Improvement Association “to preserve [the neighborhood] as a place for white people to live.” As part of the plan, they formed a syndicate to buy homes that were at risk of being sold to a black family. At times, white homeowners got together and offered to buy back homes that had just been sold to a black household.

African American families were also displaced from neighborhoods outside the west side of Evanston. In 1921, the City passed a zoning ordinance that zoned for commercial use almost every block where black people lived outside of the west side of town. As these areas were converted to commercial use, “black families were dislocated to the west,” said Mr. Wiese.

The effect of all these practices was stark. “Between 1910 and 1940, there was not a single area of African American expansion outside of west Evanston, in spite of black population growth of almost 5,000,” said Mr. Wiese. “To the contrary, public and private actions reduced the number of African American housing units outside these boundaries.”

By 1940, census data showed that 84% of black households in Evanston lived in the triangular area that is shaded light red in the map below. This area was highly segregated – 95% black. Beyond these bounds, black families lived on Garnett Place (then called Ayars) and in a few pockets of older homes purchased before 1900.

While black people were segregated into the triangular area, Mr. Wiese points out that black Evanstonians “were almost as likely to own their own homes as middle class and elite whites.” Some white members of the Evanston and the Chicago real estate establishments and some financial institutions from Evanston and Chicago provided mortgages and construction loans to black people who were building or purchasing homes in the triangular area and on Garnett Place.

To help with the purchase of their homes, many black households shared housing costs with extended families or rented rooms or apartments for extra income. In 1920, about 30% of black households in Evanston included multigenerational and extended family members. The percentage grew to about 50% by 1940.

As in Chicago, segregation had the effect of limiting the supply of housing available to black families in Evanston. This resulted in over-crowding and higher housing prices. Mr. Wiese summed up the racial transition in Evanston through 1940 as follows:

“Ironically, evidence suggests that racial segregation in Evanston facilitated black suburbanization. Although the development of residential segregation in the suburb testifies to the unease local whites felt about black migration, the establishment of clear geographic limits to black community building appears to have calmed white fears. Race relations in Evanston were structured by a high degree of inequality that favored (and flattered) local whites and minimized conflict through patterns of paternalism and deference symbolized by the relationship

Excerpt: Evanston Policies and Practices Directly Affecting the African American Community, 1900 - 1960 (Draft) - 2

of domestic service. Separated as they were by income, occupation, and power, as well as clear geographic barriers, such as railroad tracks and a wide sanitary channel, African Americans posed little threat to the social status or perceived property values of Evans-ton's economic elite. Meanwhile, as workers, they provided services that were in high demand. As a result, the dynamics of local race relations combined with the aspirations of black southerners to shape a housing market that both supported black home ownership and accommodated the growth of a large black community in an otherwise affluent and white suburb."

In 1940, the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), an arm of the Federal Loan Bank Board, prepared a map showing the risk of making mortgage loans in different neighborhoods in Evanston. A portion of HOLC's Evanston map is shown below. The HOLC prepared this and similar maps for more than 200 cities in the United States to show the risk of making mortgage loans in different neighborhoods in these cities. The process took into account the age and quality of housing, the racial and ethnic makeup of the neighborhood and other factors.

Areas were given one of four grades: "A" areas – shaded green – were deemed "homogeneous" and in demand as residential areas; "B" areas – shaded blue – were "still desirable;" "C" areas – shaded yellow – were characterized as old and at risk of an "infiltration of a lower grade of population;" and "D" – shaded red – were said to have detrimental influences and an "undesirable population or an infiltration of it."

Black neighborhoods "were invariably rated" in the D category, said researchers Kenneth Jackson and Jacob Kimmel.

HOLC's map of Evanston rated the segregated black triangular area of Evanston in the "D" category.

The HOLC also wrote a narrative description of the area shaded red in the Evanston map it prepared. The narrative, ... said: "This neighborhood houses the large negro population living in Evanston. It is somewhat better than the average negro district for this class of population. Here live the servants for many of the families all along the north shore. There is not a vacant house in the territory, and occupancy, moreover is about 150 per cent, for most houses have more than one family living in them. Sales have been very good where liberal financing terms are available, but on other sales mortgage financing is virtually impossible to obtain. This concentration of negroes in Evanston is quite a serious problem for the town as they seem to be growing steadily and encroaching into adjoining neighborhoods. The two-family structures are in most cases converted singles and they likewise are overflowing with occupants; these buildings are rented as unheated units. The number of persons on relief in this district is probably heavier than in any other area along the north shore. Altho the area is unattractive to other than the class of occupants already here, it is difficult to say that the section is declining, for it is in constant demand because of the limited number of areas available for negro occupancy in the north shore towns."

HOLC's description highlights several adverse economic impacts of segregation. It severely limited the supply of housing available to black people, which increased overcrowding to the

point where occupancy was 150%. In addition, the demand for housing and the steadily growing population meant that the black population was, in HOLC's words – the words of a federal agency – “encroaching into adjoining neighborhoods.”

HOUSING AND ZONING POLICIES

Housing:

Until the 1910s, the majority of Black residents in Evanston lived in neighborhoods throughout the city. In the years just prior to World War I, the city's Black population began to expand and soon rapidly increased.

The increase in the Black population was part of the Great Migration (1910-1970), a movement of what amounted to over six million people leaving the South for cities and towns in the North, West, and Midwest. Many Black southerners moved to Evanston, with promises of a better life away from the violence and oppression of the Jim Crow South.

During the first years of the Great Migration, white Evanston residents began to enact some of the policies (both public and private) that would create a deeply segregated city, and whose patterns and effects are still apparent in 2020. These policies evolved over time, and while there was some degree of opposition to them and in some cases public outcry, the opposition did not represent the majority of white city residents.

As early as 1918, there was evidence of a segregated Evanston. The *Chicago Tribune* referred to Evanston's “negro section” which it identified as: west of the Chicago and Northwestern railroad. (“Evanston Negroes Plan to Be Neighbors of Evanston Elks, *Chicago Tribune*, February 6, 1918.) Indeed, this section was precisely located in the area that would be home to the vast majority of Black residents by 1940, the fifth ward. This was not by accident; it was by design.

By 1940, Evanston had the largest Black suburban population in Illinois, with 6,026 Black residents in a total population of 64,000. “In response to black migration white Evanstonians erected a wall of segregation in public and private life, including the market for housing,” as historian Andrew Weise observed (436).

Black residents were steered toward buying and renting housing in the city's Fifth Ward; attempts among Black residents to occupy areas beyond that ward were met with strong opposition.

“Classic Evanston will be invaded by Negroes” read the headline of the *Indiana Gazette* in 1918. The paper reported on the plan of a Black membership organization in Evanston to move into a clubhouse at 1326 Chicago Avenue because club members were unable to find appropriate accommodations in the “Negro section” of the city. The clubhouse was planned to be built in the so-called “white” section of the city, and thus Evanston would be “invaded,” as the paper reported. White residents responded that they would “not permit the invasion.” (*The Indiana*

Gazette, February 23, 1918; “Negroes Plan to Be Neighbors of Evanston Elks, *Chicago Tribune*, February 6, 1918)

Between the 1910s and 1940, as historian Andrew Weise has documented in great detail, as more Black people moved into the city, real estate agents working in Evanston developed a practice of informal racial zoning, which offered Black residents housing largely on the city’s west side, largely excluding Black residents from residing in all other parts of Evanston.

“Evanston is growing!” one Evanston bank proclaimed in an ad in an Evanston newspaper in 1922. “Plans are now underway for extending boundaries and developing the open land to the west.” (Advertisement, *Evanston New Index*, January 4, 1922). For developers and realtors, steering Black residents to the west side was a financial boon, especially because that area had more vacant land and housing could be built there on land that had previously been considered undesirable (i.e. the land was on a floodplain and relatively far from the city’s downtown and transportation). And thus a Black section of Evanston began to “spread out to the west into a remote and undeveloped portion of municipal territory.” (Bruner, 47). For many Black residents this was the only choice for a place to live since many white landlords and realtors blocked access to housing in other areas of Evanston.

Between 1920 and 1929 more than 400 new homes were constructed in this area and they were built “explicitly” for Black residents (Weise, 442). As a result, by 1924, Black Evanston residents had a fairly high percentage of homeownership (about $\frac{2}{3}$ of Black residents owned their homes, according to David Bruner), largely due to the fact that they were unable to find rental housing that was open to them. As Bruner observed: “it is difficult for the colored man to get property anywhere; but many newcomers buy partly because they cannot find places to rent. One of the older colored residents of Evanston estimated that $\frac{2}{3}$ of those who have been long in Evanston own their homes . . . although until about 10 years ago few even of the older residents owned property: 60 to 75% of the homes owned have been purchased in the last 10 years, he says.” (Bruner, 35)

The percentage of Black home ownership would, however, decline by 1940, when just over one quarter of Black residents owned their own homes. (Evanston Committee on Postwar Planning, “Evanston Housing, Some Facts, Some Problems,” Evanston, 1940, np.)

Owing to a tacit agreement among realtors and others, the informal process of steering Black residents into a single area, which began around 1910, translated into the fact that by 1940, 84% of Black Evanston residents lived within a single neighborhood, which was described as:

“To the West and North, the enclave ended at the banks of a broad sanitary canal. To the East, black neighborhoods halted at the tracks of the Chicago and Northwestern railroad, with the exception of one small node, which protruded eastward on 2 streets to the tracks of the L train. To the South, Church Street formed the recognized boundary.” (Weise, 427-438)

Excerpt: Evanston Policies and Practices Directly Affecting the African American Community, 1900 - 1960 (Draft) - 5

In 1940, a total of 1,252 housing units citywide were occupied by Black residents. Of that number, 1,010 were located in the fifth ward, with 116 in the second ward. In the remaining 6 wards only 126 units were occupied by Black residents. (Evanston Committee on Postwar Planning, "Evanston Housing, Some Facts, Some Problems," Evanston, 1940, np.) Now, the majority of Black residents were crowded in the 5th Ward, an area in which residents often paid higher housing prices for, in many cases, substandard dwellings. In fact, when Black residents began to move to the area they found that much of the housing had no electricity, water, or sewers, and some of the streets had yet to be paved. Bruner described the area "to the West, near the drainage canal": "Here is real urban homesteading: sewers and water, gas and electricity are in, but the streets are just being graded and often families move into their houses before sewer and water are connected. The houses often look amateurish, being in many cases built apparently from wreckage of other houses. All sorts of makeshifts are adopted. In one case on the records of the housing inspector a man had built a fairly good house, then rented it to two families and taken up his own residence in the barn at the rear of the lot with his horse. In another instance four adults were found living in a two room shed without water, light or sewer connections." (Bruner, 36).

(As late as 1940, some units of housing occupied by Black Evanston tenants were documented as having no bathing facilities, no running water, and no private toilets; other units still used gas, kerosene or gasoline for lighting, while others had no cooking facilities.) (Evanston Committee on Postwar Planning, "Evanston Housing, Some Facts, Some Problems," Evanston, 1940, np.)

Also by 1940, Black families were reportedly paying higher rents for comparable properties rented by white tenants. (League of Women Voters, *This is Evanston*, 1949, 20.) Additionally, as Wiese documents, white bankers and mortgage lenders financed the mortgages of many Black-owned homes through discriminatory terms (charging higher interest rates than white mortgage holders were charged, for example.) John F. Hahn, Evanston City Clerk from 1899 to 1925 and president of the Commercial Trust and Savings Bank of Evanston, was active in financing mortgages for Black residents in Evanston. Hahn served as City Clerk at the time the city passed its first zoning ordinance, signed into law on January 19, 1921 by Mayor Harry P. Pearsons.

Zoning:

Along with the private and tacit practices that shaped a segregated city, the City of Evanston also officially supported and enabled the practice of segregation.

In January 1921, the City of Evanston officially codified this practice when the Evanston City Council passed the city's first zoning ordinance, a key piece of legislation that tacitly served as an effort by city officials to segregate the city by race. (The ordinance was revised over the years after the initial legislation was passed.)

The ordinance was designed "to classify, regulate, and restrict the locations of trades and industries and the location of buildings designed for specified uses and to regulate and limit the height and bulk of buildings hereafter erected, to regulate and limit the intensity of the use of lot

areas and to regulate and determining the area of yards, courts and other open spaces within and surrounding such buildings, and to establish the boundaries of districts for the said purposes and prescribing penalties for the violation of its provisions.” (Zoning Ordinance, Evanston, Illinois, 1921, 1.)

Evanston’s zoning ordinance was created by a nine-person city Zoning Commission, which included the consultant Harland Bartholomew, whose firm Harland Bartholomew & Associates crafted similar ordinances across the country in cities from Saint Louis, MO, to Oakland, CA. Bartholomew’s work in creating zoning ordinances (along with concurrent efforts at crafting “comprehensive city plans”) has increasingly come under scrutiny by scholars and historians who argue that one of the primary impulses behind such ordinances was to enforce segregation. And today, many scholars now view zoning ordinances as deeply damaging to the cities and towns in which they were enacted.

Indeed, some of the first zoning ordinances were designed to explicitly enforce racial segregation. Primarily in the South, some cities’ zoning ordinances established “race districts” (Atlanta) or codified “race segregation” (Dallas). (Mary T. Voorhees, “Zoning Progress in the United States,” *Engineering News-Record*, September 28, 1922, 519.)

This “racial zoning movement,” however, was impeded in 1917 when the U.S. Supreme Court declared a racial zoning ordinance in Louisville, Kentucky, to be unconstitutional. (Christopher Silver, “The Racial Origins Of Zoning In American Cities,” From: Manning Thomas, June and Marsha Ritzdorf eds. *Urban Planning and the African American Community: In the Shadows*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997, 1.)

Around 1921, the zoning movement in the United States was shifting its language, but the primary goal remained: to control land use. As historian Christopher Silver has shown, both “racial zoning practices” and their advocates were not solely located in the South. In cities in the North, Midwest, and West, “especially those where the Black population increased rapidly,” land control legislation was viewed as an “effective social control mechanism for Blacks and other ‘undesirables.’” And nearby Chicago, it should be noted, was “a bastion of racial zoning enthusiasts.” (Silver, 2)

The Negro in Chicago was a 1922 report commissioned by Illinois governor Frank Lowden and analyzed the city’s racial antipathy more generally. Charles S. Johnson, a Ph.D. student in sociology at the University of Chicago, was the director of research at the Chicago Urban League and one of the report’s key authors. It blamed inadequate housing conditions and the city’s dramatic black population increase for shifting racial boundary lines, which stoked white racial resentment. The report also detailed roundly held suppositions, by real estate brokers and laypersons alike, that a more effective system of segregation with starker lines between black and white but better conditions in the black neighborhoods would reduce racial conflict. Chicago real estate leaders took on this challenge locally as the city simultaneously became a national hub for the real estate profession and the study of real estate economics. These two developments were closely linked with Chicago’s emergence as a racial tinderbox in which

Excerpt: Evanston Policies and Practices Directly Affecting the African American Community, 1900 - 1960 (Draft) - 7

white realtors, lenders, and homeowners sought to maintain segregation as a constituent feature of residential real estate's structure and value. Many cities were experimenting with administrative forms of segregation, such as racial zoning in Saint Louis and Baltimore, while others suffered major outbreaks of anti-black violence across the color line. The imperative for racial peace was essential for cities in the midst of chaotic changes in immigration, industrialization, and urban growth. (Winling and Michney, *The Roots of Redlining: Academic, Governmental, and Professional Networks in the Making of the New Deal Lending Regime*. P. 7-8.)

Under the guise of "protecting" property values and guarding against "deterioration," zoning ordinances effectively controlled where and how city residents lived. The ordinances "sought to ensure control over the entire area of the city" and zoning itself "became an instrument that promoted spatial segregation, including racial segregation, but without directly mentioning the question of races." (Ana Cláudia Castilho Barone, "Harland Bartholomew and Racially Informed Zoning: The Case of St. Louis," *Estudos Urbanos e Regionais*, 20, 2018, 448, 454.)

In the 1920s, the practice of zoning was again challenged, most notably in the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case, *Euclid v. Ambler*, [272 US 365 \(1926\)](#). Ambler Realty filed suit against the village of Euclid, Ohio, claiming the city's zoning ordinance violated the Fourteenth Amendment's protections of liberty and property described in the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses. Although the court upheld the constitutionality of the zoning ordinance, less than two years later, the Supreme Court decided [Nectow v. City of Cambridge](#) (277 U.S. 183 (1928)) which overturned a zoning ordinance for violating the 14th Amendment due process clause.

In 1924, Northwestern University student, David Bruner, undertook a study of Black Evanston residents. Bruner's study included a survey of Black Evanston residents and an investigation of housing, aided by the work of Evanston's sanitary inspector, R.J. Lindsay. Bruner's study is valuable since it constitutes a detailed record of Black Evanston residents just three years after the city's first zoning ordinance had been passed and as the segregated city was taking shape. Bruner's approach to his work reflected the widespread attitude of many white Northerners to the influx of Black southerners. "The Negro population of Evanston," Bruner observed, presents "a very real problem." And, he asserted, "the white community regards it as such." (Bruner, 2.)

The so-called "problem" stemmed, in part, from population growth, Bruner argued. In 1920, the U.S. census recorded 2,522 Black residents in Evanston. This figure represented a more than 50% increase since 1910 when 1,160 Black residents lived in Evanston. Projecting into the future, Bruner argued that the continued influx of Black residents could mean that as many as 8,000 Black residents could soon call Evanston home. (Bruner, 18.)

"If in the space of a decade there come into a northern city growing from a population of 25,000 to 37,000, members of a socially isolated and inferior race to the number of 1,362 there may be a problem arising," wrote Bruner in 1924, "particularly when most of the number come during the last half of the decade. When the majority of the newcomers to the northern city arrive direct

from the unexacting life of Southern plantation or village without knowledge of the city and ways of living in crowds, and when at the same time little building is done and the area in which they may buy or rent is rigidly restricted, there is inevitably a problem.” (Bruner, 1.)

Bruner observed that thus far in Evanston, “race relations” had generally been positive (despite the fact that 7/8 of the Black residents he surveyed said they encountered discrimination in Evanston). But Bruner also set forth an argument concerning why the Black population in Evanston had to be addressed as problematic. “The problem presented by the Negro population in Evanston is of course only a phase of the whole problem of the Negro in the United States,” he wrote, “and a part of the problem arising from the great northward migration of the Negro since the beginning of the recent war.” (Bruner, 4). The “problem” was in fact a problem belonging to racist white people who viewed Black people as inferior or dangerous, and believed that their presence in a given location would have a negative impact on the city itself; a large or growing Black population, therefore, was something that white people needed to control, according to Bruner; and as Bruner’s study makes clear, methods for control were found in a number of ways, from hiring practices to city zoning ordinances.

Referring to the “use map” of Evanston’s 1921 zoning plan, Bruner explained that the map “indicates the kind of territories the Negroes find open to them: largely commercial and light industrial areas along the tracks, and districts so remote from transportation facilities as to be comparatively undesirable. It will be seen that practically no Class ‘A’ residential district is occupied by Negroes and none is likely to be opened.” (Bruner, 35.)

Indeed, it must be understood that Evanston’s 1921 zoning ordinance imposed restrictions upon a city that was already, to some degree, unofficially zoned since a majority Black neighborhood had already been established. The zoning ordinance essentially codified the process of limiting where Black residents could live, and ensured, as Bruner states clearly, that Black residents would not find “open” to them any of the areas zoned as Class A in the future. (The majority of Class A areas were found largely along the lakefront and extending several blocks west, and also in the northwest corner of Evanston. See Use Map.) “There can be no doubt that there are rather confined limits within which Negro may come to live in Evanston,” Bruner wrote. “This will be more and more true in the future. The Emerson Street district, especially in its eastern portion is most likely to be the permanent center.” (Bruner, 24-25.)

“After you have been restricted to this area (quite unintentionally of course since the main intention is to get you out of town altogether) then your troubles begin,” wrote the editor of the *Newsette*, a Black newspaper in Evanston, about the push to segregate Black residents within the city’s Fifth Ward or the west side in general. “Zoning laws permit anything short of a garbage dump to be built next door to your home, if you find one. The West side, as you know it, is zoned for industrial and commercial use. You will live, as usual, in the least desirable section of Evanston.” (“Evanston’s Housing Problem,” *Newsette*, May 22, 1947).

After the passage of the 1921 zoning ordinance, segregation was upheld through various practices. Some white landlords continued to restrict access to housing in the city through

“racially restrictive covenants” that provided that homes “shall not be conveyed, leased to, or occupied by anyone not a Caucasian (servants excepted).” Such covenants were effective until 1948, when the U.S. Supreme Court held them unenforceable. (Larry Gavin, “Developing a Segregated Town, 1900-1960,” *Evanston Roundtable*, December 5, 2019).

The Evanston Real Estate Board, organized and incorporated in 1918 and boasting a membership that included “every broker in good standing in the city,” also worked in tandem with others on restricting housing in the city. The board, led by seven white men, worked closely with Evanston city officials on various projects, including providing the zoning commission with “material assistance.” (*Evanston*, Evanston, IL: Kiwanis Club of Evanston, 1924, 23, 59.)

After the vast majority of Black residents were living in a single area, the work to complete the process of segregation continued. And, in many ways, the 1940s can be seen as the second wave of housing segregation in Evanston.

Home Demolition and the Land Clearance Commission

By 1940, roughly 6,000 Black residents lived in Evanston, and city officials saw fit to once again tackle the “problem” of “our non-white citizens.” Evanston Mayor S. G. Ingraham appointed a committee on postwar planning. In the committee’s report on Evanston housing, they outlined a list of “problems” associated with the housing of Black Evanston residents. (Evanston Committee on Postwar Planning, “Evanston Housing, Some Facts, Some Problems,” Evanston, 1940.)

“Negro groups as well as whites of low incomes do not pay enough taxes to support the services they consume,” advised the mayor’s commission. “A too large proportion in this group would soon mean poorer schools, streets and municipal services,” the commission advised. “To conserve the white market for their services Negroes should maintain their proportion of population about where it is. Otherwise taxes will go up and whites will move out or taxes will remain as is and services will go down.” (Evanston Committee on Postwar Planning, “Evanston Housing, Some Facts, Some Problems,” Evanston, 1940.)

In order to protect property values, develop Evanston, and tackle the “problem” of Black housing, the city adopted a policy of home demolition, a means by which the city and private citizens attempted to control and remove Black citizens from certain neighborhoods that lay beyond the west side (“clearing” those areas for “economic development.”)

Often the argument was made that the housing to be demolished was “substandard” or “unsanitary” or that certain areas were “blighted” or “overcrowded.” “Blighted neighborhoods must be cut out of the city before they spread,” wrote the League of Women Voters in 1949. “Slum clearance and strict enforcement of zoning to prevent future overcrowding of the land must go hand in hand with rebuilding,” the group advised.

For decades, white observers had noted the presence of what they called “substandard” housing in the Black section of Evanston. “Many places in colored [*sic*] area in particular should be condemned,” wrote a white resident in 1941. “But no place for people to go.” (“What are the

Present Housing Facilities,” 1941, Evanston History Center Archives.) But so-called “substandard” housing was the result of segregation itself. As mentioned above, many white landlords rented to Black tenants, charging more than white tenants would pay for comparable properties, and often failing to maintain the properties. Additionally, because there were so few opportunities for Black people to rent or own in the city beyond the west side, the area where the vast majority of Black residents lived became densely populated. Many residents did not wish to live in housing that they, too, considered overcrowded, too expensive, and lacking proper upkeep by landlords, but with nowhere else to go, they faced limited options. Demolition of Black owned and occupied homes was seen as a boon to the city’s tax revenues. The destruction of Black homes began in earnest in the 1940s. In 1941, roughly fifteen homes owned and occupied by Black residents in the area near Haven School were destroyed. The demolition took place in order to make way for the construction of a football field. Several other homes on Sherman Avenue were also destroyed that year to make room for an apartment building; and in south Evanston, more homes owned by Black residents were destroyed. The demolition of housing was taking place as one of the final acts of segregation. “Where will we move?” asked the editor of the *Newsette*, as the destruction was underway. “Where can we buy property? . . . Because of the massive squeeze play directed against Negroes, you can move into the area generally called the ‘west side,’ bounded by the canal and the railroad tracks.” “Eight to 10,000 of you are being herded into an area over which you can walk in less time than an hour,” the *Newsette* continued, warning Black Evanston residents. “You are compelled to live in kitchens, attics, basements, and, possibly, closets and bathrooms . . . If you do not buy, then you move out of town. That is just the exact purpose of the squeeze play against Negroes in Evanston. By their own admission, openly published, whites who are smoking Negroes out of town are interested in keeping Negroes who can serve them as maids, chauffeurs, butlers, [and] dishwashers.” (“Evanston’s Housing Problem,” *Newsette*, May 22, 1947).

In 1945, the demolition of homes was codified when the Evanston City Council established the Land Clearance Commission, a five-member board appointed by the mayor with the consent of the City Council. (Evanston’s future mayor, John Emery, chaired the commission at one point.) The commission’s mandate was to focus on identifying so-called “substandard” housing in Evanston, purchase that housing, evict the tenants, and demolish the structures. This practice was presented as a means for city beautification and “redevelopment.” This practice was similar to many other practices across the country variously known as “slum clearance” and “blighted neighborhood development.” (In 1947, Illinois passed statewide legislation that legalized the demolition of private homes and businesses: the Blighted Areas Redevelopment Act of 1947.(315 ILCS 5/1)(from Ch. 67 1/2, par. 63.)

But what of those who were forced to move out of their homes only to have them destroyed? Evanston paid low market costs to purchase the homes that were to be demolished, but those who were cast out did not necessarily have replacement housing made available to them. “Some cities have solved this dilemma,” the League of Women Voters observed in 1949, “with temporary housing for the dispossessed. Evanston, as yet, has found no solution.” (*This is Evanston*, 1949)

In August 1948, a mass meeting of Black residents was held in Evanston to address the new land clearance program. Several speakers presented an analysis of the city’s new commission

and observed that Evanston had failed to do anything constructive towards housing for Black residents. ("Hold Mass Meeting In Evanston on Housing," *Chicago Defender*, August 14, 1948).

In the fall of 1948, the Land Clearance Commission made its first condemnations. These were done in neighborhoods predominantly occupied by Black residents. The areas were: "both sides of Hovland court between Church and Emerson streets; the east side of Wesley Ave, between Emerson and Foster streets ; A portion of the east side of Elmwood Ave between Lake and Grove streets; Also both sides of Gray Ave between Church and Emerson streets." (*This is Evanston*, 1949.) This described area, it should be noted, lies within the city's Fifth Ward.

Some of the condemned areas were set aside to use as parking lots. As the city undertook this clearance project no plans were in place to finance the construction of new housing or to authorize any kind of government authority to oversee the process of land clearance. At one point the Evanston City Council reportedly undertook consideration of establishing a Housing Authority but did not take that action.

The City of Evanston was not the sole entity pursuing land clearance policies. Northwestern University also adopted this strategy. Purchasing homes and buildings, the university would then demolish them in order to construct its own (tax free) buildings.

In 1967, Northwestern University petitioned the Evanston City Council to amend the city's zoning ordinance in order to allow the university to build a \$10,000,000 graduate student complex on a lot bounded by Emerson, Maple, and Foster streets and the CTA tracks (Again, this land was located in the City's 5th Ward). Most of that land was "taken up with residences and six small businesses" and many were owned and occupied by Black residents. In the announced plans for "clearance" of the land, only brief mention was made of the "hardship cases"- the current occupants and tenants might need assistance in their "relocation effort." ("Northwestern U. Bids To Build Grad Flats: Evanston Zoning Laws Must Be Changed Though," *Chicago Defender*, October 24, 1967.)

"In order to make room for the graduate dormitories on Maple Ave between Emerson and Foster streets, Northwestern University demolished many apartment units and residential homes resulting in the displacement (removal) of over 70 families, 1/3 of which were black. The white families displaced simply moved to another area of town, but the Blacks, subject to racial discrimination, had no place to go and eventually left Evanston. In this sense the Blacks were 'removed.' " ("The Case Against Northwestern University," Northwestern University Archives, ND.)

Before beginning construction, the university petitioned the City of Evanston to amend the zoning ordinance in order to authorize the planned design. In March 1968 the Evanston City Council agreed to authorize a new zoning classification that would allow Northwestern to build the graduate housing complex according to its plan. By August 1968, all of the existing buildings had been "cleared" (demolished) after the families and business owners were bought out, save for William Spencer and his wife who had operated their business, "Foster Street Pharmacy," for

48 years. They were the last to leave. (Edith Herman, "N.U.'s Housing Project Delayed," *Chicago Tribune*, August 18, 1968.)

Construction, however, was delayed after the Evanston City Council asked Northwestern University "to make a payment to the city for fire and police protection." Because Northwestern University land is tax exempt, the university does not pay for the City's fire and police services which is funded through taxes. In October 1968, the City Council voted to accept the university's offer of "the gift of a new \$30,000 fire engine as partial compensation for fire protection and other municipal services provided by the city." The council also voted "to approve" another request from the university for the "rezoning of a tract of Northwestern University property bounded by Garnett Place, Foster St, Maple Ave and the L tracks for more graduate housing." ("Council O.K's Rezoning of N.U. Property," *Chicago Tribune*, October, 8, 1968.)

Critics of Northwestern University's development methods and projects objected to what was seen as the university's encroachment on Black neighborhoods. "Northwestern University is engaged in an effort to expand its boundaries into the Black community. Northwestern University is not expanding northward or southward into the white affluent community, but westward into Black and mixed communities," critics observed. Further, they charged, owing to the tax exemption status enjoyed by Northwestern University, the tax burden to pay for city services was born disproportionately by low-income residents, many of whom were Black. ("The Case against Northwestern University.")

Additionally, critics objected to Northwestern's reported "sell and lease back" arrangements, producing "large, tax-exempt incomes, while taking that much more property off the tax rolls." Such arrangements involved "wealthy homeowners, businessmen and corporations" selling their land to Northwestern University "which in turn leases the land back to the original owners for their disposition at a reasonable rate... Since the land is under the legal ownership of Northwestern University, the original owners no longer have to pay property taxes. Thus providing a 'tax dodge.' Consequently as property owned by the wealthy is removed from the tax rolls, the tax base is reduced creating a greater tax burden on low income families." ("The Case against Northwestern University; U.S. House of Representative, Hearings Before the Committee on Ways and Means, 81st Congress, Revenue Revision of 1950, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 810).

Finally, critics objected to Northwestern's often poor service as a landlord to some Black Evanston residents. In the area surrounding the new dormitory alone, Northwestern reportedly owned 25 dwelling units, all classified as income property and tax exempt, many of which reportedly had large numbers of code violations, along with defective plumbing, electrical, and heating systems, resulting in several fires. ("The Case against Northwestern University.")

Residential Housing:

Evanston African American residents had few options in purchasing a home. Evanston banks would not offer or provide home loans to Black families. Most families applied for mortgages in Chicago or had made arrangements with their employers. Andrew Wiese in ..

A resident shared his experience dealing with banks:

Being in the mortgage business now, I look back, and when my parents bought their house, like, 99 percent of the black folks then, or African Americans at that point, got their mortgages from somewhere outside this community. No banks would [lend] money to minorities to buy houses. And so when the fact banks wouldn't lend money to do anything, so when I became president of the NAACP that was one of my goals is to knock down the discriminatory practices at the banks. . . That was in 1972. (Carl Davis. Shorefront oral history collection, www.shorefrontvoice.org)

Another resident who eventually served as 5th ward alderman shared an instance that took place in 1965:

"I just looked at the signs, found an apartment, and went to a local realtor, who is very much in business still to this day, and after going into the building with my wife, and being basically ignored for a long time as we were sitting sort of in, like, a little waiting room area, finally a man came out from a side office. . . And he walked up, and sort of drew in his breath. . .and asked if there was something that he could do for us, or what we wanted, -- it was nothing along the line of "may I help you". . . And when we told him that we had found an apartment in one of the buildings that his firm managed, and that we wanted to put in an application. . . He actually jumped back like a step, almost as if I had thrown something on the ground that had blown up and had suddenly startled him. . . he drew in his breath, and he said, "Why no. We don't rent to coloreds." (Mike Summers, Shorefront oral history collection, www.shorefrontvoice.org)

Housing segregation in Evanston was documented through the city's relationship with Northwestern University, which for years offered students a list of accredited off-campus rooming houses and rentals. Many owners of those private properties, it was known, "refuse[d] to rent to Negroes." ("Discrimination Against Negro Students," *Daily Northwestern*, December 15, 1936.) It was not until 1965, when, acting under pressure from students and others, that university officials finally agreed to remove from the university's list of approved off-campus housing any landlord that was found to discriminate in renting to students. (Michael Whitney, "NU to Notify Landlords of its Policy," *Daily Northwestern*, February 4, 1965.) But discrimination against Black renters would persist.

Fair Housing

For years, Evanston residents, Northwestern students, and others brought pressure to the university to desegregate its own real estate holdings in Evanston. And pressure on the Evanston City Council to pass fair housing legislation had been ongoing for years, with numerous petitions presented before the City Council to no avail.

In October 1967, the Evanston City Council finally passed an ordinance providing a penalty for real estate agents found practicing discrimination. The ordinance created a city-issued license for real estate brokers that could be revoked if they were found to be practicing discrimination in

the rental, sale and advertising of housing. ("Vote on Open Housing is Set for Evanston." *Chicago Tribune*, October 3, 1967; "New Housing Bill Urged," *Chicago Tribune*. April 14, 1968.) The ordinance was largely seen as ineffective since it did not address the larger issues related to housing discrimination.

It was not until after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in April 1968, that the Federal Government signed into law the Fair Housing Act, expanding on existing laws and prohibiting discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, and national origin. In Evanston, the City Council still refused to pass a fair housing law. After students and hundreds of Evanston residents took part in marches, and the Fair Housing movement's leaders stated "emphatically and unequivocally" that if an ordinance was not passed on or before April 29, 1968, they would move "from non-violent protest . . . to nonviolent resistance," involving an "economic boycott of all Evanston businesses, transportation systems, and profit making operations within the city limit of Evanston," that a law was finally passed. ("Statement of Intent," Collection 57, Evanston Housing Records, 1900-1995, Evanston History Center Archives, Evanston History Center, Evanston, IL; John Maclean. "O.K. Stiffer Housing Law," *Chicago Tribune*, April 30, 1968.)

The legislation did not solve the issue of housing discrimination in Evanston. By 1985, a study of Evanston real estate practices alleged that "racial steering" was being practiced by certain realtors, whereby Black renters and buyers were "steered" toward certain properties and away from other areas of the city. "Discrimination in Evanston's real estate market is very subtle and not always apparent," the report noted. Mayor James C. Lytle appointed a committee to investigate, pledging "to correct the problem." (Robert Enstad, "Evanston Cites Realty Steering," *Chicago Tribune*, March 27, 1985.)

Veteran Housing:

After World War II, the city of Evanston, like many cities and towns across the country, experienced a severe housing shortage owing to a lack of residential construction during the war. A total of thirty-seven buildings were allotted to Evanston by the federal Public Housing Authority to be built on the shore of the sanitary district canal (on the city's west side). The new housing project was segregated: A total of 111 four-room family units were built; the majority of which were open to white families only. Just one tenth of the units were set aside for Black families. The housing units were managed by an Evanston City official, the veterans housing supervisor, a position created in 1946 by the Evanston City Council.

In 1946, Northwestern applied for a city permit to build a 280-unit housing facility for returning (white only) veterans. ("Evanston Lets N.U. Build More Huts for Ex-GIs," *Chicago Tribune*, February 5, 1946.) City Council member Jourdain urged the council to "demand that the school drop its color bar as a condition upon which permission would be granted" for the new structure. ("Northwestern Gets Ok on Jim Crow Dorm," *Chicago Defender*, May 11, 1946.) As chairman of the city's building committee, Jourdain wrote multiple correspondences to the National Housing Agency (NHA) to determine the legality of the restriction. "At this writing, nine Negro war

veterans, — some with battle stars from the European and the South Pacific theaters, some drawing disabled war vets' pensions," he wrote, "are finding that their share in World War II means little to a university which today raises against them the very Hitler racist barriers they fought to destroy."(Quoted in Beverly, Jr., *Edwin B. Jourdain*, 97.)

The NHA informed Northwestern officials of its policy to "administer its functions with racial equity." All educational institutions that sought federal aid or support for emergency construction were required "to reply that in the administration of its temporary housing program, it will provide housing for racial minority groups substantially in accordance with its proportionate needs." But university President Franklyn Bliss Snyder announced that the NHA's policy would have no impact on the planned construction. "It is not in my power to commit the university on the question of housing Negro veterans," he said, "the university recommends that they stay with Negro families in Evanston and not on the campus." This policy was, he explained, "determined by the board of trustees and the public sentiment of the community. There is no indication that it will change." By a majority vote of the Evanston City Council, the construction was approved. (R.B. Goldsberry, "Negro Vets Not Wanted in N.U. Dorms," *Chicago Defender*, July 20, 1946).

Spencer Jourdain, Edwin's youngest son, in his book wrote extensively on this as well, ended with "The permit was issued, and university housing segregation would continue for several years thereafter. The city, the local builder, and the federal government had collaboratively authorized continued racial segregation. (Jourdain, Spencer, *Dream Dancers Vol III*, p 323)