BUILT BY THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES – AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA, FROM THE CIVIL WAR THROUGH CIVIL RIGHTS

by

Lindsey Bestebreurtje
A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of George Mason University in Partial Fulfillment of The Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy History

Committee:

Dr. Jennifer Ritterherhouse Director
Dr. Zachary Schrag
Dr. Suzanne Smith
Dr. Stephen Robertson
Dr. Brian Platt Department Chairperson
Dr. Cynthia Kierner Program Director

Date: March 27, 2017 Spring Semester 2017 George Mason University Fairfax, VA
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by

Lindsey Bestebreurtje
Master of Art
George Mason University, 2011

Director: Jennifer Ritterhouse, Associate Professor
Department of History and Art History for Doctor of Philosophy

Spring Semester 2017
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
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DEDICATION

To my loving husband, Justin Rodgers.

Nevertheless She Persisted.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this time to thank some of the people who contributed to the success of this dissertation.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the many archivists, librarians, and professionals who helped me through the research process. A big thank you to Heather Crocetto and the entire team at Arlington Central Library’s Center for Local History, where I conducted the vast majority of my research. Appreciation goes to John McClure, Laura Gilmour Stoner, and the dedicated professionals at the Virginia Historical Society for their assistance. And finally the staffs of the Library of Virginia, George Mason University (GMU) Special Collections and Archives, and the University of Virginia Special Collections and Archives.

I would like to acknowledge the research and writing grants I received which helped to partially fund this process. Thank you to the Virginia Historical Society for their Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship, and to GMU for their Graduate Assistantship, Tuition Scholarship, and Provost’s Award.

While these sources of funding helped greatly, throughout my project I had the honor to work in the field of public history at some truly inspiring institutions. I would like to thank a few of the amazing individuals who helped me throughout this process. Paul Gardullo and William Pretzer at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, Robert Vay at GMU Special Collections and Archives, Lisa Davidson at the Historic American Building Survey, Sharon Leon, Sheila Brennan, and Joan Troyano at the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, and Jason Martz and the entire “#BOOM” team at the National Park Service. Without the personal, professional, and academic support of each of you this project would not have been possible.

Thank you to the members of my committee – Jennifer Ritterhouse, Zachary Schrag, Suzanne Smith, and Stephen Robertson – for their input, editing, and support. A special thank you to my committee chair, Dr. Ritterhouse, for helping to shape me as a scholar.
through M.A. and Ph.D. courses, by taking me on my first research trip, and by working closely with me throughout this dissertation. And to Dr. Schrag, for being a particularly dedicated second reader.

Beyond my committee, I would like to acknowledge the broader GMU community. Thank you to all of the inspiring professors with whom I had the privilege to work. Special acknowledgements to Professors Censer, Crew, Petrik, Scully, and Zagarri for their guidance through the doctoral program. Thank you also to my peers in the Ph.D. program for providing a truly collaborative and supportive environment. Thank you to Amanda Regan for her support in the program and invaluable help with my website. Thanks as well to Zayna Bizri, Megan Brett, Gretchen Burgess, Erin Bush, Sara Collini, Eric Gonzaba, Sheri Huerta, Ben Hurwitz, Janelle Legg, Claire Love, Anne McDivitt, David McKenzie, Jordan Patty, Lynn Price, Spencer Roberts, Celeste Sharpe, Nate Sleeter, and Jeri Wieringa. But special recognition must be reserved for Jackie Beatty, in whom I have found a protest buddy, book club partner, 8 a.m. texter, and lifelong friend.

Thank you to some of the amazing friends in my life. To Lara Dumont, my lobster. To Liz Looney, Aimee Grimshaw, Katy Smotrys, Jess Wilk, and Tracy Keogh – here is to another decade of long weekends together at the beach. To Kyle Kearney and Jacob Chang, for being an ever present source of laughter. And to the “Fairlington crew” for all the wine tastings, pool days, and game nights that served as welcome distractions.

Most importantly, I would like to give credit for the success and completion of this project to my family. To my incredible husband, Justin Rodgers, who helped to keep me sane and motivated through the perfect combination of laughter, reassurance, and movie marathons. To my parents, Anton and Donna Bestebreurtje, who led by example to show me the unparalleled power of hard work and dedication. As my Mom always says: “sharp pencil, sharp mind.” To my sister Katie Koentje, for always being my biggest fan, best friend, and for bringing two delightful men into my life: my brother-in-law Erik and nephew Ryan. To the family I gained through marriage – Steve, Terry, Meghan, and Katy Rodgers – for their love and encouragement. And to the entire Bestebreurtje, Baker, Button, Cantwell, Cash, Fitzpatrick, Jackson, McCormick, Rodgers, and Zirinksy clans: thank you. I love you all enough to never make you read my dissertation.
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ABSTRACT

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Lindsey Bestebreurtje, Ph.D.

George Mason University, 2017

Dissertation Director: Dr. Jennifer Ritterhouse

*Built By the People Themselves* tracks African American community development as the processes of suburbanization and segregation shaped lives, the built environment, and the law in the northern Virginia county of Arlington from the 1860s to the 1970s. It traces the strategies black Arlingtonians used to create lasting communities that met their own needs and reflected their own preferences when possible within the context of white domination in a Jim Crow society. Since its earliest suburban development, Arlington was made up of diverse neighborhoods, each with divergent, competing visions for the area’s future. Some of the oldest of these neighborhoods were three African American neighborhoods – Hall’s Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley. For more than one hundred years, Arlington’s white leaders and developers used zoning, planning, restrictive covenants, redevelopment, and loan policies to limit and attempt to push out Arlington’s black population. Racial division, class division, and competitions over
aesthetics unfolded in these battles for space. My exploration of the process of creating and defending communities within the suburban environment analyzes how the physical environment of Arlington reflected racial tensions, as competitions over race, space, and aesthetics literally built a physical manifestation of a county divided under Jim Crow.

This study tracks how black communities both challenged and supported white suburban visions. Their community planning traditions highlight the important role the process of suburbanization played in black community development. Key concepts explored through this work are the role of community, and how people used these communities to shape the development of suburban environments through their homes, neighborhoods, and the built environment. Three main themes in this project are to question what constitutes a suburb, to question the meaning of racial separation to see when separation amounted to segregation and when it provided space for black communities to grow, and to question how Arlington’s proximity to Washington, D.C. impacted the area’s development via employment, new residents, physical occupation, and policy. While power differentials meant that white, middle class ideas mostly dominated the suburban landscape, the continued presence of the three anchor black communities and their impacts on the county as a whole show how black visions of suburbanization contributed to the area’s development.

In the early 1860s, Hiram Fleet fled enslavement in southern Virginia for the Freedman’s Village contraband camp in Arlington, Virginia. There he and his wife, Ellen, a fellow self-emancipating slave from Virginia, began their family in freedom. At Freedman’s Village they became community leaders, helping to found Mt Zion Church,
and started their family. They imparted on their children the importance of community leadership and activism. Following the closure of Freedman’s Village at the turn of the century, their oldest son Edmund Fleet purchased a home in the black middle class Butler-Holmes neighborhood. He worked beyond his individual neighborhood as a leader with the Masons in Green Valley, the Odd Fellows in Johnson’s Hill, and at Mt. Zion Church, which relocated from Freedman’s Village to Green Valley. His wife Mary helped to found the ladies auxiliaries of those organizations. Their son Edmund Fleet, Jr. continued to be active in Arlington’s community as an Odd Fellow, a leader within Mt. Zion, and a founding member of Arlington’s YMCA. A federal employee with the Navy, Fleet, Jr. lived in the African American Johnson’s Hill community in “a comfortable two-story brick home.”1 The family had relocated from Butler-Holmes after that neighborhood had ceased to be an exclusively black enclave in the mid-twentieth century.2 The Fleet family continued their involvement in Arlington’s black communities into the late-twentieth century. Fleet, Jr.’s son William H. Fleet was an active leader in Green Valley’s Mt. Zion Baptist Church. His daughter Alice B. Fleet returned to Arlington to teach public school after earning her Master’s degree from the University of Pennsylvania. In the 1960s and 1970s she was an active member and frequently served in

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1 The Virginia Arrow, ca. 1950, RG 11, Box 4, File 5, Arlington Central Library, Center for Local History, Arlington, Virginia (Hereafter CLH).

2 It is not clear exactly when the Fleets relocated, but as of the 1940 Census they were still living within the Butler-Holmes community at 1809 South 9th Street. United States Census, 1940, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office).
leadership positions within Arlington’s Democratic Party, school board, YMCA, and League of Women Voters.³

The story of the Fleets is the story of Arlington’s strong African American community. Brought to the area by Freedman’s Village, the Fleets took advantage of federal employment opportunities and supported community institutions within and beyond the neighborhoods where they lived. They moved throughout the county as Arlington’s black neighborhoods were formed and then shuttered due to federal and state changes, zoning and planning legislation, and shifts in local attitudes and realities. But despite the loss of specific neighborhoods, Arlington’s strong black parallel institutions including churches, schools, and social, political, and fraternal organizations endured. These institutions and the people behind them worked to ensure the continuance of Arlington’s three anchor black communities of Green Valley, Hall’s Hill, and Johnson’s Hill.

*Built By the People Themselves* tracks African American community development as the processes of suburbanization and segregation shaped lives, the built environment, and the law in the northern Virginia county of Arlington from the 1860s to the 1970s. This dissertation’s title, “built by the people themselves,” comes from dual sources. In an oral history interview with community leader Terry Townsend he lamented that black homes had to be “built by the people themselves” in the face of a hostile county.⁴ This

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complaint could apply to virtually any aspect of black life in Arlington from the 1860s through the 1960s. However, this same quote also arises in an interview with African American county resident John Henderson. Where Townsend is lodging a complaint, Henderson is noting a point of pride within his neighborhood. These dual ideas, of a hostile white environment and an active black community, represent this dissertation’s broader goals of revealing the strategies black Arlingtonians used to create lasting communities that met their own needs and reflected their own preferences to the greatest extent possible within the context of white domination in a Jim Crow society.

By 1950, Arlington County, Virginia, looked like one continuous suburb of Washington, D.C. But in reality, Arlington was made up of a series of distinct and diverse neighborhoods, each with divergent and often competing visions for the area’s future. Some of the oldest and most enduring of these neighborhoods were the three African American communities of Hall’s Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley. Their histories stretch back to antebellum Virginia and the area’s influx of freed people during and after the Civil War.

It was not just these neighborhoods that endured, but also their residents. Arlington’s black residents were a very stable group, with high rates of home ownership. In 1900, 59% of black families in Arlington owned their homes, above the national rate of 46.5% of home ownership for all Americans that same year. These numbers

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6 Nancy Perry, Spencer Crew, Nigel M. Waters, “‘We didn’t have any other place to live’: Residential Patterns in Segregated Arlington County, Virginia,” Southern Geographer, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Winter 2013).;
continued to rise to 64% by 1920, with little turnover in home ownership for the next twenty years. This stability reflects the fact that several generations of Arlington’s African American residents stayed in the homes and neighborhoods where they grew up. But this seeming stability masks an encroaching white populace whose leaders attempted to push out Arlington’s black residents.

The 1860s and the early 1970s were bookends of major periods of transition for Arlington’s black neighborhoods and their populations. In 1863 the federal government created Freedman’s Village contraband camp for formerly enslaved African Americans during the Civil War. Freedman’s Village became Arlington’s largest black community and was the county’s first entirely pre-planned neighborhood. But beginning in the 1880s a revitalized white population following the destruction of the Civil War exerted social and legal pressures against Freedman’s Village and Arlington’s black residents. Individual citizens, Arlington’s leaders, land developers, and the federal government, who all wanted county lands for themselves, mounted extreme pressures against Freedman’s Village and its residents. From the 1880s to 1900 the process of closing

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7 Perry, et. al., “’We didn’t have any other place to live’,” Southern Geographer, (2013).

8 Fort Myer was originally opened as Fort Whipple. Named for Brevet Major General Amiel Weeks Whipple in 1863, the instillation was renamed for Brigadier General Albert J. Myer in 1881. For the purposes of this project it will be called Fort Myer throughout.
Freedman’s Village was underway as these groups all pushed to reclaim that land and remove black social and political power.\(^9\)

This closure sparked a movement of African Americans across the county – forming new communities and expanding those settlements which were created before and immediately after the Civil War. With smaller periods of transition in the interim, the 1940s saw major changes in Arlington’s black living patterns as federal build-up for WWII defense industries pushed out black communities and reshaped the makeup of the remaining African American communities through federally subsidized housing. Zoning, planning, restrictive covenants, redevelopment, and loan policies were all used to restrict and attempt to push out Arlington’s black population. Black homes and families who lived in nearly a dozen settlements in 1900 were constricted to only the three anchor communities by 1950. But, despite this constriction within Arlington County’s increasingly standardized suburban environment, community members remained active in neighborhood and cross county organizations while also working to preserve their homes and communities for future generations. From 1965 to 1973 their places in the county were solidified when the active organization of community residents forced the Arlington Planning Commission to include plans to preserve these neighborhoods in their Neighborhood Conservation Program.\(^{10}\) This study explores how these neighborhoods were able to survive and thrive, studying their residents' tactics for resistance, community

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\(^9\) The process of closing Freedman’s Village began in the late 1860s, took on new life in the late 1880s, and was completed by 1900. RG 103: Freedman’s Village Collection, CLH.

\(^{10}\) First established as a county program in 1963, conservation plans were approved for Hall’s Hill and Johnson’s Hill in 1965 and Green Valley in 1973.
building, and adaptation to attempt to stay in the homes they had made for themselves and their families.

Though containing diverse elements, at its core this is a study of African American community development, especially as it relates to suburban development. Previously works looked at suburban development only through the lens of black exclusion and white flight. This great oversight began to be rectified in the 1990s and into the new millennium. With the rise of African American history in suburban studies, community building became a major focus. This is especially true when looking at the neighborhood, community, and state level political battles of the long Civil Rights Movement. These works look at African American suburban development as it relates to civil rights challenges, such as attempts of African Americans to contest restrictive covenants to move into previously all white neighborhoods or to challenge economic restrictions which kept blacks from being full participants in American capitalism. But


other works have moved beyond a focus on community building as it relates to civil rights to investigate African American suburbanization in its own right.\textsuperscript{15} Perhaps the strongest of these works is Andrew Weise’s national synthesis of African American suburbanization \textit{Places of their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century}.\textsuperscript{16} Because his subject had gone mostly unstudied to this point, a large part of Weise’s narrative centers on showing that African Americans lived in suburban environments where others had assumed they had been barred.

Arlington’s development offers an interesting case study in suburban development because each of Arlington’s neighborhoods developed in distinct ways. Growing in various places across the county, they each had their own development strategies and social and class make-ups. But some paths of community formation were consistent, as each of these neighborhoods were host to churches, schools, businesses, or social institutions. These community institutions were not present in all of Arlington’s small black enclaves. For the purpose of this study, a “community” is defined as an area which had both homes and at least one community institution, such as a church, school,


or civic organization. An area can also be defined as a community if it was centrally planned and platted as such. In contrast, an “enclave” only featured homes which were not centrally planned and was host to no community institutions. Though the distinction between “community” and “enclave” is not solely defined by size, enclaves usually featured fewer families than communities and their residents had to travel beyond the neighborhood for all community institutions.

The community institutions grew from and continued to perpetuate strong African American communities, and they helped to create some communities which were much more entrenched than other communities, black or white. But institutions alone were not enough to secure a neighborhood’s continuation, as the case of Queen City reveals. Queen City began in the early 1900s and was host to three churches and several businesses before being unceremoniously condemned and torn down in 1942 to make way for the road network of the War Department’s Pentagon building. Clearly, the presence of African American parallel institutions was not enough to explain the continued presence of the three persistent communities.

The study of these African American development patterns in their own right is an important contribution to the history of black community development. But beyond looking at community development alone this work will have a strong focus on the black built environment, which is understudied. This is especially true in a suburban environment like Arlington, as recognition of the presence of African Americans in suburbia has only entered the historiography within the last decade. A study of the built environment will establish a physical understanding of the layout of homes, churches,
schools, and club houses created by Arlington’s black population as they relate to one another and to white encroachment. The built environment is a too often overlooked element of community, with studies of community development focusing on institutions and communities as theoretical abstractions rather than tangible places. An examination of Arlington’s built environment will help to show how the broader African American community of Arlington related to their individual neighborhoods as well as their county-wide institutions. Additionally, by looking at the physical spaces created by African Americans, the homes, yards, and institutions that reflected their present lives and future aspirations, we will be able to see how and in what instances the built environment created was similar or different from that of their neighboring white communities.

What makes a study of Arlington’s persistent black neighborhoods especially interesting is to explore their relationship with the changing environment, from semi-rural to suburban over the course of several decades. Such a study allows an investigation of race and class divisions within the county, including competing aesthetics and ideas about what constituted desirable homes and neighborhoods. We also see external forces at work, including segregation and disfranchisement laws passed by the state of Virginia and various policies of the federal government. Providing an extensive amount of blue- and white-collar employment for African American men and women, the federal government created a unique employment type not available to most southern African Americans, who were by and large farmers, factory workers, or, in the case of the
growing black urban middle class, owners and operators of segregated businesses. The federal government has played a unique role in Arlington as both a nearby source of employment and an authoritative power. Large portions of Arlington were physically occupied and controlled by the federal government throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with Arlington National Cemetery, Freedman’s Village, Fort Myer, the Navy Annex, the Pentagon, National Airport, and the Department of Agriculture’s Experimental Farm. Today 18% of the County is occupied by the federal government. Of course Arlington is also affected by those federal policies which impacted the entire country during this time, such as Federal Housing Administration (FHA) lending policies. Indeed, one of the FHA’s earliest builder loans went to developer Gustave Ring to construct Arlington’s Colonial Village garden apartment housing development. The FHA worked closely with Ring and his architect Harvey Warwick, intending “Colonial Village to be a model for subsequent FHA-insured projects.” The proximity of the federal city, the government’s physical occupation of the county, as well as the federal policies which created suburban subsidies, loans, and tax policies not only for Arlington,


but nationwide, meant that Arlington’s development had an exceptional relationship to federal authority.

Throughout this dissertation I discuss Arlington County as a growing suburban area. An important aspect of studying Arlington as a suburban environment is understanding when residents thought of themselves as living in a suburb. The idea of Arlington as a suburb evolved during the late-nineteenth century. For example, an 1872 advertisement for homes in the Hall’s Hill community focused on homes and smaller lots, but still described the area as “farm” land situated on a “fair site [for] cultivation.” But by 1892, advertisements for Hall’s Hill reframed the focus of the area as a street-car suburb of Washington. By the first decade of the twentieth century nearly every publication and advertisement discussing homes and developments in Arlington County used the word “suburban.”

A study of Arlington’s persistent black neighborhoods in relationship to the county as a whole also allows us to challenge and expand definitions of “suburb.” The environments described by this word changed over time, from isolated suburban village communities dotted across the landscape, to one contiguous, dense suburban environment of interconnected communities. Historians who study suburbia and suburbanization are constantly reworking their definitions. Suburbs are both symbolic and a planning type,

20 “Hall’s Hill” (advertisement), The Evening Star, August 14, 1872.

21 “Hall’s Hill, High View Park” (advertisement), The Washington Bee, September 17, 1892.

making them difficult to define.\textsuperscript{23} Arlington’s white communities and developers pushed for a suburban vision consistent with the idealized streetcar and picture window suburbs studied by early historical studies of suburbs – defined, in Kenneth Jackson’s words, via “function (non-farm residential), class (middle and upper status), separation (a daily journey to work), and density (low relative to older sections).”\textsuperscript{24} By the early 1920s, Arlington was a “thickly settled” continuous suburban community.\textsuperscript{25} This suburban development pitted the suburban ideal pushed by Arlington’s white social and political leaders and developers against African American neighborhood development and autonomy. Whites tried to exercise authority over and exclude blacks even when black visions of suburban development were in line with the pre-planned, streamlined, and middle class visions of their white counterparts. Although neither Arlington’s white leaders nor its black residents got exactly what they wanted, African American planning and community creation in Arlington shows the important role the process of suburbanization played as visions of community development between black and white competed during the Jim Crow era.


\textsuperscript{24} Jackson, \textit{Crabgrass Frontier}, (1985) p 11.

\textsuperscript{25} In the 1920s Clarendon attempted to become its own incorporated town. But the Virginia Supreme Court determined that they did not have the right to break away because the county was one densely settled suburban area and not a series of separate towns. \textit{Bennett v. Garrett}, 132 VA 397, (Opinion June 15, 1922); \textit{Cases Decided in the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia}, Vol. CXXXII, (Richmond: David Bottom, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1922) p 400.
About Arlington County

Arlington is a 25.7 square mile county in northern Virginia, directly across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C. The area that would become Arlington had notable connections to the early explorations of John Smith in 1608 and as lands owned by founding fathers George Washington and George Mason. But the lands of the county did not become a distinct area until 1790, when Virginia donated Arlington County and Alexandria City to form a portion of Washington, D.C. In 1846 the District retroceded Virginia’s lands back to the Old Dominion. From that time until 1870, Arlington and Alexandria functioned unofficially as separate entities. Even during the years of their formal connection, many local laws and regulations stipulated if they were intended for the “city” or the “county” portion of what was collectively known as Alexandria. In 1870, changes to Virginia’s state constitution allowed the two entities to formally split into separate municipalities. This split was embraced by county leaders and residents because the city and growing suburban county had conflicting needs and visions for their futures. They frequently competed over resources and clashed over issues of land use.


27 President James K. Polk signed the lands of Arlington County and Alexandria City back to Virginia on February 3, 1846 after lobbying from Virginia business men, resistant to competition with Georgetown, and supporters of slavery, worried about restrictions on slavery and the slave trade in the federal city. C.B. Rose, Arlington County Virginia: A History (Virginia: The Arlington Historical Society, 1976) p 81-82.

But beginning in 1870 Arlington County was freed to determine the trajectory of its own development without the influence of Alexandria City.\textsuperscript{29}

Though they functioned independently beginning in 1870, city and county were both known as “Alexandria” until 1920. County residents pushed for a new name because by the first decades of the twentieth century the county shared little with the city. Arlington had a built environment and municipal trajectory distinct from the urban development of Alexandria City. Following the close of the Civil War suburban village neighborhoods, constructed in isolation from one another, dominated the landscape. These villages were laid out by newly minted developers, who were often large landowners transitioning to amateur developers. County leaders used the decades around the turn of the century to create neighborhoods that fit their visions of ideal suburban environments. At the same time, they created a social and political environment that strengthened those neighborhoods. Together the built environment and new political climate allowed county leaders to connect their neighborhoods and the visions of their founders into one, dense suburban environment. Through these processes, Arlington’s white community moved from one of isolated suburban villages to one contiguous suburban environment. In contrast Alexandria continued to grow not as a suburban environment connected to the federal city, but as a mixed-use urban environment.

Beyond the distinctive physical environments created, county and city residents often did not see eye to eye on political matters. In 1846, county residents did not support

\textsuperscript{29} Rose, Arlington County, Virginia, (1976) p 119-145.
retrocession back to Virginia from the District of Columbia as city residents did. In 1860 county residents voted to remain a part of the Union, while city residents preferred the Confederacy. These early patterns of social divergence continued. As the county’s population grew, they continued to want their own identity. By 1920 Arlington’s population warranted their own seat in Virginia’s General Assembly. Though locals knew the difference between the areas, outsiders frequently grouped the city and county together because of their shared name, often making the county the de facto subordinate to the city. To distinguish themselves Arlington political leaders changed the county’s name to Arlington after the plantation home of the county’s most famous resident, Robert E. Lee, and the nationally famous Arlington National Cemetery.

Additionally, Arlingtonians wanted to create a distinct name because of bad blood between the two jurisdictions. Throughout the first decades of the twentieth-century as Arlington’s suburban environment expanded, Alexandria saw the true value of the lands they had lost in 1870 and began to position itself to take land from the county. In two court cases concluding in 1915 and 1929 the state’s Supreme Court of Appeals deemed that “it is necessary and expedient that the corporate limits of the City of Alexandria

References:

30 Rose, Arlington County, Virginia (1976) p 81-82.
31 In the elections leading up to the Civil War, Arlingtonians supported Constitutional Unionists, who ran on platforms of maintaining both the Union and slavery. In contrast, residents of nearby Alexandria City supported secession. Rose, Arlington County, Virginia, (1976) p 95.
should be extended.” With these new boundaries Arlington lost 3,000 acres to Alexandria. These acres amounted to major losses in territory, resources, rail-lines, sources of revenue, communities, and the tax base. Following the 1915 decision, the county underwent a name change from Alexandria County to Arlington County in 1920. For the purpose of clarity, “Arlington” will be used throughout this dissertation to describe the areas outside the City of Alexandria that were nonetheless called “Alexandria” until 1920.

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Green Valley

Green Valley was Arlington’s earliest black community. Its roots can be traced back to the 1840s. At this time the county was predominantly made up of small farms growing staple crops, though there were a few larger plantations; including the Parke
Custis family’s Arlington House. Arlington had a relatively small free black population in the decades leading up to the Civil War. In 1840 the county was home to 290 enslaved and 235 free people of color within a total population of approximately 1,500. These individuals and families lived throughout the county, in small clusters or intermingled amongst white farms and homes.

One such African American family was the Jones family. In 1844 Sarah and Levi Jones purchased fourteen acres of land to farm and build a home. Their property lay in southeastern Arlington on a hill overlooking Four Mile Run. Not much is known about Sarah Jones in the years before she and her husband purchased their farm. Her husband, Levi Jones was born into freedom in nearby Fairfax, Virginia. His parents, Davy and Evy, were originally enslaved on George Washington’s Mount Vernon plantation. In accordance with the will of the late-President, all of the enslaved

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36 Though no longer numerous by the outbreak of the Civil War, large plantations had been the dominant land type in the land that would become Arlington throughout the eighteenth century. The plantations of George Washington, George Mason, and Lord Fairfax, among others, extended into lands that would become Arlington County. Arlington House and plantation would come to be the home of Robert E. Lee and his wife Mary Custis Lee in 1857.


39 Sarah is not featured on the Free Negro Registry, possibly because she was covered under her husband. She is potentially the child of Matilda, a woman emancipated by John C. Herbert in 1830 along with an unnamed three year old daughter. Alexandria County Government, Register, Vol. 1, No. 298, June 10, 1830, p 43.; Dorothy S. Provine, Alexandria County, Virginia Free Negro Registers 1797-1861, (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1990).

40 Also spelled “Eby.” Donald Sweig, Registrations of Free Negroes, Book 2 (Fairfax, Va.: Fairfax Historical Commission, 1977) p 66, 96, 98.
individuals who made up his estate were freed following the death of his wife Martha Washington in 1801.\(^{41}\) This included Davy, Evy, and their two daughters, Sarah and Nancy. In the years to come, the Jones family grew to include three more children, David, Joseph, and Levi, all born free. In 1833 Levi moved to Arlington where he likely worked as a farm hand.\(^{42}\) For eleven years the Jonses saved their money until they had enough to purchase those fourteen acres from Arlington land owner Elizabeth Baggott at a rate of $200 down, and $235 over the course of five years.\(^ {43}\) On this land they grew oats and corn, had a large peach orchard of fifty trees, and built a barn and dairy house for their animals.\(^ {44}\) The Joneses constructed “a big [two-story] house” in the log-cabin style.\(^ {45}\) With this home and land Levi and Sarah Jones set this area on a path to become one of Arlington’s core African American neighborhoods.

Enslaved individuals and families resided nearby, including those living on the property of prominent white landowner Anthony Fraser. In 1804, Fraser’s father,


\(^ {45}\) The Jones’ home was destroyed during the Civil War. Following the conflict they successfully petition for funds which they used to build an even larger, two-story wood frame home. “Testimony of George Shorter” (November 22, 1873) in U.S. Southern Claims Commission, “Virginia, Alexandria, J, Jones, Levi” (ca. 1872-1877). Microfilm Publication M2062, 36 Rolls; NAI 55715. Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, Record Group 217, NARA.
William, Jr., purchased forty-six acres of largely undeveloped and forested land from the Alexander family in southeastern Arlington. In 1821 Anthony came to own the property which he expanded to include 1,000 additional acres and the large Green Valley Manor home, the third largest plantation in Arlington. The Fraser property featured a combination of tenant farmers and enslaved African Americans working the land. In 1850 the Frasers owned twelve enslaved individuals – eight men and boys, ranging in age from 4 to 70 years, and four women and girls, ranging in age from an infant to 30 years. Only two of these individuals are listed by name – Nathan Butler, age 30, and Douglas Jones, age 20. In the 1860 Census Anthony Fraser is shown as owning nine enslaved

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46 Also spelled “Frazer.” Daniel Fraser first emigrated from Scotland in the early 1700s. Daniel’s son William settled in Arlington in 1758 as a tenant farmer on the Alexander family’s Abingdon plantation. Eleanor Lee Templeman, Arlington Heritage: Vignettes of a Virginia County. (Self Published: 1959) p 60.


individuals – five men and boys ranging in age from 10 to 57 years, and four women and girls, ranging in age from 17 to 56 years.\(^{51}\)

Beyond a local enslaved population, the free African American Syphax family lived and worked approximately two miles from the Jones property. In 1826 the Parke Custis family manumitted three members of the Syphax family, mother Maria and children Elinor and William.\(^{52}\) At this time George Washington Parke Custis gifted Maria Syphax a seventeen acre tract of land in Arlington County along what is today Shirley Highway, Interstate 395.\(^{53}\) On this property the Syphax family built a home and farm, and Maria bore eight more children into freedom. Maria’s husband, Charles Syphax, joined his family in freedom upon his manumission in 1861.\(^{54}\) Maria and her children all received formal educations, a rarity for African Americans at this time.\(^{55}\) Through this

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\(^{55}\) Maria was educated alongside her probable half-sister Mary Ann Randolph Custis at Arlington House, while her children were educated in Alexandria and Washington. It is not known whether Charles was formally educated, but it is possible that he also received some informal education because he served as a “house slave” and because his father, William Syphax, was a free man of color who served as a preacher in Alexandria. Abbott. “The Land of Maria Syphax and the Abbey Mausoleum,” *Arlington Historical Magazine*, (Oct. 1984).
education and their landholdings, the Syphax clan became an early prominent free black family in Arlington. They would come to support Arlington’s growing black community following the Civil War.

Nevertheless, the area around the Jones property did not attract other African American buyers in the 1840s and 1850s. This was because Arlington only had a small free black population, limiting the number of potential buyers. Additionally, free African Americans held a precarious place in southern society during the era of slavery. Though not enslaved, they were also not entirely free because of the multitude of restrictive Black Codes limiting their rights, economic and educational opportunities, and personal choices. Codes limiting the rights of free and enslaved blacks began in colonial Virginia, but were greatly expanded in strength and scope following the panic accompanied by Nat Turner’s 1831 slave uprising in southeastern Virginia. Black codes existed in Arlington, but were not enforced unilaterally until the late 1840s, after Arlington County and Alexandria City were retroceded to Virginia.

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58 For example, while Arlington required the registration of free blacks in accordance with Virginia’s black codes, this practice was far from comprehensive. However, in the years immediately following retrocession to Virginia, the numbers of free black registrants rose sharply without a corresponding immigration of people. So these individuals were required to register for the first time under the new social and political climate. Rosenthal, “1790 Names – 1970 Faces,” within A Composite History of Alexandria, Vol. 1, (1975) p 82-91.
In the absence of earlier growth, Arlington’s black population took off only with the war years. Immediately following the Civil War, Green Valley quickly emerged as an African American community. It became the largest community in terms of both geography and population by 1900, when the closure of Freedman’s Village would greatly change the landscape of black Arlington. The strength of Green Valley was due, in large part, to the presence of the Jones family. Levi and Sarah Jones were successful farmers before the war. Their prosperity allowed them to expand their farm. Beginning with a lot of fourteen acres, Jones purchased eight additional acres of land as it became available. Five of these acres were obtained for the purpose of subdivision and sale to African Americans.

The white Fraser family, whose Green Valley Manor home became the namesake for the community, also sold land to African Americans at this time. The Fraser home and property were greatly damaged during the Civil War. This was because occupying federal forces used their home and land for both Fort Barnard and a convalescents’ camp for Union soldiers. These military instillations greatly impacted the physical environment of the Fraser’s land as trees and crops were cleared, and trenches were dug.

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59 Lands and improvements were valued $2,580 for 15 acres, about $166 per acre, before 1865. In comparison, local white landowner Bazil Hall’s land was valued at only $30 per acre, though his property was substantially larger, resulting in greater personal wealth overall. U.S. Southern Claims Commission, “Virginia, Alexandria, J, Jones, Levi” (ca. 1872-1877). Microfilm Publication M2062, 36 Rolls; NAI 55715. Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, Record Group 217, NARA.


for the fort. The convalescent camp led to huge changes to the property because of its scope – consisting of barracks, a hospital, officer and surgeon quarters, and more.\textsuperscript{62}

Family accounts hold that the steady thud of axes chopping down trees greatly saddened Anthony Fraser.\textsuperscript{63} This stemmed from loss of income and property, worth an estimated $34,000, but also because Anthony Fraser was known to be a Confederate sympathizer.\textsuperscript{64}

When the Union occupied his home during the war they hung a Union military flag over his front door. In a small act of defiance, Fraser refused to use the front door and pass under the flag from that time forward, instead entering and exiting through the rear of the house.\textsuperscript{65} Despite these prejudices, extreme economic hardships because of the destruction of property and loss of enslaved labor pushed Fraser to sell land to African Americans following the Civil War.\textsuperscript{66}


\textsuperscript{64} $34,342 for the estate’s damage. U.S. Southern Claims Commission, “Virginia, Alexandria, Anthony Fraser, No. 8738” Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, Record Group 217, NARA


Where local white landowners often sold lands begrudgingly to African Americans due to extreme economic hardships, the Jones family actively sought black buyers. After Levi passed away in July of 1886, Sarah continued this practice, subdividing and selling seven additional lots to African Americans before her death in 1915. The Jones family also encouraged the creation of African American institutions in Green Valley. In the first decade following the war they held religious services in their home until a local chapel could be erected for the growing black population. Because of their position as landowners before the war, and their interest in both selling land to African Americans and creating community institutions immediately following the war, residents consider the Joneses’ purchase of land in 1844 to be the start of the Green Valley community. Though Arlington’s free black population was small, the presence of community leaders like the Jones and Syphax families helped to shape Arlington’s black community development after the creation of Freedman’s Village expanded the area’s African American population.

**Historiography**

These realities of Arlington’s communities, institutions, employment opportunities, and social and political make-up both reinforce and challenge elements of the historiographies of African American community development. Despite the many and varied article and book length studies of the diverse elements of African American


community formation in the American suburban landscape following the pioneering early works of scholars like Andrew Weise, there is still work to be done. There are holes in the historiography which need to be addressed to create a more accurate historical picture. One is to explore the American South more fully. Though the new cities of the Sunbelt have received a great deal of attention, not enough work has been done on the American South, especially the upper-south state of Virginia. The works which do study the community development of the Old Dominion tend to only focus on upper middle class white suburban neighborhoods. Those that analyze African American community development tend to study Richmond alone. As an industrial city reliant on river and then rail travel, Richmond’s development is not the same as that of Arlington, with its reliance on federal employment. Works that move beyond Richmond are almost always about either community development as it relates to the Civil Rights Movement or very


early examples of African American community development during Reconstruction, such as the growth of Freedman’s Village. Though Freedman’s Village is the most popular topic for local historians exploring Arlington’s black communities, none explore it in the context of suburban development, community formation, or other contraband camp types.

The scholarship on Virginia ignores almost entirely the northern Virginia county of Arlington which has been one of the states’ most densely populated, wealthy, and fastest growing counties throughout the twentieth century. With the exception of some

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exciting recent scholarship, the histories of Arlington are the work of local enthusiasts who have produced history which is rich in facts while shallow in analysis or extrapolations to broader significance.\textsuperscript{72} No works analyze community development in African American neighborhoods across the county, or how this development relates to non-black communities in the county, state, or nation. Additionally, my analysis focuses on African American community development through the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, something that is still missing from recent scholarship of African American suburbanization.\textsuperscript{73}

Beyond suburbanization, my dissertation addresses other areas of African American community development. The historiography of black community


\textsuperscript{73} Weise’s \textit{Places of their Own} only quickly covers the nineteenth century, whereas the twentieth century is the true focus of their work. Most of the works which do look at African American community development during the nineteenth century do so within urban environments. By expanding this study of nineteenth century African American suburbanization I expand the four African American suburban types outlined by Weise. Other works in the field, such as the Seminole \textit{New Suburban History}, ignore the nineteenth century entirely. \textit{The New Suburban History}, edited by Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
development is in many ways a study of the various institutions created by the black community – including schools and social, political, and service parallel institutions. My work engages these diverse historiographies.

While the study of suburbanization as it related to African American community development did not emerge until the 1990s, other facets of historical scholarship began dealing with African American communities in a meaningful way during the 1950s and 1960s. The modern historiography of southern African American communities during the era of Jim Crow begins with C. Vann Woodward’s influential works Strange Career of Jim Crow and Origins of the New South. These works were the first to thoughtfully analyze the creation of Jim Crow segregation, challenging notions of its permanence and inevitability. Shaping the historical debate for a generation of historians, Woodward’s most prominent challenger was Howard Rabinowitz. His 1978 book Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890 argues that African Americans faced exclusion well before the 1880s and 1890s. Rabinowitz went on to challenge the utility of asking when segregation began instead of investigating why and how it began. My work is a part of this ongoing conversation, looking at the slow and contested process of establishing residential segregation.


The role of education has been a large part of studies of black community development. Eugene Genovese was one of the first to explore the connection that slaves and freedmen saw between education and empowerment, creating neighborhood schools as a way to ensure continued freedom throughout the South. 77 James D. Anderson’s work on “freedom schools,” schools that were created during and immediately after the Civil War by and for African Americans, shows how education was central to community formation for African Americans in the South as soon as freedom was a possibility. This can be seen in Arlington, where schools for African American children began during and immediately following the Civil War. 78 The link which the black community saw between education and citizenship is a very common theme within the scholarship of African American schools, education, and community development. It first appeared in the early histories of W.E.B. Du Bois and continues into the present with works such as Heather Williams’s Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom. 79


Scholarship on the broader significance of schools as community institutions fits with the realities of Arlington. These schools provided not only education, but were also pillars of their local black communities. As was the case in both Hall’s Hill and Green Valley, these institutions were constructed at the geographic center of the growing communities. William H. Chafe in *Civilities and Civil Rights* explored the role of Greensboro, North Carolina’s black colleges in shaping community development and how the area’s black youths chose to challenge Jim Crow.80

Arlington provides another case study in this larger story through the many diverse and long lasting African American community institutions. Though these institutions were sometimes less active in combatting broader social and political issues, their continued presence and growth even in times of inaction allowed these institutions to help community members take action whenever called upon. In addition to looking at the role of schools as community institutions, my scholarship adds to works dealing with school integration struggles of the 1950s. Arlington’s story fits with existing conversations about the role of national organizations, like the NAACP, in their court battles over school integration, which privileged areas with small black populations as the places most suited to challenge school segregation.81 Arlington’s Stratford Middle School was the first school in the state of Virginia to integrate in February of 1959. This is profound especially considering it was Virginia’s Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr. who helped


to spearhead the system of Massive Resistance to school integration used throughout the south to block integration. Arlington’s increasingly socially liberal white residents contributed significantly to the success of integration in the county, fitting with arguments made by historians Matthew Lassiter, Andrew Lewis, and others who explore the role of social moderates in the battle against massive resistance in Virginia. But my work focuses on the roles of local black Arlingtonians and their institutions, moving the scholarship beyond a focus on both national African American organizations and the role of liberal whites to show the importance of Arlington’s black community in shaping school integration on the local, state, and national levels.

I explore the significance of class in relation to community formation. While the role of working class African Americans were slower to be incorporated into the historiography, explorations of black business development, class, and labor have been studied since the 1960s. Initially, scholarship focused on the low numbers and lack of success of black businesses. But increasingly, scholars are seeing black businesses as

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central to communities, especially in those urban areas where parallel black downtowns were created. In Arlington, no such downtown emerged. Instead, African Americans businesses were small community institutions, many of which were run out of people’s homes. This created specific realities for Arlington’s African American built environment which shaped the area’s community formation. Additionally, working and middle class African Americans created distinct home and community types based around their current needs and future aspirations, from semi-rural to suburban to aspirationally urban. Thus Arlington’s diverse class-make up allows for an exploration of class as it relates to suburbanization and community formation. White responses to these various communities also allows for an exploration of if and how reactions to these neighborhoods could be grounded in class divisions in addition to race.

Beyond the built environment and business ownership, other aspects of Arlington’s class make-up brand it a distinct area for historical study. Most works on African American working class laborers tend to focus on factory work, service industries, and agricultural work – the major employment types for African Americans in the South. Despite the lower social and economic status of their subjects, working class histories, such as Robin D.G. Kelley’s article “We Are Not What We Seem,” focus on


the agency of the blue collar workers in negotiating their conditions and carving out space for themselves. 88 Arlington’s African American residents experienced a distinct labor pattern, many working in the blue and white color jobs of the federal government. 89 Because of this reality I am able to explore the ways in which limitations in advancement, as well as progressive policies in hiring and firing in federal posts, together shaped the development of working and middle class African American communities, and how these realities affected their relationship to local whites.

African American parallel institutions play either central or supporting roles in most all historical studies of black community formation. 90 Arlington had very active NAACP, Mason, Elk, and Odd Fellow organizations. But perhaps the most studied African American parallel institution was the church. Arlington’s churches provide an interesting example of community building. Several churches were forced to relocate between Arlington’s black communities because of destruction of their surrounding

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90 The National Association of Colored People, and National Association of Colored Women, the National Negro Business League, the National Bar Association, the National Medical Association, the National Hospital Administration, and the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses are but a few of the national organizations studied for their impact on the black community alongside countless regional and local institutions. David H. Jackson, Jr., “‘The Growth of African American Cultural and Social Institutions,” within A Companion to African American History, Alton Hornsby, Jr. et. al., eds. (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2005) p 312-324
neighborhoods due to federal building projects. This occurred first in Freedman’s Village and later in Queen City. Though their physical communities were demolished, the social communities of these institutions prevailed. As was the case with schools, in several of Arlington’s black communities, including Green Valley, Hall’s Hill, and Queen City, the social importance of the church is reflected through its physical location at the geographical center of their communities. African American churches served not just an area’s spiritual needs, but its social, political, and cultural needs as well. Churches were the first places within the U.S. entirely controlled by and for African Americans, making them central to community development. Because of this, in many circumstances the church you attended communicated much more than just your denomination. Serving the needs of various communities, a church’s message and social programs were tailored to fit the needs of their congregation. Many black church leaders were also political

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93 Historians Willard Gatewood and David Jackson have shown how churches can be used to analyze class divisions within the black community. Willard Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920*, (Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press, 1990); David Jackson, *A Chief Lieutenant of the Tuskegee Machine: Charles Banks of Mississippi* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2002).
Beginning immediately after slavery, this pattern remained true throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, continuing into the Civil Rights Movement. In Arlington these parallel institutions allowed black neighborhoods to successfully lobby the county government for protection under the Neighborhood Conservation Program preservation legislation from the mid-1960s to the early-1970s. Scholarship on the preservation movement documents the ways in which local and state legislation as well as the national Historic Preservation Act of 1966 were used to condemn and redevelop black communities. The ability for Arlington’s African American communities to use planning legislation to their advantage during the late 1960s and early 1970s when the preservation movement became powerful is distinctive. Nationally many African American communities were singled out for redevelopment and destroyed under similar improvement programs. This same pattern was also repeated

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The preservation movement led to the destruction of the African American communities of Fort and Macedonia/Seminary in neighboring Alexandria City, and the loss of Navy Hill and Fulton in Richmond, Virginia.\(^99\)

African American political participation was initially studied primarily within the brief period during and after Reconstruction. Fitting with national trends, black Arlingtonians enjoyed a modest amount of political power represented in a few African Americans elected to political positions until the turn of the century. But legal changes in Virginia and local pressures from citizens and developers who worked to limit and decrease Arlington’s black population resulted in the decline of formal political power into the mid-twentieth century. But in the scholarship of the last few decades there has been an expansion of the meaning of the word “political,” allowing informal political bodies to be included in analysis of politics. Steven Hahn tracked formal and informal political participation amongst African American communities from slavery through the Great Migration, arguing that their efforts had profound effects in shaping the character of American democracy.\(^100\) This reframing allows for the exploration of Arlington’s

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active churches, schools and parent organizations, fraternal organizations, and neighborhood groups as political institutions.

The long Civil Rights Movement is another important part of black political participation and community development. First popularized by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, the long Civil Rights Movement paradigm stretches the era’s timeline before the integration struggles of the 1950s to see social and political organizing traditions of the 1930s and 1940s as the true beginnings of the Movement.\textsuperscript{101} These works have been taken in many directions, creating a broad and rich examination of black political participation and community development around civil rights. Two examples include work by Thomas Sugrue and Susan Ashmore. In \textit{Sweet Land of Liberty} Sugrue focuses on how northern communities in the 1930s were the foundation off of which southern communities organized against Jim Crow.\textsuperscript{102} Ashmore’s \textit{Carry It On}, which stretched the Movement in the other direction looking at how the Civil Rights Movement did not end in the mid-1960s, but rather continued into the 1970s.\textsuperscript{103} My own work explores both “ends” of this long civil rights movement, focusing on Arlington’s parallel institutions and resistance to their neighborhoods being pushed from the county from the early to the late twentieth century.

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{102}Sugrue, \textit{Sweet Land of Liberty}, (2008).
\end{itemize}
The development of parallel institutions and communities must always be considered alongside the realities of their times. Studying African American community formation during this time period means thoughtfully considering the roles of intimidation and brutality. Violence has played a large part in the scholarship of African American community development. In the 1990s and 2000s works which focused on the daily violence of Jim Crow became widespread.\textsuperscript{104} Amy Louise Wood analyzed the role of modernity as it related to lynchings, showing how industrialization and urbanization in the South led to a rise in violence while also changing how that violence was meted out, perceived, and discussed.\textsuperscript{105} By calling out the extreme violence of Jim Crow studies of black resistance to violence and community struggles to create a safe environment in the face of these everyday terrors were able to come to the fore.\textsuperscript{106} Though it does not appear that there were lynchings in Arlington, there were instances of violence and police brutality, especially around the segregated streetcars.\textsuperscript{107} Arlington had a Ku Klux Klan chapter, Ballston’s Klavern No. 6, which participated in intimidation campaigns against


black political activism in the 1920s and ‘30s, and during school integration in the 1950s and ‘60s. Additionally, in the late-twentieth century the American Nazi Party was founded in Arlington. They used a combination of protest, threats, and intimidation to attempt to control black lives.

While Arlington was not without its violence, its race relations were still more stable than those seen in Washington or elsewhere in the South. This more restrained violence is consistent with state-wide patterns which did not legitimize vigilante justice found in other southern states throughout the twentieth century. Arlington’s comparatively peaceful race relations, a stable black population, employment opportunities, and strong community institutions all drew new residents to the area.

Chapter Outline
Chapter One, “Where They Had Lived Undisturbed for Nearly a Quarter of a Century,” looks at the creation and expansion of Arlington’s black communities from the mid-1860s to 1900. This chapter focuses on Freedman’s Village – a contraband camp created by the federal government for the formerly enslaved in 1863. This camp was distinctive amongst contraband camps in its use of cutting edge nineteenth century urban and suburban reform visions, and due to its focus on education and employment beyond agriculture. It was also distinctive for Arlington County, as it was the area’s first pre-

108 Perry, et. al., “‘We didn’t have any other place to live,’ Southern Geographer, (Winter 2013).


110 John B. Syphax to William C. Endicott, January 18, 1888, RG 92, File: Office of the Quarter Master General, NARA.
planned community. Here, Arlington’s African American residents created schools, churches, and cultural institutions. In 1900 Freedman’s Village formally closed after decades of pressure from federal institutions, Arlington residents, political leaders, and real estate developers all combined to turn the tide against Freedman’s Village and its black residents. Far from being the end of black Arlington, the closing of Freedman’s Village led to the creation of nearly a dozen African American communities across the county and the expansion of the existing Green Valley and Hall’s Hill neighborhoods, as people, institutions, and resources were spread throughout the landscape. Each of these communities had their own aesthetics ranging from semi-rural, to suburban, to semi-urban. These diverse communities reflected the current needs and future aspirations of residents as well as suburban ideals of the times, especially in middle class neighborhoods like Johnson’s Hill. The home styles, schools, churches, and institutions created within Freedman’s Village shaped Arlington’s built environment and growing African American community for decades.

Chapter Two, “Suburban Homes… in Sight of the Monument,” provides a deeper look at Arlington’s white social and political leaders and the rise of suburban villages in Arlington. It focuses on the creation of Arlington’s white streetcar suburbs. The rapid expansion of Arlington’s white communities was the result of more residents being drawn to the area for federal employment as federal agencies expanded during the early twentieth centuries. The built environment of these neighborhoods closely tracked with

national trends of what made an ideal, picture-window suburb. These suburban neighborhoods began as physically and socially isolated suburban villages dotted across the landscape. The chapter also tracks the expanding social and political control of white politicians, planners, and boosters from the late-1870s to the 1920s. Throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, these individuals and their institutions expanded their suburban visions of pre-planned, white, middle class communities from community level regulation to broader attempts at control via county-wide legislative changes which governed where and how communities and their people could live and grow. The physical expansion of new and existing white communities, and the laws governing them, continued to increase until Arlington was a “thickly settled,” continuous suburban environment. The expansion of Arlington’s white neighborhoods was directly connected to expansions in federal employment which attracted new residents to the area. As these communities grew they became less isolated and more interconnected physically and socially, demonstrating how federal expansion helped to decrease neighborhood identity. This occurred at the same time as local and state political changes that limited the scope of black rights.

Chapter Three, "So That We May Occupy Our Rightful Place," explores continued changes for Arlington’s people and built environment into the 1930s. As realities changed, Arlington’s black families and communities had to adapt. As

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113 Elks, Proclamation, 1927, RG 11: Papers of Edmund C. Fleet, Box 3, File 7: Minutes and Resolutions 1924-5, CLH.
Arlington’s white leaders entrenched their social and political power, and white communities transitioned from suburban villages to a densely settled suburban environment, local black communities took a path that was similar but distinct. The suburban village model of Arlington’s white communities never fit with the realities of black communities in Arlington. Though neighborhoods sometimes grew up in physical isolation from one another, they were never socially isolated the way white suburban village communities were. As a result federal expansion did not decrease black community identity as it did white. Arlington’s black churches and other community institutions were all cross-community organizations which were built for, supported by, and in support of black Arlintonians from across the county. Even community institutions that provided services on a more narrow community level, like schools and small stores, also generated links across communities by serving those beyond their borders. As white neighborhoods continued to expand, white residents and political leaders continued to work against the presence of Arlington’s black neighborhoods so they could claim that space for their own. Racialized zoning, planning, and municipal laws questioned the validity of Arlington’s black neighborhoods by legislating against the types of homes and environments they created in their neighborhoods. Against these mounting pressures black Arlintonians used their strong community institutions and stable population to adapt to and contest the county-wide legal and social changes that worked against them. But despite their hard work, at this time Arlington saw the loss of

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many small black enclaves and communities, while those remaining communities were barred from expanding geographically. With these new realities, black Arlingtonians used new and pre-existing community institutions, familial relations, employment, and new strategies to preserve communities in an attempt to maintain spaces for themselves in suburban Arlington. The restrictions against Arlington’s black communities made them more densely populated and identifiable, increasing their identities as black communities.

Chapter Four, “Everybody Was Coming to Washington in Those Days,” looks at the rapid expansion of Arlington’s population and homes in the wake of the extreme expansion of the federal government during the New Deal, World War Two, and the Cold War.\(^{115}\) At this time trends of white residential and legislative pressures against Arlington’s black communities took on new levels. As a result federal expansion threatened Arlington’s black neighborhoods, even while simultaneously providing unparalleled access to good jobs. During the next two decades Arlington’s population, environment, and social make-up changed rapidly. While Arlington’s white community boomed with new arrivals, Arlington’s black community remained a small but stable group with continuing generations of families in the area since Freedman’s Village. These individuals and families continued to organize and participate through community institutions. Additionally, the expansion of the federal government beyond Washington at this time had profound effects on Arlington’s built environment, especially with the creation of the War Department’s Pentagon building which led to the demolition of the Queen City and East Arlington black communities. By 1950 only the three black

communities of Hall’s Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley remained. The extreme population boom along with more urban sensibilities from these new residents also changed Arlington’s built environment into a far more densely settled suburban environment than Arlington’s early twentieth century developers imagined or desired. Federal expansion and the corresponding population boom decreased white neighborhood identity as neighborhoods became increasing linked physically and with home styles that were generally consistent. These new individuals also brought new social ideas with them.

Chapter Five, “We Cannot Lose This Fight as We Lost Our Freedoms During Reconstruction Days,” explores the changing political and social dynamics in Arlington. The area’s new residents were increasingly well educated individuals raised beyond the South who did not embrace older political models based around small government, little spending, and racial hegemony. Because they were able to use their stable population and strong community institutions to survive to see a more socially liberal Arlington emerge, Arlington’s remaining three black communities were able to use new legislation to their own ends. In this more liberal social and political climate, Arlington’s strong black community successfully battled in court for school integration, making Arlington the first area in the state to integrate its schools in 1959. From 1965 until 1973, each of Arlington’s three black communities successfully applied for recognition as historically significant under Arlington’s Neighborhood Conservation Program, making them eligible to receive municipal improvement funds. They were

aided in this pursuit by their strong neighborhood identities. The formal recognition given by the county to these areas after generations of perseverance on the part of neighborhood residents shows how collective action, parallel institutions, and neighborhood development established an African American community able and determined to carve out places for themselves in Arlington, Virginia.
In the second half of the nineteenth century, Arlington was a community in transition. Arlington, County, Virginia, moved from rural hinterland towards suburban enclave following the Civil War. Freedman’s Village was a big part of this change. Freedman’s Village began as a contraband camp established by the federal government for the formerly enslaved. The Village was Arlington’s first successful pre-planned neighborhood. The Village attracted many new African American residents to the area, mostly from other parts of Virginia and Maryland, greatly increasing the county’s black population from about one-third to just over half of the total population. The Village was envisioned as a social experiment by the War Department, giving formerly enslaved individuals and families the social, educational, work, and domestic skills they would need to survive in freedom. Residents embraced these aims and shaped the Village to improve their lives in other ways. Immediately after its founding in 1863, residents began

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117 John B. Syphax to William C. Endicott, January 18, 1888, RG 92: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, NARA


creating churches, schools, and political and social institutions, turning the Village into a community which would greatly impact Arlington’s development.

During and immediately following the Civil War local white Arlingtonians were struggling. Federal occupation during the war and Reconstruction hurt their social and political power, while the war’s destruction and lean post-war years hurt their economic power. Economic hardships led many white Arlingtonians to subdivide and sell their land, turning the former farming community into a more densely populated environment. At the same time, rail networks expanded in the county. The possibility of easier commuting further pushed suburban expansion in Arlington.

Much of the land sold at this time was purchased by African Americans. They were drawn to Arlington by Freedman’s Village, employment opportunities, the possibility of building new communities, and a tradition of African Americans settling in the periphery of southern antebellum cities.¹²⁰ The desire to build strong black communities and connections in freedom made early African American residents of Arlington dedicated to community development. By contrast, as they readjusted to post-war realities, white Arlingtonians did not take as active a role in shaping the county’s suburban growth immediately following the Civil War. This allowed African American communities to form and expand. But beginning in the 1880s a revitalized white population exerted social and legal pressures against Freedman’s Village and Arlington’s black residents. Individual citizens, Arlington’s leaders, land developers, and the federal

government, who all wanted county lands for themselves, mounted extreme pressures against Freedman’s Village and its residents. As whites began to assert their vision for the county it became clear that they hoped this vision would not include African Americans. But Arlington’s new black residents and their social institutions would not be pushed from the county; rather they would be dispersed within it.

Beginning in the 1890s, the Village’s people, institutions, and resources were spread across the county, expanding other existing neighborhoods, like Green Valley and Hall’s Hill, and leading to the establishment of new communities. These new areas included Johnson’s Hill, Queen City, Butler-Holmes, and many other smaller enclaves dotted across the county. These new and expanded black communities had distinct goals and aesthetics, representing the aims of the individuals and families who called them home. Each community represented its residents’ ideas regarding what would make an area a good place to live. Because of this, their environments ranged from semi-rural, to aspirationally urban, to suburban.

The types of homes and communities created were tied to class. Working class neighborhoods used their homes’ lands and locations to generate income. This was accomplished either by creating semi-rural, small farm communities, as was the case in Hall’s Hill, or by establishing themselves along main thoroughfares with easy connections to employment opportunities and customers, as in Queen City. While working class communities were grounded in needs and subsistence, the aesthetics and choices of middle class communities were tied to future aspirations for themselves and their children. Communities like Johnson’s Hill attempted to create a more urban
environment, mimicking the homes from the black neighborhoods in Washington’s Foggy Bottom neighborhood, while the middle class Butler-Holmes subdivision had the aesthetics of a traditional streetcar suburb, with pre-platted lands and more standardized single family homes. All of these communities and community types shaped Arlington’s early suburban development, impacting a region in transition following the Civil War.

But despite these differences in aesthetic, Arlington’s African American communities all had unified goals of creating community institutions like churches, schools, and mutual aid societies. These institutions were very often cross-community endeavors which connected these diverse, and at times physically isolated, communities to one another in order to establish a connected black Arlington. Community residents also shared the aim of home ownership across all communities and classes. These foundations would be essential in maintaining a black Arlington against outside pressures throughout the twentieth century.

**Freedman’s Village: The Expansion of Black Arlington**

By the winter of 1863 the situation in the District of Columbia had become extreme. Huge numbers of African Americans were pouring into the capital city. War generally leads to displacement, but during the American Civil War displacement was amplified by enslaved African Americans’ taking advantage of the war’s upheaval to escape their bondage and flee to federal lines. This was especially true in Washington, D.C. following first the abolition of slavery within the District in 1862, and later the general Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. In Washington the black population
increased from 19% of the city’s population in 1860, to more than 30% by mid-war.\textsuperscript{121} Many, if not most, of these individuals and families arrived in poor health with little property or money and with no place to live, straining the federal city’s resources. In response, several camps, known as contraband camps, were established in Washington to house these individuals. Two camps were set up in southern Anacostia and one was placed near the Capitol Building. But camps became overcrowded, with poor sanitation and hygiene. During the winter months of 1862 a smallpox outbreak swept through the Capitol Hill contraband camp. Realizing that so many people could not stay within the city alone, Colonel Elias M. Greene, Chief Quartermaster of the Department of Washington in charge of military construction and logistics, suggested that another camp be created, but this time beyond the city, in the “pure country air” of Arlington, Virginia.\textsuperscript{122}

During the war Arlington existed in an uncertain middle ground between Union and Confederate lines. Though the county, then mostly rural farmland, did not enthusiastically support secession, when Virginia seceded from the Union Arlington did too.\textsuperscript{123} But Arlington’s secession was never fully realized because at the opening of the war in the summer of 1861 Arlington was occupied by federal troops. To protect

\textsuperscript{121}Kate Masur, \textit{An Example for All the Land: Emancipation and Struggle Over Equality in Washington, D.C.} (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2010) p 33, 56.


\textsuperscript{123}In the elections leading up to the Civil War, Arlingtonians supported Constitutional Unionists, who ran on platforms of maintaining both the Union and slavery. In contrast, residents of nearby Alexandria City supported secession. Rose, \textit{Arlington County, Virginia.} (1976) p 95.
Washington and its claims in Virginia, the federal government erected twenty-one forts in Arlington County. This existing occupation made Arlington a natural choice when the War Department needed to expand contraband camps beyond the District. When it came to choosing a location within Arlington for the camp, government officials chose Arlington House – one of the county’s few large plantations. Arlington House is located in the eastern portion of Arlington County, immediately across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., with sweeping views of the National Mall. The lands were amongst the most fertile and picturesque in the county, with easy access to the federal city.

Arlington House belonged to the family of the area’s most famous resident, Confederate General Robert E. Lee. In the spring of 1861 after Lee gave up his post in the federal Army to join the Confederacy the Custis-Lee family fled south to Richmond, Virginia. In 1862 Congress enacted land taxes on properties in rebelling states that must be paid in person. The federal government seized the plantation after Mary Custis Lee neglected to pay her tax bill of $92.07. In poor health, she sent her cousin Philip R. Fendall to pay the bill in her stead, but he was told the taxes must be paid in person by Mrs. Lee alone. So the federal government seized Arlington House. The relocation of formerly enslaved individuals at Arlington House was thus a choice with both practical and symbolic purposes.

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At Freedman’s Village the government created a pre-planned community with houses, roads, and institutions which was a physical representation of federal goals of moral uplift for the formerly enslaved population. US Army Corps of Engineers, “General Plan No. 9 – Freedman’s Village near Arlington Heights, VA” [July 10, 1865] Maps Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Here after LOC)

On December 4, 1863 Freedman’s Village contraband camp opened. Contraband camps were dotted across the south, wherever the Union army held lands. Many of these camps were created haphazardly. They functioned simply as holding grounds, “adjuncts to the plantations,” or later as Union recruitment facilities for African American soldiers. However, Freedman’s Village was created with more thoughtful intent. The Village encompassed more than 1,100 acres of picturesque land in the

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northeastern portion of the county, with sweeping views of Washington.128 Here, the government created a pre-planned community with houses, roads, and institutions. Freedman’s Village “became a showplace to which government officials directed foreign visitors and other dignitaries eager to witness the progress of former slaves.”129 The pre-planned community built by the War Department was a physical representation of federal goals of moral uplift for the formerly enslaved population. To this end, the government erected a “neat and extensive collection of frame houses.”130

One-hundred white-washed, one-and-a-half story duplexes were constructed along a quarter-mile long thoroughfare through the Village. The clapboard houses used a pared-down version of the Classical Revival style. Popular in the late-nineteenth century, in its grand representations, Classical Revivalism used symmetry and columns to allude to Greek temples, symbolically connecting America to the ancient democracy and its ideals through architectural style. In its vernacular execution at Freedman’s Village, the Classical Revival architecture used color and symmetry to convey the ideals of the movement. The external symmetry of the home was meant to lead to social harmony and stability. The white color of the homes was meant to encourage cleanliness, godliness, and order. Initially chosen by the War Department, this housing type was embraced by black Arlingtonians. They took great care in the maintenance and upkeep of these homes. When building their own homes later residents often recreated this style.


Figure 4
The one-hundred white-washed, one-and-a-half story duplexes constructed by the War Department using a pared-down version of the Classical Revival style became a popular home style for African Americans beyond the Village. Freedman’s Village, Arlington, Virginia, 1864, Prints and Photographs Division, LOC.

The War Department did more than just build houses in Freedman’s Village. In partnership with northern religious and aid societies, they established institutions to help educate the former slaves in practical skills and the ways of wage labor. Women were taught domestic housekeeping skills, while vocational schools for men taught them to become carpenters, tailors, wheelwrights, shoemakers, harness makers, and more. Though these programs smacked of paternalism and encouraged assimilationist tendencies, they improved the lives of many. For example, blacksmithing was among the trades taught at the Village. Elsewhere in Virginia and across the South it became increasingly difficult for African Americans to practice these skilled professions. Under slavery individuals could learn and practice these trades, but in freedom African American craftsmen found a harder time practicing such skills because of prejudices and

new restrictive policies.\(^{132}\) Many skilled laborers, such as William A. Rowe who worked as a blacksmith, became leaders in the community because of the pay and prominence their education and skilled jobs provided.

With their new or improved skill-sets, many within the Village came to work for the federal government. These individuals worked as “soldiers, teamsters, and workers on fortifications.”\(^{133}\) Both Thomas Owens and his wife Hannah found federal work within the Village, she as a cook and he at the military’s growing cemetery on the grounds.\(^{134}\) The opportunity to work for the federal government highlights another benefit for African Americans living in Arlington. These employment opportunities provided a welcome alternative to farm labor, the most common employment type for African Americans at this time.\(^{135}\) Others worked in the Village’s hospital or home for the elderly. In 1864 hospital workers were paid $0.40 per day, while teamsters and skilled laborers were paid $1 per day plus rations.\(^{136}\) These pay rates were consistent with white wages.\(^{137}\) Some

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\(^{132}\) Ross discusses her father’s 1880s blacksmithing business in Arlington and his inability to work as a blacksmith in Lynchburg, Virginia. Katherine Mosley Ross, interview by Annon., 1995, RG 103: Freedman’s Village, Box 2, File 30, CLH.


would transition between these regionally exceptional employment types - such as Village resident Harry W. Gray, who transitioned from a job as a skilled mason to become a messenger for the Department of the Interior.¹³⁸

![Image of Freedman’s Village](image)

**Figure 5**

Here residents of Freedman’s Village are seen on the main thoroughfare through the Village alongside their homes. These individuals and families took great care maintaining these homes. “Freedman’s Village,” ca. 1860s. National Park Service.

Though they benefitted from the overall central planning of the Village’s buildings, layout, and services undertaken by the War Department, it was the African American residents themselves who spearheaded the development of a truly robust community in Freedman’s Village. The camp became home to African Americans of all ages and family types. Some African American families escaping bondage were able to bring extended kin networks together at the Village. The Parks family was able to keep

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their entire thirteen person family together. The head of their family, Lawrence Parks, was already in his mid-seventies when he attempted to create a new life for himself and his family at the Village. Mary Pollard came to the Village at the age of forty with her fifteen-year-old son James in 1865. Others came to the Village as individuals, such as fourteen-year-old Nancy Jackson who was living at the Village by 1865. Though villagers differed in age or family connections, at the Village they were united in their goals of creating a strong community in freedom. These individuals and families took great care of maintaining their homes. An 1864 Harper’s Weekly article hailed that the “place presents a clean and prosperous appearance at all times.”\(^\text{139}\) With the help of northern missionaries, residents directed the creation of religious and educational institutions in the Village. As early as 1864, Freedman’s Village had primary and secondary schools for the children of the Village which educated from 250 to as many as 900 students.\(^\text{140}\) Demand for education was so high amongst adults that a night school was established to meet their needs.\(^\text{141}\) Residents stressed the importance of an education for themselves and their children. The song “Uncle Sam’s School” could be heard in the Village, residents singing the chorus “come bring your books and don’t be a fool, for

\(^{139}\) “Article” Harper’s Weekly, ca. 1864.


Uncle Sam is rich enough to send us all to school.” ¹⁴² With this enthusiastic embrace of education, literacy rates in the Village rose from only 20% in 1870 to 56% by 1890. ¹⁴³

As the community grew, the Civil War raged on. In April of 1865 Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General and future President Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia. That same spring, the management of Freedman’s Village transitioned from the War Department to the newly formed Freedman’s Bureau. Congress founded the Bureau to provide for the immediate physical needs of former slaves and help them transition into freedom through social, political, and legal aid.


In peace, victory, and freedom, with the newly minted federal agency dedicated to pursuing their rights, the inhabitants of Freedman’s Village created and expanded schools, churches, institutions, and fraternal and mutual aid societies, deepening their roots in the Village. Fraternal and mutual aid societies provided the men of the Village a way to exercise their new social and political rights. In this way the Village became, even more than other contraband camps, “the first great cultural and political meeting ground” produced by and for African Americans. One such organization was the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, founded in the Village in 1870. This organization served many needs of the young black community – hosting social functions, serving as a meeting ground for political functions, serving as a credit union, helping to establish internal community leadership, and supporting black churches and schools. In 1888 black Arlingtonians also founded their own Masonic Lodge No. 58 in the middle class Green Valley community.

In 1866 the Little Zion Methodist Church and the Old Bell Baptist Church were founded. Less than ten years later, in 1873, Old Bell had so many members that it divided into two congregations – Mt. Olive and Mt. Zion Baptist churches. Lucy Harris was a founding member of the Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Lucy came to the Village in 1865 with

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her extended family. Lucy’s commitment to expanding religious institutions within the
Village shows how its long-term residents wanted to shape the Village into a truly robust community.

These churches were not just houses of worship, they were anchors of the
community and spiritual leaders were often community leaders. Old Bell’s Reverend
Robert S. Laws, also worked as an employment agent for the Village, helping his fellow
Villagers find work.147 Laws enjoyed a great deal of influence in the community, he was
called “the leader of public sentiment in the Village.”148 This kind of influence of
spiritual leaders in community affairs was not isolated to Laws. Henry Lomax came to
the Village about 1864 with his wife Mary and their young son William.149 Working as a
laborer for the military at the Village, Lomax became Bishop of Zion Methodist, later
renamed AME Zion. His position within the church helped Lomax to become a
community leader, also taking up leadership positions within the Odd Fellows. These
churches and organizations expanded and solidified Arlington’s black middle class that
had been made possible through employment and education possibilities provided the
freedmen in the Village.

148 C. S. Potter, “Letter to E. P. Smith,” January 26, 1867, American Missionary Association Archives, 1828-
1969, Box 181: Virginia, 1866 October 16 - 1867 March, HI-9626, Amistad Research Center, New Orleans,
Louisiana.
Hall’s Hill

Though it was the county’s largest, Freedman’s Village was not the only black community to emerge in Arlington in the 1860s. In 1865 the Hall’s Hill community began to take shape. Located atop a hill in the western portion of the county, the community had amazing views. When writing his younger brother from his station at Hall’s Hill, Civil War soldier John William observed that “from this hill you have a view of the country for nearly ten miles, and probably can see the country very near Vienna and Fairfax.”150 The hill for which the community got its name also featured “a fine stream of water” which afforded “water for cooking and bathing,” and “woodlands, which furnished fuel.”151

These descriptions of lovely, pastoral views and natural resources show how Hall’s Hill, like Freedman’s Village, was built on desirable land. It was unusual for African American communities to be in such sought-after areas. Instead, most African American communities took shape far from downtowns or preferred views. The one thing that areas African American settlements beyond Arlington seemed to have in common was they were seen as undesirable in some way. Nationally, the only African American communities which developed in such desirable areas were domestic service enclaves created so domestics could live close to the elite homes they serviced. Seven percent of Arlington’s African American residents worked as domestic workers, including Hall’s


Hill residents Ellen Hayson, who worked as a cook, and her daughter Margaret, who worked as a live-in maid.\textsuperscript{152} But this employment type does not seem to have impacted African American settlement patterns.\textsuperscript{153} Meanwhile, even elite and middle class black communities of the New South, such as the Hayti African American neighborhood of Durham, North Carolina, were forced to take up residence in an undesirable periphery of mud flats outside the city.\textsuperscript{154} But these residential patterns were not seen in Arlington.

Instead, the locations of Hall’s Hill and Freedman’s Village in desirable areas can be linked to Arlington’s Civil War and post-war realities. The federal government created Freedman’s Village on Lee’s plantation as a form of payback in a time of increased land confiscation and reassignment. Hall’s Hill’s creation was the result of local circumstances in Arlington which created a window for black land purchase.\textsuperscript{155} Federal occupation during the war and Reconstruction hurt white Arlingtonians’ social and political power, while the war’s destruction and lean post-war years hurt their economic power. In Arlington the physical destruction of war and federal occupation led to the devastation and seizure of lands, crops, farm animals, and homes. So, following the Civil War,

\textsuperscript{152} Margaret Evely Wright, interview by Terry Townsend, December 15, 1974, Zonta Oral History Program, CLH.

\textsuperscript{153} These suburban patterns of development challenge the black suburban types outlined by Wiese. Wiese, \textit{Places of Their Own} (2004); Nancy Perry, Spencer Crew, Nigel M Waters “‘We Didn’t Have Any Other Place To Live’: Residential Patterns in Segregated Arlington County, Virginia,” \textit{Southern Geographer}, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Winter 2013) p 404.

\textsuperscript{154} Leslie Brown, \textit{Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class and Black Community Development in the Jim Crow South} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

Arlington’s existing white community was not in a position of strength to keep the best
lands for themselves. Economic hardships led many white Arlingtonians to subdivide and
sell their land. At the same time, rail networks expanded in the county. The possibility of
easier commuting further pushed expansion in Arlington. In the immediate postwar years
white Arlingtonians took a less active role in shaping the county and their own
communities into a unified suburban environment.

The hard times of the Civil War are what spurred white land-owner Bazil Hall,
the name-sake of Hall’s Hill, to sell his land to African Americans. Bazil Hall lost much
during the war. He fled his house when a skirmish between Union and Confederate forces
put his home in the crossfire.\footnote{156} During his absence his home and 327 acre farm were
stripped of furniture, timber, fences, crops, and farm animals.\footnote{157} Following this initial
destruction, Hall’s property was taken over by Union forces for an encampment. Before
the war, Hall’s land was valued at over $10,000, with an additional $15,000 in personal
property. But following the war, his land was valued at only $6,400 and his personal
property was estimated to be worth only $30.\footnote{158} Hall was in his late fifties with four
young children still living at home.\footnote{159} To survive he needed to sell his land.

\footnote{156} Paul Vovey, “Notes on Two Arlingtonians: Basil Hall; Robert S. Lacey,” \textit{Arlington Historical Magazine}, Vol. 2 No. 3 (Oct. 1963) p 22-23.


\footnote{158} U.S. Southern Claims Commission, “Bazil Hall No. 2422,” NARA.

\footnote{159} These figures are from 1860 and 1870 respectively. Wise, “Bazil Hall of Hall’s Hill,” \textit{The Arlington Historical Magazine} (Oct. 1979).
New arrivals of African Americans seeking to make lives for themselves for the first time in freedom took advantage of this situation. Aided by the creation of black community infrastructure by the War Department through Freedman’s Village, African Americans in Arlington were more forward-looking than whites when it came to carving out communities throughout Arlington. Immediately following the war those looking to buy land in Arlington were African Americans. Hall sold his land at a loss to African American individuals and families. Even at the depressed, post-war rate, Hall’s land was still valued at more than $19 per acre. In 1865 he began selling his land for $10 to $15 an acre. Needing funds and provisions desperately, Hall was willing to accept lump sums of cash, in-kind trade, or installments of $0.60 a month for his land. This willingness to  

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160 The price of land quickly rose from this early rate from 1865, when sales began, to 1888, when Hall passed away. Article, *Evening Star*, December 14, 1857; Wise, “Bazil Hall of Hall’s Hill,” *The Arlington...*
barter and pay off lands slowly helped African Americans just starting out to obtain homes even though they had little savings or access to loans.

However, the willingness of white landowners to sell to African Americans should not be equated with support for Arlington’s new and growing black community. This is especially true in the case of Bazil Hall. Hall was known for his violent temper generally and for his aggression towards blacks in particular. He was rumored to have “shot one negro simply in bravado,” and was quoted by a Union soldier as having asserted that “any man of common sense will say that slavery is the very best thing for the South.”

Though Hall had at least four slaves – Thomas Merchant and the Fair family, Alfred, Genny, and son John – between 1855 and 1860, none of the Hall’s formerly enslaved workers stayed in Hall’s Hill to purchase land from Hall. He was known for being demanding of his enslaved workers, an *Evening Star* article noted that he and his wife were known “as being hard on servants.” It is very possible that Merchant and the Fairs did not wish to continue any relationship with Hall in freedom. It is also possible that Hall was unwilling to sell to his former slaves.

Unfortunately for the neighborhoods’ residents, Hall’s involvement in their lives did not end with the bill of sale. Bazil Hall did not want the new residents on his land to

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“forget their places.” He discouraged them from taking employment which he believed was above their station, instead hoping they would rely on his benevolence. This became another hurdle early black settlers in Arlington had to negotiate. But despite this, Bazil Hall and his land sales represented an opportunity for black residents to buy land and create lives for themselves in a lovely, desirable location within the county.

Hall’s Hill was the first post-Civil War black neighborhood established beyond Freedman’s Village. Like the residents from Freedman’s Village, most came from rural lives on Virginia and Maryland farms and plantations. That was the case for James Washington who came to Hall’s Hill from a Maryland plantation as a single man to purchase two lots totaling three acres in 1866. Another early purchaser was Archibald Upshire, who bought one lot for himself, his wife Eliza, and their growing family. These African American residents seeking a life and community for themselves and their families were mostly working class. Both Archibald and Eliza worked outside of the home, he as a laborer and she as a domestic. In freedom, many Hall’s Hill residents

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worked as unskilled laborers in Washington, D.C. for $0.15 to $0.50 a day, less than half the rate received by many of the skilled laborers educated at Freedman’s Village.

These residents relied on the steam and rail trolley system to take them in and out of the city for work. Hall’s Hill was built along the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) line, first chartered in 1853. By 1870, many rail lines, including the W&OD line, were expanding freight and passenger service across Arlington County and nearby Alexandria City. The W&OD tracks ran from downtown Alexandria, along the path of Four Mile Run through Arlington, north to Rosslyn, and out to the towns towards Virginia’s Blue Ridge Mountains. Feeding off of the growth of one another, rail lines continued to improve their service and expand their stops, increasingly focusing on commuter travel, encouraging and reacting to a rising commuter community seeking employment beyond the farm in Arlington County. Connections between Washington and Arlington continued to expand with the opening of the Aqueduct Bridge as a free bridge in 1886. Arlington moved slowly towards more concentrated communities of smaller land holdings, with Hall’s Hill as an intermediary step. During the mid-nineteenth

167 Chartered as the Alexandria, Loudon, and Hampshire Railroad, the line would go through several name changes throughout the late nineteenth century until the Washington and Old Dominion was formalized in 1911. To avoid confusion, Washington and Old Dominion will be used as the name of this line throughout.

century contemporaries called this transition the “middle landscape.” The choice of Hall’s Hill’s residents to locate in an area along a trolley line, which provided access to employment in Washington, D.C., while maintaining lots with space for homes, gardens, and expansion was a part of this suburban growth.

Riding the trolley was more difficult for Hall’s Hill’s residents than some of their more affluent neighbors. Though riding the rails was convenient and the most reliable way to travel in the county, where despite road improvements made during the war years, almost all of the county’s road networks were still dirt or gravel, it still proved difficult. A two-way trolley ticket cost $0.05 per day, taking up one-third of the residents’ average daily income. While employment in D.C. offered job opportunities, the significant cost to travel into the city for work shows that this employment choice was not without its trials. Most of Hall’s Hill’s working residents needed to travel beyond the community for work because the community had few, if any, businesses at the end of the nineteenth century.

The residents of Hall’s Hill used their farming skill-sets to improve their economic situation. Shaping their environment to meet their needs, they created a semi-rural community which featured extensive gardens, where residents kept horses and raised hogs, chickens, and turkeys. Here, African American working class residents

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chose to recreate elements of their rural plantation past, making a choice about what their ideal neighborhood would look like. Residents used farming to supplement incomes. Residents focused on buying as much land as they could afford rather than creating elaborate homes, often expanded their land holdings slowly. For example, when Robert E. Ferguson first purchased land from Bazil Hall he was only able to buy one-half of an acre. But over time his land holdings expanded until his lot was large enough to support farming. Coming from the rural Herndon, Virginia, Ferguson used his farming skill sets to grow cherry trees whose fruit was harvested for sale by his wife Ellen Hayson and their children. Residents built simple single family wood frame or brick homes themselves, often in a piecemeal fashion as supplies could be afforded and time could be secured to complete the work. These homes were often reminiscent of farm houses, constructed in a simple, modified-Four Square style.

Beyond their individual attempts to create successful lives in freedom through work and home, the residents of Hall’s Hill created community institutions to help establish the kind of social and physical environment they thought desirable. Only one year after the first bills of sale, Hall’s Hill residents created their first church congregation. In 1866 Moses Pelham organized a Methodist prayer services which grew


into the Calloway United Methodist Church. Pelham came to the area from Culpeper, Virginia. Like the Parks family in Freedman’s Village, the Pelhams migrated to Arlington with an extended kin network which was anchored by Moses and his brothers Burrell, Gipson, and Ed Pelham. In 1868 the black residents of the community organized a school for the community’s growing population of children. James Washington and his wife Lucinda raised six children in Hall’s Hill. Moses Pelham also had six children. The Upshires’ had two children when they purchased their home and four children as of 1870. These young, growing families pushed for a good education and a better life for their children.

Hall’s Hill’s school was a simple one-room school with one teacher. Though modest, this school was unique for the area. Hall’s Hill was located within the Washington District, the county’s westernmost voting district. In Washington District, local white residents resisted public education. Even after the county established a public school system in 1870, the region opted out of the program, waiting until 1878 to open the Carne School for white children. This resistance likely had less to do with an outright rejection of public education than the fact that at this time many Arlingtonians sent their children to school in Washington, D.C. The district provided the possibility for


students to attend private school and children of federal employees could also attend D.C.’s public schools for free. With these options open to their children, Washington District’s white residents resisted being taxed for education closer to home. The white residents near Hall’s Hill did not yet view the area as a growing community. Their disinvestment in community schools points to a continued lack of vision for the area’s future development.

However, for Hall’s Hills residents it was important not only that their children receive an education, but that they receive that education close to home. This could be the result of many practical factors, such as the difficulty for school-aged children to navigate the trolley cars. Trolley travel was dangerous and taking the streetcar meant constantly living with the threat of “death or debilitating injury.” As early as the 1860s states had railway safety commissions to deal with public safety concerns from riding the rails. Getting on and off of a moving trolley car was particularly perilous because the average step-up or down from a trolley car was three-feet; truly a jump for a child. The lack of curbs or sidewalks in the community’s roads could have increased these safety fears. Or concerns about paying additional trolley fares beyond those already paid by parents traveling beyond the neighborhood for employment could have been a contributing factor.


179 This is the average height for trolley cars in the 1880s. Welke, Recasting American Liberty, (2001).
But this choice to create a school for and within their own community shows distinct visions from black Arlingtonians about what makes an area a good place to live. Unlike their white neighbors, the residents of Hall’s Hill felt that it was important to create their own schools within the community. A path also taken by the residents of Freedman’s Village and Green Valley, the desire to have a local school shows not only the importance of education for the first generation of African Americans in freedom, it also shows how schools were perceived to be neighborhood institutions, pillars of the community. The physical location of the Hall’s Hill school in the center of the community, alongside the church, highlights this fact. Schools were used not only for education but also to provide neighborhood children with a sense of community, connection, and insulation from negative outside white influences which they would be more likely to experience if they had to travel great distances beyond their communities.

This call for isolation is also suggested in the layout of the community. Hall’s Hill church and school were clustered along Fairfax Road, the community’s main connector to the District and other parts of the county. With homes fanning out from the main road and these institutions, Calloway Church and Hall’s Hill school were the anchors of the community. With these institutions at the center of their community physically and socially, the environment built by Hall’s Hill’s residents was a physical representation of their preferences for what community life should be like. As previously mentioned, the county’s road network was primitive with primarily dirt roads. On top of this, in Hall’s Hill the roads were narrow and most did not open out to connect to other roads. Beyond the main thoroughfare of Fairfax Road through the community, few roads passed through
Hall’s Hill. This limited connectivity and general impassability of Hall’s Hill’s roads could certainly be inconvenient for residents; however it also provided insulation from surrounding white neighbors. It is important to remember that although Hall’s Hill was increasingly becoming a black community, full residential segregation was not yet a reality. Instead, Hall’s Hill’s black residences neighbored white farming families and newly emerging white neighborhoods, in what Thomas Hanchett has described as a “salt and pepper” residential pattern common to post-Civil War southern residential expansion. Residents were also isolated from other black communities in east Arlington where Freedman’s Village and Green Valley were located. This separation from a larger local network of black communities could have heightened their desire to create some breathing room for their community by becoming insulated.

By the 1870s, only a few years after its founding, Hall’s Hill was a thriving and growing black community. The farms of Arlington’s past were slowly moving towards more concentrated communities of smaller land holdings, with Hall’s Hill’s modest landholdings, small levels of farming, and commuting work population as an intermediary step. The choices made by Hall’s Hill residents and the suburban-style infrastructure created in Freedman’s Village point to the beginnings of a suburban existence for Arlington and its residents, a path shaped by the choices and preferences of the area’s African American residents in combination with such factors as federal policies and postwar economic and social conditions.

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Problems for Freedman’s Village

Despite early support from the federal government, the War Department, and the Freedman’s Bureau, backing for Freedman’s Village waned throughout the 1870s. Where the aims of the freedmen and the government had once been in line, they were now at odds. Nationally, support for Reconstruction programs was on the decline. Radical reconstruction and Republican political control collapsed as social and political reconciliation and reunion ended what public support had once existed for African American rights.\(^1\) As a result aid to former slave families fell from favor. The kind of social experimentation undertaken in large scale federal projects like the one at Freedman’s Village were especially vulnerable for attack. Cracks began to show even amongst Village officials. Reverend Laws worked as a spokesperson for the community, pushing Village administrators to expand freedmen’s rights. In this new climate this behavior made Laws enemies; one camp bureaucrat called Laws an agitator for his support of black rights and encouraged the reverend to leave the Village.\(^2\)

The freedmen who had once been celebrated for their improvements to themselves and the land were now categorized as “squatters.”\(^3\) This characterization was “untrue, libelous, …without foundation,” and had no bearing on the actual

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\(^3\) This characterization of Freedman’s Village residents as squatters could be seen in military correspondents and amongst civilians. J.A. Commerford, Superintendent of National Cemetery, to Major and Quarter Master G.B. Dandy, November 12, 1878, RG 103: Freedman’s Village, Box 1 Folder 1, CLH.; The Freedman’s Village, *Alexandria Gazette,* December 7, 1887. Vertical File: Freedman’s Village, CLH.
environment created by the Villagers. Lifelong Arlington House resident Selina Gray, who lived on the property first in slavery and later in freedom, knew better than most all the ways in which the environment changed. Gray, her husband, and their children transitioned from slavery to freedom on the property, moving from the house yard to Freedman’s Village. But she called the lands “a most lovely place” which still “looks beautiful,” singling out Village homes as contributing to “that beautiful place.”

Villagers continued to maintain the houses at the center of the Village originally built by the War Department, keeping their homes neat, tidy, and very comfortable. Many residents improved upon these homes through additions and land beautification, some spending as much as two- to three-times their initial investments. Beyond these improvements, residents of the Village also paid land rents as well as local, state, and federal poll, road, school, and personal property taxes. So residents were not “squatters,” they were individuals and families purchasing land, improving that land, paying rent, building homes, and continuing to expand their community institutions. This pattern of discrepancies between black residents seeing a thriving community and outside white politicians and individuals seeing a shantytown began with Freedman’s Village but

184 Board of Supervisors, Minute Book, February 13, 1884, RG 103: Freedman’s Village, CLH.

185 Selina Gray to Mrs. Mary (Custis) Lee, 1872, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia (Hereafter VHS).


would be repeated in community after community, as black and white residents battled for space in the emerging Jim Crow society. What this characterization of “squatter” actually shows is racialized resistance towards the Villagers and outside forces fishing for an excuse to take lands they wanted for other purposes.

This push to take the land back from Villagers was a drawn-out process. In 1868 the Freedman’s Bureau’s continued existence was debated in Congress. Though not closed, the power of the Bureau shrunk significantly until its powers were limited to only petitions and education for African Americans. The government also attempted to close Freedman’s Village in 1868. In anticipation of this closure, the homes between the Potomac River and the grand porch of Arlington House, impeding views to and from the elite home, were torn down, residents forced to relocate elsewhere on the property. Distraught at the sudden move William Conway’s mother-in-law asked one of the men issuing the evictions, Lieutenant Bergevin, where they should go. He responded by calling the woman a “damned fool” for thinking that was his responsibility. This relocation was undertaken in the winter and with such little notice that some men returned home from work to find their wives and children gone. But Villagers organized against this closure of the Village. As a result these early efforts to close the Village were not successful. In fact, the attempted relocation was so botched that it sparked an

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189 15 Stat. 83 (July 6, 1868) and 15 Stat. 193 (July 25, 1868), M1869: Records of the Assistant Commissioner and Subordinate Field Offices for the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1872, NARA

190 Sergt. SN Clark, Bureau Refugees Freedmen and Abandoned Lands Headquarters Asst Commissioner District Columbia Washington, to Colonel, December 29, 1866, RG 103: Freedman’s Village, Box 1 Folder 10, CLH.
investigation by the Freedman’s Bureau. To quell the discontent residents were able to buy their homes from the government and established what they believed was a rent-to-own system for their land. Villagers beyond the central avenue constructed by the War Department built their own homes. Most were good quality painted frame houses with fenced in yards. Villagers also created a surrounding farming community of five- to ten-acre plots called Arlington Tract Farms. Thomas and Hannah Owens initially lived in the central Village until moving to an Arlington Tract farm in 1868. Owens and his neighbors, including John B. Syphax, built homes for themselves and improved the lands by farming. Residents were hopeful these purchase agreements “shall best secure our property… to ourselves and our children.”

Six years after the first attempt to close the Village, in 1872, the Freedman’s Bureau was abolished. Without a governmental body to lobby on behalf of the Village, in the 1880s the War Department reinvigorated efforts to close it by calling for Congressional action. The military wanted the land to expand Fort Myer and Arlington National Cemetery, and to establish a parade ground. Others in the federal government wanted the land to create a new road network from Georgetown to George Washington’s Mount Vernon. By 1889, the Department of Agriculture joined in on the government’s


193 The New York Herald Tribune quoted in “Closing the Village,” RG 103: Freedman’s Village, Box 1, Folder 1, CLH.
Beyond the federal government, white Arlingtonians seeking voter reform to curb black political power also wanted to close the Village. White Arlingtonians regrouped after the Civil War and were now ready to reassert their prominence by taking back rights from African Americans. Local whites claimed that “the presence of the Negroes on the reservation [Freeman’s Village] has a peculiar effect on the politics,” and that African Americans “controlled the county, electing their Board of Supervisors.” African Americans could legally vote in Arlington during military Reconstruction beginning in 1867. These rights were solidified with state-level Constitutional changes required by the Reconstruction Amendments beginning in 1870. Also in 1870 county-wide electoral reform increased the total number of political offices, made those offices elected rather than appointed positions, and divided the county into three geographically equal political districts: Washington District in the western portion of the county, Arlington District in the center, and Jefferson District in the eastern portion. The result of all these political changes was that some African Americans were elected to county positions, especially within Jefferson District which contained Freedman’s Village. James Pollard, who came to the Village as a teen and worked as a skilled laborer, became Justice of the Peace. William A. Rowe, who was trained as a blacksmith in the Village, was also a particularly

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195 Article, Alexandria Gazette, September 2, 1872. Vertical File: Freedman’s Village, CLH.

successful African American politician. He served as Supervisor of Jefferson District from 1871 to 1879 and even served as Board chairman from 1872 to 1883.\footnote{Research and Records Committee, Arlington Historical Society, “County Officials in Arlington, 1870-1960,” \textit{Arlington Historical Magazine}, Vol. 3 No. 3 (Oct 1967).}

But African American political power should not be overstated. Not all African Americans met the minimum requirements for voting. Of those who could vote, only 140 taxpayers from Freedman’s Village voted in the Presidential Election of 1888. Though there was an African American presence on the Board of Supervisors they were never the majority, keeping whites in control of county affairs. Additionally, even though African Americans were able to vote and be elected to office, the white social and political leaders of Arlington had other strategies to keep black elected officials from taking office. Despite the fact that black men won elections to the posts of County Clerk, Treasurer, and Sheriff, inexperience or inability to pay election dues were used to keep them out of these offices during the 1870s and 1880s. Thus despite election, no African Americans ever served in these positions. Early attempts to keep blacks from taking office were seen as small victories, but white officials wanted more.

In seeking to limit black voting power one of the primary strategies for Arlington’s emerging conservative Democratic political leaders was to attack the legitimacy of Freedman’s Village. One member of the Board of Supervisors alleged the Village was full of “paupers and indigent persons who infest the Arlington estate in the county;” while a newspaper article called it a “hamlet of squalid want and destruction.”\footnote{Board of Supervisors, Minute Book, December 6, 1875, quoted in Rose, \textit{Arlington County, Virginia} (1976); Article, \textit{National Republican}, 1884 quoted in Rose, \textit{Arlington County, Virginia} (1976).}
Attempting to break up the largest black voting-block in the county, Arlingtonians attacked the validity of the residents’ claims to the land. An *Alexandria Gazette* article alleged residents were “being supported entirely by the United States Government” and thus they did not have a legitimate claim to suffrage.\(^{199}\) In reality a federal report found that only one Village resident, a twelve year old orphan girl, was on long-term welfare.\(^{200}\) The Village’s status as government land led Arlingtonians to argue it was not truly within their jurisdiction and thus they had no responsibility to contribute to schools or other municipal activities within Freedman’s Village. This smear campaign against Arlington’s black residents had parallels throughout the South, as state and local governments attempted the reverse hard-won black social and political rights.\(^{201}\)

In addition to those in the federal government looking to use the Village’s lands and those attempting to reverse black enfranchisement, land developers were also attacking Freedman’s Village. In the last decades of the nineteenth century Arlington was quickly becoming a streetcar suburb of Washington. Land developers were striking out to obtain more and more land where they could plat and build more suburban neighborhood subdivisions. At the turn of the century, it was estimated that the county’s wealth had “increased ten-fold [with] many pieces of property worth ten times their assessed value.”

\(^{199}\) The Freedman’s Village, *Alexandria Gazette*, December 7, 1887, Vertical File: Freedman’s Village, CLH.


In this state of land grab and economic frenzy, developers lured federal workers with “quiet and repose from the stir and bustle and noise” of the city to a county which was “law abiding and prosperous.” These individuals, their interests, and the kinds of communities they created are the focus of chapter two. With the land and crops together, Freedman’s Village was estimated to be worth $27,162.95 as early as 1864. With so much wealth at stake, land developers lobbied for the eviction of residents of Freedman’s Village in order to obtain that land for themselves. The developers had powerful allies in their corner. Virginia’s U.S. Senator, John W. Daniel, spoke on behalf of the developers, informing the War Department that the “people of the vicinity would like very much to open the way to improvement by having [the residents of Freedman’s Village] removed.” Daniel went on that it was “improper that government property should be continually occupied by squatters who have no interest in it such as to stimulate improvements.” But of course, the Villagers had been improving the land through building, cultivation, and community formation for more than two decades.

All of these pressures against the community were coming to a head during a time of legal uncertainty for the entire property that once made up the Arlington House plantation. George Washington Custis Lee, one of Robert E. Lee’s sons, was in a legal battle with the United States government claiming that his lands were illegally seized. His

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203 Letter to Gen Edwin M Stanton, Secretary of War, August 15, 1864, RG 103: Freedman’s Village, Box 1, Folder 9, CLH.

204 John W. Daniel to Redfield Proctor, December 18, 1890, RG 93, File Arlington Reservation, Consolidated Correspondence, Y-123, NARA
late mother had also struggled to secure the property, but her attempts were unsuccessful because she wanted the property to be converted back to a private residence – removing Fort Myer, Freedman’s Village, and re-interring all the dead from Arlington Cemetery elsewhere. Lee on the other hand only called for just compensation for his family’s lands. After a five year legal battle, in 1882 the Supreme Court sided with him and in 1883 the federal government purchased the Arlington estate house and grounds from Lee for $150,000. Even though the purchase agreement did not call for the expulsion of the Village, the formalization of the land as federal property at a time of extreme hostility against African Americans generally and Village residents specifically provided a new legal context for efforts to uproot the Village.

Officers at Fort Myer and Arlington National Cemetery began complaining about the Villagers with renewed gusto. The Superintendent of the National Cemetery, John A. Commerford, alleged that “the colored people who live on the reservation” were cutting down the cemetery’s trees for firewood during the night. He complained that “very few of these squatters buy any fuel and depend mostly on what they can [find] within the enclosure.”\(^{205}\) Despite years of Superintendents noting the use of cemetery trees by a few Village residents, Commerford insisted this was a large-scale problem and these trees were meant to be decorative and not used for firewood. These charges were added to new complaints that it was illegal for civilians to live on government property. Quarter Master General for the District, Brigadier General Samuel B. Holabird, stressed that “in violation

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\(^{205}\) J.A. Commerford, Superintendent of National Cemetery, to Major and Quarter Master G.B. Dandy, November 12, 1878, RG 103: Freedman’s Village, Box 1, Folder 1, CLH.
of paragraph #138 Army Regulations, amended by General Order #26, Adjutant
General’s Office, 1883, civilians are residing upon the Military Reservation.” Because of
this Holabird asserted that the Villagers “should be ordered to vacate their holdings.”

Residents who had once received the support of Village administration were now
seen as nuisances. That was the case for Thomas Owens and his wife Hannah. As
previously mentioned, when they arrived at the Village both Thomas and Hannah worked
for the federal government within the Village. This work earned the couple enough
respect amongst government agents that when rumors of the Village closing began in the
late 1860s a government official wrote on behalf of the Owenses, asking that they be
allowed to stay even if others were forced to go. These eviction threats did not come to
fruition at that time. Instead the Owenses used their government jobs to save enough
money to buy one of the farms within the Village for $40 in 1868. For the next twenty
years Thomas was a successful farmer and Hannah was able to retire from work. But
none of this success mattered. By the 1880s all support for the freedmen was gone and
the officials who once supported his place in the Village now wanted him to leave.
Eviction orders were handed down on December 7, 1887. Despite being allowed to
purchase their homes and rent their lands beginning in 1868, the federal government

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206 Birg. Gen. Samuuel B. Holabird to William C. Endicott, November 17, 1887, RG 93: Office of the Quartermaster General, NARA

207 Captain VRG Supt. To Bvt. Brig. Gen. CH Howard, Department Commissioner of Washington, D.C., November 9, 1866, RG 103: Freedman’s Village, Box 1, File 1, CLH.


insisted that this was under “the direct understanding that they are to acquire no title to
the land, and are to move when required.” Residents did not see it this way. Owens
said that “people ask us why we don’t buy land and own our own homes,” but he
believed he had done just that, and had the receipts to prove it. Despite that fact, the
War Department gave the Villagers 90 days to leave with no compensation.

With the prospect of being evicted from their homes, “where they had lived
undisturbed for nearly a quarter of a century,” Villagers organized and sent community
leaders to plead their case to the Secretary of War. Villagers used the social and church
institutions cultivated for a generation to organize in an attempt to resist the closure of
their community. John B. Syphax was the representative for the community. He argued
that not only the rents paid and the houses constructed, but also the community formed by
the Villagers amounted to a valid claim to their land in Arlington. He highlighted the
construction of the brick Mount Olive Church, around which “several houses were built”
and “many began to plant trees, and make such other improvements.” Here “coming from
the shades of the past, these people have proven, in their new condition of self-reliance,
more thrifty, and less vicious than could be reasonably anticipated.” Taking a cue from
Lee’s successful bid for his land from the Supreme Court, Syphax pushed that should
residents not be allowed to stay in the Village, then they must be justly compensated for

210 Arlington Estate, Memorandum, RG 92, File: Arlington Estate, DNA, Y-122, NARA.

211 Article, New York Herald, December 7, 1887 quoted in James “Freedman’s Village, Arlington, Virginia
(1967).

212 John B. Syphax to William C. Endicott, January 18, 1888, RG 92, File: Office of the Quarter Master
General, NARA
their homes and improvements. He called for each resident to receive $350 for their homes, lands, and relocation costs.\textsuperscript{213}

With the memory of the scandal around the mismanagement of eviction notices in 1868, the War Department surveyed and assessed the property in the winter of 1887-1888 to silence this protest. Most residents received at least some compensation for their lands, but these payments were far under market value. Nancy Jackson, who came to the Village on her own as a teenager soon after its opening, had created a good life for herself in the Village. Nancy built a home and made agricultural improvements. She received $123.15 in compensation for her home, trees, and vines.\textsuperscript{214} Other neighbors received smaller funds. Martha Smith received $40.34 for her home and another $3 for agricultural improvements. Lucy Harris was paid only $35 for her home, which she purchased for $50 nearly twenty years earlier. She was “distressed” at the idea of having to leave her home.\textsuperscript{215}

Lucy lived within one of the central houses of the Village beginning in 1865 when she and several members of her extended family moved to the Village. The prolonged period of pressure against the Village drove many residents away before its formal closing. Though several members of the Harris family lived in the Village in 1865, by

\textsuperscript{213} John B. Syphax to William C. Endicott, January 18, 1888, RG 92, File: Office of the Quarter Master General, NARA

\textsuperscript{214} Sara Collins, et. al., \textit{Freedman’s Village} (2002).

1888 only Lucy remained. Other families, such as the Parks family, were able to remain together in the Village. Previously enslaved at Arlington House, the entire thirteen person Parks family remained together in the Village. As of the federal survey, two generations of the Parks family had been homeowners at Freedman’s Villages. James Parks lived in one of the original duplex structures created by the War Department in the core of the Village. He was given only $13.20 for his home. Of the second Parks generation, William Parks and the younger Lawrence Parks each received payments in the $70 range for their farms. Farmers generally received more money than those living in the central Village. The Owens family received $130 for their home and farm. But this was not always the case, as some farmers, like William Winston, received nothing at all - their modest homes and land improvements deemed worthless by the government. Ultimately each household was paid an average of $103 for their land and homes, less than half of what Syphax originally requested. At the same time Congress deemed the “contraband fund tax” levied on the freedmen during the war on top of standard taxes illegal retroactively. Taxes and property valuations were reimbursed at the same time. These funds together provided each household with an average of just under $576 with which to move, find a new home, begin improvements again, and start their lives over.²¹⁶ By 1900 the last of Freedman’s Villages’ residents relocated. Nearly forty years after the community’s formation and

²¹⁶ There were 130 households within the Village in 1888. US Government, Valuation of Property in the Village, 1888, RG 92, CQMGF, MSS, NARA, quoted in James “Freedman’s Village, Arlington, Virginia” (1967).
thirteen years after the original eviction notice was handed down, Freedman’s Village, Arlington’s first entirely African American, pre-planned community ceased to exist. 217

Figure 8
This map of Arlington’s modern boarders shows new and expanded black settlements in Arlington in 1900. Original Map by Nancy Perry, projection NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N, with edits by Lindsey Bestebreurtje.

The Freedman’s Village Diaspora
With the closing of Freedman’s Village some residents left the area entirely, but many stayed local. Historian Kenneth T. Jackson tracks how from the 1840s to the 1890s Americans came to idealize the suburban lifestyle through changing narratives around the

home, nature, and domesticity. Historian Andrew Wiese has shown how African Americans specifically were impacted by these same ideological pulls, if in different ways. By the 1890s through their choices of home type, neighborhood type, and travel beyond the home for work, Arlington’s black residents were consciously choosing suburban environments to build their homes and lives. This is evident by the fact that the freedmen and the first generation of African Americans born in freedom embraced the suburban land reforms from Freedman’s Village and sought to create their own suburban villages across the county in the style of their Village. Some migrated to the few pre-existing black communities of Hall’s Hill or Green Valley. The Owens family and William A. Rowe relocated to Green Valley. Others formed new settlements. The closing spread the Village’s residents, resources, churches, and institutions across the county in a diaspora. This multiplied the number and variety of black settlements. No less than eleven small black enclaves arose across Arlington. A majority of these new black residential areas grew in eastern Arlington, on the outskirts of the Village’s former borders.

Though many of these areas grew up in ways which were similar to Freedman’s Village, each took its own unique path. At Freedman’s Village the War Department constructed all of the homes of the central Village at once. Lacking this type of centralized planning and building, the housing types within these new communities were


more diverse. These diverse housing and neighborhood choices highlight differences within Arlington’s African American population about what made an area a good place to live. These opinions were impacted by class, past experiences, where one chose to build, how much land one could afford, and whether or not one could find someone willing to sell to African Americans in Arlington’s increasingly hostile environment. These distinctions point to a lack of one central African American suburban vision for Arlington at this time. But despite these variations, African American communities across the county were linked by social institutions.

Not all communities could build their own institutions. This was especially true of smaller enclaves. Without institutions of their own, Arlington’s African American population traveled beyond their own communities to larger nearby black communities with these amenities. For example, when William Green built his home from land purchased from a white farmer in 1880 in the almost exclusively white Ballston neighborhood, the area had no amenities open to African Americans. Instead, the family traveled more than a mile through surrounding white areas to neighboring black communities to attend school, shop, and worship. African Americans like the Greens made the choice to live in the smaller clusters like these because of available lands and perhaps because the areas were already home to relatives or friends. Additionally, by establishing themselves in small black enclaves rather than larger black communities residents could slip under the radar, escaping negative white attention. It is also possible that being close to white neighborhoods allowed residents to have access to amenities.

220 Perry, et. al., “‘We didn’t have any other place to live,’” Southern Geographer, (Winter 2013).
like improved roads and trolley stops, even as other amenities like churches and schools were not open to them. At this time nearby white residents did not support these black enclaves, but instead benignly tolerated them and attempted to reduce their presence in their everyday lives. For example, the white neighbors who bordered Ballston’s black enclave grew their hedges high in order to physically obstruct their view of Ballston’s black part of town.\textsuperscript{221}

With the closing of Freedman’s Village, areas with existing communities like Green Valley expanded. Though not as dense or centralized as the Freedman’s Village, Green Valley appealed to the migrants from the Village because it was home to a church, school, and active black community. AME Zion Church had transitioned from Freedman’s Village to Green Valley. The congregation initially met in homes of community leaders Levi and Sarah Jones and Henson Thompson until a stand-alone chapel was completed in 1875.\textsuperscript{222} In 1870 area residents supported their own school. As was the case in Hall’s Hill, both the AME Zion Church and the Kemper School were located in the geographical center of the Green Valley Community, highlighting their importance to the local community. Initially held within the home of teacher Charity Jones, this school expanded into Kemper School in 1875.\textsuperscript{223} This expansion was due to

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{221}\textit{Perry, et. al., “‘We didn’t have any other place to live’,” Southern Geographer,} (Winter 2013).


\end{footnotes}
Green Valley’s organized and active community who energetically lobbied Arlington officials for support. In 1871, minutes for a county meeting on public schools noted that there “seemed to be quiet an interest among the colored people, as there were quite a number of the parents and friends present who seemed anxious for a Public School.”

They attended county political meetings where they “requested another colored school be opened in order to be accessible to those living in the southern part of the district.” This organization helped secure amenities for their children and community.

Residents of Green Valley were increasingly middle class individuals who actively participated in county affairs. This distinction began with the area’s first residents, Levi and Sarah Jones. Free before the Civil War, the Jones were able to purchase fourteen acres upon which they built their home in 1844 for approximately $400. Beyond the Jones family, other individuals who were free before the Civil War also chose to establish their homes in Green Valley. This included others who were free before the war, such as William Taylor, Henson Thompson, and Frank Williams.

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225 Meeting Minutes, October 4, 1875, *Minute Book of Arlington District, 1870-1905*. CLH.


227 Taylor was born free and Williams was emancipated by Charles Lewis. Registration, December 6, 1853, No. 87, Vol. 3 p 91; Registration, August 3, 1847, Vol. 3 No. 211, p 29; *Provine, Alexandria County, Virginia*
These individuals were in a better position than the recently enslaved to purchase land because they had more time and experience earning wages. Henson Thompson for example was a skilled carpenter before and after the war.\textsuperscript{228} Whether enslaved or free before the war, following the war the area attracted individuals able to purchase larger tracts of land. For example, Charles Coles purchased seven acres in the 1870s.\textsuperscript{229} Nearby white land-owners hurting following the Civil War, including the Baggott and Fraser families, sold land in Green Valley to African Americans.\textsuperscript{230} Additionally, the Jones family actively subdivided and sold land to African Americans, as did Washington, D.C. land developer John Nauck, encouraging the development of a free black community following the Civil War.\textsuperscript{231}

Because of the existing institutions and active, middle class residents, relocating to Green Valley was the choice made by several of the Village’s prominent community leaders. This was the choice made by Selina Gray.\textsuperscript{232} Though she “underwent a great deal to stay at Arlington” House as long as she could, eventually the pressures against

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\textsuperscript{228} Thompson became a leader in the community through work with AME Zion Church and as Arlington District’s Superintendent of the Poor from 1874 to 1879. Rose, “The Map of Arlington in 1878 ,” \textit{The Arlington Historical Magazine}, (Oct. 1962) p 17-33.


\textsuperscript{232} Selina Gray to Mrs. Mary (Custis) Lee, 1872, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917. VHS.
Freedman’s Village were too great and Selina Gray and her family had to relocate. Though she was reluctant to leave, Selina was “very happy” to create “a comfortable home of my own.”\(^{233}\) Gray and her family moved into a large stucco house on ten acres bordering the Jones property.\(^{234}\) Another community leader to relocate to Green Valley was William A. Rowe. He moved to Green Valley in 1879 with his wife and three children. Rowe quickly re-established the role he had played in the Village’s Jefferson District as a local political leader.\(^{235}\) He was elected as Supervisor for Arlington District, the same position he had held in Jefferson District. Rowe’s daughter Anne also relocated to Green Valley from the Village with her new husband Thomas H. West. West worked as a builder and general contractor. He quickly constructed middle class homes for his fellow residents, most of which were large Colonial style brick homes.\(^{236}\) Up to this time Green Valley was still a mix-raced community, with white and black families dotted across the landscape.\(^{237}\) But the influx of new black residents who had been the leaders of

\(^{233}\) Selina Gray to Mrs. Mary (Custis) Lee, 1872, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917. VHS.


Freedman’s Village solidified the community’s path towards becoming an exclusively African American and increasingly middle class neighborhood.

In addition to creating enclaves and expanding existing communities, the Freedman’s Village diaspora also created new black communities at this time. One of these new communities was Queen City. Unlike earlier communities like Green Valley, Hall’s Hill, and Freedman’s Village, Queen City was not located on particularly desirable lands. Instead, its land was flat, prone to flooding from the nearby Potomac River, and situated near several factories. Together with the adjacent community of East Arlington, Queen City was located in south-eastern Arlington, just outside of what had been Freedman’s Village. It was nestled in a triangle of land formed by Columbia Pike, Mt. Vernon Avenue, and the Washington, Alexandria, and Mt. Vernon trolley line, which opened in 1892. However despite other problems with the community’s location, this placement along both road and the rail line gave residents very easy access to Alexandria and Washington cities, an advantage they used to travel for employment, to shop, and to sell their wares at the larger markets. However, this connectivity also made residents of Queen City vulnerable to outside pressures, preventing them from developing the kind of insulation residents of Hall’s Hill created.

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Figure 9
Rail networks expanded in the county, providing easier commuting and pushing suburban expansion further in Arlington. “Diagram of Electric Railroad Routes near the Potomac River, Including the Washington Alexandria and Mt Vernon Lines,” [ca. 1915] Maps Division, LOC.

Queen City was built around a church which had roots in Freedman’s Village.

With the first rumblings about the likely closure of the Village in the late 1860s the Old Bell Church was demolished. At that time the church split into two congregations – Mt. Zion Baptist Church and Mt. Olive Baptist Church in what would become Queen City. In
1892, as Freedman’s Village began to close, the new community of Queen City formed around their church. Despite having just been removed from Freedman’s Village, residents were still hopeful about the possibility to continue their community and remain permanently in Arlington. As a representation of this desire for permanence they constructed a large and expensive brick church for Mt. Olive Baptist. The two-story, red-brick, marble-front church became the geographical center of the new neighborhood, while this African American institution became the center of a new black community.

Saving one-fourth of an acre for the church, the remaining land was parceled into forty lots to be sold to church members leaving the Village. With small plots of 20 feet by 92 feet, this subdivision transformed the former farm land into a more dense and suburban environment. The Volins were one of the families who purchased a lot in Queen City. George Volin and his mother-in-law Lettie Colling took their settlements from the government and came to Queen City. The family’s small lot cost $35 and they quickly set out building a house on the property.\(^{239}\) Many of the homes constructed by former residents of Freedman’s Village at this time were reminiscent of the simple clapboard houses they called home in the Village, making housing type another product of the Village’s diaspora. This aesthetic choice shows residents’ continued connection to the Village and their desire to recreate some of the elements of their former community, but with new choices which represented a changing Arlington. The two-story, six-room, central-hallway home the Volins constructed for themselves was still modest in size, only 18 feet wide by 32 feet long, but was larger than the one-and-a-half-story, four-room

structure of the Village. Though modest, the home cost $1,100 in building supplies from Murphy and Ames lumberyard.\textsuperscript{240} This hefty price tag highlights why African American families often constructed their homes themselves and in a piecemeal fashion, putting in sweat-equity wherever possible.

On their modest property the Volins kept hogs, but they were not able to grow food on their plot. Queen City residents had to transition away from even small-scale subsistence farming because of the slight size of their lots and because their soil, so close to Arlington’s brick yards and industrial district, was not ideal for farming. This inability to grow their own food was an adjustment from Freedman’s Village where the Volins’ property was “full of blackberries [and] cherry trees.”\textsuperscript{241} Without the option to grow food for subsistence or sale, Queen City resident Baldwin Gray worked multiple jobs in order to stay afloat. He was employed as a fisherman, selling fish in D.C. markets. He was also a contract employee with the federal government, mowing grass and taking care of the grounds on the National Mall around Hains Pointe and the Lincoln Memorial. This was a departure from the choices previously made by working class families in Arlington. With limited land Gray, the Volins, and families like them had to adapt away from older means of family subsistence which relied at least somewhat on farming. Most food was bought in D.C.’s black neighborhood markets, with smaller items secured within the community at the local Veney’s General Store.

\textsuperscript{240} Gilpin, “Queen City,” (1984) p 4. CLH.

\textsuperscript{241} George Volin, Jr. interview by Susan Gilpin quoted in Gilpin, “Queen City,” (1984) p 4. CLH.
Beyond Queen City, other emerging black communities in eastern Arlington grew along Columbia Pike and the newly constructed trolley car lines. The primary lines in eastern Arlington were the Washington, Arlington, and Mt. Vernon line, which serviced Queen City, and the Washington, Arlington, and Falls Church Railway, which serviced nearby black neighborhoods Johnson’s Hill, Butler-Holmes, and points west beginning in 1891.\textsuperscript{242} Queen City’s proximity to the brickyards, major roads, and trolley lines made it a more industrial suburban neighborhood than some of its emerging middle class counterparts. The new communities which grew up around these lines were increasingly smaller and more densely populated, and many residents used the lines to commute into Washington for work. These development patterns continued the transition away from a still somewhat rural community with small farms and towards an even more densely populated, suburban existence.

More than just working class communities emerged out of the closing of Freedman’s Village. The closing occurred at a time of generational shift. The first generation of African Americans who grew up in freedom and came of age during the Reconstruction era when social and political rights were still relatively strong for African Americans. Men like Edmund C. Fleet, Sr. who were born in the Village, educated there, and had not personally experienced the trials of slavery, used the community institutions, education, and sense of community imparted to them by their parents to push for more rights through active membership in Arlington’s middle class institutions. Fleet’s father Hiram Fleet was an active member in the community and Mt. Zion Church, imparting on

\textsuperscript{242} Merriken, \textit{Old Dominion Trolley Too} (1987).
his son the importance of community organization. With this increase in opportunities a
new black middle class emerged. These families stressed “etiquette, manners, and
chivalry.” Arlington’s black middle class is defined by those individuals who generally
had higher levels of education, many of whom were employed by the federal
government, and were leaders in their communities through church leadership, mutual aid
societies, and politics. Because of restrictions blocking their progress in various
economic endeavors in a white-dominated society, African Americans had a slightly
more malleable understanding of middle class status which was predicated on education,
community leadership, and behavior over a strictly economic definition. The Village’s closing also occurred at a time of residential shift. The same
changes that encouraged suburban development and movement beyond the city during
the early and mid-nineteenth century intensified by the turn of the twentieth century.
Suburbia continued to rise in popularity as new social and political movements continued
to stress the importance of nature, space, and the single family home over urban living.
Trolley networks continued to expand their lines and service to allow commuting to work
from greater distances. Developers took a more active role in Arlington, platting and
supporting pre-planned suburban developments. Through these changes, the suburban

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residential type became more entrenched in Arlington. These two shifts together of a rising black middle class and growing suburban development were reflected most fully in the creation of the new neighborhoods Johnson’s Hill and Butler-Holmes.

Johnson’s Hill began in 1880 when white farmer J.R. Johnston, and later his son Richard, subdivided their farm and sold lots to African Americans leaving Freedman’s Village. The first rounds of purchases went to Harrison Green, Emmanus Jackson, and Harry W. Gray, son of Selina Gray. Later, other Village community leaders came to Johnson’s Hill, including James Pollard. Johnson’s Hill sits on a hill along Columbia Pike just outside the bounds of Freedman’s Village and the expanding Fort Myer in east Arlington. The lots which Johnston sold were ten acre plots. The larger size of these plots set the Johnson’s Hill residents apart from nearby residents of Queen City, for example, who could only afford much smaller plots. The community itself had large plots but few residents and few amenities. Residents traveled beyond the borders of the community for church and school. But, the community’s positioning between Queen City and Green Valley meant this travel was not arduous.

Despite lacking some other community institutions, Johnson’s Hill became home to one of the most important African American middle class institutions in Arlington: The United Order of Odd Fellows. On land purchased for $200 in 1884 along the western edge of Johnston’s property, Arlington’s growing black middle class created a home for

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the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows. Here Odd Fellows Steven’s Lodge No. 1435
fraternal organization established Odd Fellow’s Hall.\textsuperscript{248} This hall played host to other
African American institutions before they could create their own permanent places,
including several churches and the Masons, further solidifying the importance of the Odd
Fellows and their hall’s location in Johnson’s Hill. The order was originally founded in
1870 in Freedman’s Village by community leaders.

The Odd Fellows attracted new members from the new generation of young black
men. Most joined the order in their early twenties, including James Smith at the age of
twenty-two and several young men from the Parks family.\textsuperscript{249} Though located in
Johnson’s Hill, this organization was “the one club which bound together black people
from all the churches and neighborhoods in Arlington.”\textsuperscript{250} Members paid dues of between
$0.25 and $1.25 a month depending on their ability to donate. This sliding membership
scale highlights the ways in which the label of middle class was not strictly tied to
income. The organization filled many needs for black Arlingtonians. They hosted
entertainment and social activities, provided burial services at their private cemetery,
served as a credit union, and donated money for both the “sick and distressed” and for the
general “good and welfare” of the black community. The Odd Fellows donated to each of

\begin{footnotes}
\footnoteref{248} WM. H. Duncan, Clerk, \textit{“Virginia Circuit Court Arlington County Clarendon VA,”} March 24, 1884. RG 11:
Papers of Edmund C. Fleet, Box 2, Folder 7: Property Deed to GUOFF 1884, Carbon Copy. CLH.

\footnoteref{249} James Smith, relative of Village resident Martha Smith, was initiated in 1875. Lawrence Parks (farmer)
was initiated in 1882, and his brother, William H.F. Parks, laborer, was initiated in 1879. Collins, \textit{Freedman’s Village}, (2002).

\footnoteref{250} Gilpin, \textit{“Queen City,”} (1984) p 4. CLH.
\end{footnotes}
Arlington’s black churches and schools in turn. The mutual aid and uplift of the Odd Fellows within Johnson’s Hill highlights the area’s growing middle class community. The Gray family was a part of this development.

Figure 10
Harry W. Gray (left) and his wife (right) Martha M.H. Gray were middle class leaders in their Johnson’s Hill neighborhood after relocating from Freedman’s Village. Harry Gray Gillem Collection, Arlington House: The Robert E. Lee Memorial, Arlington, Virginia.

Resident Harry W. Gray was a skilled mason. He could also read to a fifth grade level. His vocational skills and education put Gray in high demand following the war. Throughout the late 1860s Gray worked at the nearby Blick-West brick yard and as

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251 See Odd Fellows records in RG 11: Papers of Edmund C. Fleet, CLH.

a contract laborer for Arlington House, where he improved his masonry skills. In 1872 he left these jobs to become a messenger and clerk for the Department of the Interior. Six years later, he married Martha M. Hoard. Before the war Martha had been enslaved at James Madison’s Montpelier. At the age of fifteen she moved to the District where she also began working at the Department of the Interior. After marrying, the couple purchased their land in Johnson’s Hill for $800 and began constructing their home where the couple would raise four children. The six members of the Gray family lived at their Johnson’s Hill residence with a live-in servant.

253 As a contract laborer for Arlington House, Gray earned $45 per month. Selina Gray “Letter to Mrs. Mary (Custis) Lee,” 1872, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917. VHS.

254 Hoard’s exact position at the Department of the Interior is not known. However, she worked under Secretary of the Interior Columbus Delano, at a rate of $10 per month. Positions open to women at this time include stenographer, clerk, copyist, nurse, cook, and charwoman (cleaning woman). Based on her pay rate, it is likely that she held a lower-level position, including nurse, cook, or charwoman. Columbus Delano, et. al. “Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior” (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1875); Martha Gray Gillen, interview by Robinet, Interview Transcript, 1963. RG 103: Freedman’s Village, Box 2, File 31, CLH.

For their home the Grays built a two-story, three-bay wide, red-brick Italianate style row-home. This style mimicked houses from D.C.’s Foggy Bottom neighborhood, where Martha’s parents lived. The row-home was constructed without windows along the sides of the house. That is because when it was completed in 1882 the Grays imagined that soon other row homes would be built alongside theirs, predicting Arlington would eventually become a more densely settled environment. Similar growth was occurring at the same time in other residential areas outside major cities of the South. The Dilworth neighborhood outside of Charlotte, North Carolina for example opened in 1887 with a semi-urban grid model with diverse home types beyond the detached, single family
Gray’s neighbors created Italianate and Queen Anne style homes for themselves, though none as ornate as the Gray’s. These homes highlight the type of community they hoped to create in Arlington, one which was stable and centralized with a strong middle class presence like the one they observed in Washington’s Foggy Bottom.

Another middle class neighborhood to emerge at this time was Butler-Holmes. Located west of Fort Myer, across Columbia Pike from Johnson’s Hill, the community was named for its founders William H. Butler and Henry Louis Holmes. Both men were African American and leaders in Arlington’s black community who began that leadership role in Freedman’s Village. Butler served as Commissioner of Roads in 1879 and as Surveyor of the Roads and Superintendent of the Poor throughout the 1880s. Holmes served as the Commissioner of Revenue from 1876 to 1903 and was a leader at the neighborhood’s St. John’s Baptist Church. Both men were active leaders in the Odd Fellows. Holmes was also a founding member of the Masonic Lodge No. 58, another important African American fraternal organization established by Arlington’s growing black middle class.

In 1879 the men and their families left Freedman’s Village to establish their homes in the community that would bear their names. Butler constructed a wood, frame Queen Anne-style home, while Holmes erected a Bungalow house. Each of these home

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types, along with the Italianate homes of Johnson’s Hill, could be seen in the growing white suburbs of Arlington and were more popular choices in newly emerging white neighborhoods than those homes being built by black homeowners. In creating a streetcar suburb for themselves and other like-minded African Americans, Butler and Holmes highlighted how the black middle class shared many values and aesthetics with their white counterparts for what constituted a suburban ideal. Butler and Holmes, unlike the Grays, wanted to create a bedroom community dominated by single family homes. Butler and Holmes helped to shape Arlington’s growing suburban environment. This was achieved by creating this kind of suburban neighborhood by and for African Americans. The bedroom community model was on the rise county-wide but was not yet the dominant environment type. With this vision in mind, the two men partnered in 1882 and subdivided their lands into plats to be sold to African Americans for suburban development.

Figure 12
These modern photographs show Butler’s Queen Anne home (left) and Holmes’ Bungalow house (right). Each of these home types were also popular in the growing white suburbs of Arlington. Arlington County Government, *Penrose Neighborhood Conservation Plan*, by Penrose Neighborhood Association (Arlington, Nov. 2003).

Though less common than purchasing land from white sellers, the African American communities of Butler-Holmes, Green Valley, and Pelham Town, subdivided in 1890, were each developed by African Americans. The option to live within a community sold by and for African Americans was an appealing choice to many. Both Sarah and Levi Jones, key land sellers in Green Valley, and brothers Burrell and Moses Pelham, former residents of Hall’s Hill who founded Pelham Town, created unplanned subdivisions. The Jones and Pelham families each sold lands to those who seemed to have nowhere else to go, the Pelhams mostly selling and renting land to their own family. Butler and Holmes however stand out for their intention to form a centralized, platted, black community. By setting out to create a suburban neighborhood which embraced

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260 Wiese, *Places of Their Own* (2004). Perry, et. al., “‘We didn’t have any other place to live’,” *Southern Geographer*, (Winter 2013).
then-contemporary ideals about suburban homes and communities they pushed their ideas from their individual homes to the community at large.

A 1900 map of Arlington shows 26 plats of land of between 0.5 and 0.25 acres in Butler-Holmes.\(^{261}\) Families like Abraham and Julia Sommers and J.H. and Lilly Williams purchased some of the smaller plots in Butler-Holmes.\(^{262}\) J.H. Williams was only twenty years old in 1900 when he purchased his land, perhaps hoping to expand his property further as he was able. Members of the growing middle class, such as Edmund C. Fleet, Sr. purchased a home in Butler-Holmes. Fleet served alongside his community’s founders as a leader in the Odd Fellows, Masons, and church. These individuals could have been drawn to Butler-Holmes by its founders’ commitment to a suburban vision or the possibility to own land within the only black-owned subdivision.

Most Butler-Holmes residents worked beyond the neighborhood. Men like Clarence Johnson and C. Richard, worked in Arlington’s brick yards, while other neighbors worked as laborers or sledgers at a nearby quarry. Others worked as skilled laborers in Washington, D.C., including teamster William West and barber George Lee.\(^{263}\) Because the majority worked beyond the neighborhood in Arlington’s industrial areas, Alexandria, or the District, many were also likely drawn by the community’s connection to both Columbia Pike and the Fort Myer Branch of the Washington, D.C. area.


\(^{263}\) Ibid.
Alexandria, and Falls Church commuter rail system. The majority of women in the community did not work beyond the home, further highlighting the areas growing middle class status.264

Arlington’s rising middle class communities were creating spaces distinct from their working class counterparts. Where working class communities like Hall’s Hill created more rural spaces and other working class communities like Queen City could afford only very small lots, choosing to rely on nearby industry for all employment, the middle class communities like Butler-Holmes and Johnson’s Hill took different routes. This shows diversity among black visions of what Arlington’s future should look like. Even the middle class visions were distinct from one another. These communities and their residents were living through a changing Arlington as most of the area's small farms were being sold off into lots and trolley cars continued to crisscross the county. They hoped to be a part of this transition.

Despite differences in class and aesthetics, these neighborhoods were linked by their church and social institutions, most of which had roots in Freedman’s Village. At the Village Arlington’s black residents had lived together, which helped to solidity future cross-county connections despite future difference in status and class. In addition, each community institution had ties beyond the borders of the neighborhood where it was located. For example, when life-long Village resident Edmund C. Fleet, Sr. relocated to Butler-Holmes upon the Village’s closing, he continued ties not only with the neighbors

264 Those women who did work were primarily employed as domestics. United States Census, 1900: Virginia, Alexandria, ED 1 Arlington District, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office), NARA, p 16-17.
and institutions within his new community, he also became a leader at Mt. Zion church and Masonic Lodge in Green Valley, and the Odd Fellows in Johnson’s Hill.

Beyond these core connections, something that was consistent across all neighborhoods, despite class or aesthetics, was the importance of home ownership. Despite attempts to push black residents from suburban Arlington through efforts like closing Freedman’s Village, Arlington’s black residents were becoming an increasingly stable group. By 1900, 59% of black families in Arlington owned their homes. This rate of homeownership was well above both the national rate of 46.5% for all Americans and 22.1% for African Americans that same year. Some residents continued to rent homes. Pelham Town, platted in 1890 by the Pelham brothers, Moses and Burrel, just ten blocks from the Hall’s Hill community, had high rental rates. Beyond Pelham Town, mostly rented to Pelham relatives, those who rented were more likely to be non-native Virginians or in households headed by women, but employment type was not a deciding factor in determining who rented and who owned their home. With a relatively small

265 Perry, et. al., “‘We didn’t have any other place to live’,” Southern Geographer, (Winter 2013); US Census, “Historic Census of Housing Tables,” Home Ownership Rates, National and Virginia, 1900 <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/census/historic/owner.html>.


267 Perry, et. al., “‘We didn’t have any other place to live’,” Southern Geographer, (Winter 2013) p 417.

renting population, Arlington did not experience the speculative rental market like residents of nearby Washington, D.C., where demand for cheap rental properties greatly outpaced supply.  

African American home ownership was still quite high in the county. It was a direct result of this home ownership that new generations of Arlington’s African American residents were able to stay in the homes and neighborhoods where they grew up. This home ownership was made possible due to several factors. Many had received funds from the federal government when Freedman’s Village was closed that helped secure down payments. Black Arlingtonians had access to loans through mutual aid societies, like the Odd Fellows, and from access to the strong nearby black community in Washington. Desperate white Arlingtonians looking to sell land to anyone despite color immediately following the Civil War provided a large supply of land. Additionally, African American residents’ willingness to build their homes slowly over time as funds became available helped them to own their own homes.

Because so many of Arlington’s black residents were dispersed by the closure of Freedman’s Village it is also very likely that this negative experience with the government had shown them exactly how important home ownership was. Despite contracts with the War Department which led many residents to believe that they had purchased their homes and lands, they were removed from of their properties with the claim that they had no legal right to them in the first place. It took years of legal battles to

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270 Perry, et. al., “‘We didn’t have any other place to live’,” Southern Geographer, (Winter 2013).
get the federal government to admit that the residents did have a legal claim to their homes and issue minimal compensation for improvements. This highlighted the importance of home ownership for black residents of Arlington and pushed them to own rather than rent wherever possible. Sadly, ownership and a solid legal claim to their homes and properties would not always be enough to keep encroachment from white Arlingtonians at bay.

**Conclusion**

Freedman’s Village brought many new African Americans to Arlington County at the close of the Civil War. Though the houses and physical layout of the Village were pre-designed and built by the War Department, it was the residents themselves who created and expanded churches, schools, social, and fraternal institutions, all of which made the Village a community. These institutions and their aims reveal the kind of community Arlington’s African Americans aspired to in freedom. Beginning in the 1880s and continuing into the dawn of the twentieth century, pressures from land developers, white residents, and federal forces pushed Freedman’s Village to close. This closing marked the rise of white resistance to black community formation which would continue into the late twentieth century.

Upon its closing, the community’s residents, institutions, and ideas about community building and neighborhood aesthetics spread throughout the county. Before the Village’s closing, independent African American neighborhoods began to form and expand throughout the county. Residents in the early communities of Hall’s Hill and Green Valley created slightly more rural landscapes than the neighborhood model created
at Freedman’s Village. These landscapes merged older styles of land use seen in the county before the war with the smaller plots and more dense settlement that was a part of Arlington’s post-war reality. The diaspora of Village residents shaped these early black settlements and led to the emergence of many new African American neighborhoods and neighborhood types. In places like Queen City, working class residents were only able to purchase small lots, too small for the kind of semi-rural farming practices earlier neighborhood residents used to supplement diets and incomes. Instead residents used their access to trolley lines, major roadways, and Arlington’s industrial center, anchored by brick yards, to support themselves and their families. Through these small lots the residents of Queen City created a physically tight-knit and more densely populated community whose small single family homes were in line with the county’s increasingly suburban environment.

Other new middle class neighborhoods emerged with the closing of the Village. Former Village community leaders and the first generation of African Americans born in freedom made up the first generation of middle class leaders in Arlington. Just as working class visions of community development were spread between semi-rural and suburban, so too were middle class ideas about what makes an area a good place to live conflicting between suburban and semi-urban. The Grays in Johnson’s Hill for example created a more urban brick row-home for themselves, while African American land developers Butler and Holmes created a traditional streetcar suburb within their community. This shows a difference in aspirations on the part of Arlington’s black middle class between one focused on mirroring an existing strong black community and
one which was more focused on aligning themselves with white visions. These aesthetic choices revealed aspirations for the present and the future. Each of these choices made by African Americans impacted Arlington’s early development. Residents’ choices of where to establish their neighborhoods, the size of their lots, how to orient themselves along new and existing transportation networks, and the houses they created all had a lasting impact on Arlington’s development.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, white Arlingtonians regained power after the Civil War had diminished the strength of the community’s social and civic influence. As this sway continued to grow out of Reconstruction and into the Jim Crow era, Arlington’s white leaders used their power to attempt to push out black Arlington from what they increasingly envisioned as an all-white, exclusively suburban landscape. Without regard for whether black Arlington’s neighborhoods challenged or reinforced their own aesthetic visions, Arlington’s white leaders steadily created zoning, planning, and covenant legislation in an attempt to push out the large and diverse communities established throughout the county. Just as white residents resented Freedman’s Village and pushed for its closure, they also worked against the new African American communities that developed at the turn of the century. This resistance was the case no matter what kind of community was created, from the working class Queen City to the middle class Butler-Holmes. This opposition to all black neighborhoods, despite their class or aesthetic, highlights how developing white policies around zoning and planning that were meant to create a specific suburban vision for the county were also deeply tied to resistance to any black presence. While grounded in language of aesthetics of home
design and neighborhood layout, the true cornerstone of white suburban desires was black absence.
Arlington’s African American communities were not created in isolation. Their formation was created in conversation with and, in some cases, in opposition to white communities. While Arlington's African American communities continued to grow and multiply following the closure of Freedman's Village, Arlington's white communities also expanded. This growth was both physical, with the formation of new neighborhoods, and ideological, with a continued solidification of social and political power. White Arlingtonians were slower than their black counterparts to recognize the potential of the area as a suburban environment and to understand the power and influence they wielded over the built environment of Arlington. But once they regained social and political power following the Reconstruction era they took up the call of community development and expanded power with gusto. White powers-that-be continued to work against African American rights in order to diminish blacks' presence across the county.

Arlington’s suburban environment expanded rapidly. In addition to the African American turn-of-the-century communities already discussed, nearly a dozen new white communities

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suburban communities formed across Arlington County by 1900. These communities and their homes represented something different for Arlington. Unlike Arlington’s African American communities, which formed diverse neighborhoods from semi-rural to suburban to aspirationally urban, Arlington’s white communities created a more consistent environment across their neighborhoods. Communities followed the middle class suburban trends of their time, transitioning from larger Victorian homes to smaller Craftsman and Bungalow models throughout the early twentieth century.

These homes were all constructed in centrally planned developments. Arlington was a part of a national trend away from piecemeal, individual home building and toward large, centrally planned community developments. These communities were pre-planned on grid patterns primarily by developers and focused on symmetry, aesthetics, order, and the use of green space. One reason for this focus on pre-planned developments was the City Beautiful Movement – an aesthetic, social, and political movement popular amongst the upper and middle class. Developers hoped to use aesthetics and connections to environmentalism in building to encourage order, symmetry, and harmony in life, with the aim of refashioning citizens’ lives to make them engaged and well-rounded through changes in landscape design. It is not surprising that the upper and middle classes of Arlington embraced this movement so fully, as City Beautiful had a great impact on nearby Washington, D.C. with the McMillan Commission’s 1902 redesign of the

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National Mall. Examples of this kind of development can be seen in the new, middle class developments of Arlington. With these intellectual underpinnings, Arlington’s developers created pre-planned suburban villages consistent with suburban ideals.

White Arlingtonians’ vision of their ideal suburban environment evolved over time. This vision came to be dominated by the latest trends in suburban house and land-use forms to create one contiguous suburb. But, initially individual ‘suburban village’ neighborhoods constructed in isolation from one another dominated the landscape. These villages were laid out by newly minted developers, who were often large landowners transitioning to amateur developers. Suburban villages were secluded developments dotted across the county in physical and social isolation from neighboring areas. These villages created social and municipal institutions meant only for those living within their boundaries. This was unlike African American communities whose social institutions, such as churches, fraternal organizations, and in some cases schools and stores, were intended for black residents despite the neighborhood in which they lived. This highlights a continued isolationist ideology amongst whites in Arlington that changed slowly over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Moving beyond the suburban village model, several individual developers realized that only the ability to operate on the county-wide level could allow for truly robust growth. With this ideological shift came changes in the tactics and policies of

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275 For more on isolationism in the South and turn of the century attempts to change this ideology see William A. Link, *The Paradox of Southern Progressivism, 1880-1930.* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).
Arlington’s leaders. Arlington’s rising ranks of professional developers were very much connected to the political climate of the state and county. There was great overlap between Arlington’s developers, boosters, politicians, and social leaders. In self-reinforcing relationships, these leaders sought to create a suburban vision for the county that used local development, politics, and policy together with state level laws to move the county in the direction of an interconnected environment that they themselves would build and control. This connectivity was supported by transportation networks that increasingly linked communities together. The decline in the suburban village model was also the result of federal expansion that brought more residents to the area, expanding white neighborhoods to make them more interconnected physically while decreasing individual neighborhood identities.

Aesthetics as well as race played into this ideal suburban vision of the county. Just as they worked to remove African Americans from political power, these leaders embarked on what they described as the “clean-up campaign” to rid the county of what they deemed less desirable black residents. This county-wide campaign sought to reform Arlington's politics and its physical landscape to create an environment more hospitable to booster control by targeting black Arlington's rights and communities as illicit and corrupt. County leaders used the decades around the turn of the century to create neighborhoods which fit their visions of ideal suburban environments, to create a social and political environment that strengthened those neighborhoods, and finally to merge these physical and social environments to connect their neighborhoods and the visions of
their founders into one, dense suburban environment as Arlington’s white community moved from one of isolated suburban villages to one contiguous suburban environment.

Suburban Villages

![Figure 13](https://lccn.loc.gov/89692593)

This map shows the many new communities developing across Arlington County, then called Alexandria County, as the area moved into the twentieth century. Griffith Morgan Hopkins, Jr. "Alexandria County, Va, 1878" [1878] Maps Division, LOC. <http://lccn.loc.gov/89692593>

The County’s formal split with Alexandria City was the first step to allow the area’s leaders to actualize their new vision for the built environment. Thanks to changes in Virginia’s state constitution, in 1870 the two legally split, freeing Arlington County to determine the trajectory of their own development without the influence of Alexandria.
City for the first time. In addition to Arlington's new autonomy, the area needed transportation infrastructure to develop. Before the Civil War the Alexandria and Washington Railroad and the Alexandria, Loudoun, and Hampshire Railroad served the county. But both of these lines were destroyed during the war. From the 1880s to the first years of the new century, rail and trolley lines offering commuter service sprang up throughout the county. The Washington, Alexandria, and Mt. Vernon commuter line opened in 1892, with subsequent expansions over the coming years. This line was the only Virginia trolley line offering service in Washington, D.C. as well as throughout Arlington and northern Virginia. In the 1890s several lines attempted to run tracks into Washington, but found the endeavor too costly. Instead rail passengers had to walk into Washington to continue on to their final destinations, until the completion of the Washington, Alexandria, and Mt. Vernon’s connector line in 1906 after more than a decade under construction. The Washington, Arlington, and Falls Church line also continued to expand, and these two lines were connected via the Clarendon stop in 1907.

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278 This line had a spur from Arlington Junction to Rosslyn and from Mount Vernon into Washington. Rose Arlington County, Virginia (1976).

279 The connector was under construction from 1894 to 1906. Before that time, for an additional $0.05 passengers could cross the Aqueduct Bridge to the 12th and Pennsylvania Street station without changing trains. John E. Merriken, Old Dominion Trolley Too: A History of the Mount Vernon Line (Dallas, Tex.: Taylor Publishing Company, 1987).

This map from 1907 shows rail lines throughout Arlington County as well as the suburban areas congregated around these lines. Note the sudden end of grid streets, showing the neighborhoods’ development as isolated suburban villages. “1907 Map of Alexandria County, Virginia” [1907], Map Collection, Arlington Central Library, Center for Local History, Arlington, Virginia. (Here after CLH).

Suburban environments developed through the late nineteenth century as improvements in transportation via steam, omnibus, and commuter rails made it possible for people to leave city centers and still commute daily to work.281 Arlington’s rail lines

were packed with commuters. Indeed, one county resident noted that you could “see more people coming home” on the trolleys in just one evening than could be seen “in ten days going around to their houses.” All of Arlington’s early suburban development depended on the continued development of rail lines and connections to Washington, D.C. For example, the Clarendon stop of the Falls Church to Rosslyn electric trolley line spurred substantial suburban development after it opened in 1897. The Wood Harmon Real Estate Division subdivided the entire area along Wilson and Washington boulevards, west to Clarendon Circle, and north to Key Boulevard with squared blocks on 25-foot lot frontages throughout the area. Arlington saw a huge boom in growth and development, with eleven new white communities developed between 1879 and 1900 alone, and those numbers only continued to rise.

Arlington needed the rail lines in order to encourage truly robust development because the county’s roads were in bad shape. Frank Ball, son of Ballston community leader William Ball, called the lines one of the “greatest things that occurred in Arlington County prior to 1900” because it met “the needs of the people” while also “building up the County” for future residents. Developers took responsibility for roads within

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individual communities. As a result some individual neighborhoods had passable roads, while the county’s road networks at large remained rudimentary. In 1890 three bridges crossed from Arlington into the District, with roads fanning out from each. All of these public roads remained unpaved dirt, oyster shell, or gravel roads into the 1920s. Wilson Boulevard, a major thoroughfare in central Arlington, became Arlington’s first fully paved public road in 1909.

The rail lines provided “cheap and rapid” transportation with “the prospect for a rapid increase in the value of land.” The increased value of land for settlement due to the expansion of the rail lines occurred at the same time of declining farming in the area. During the decade from 1870 to 1880 Arlington’s total farmland declined by almost fifty-percent, from 15,260 to 8,095 acres. The county saw similar decreases in improved lands, farm animals, and yields as the area transitioned away from small farms and towards residential development. The county began its transition away from farming. By

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287 These three bridges were the Chain Bridge (1797), the Aqueduct Bridge (1843, later renamed the Key Bridge), and the Long Bridge (1808, later renamed the Fourteenth Street Bridge). Marilyn M. Harper, “Arlington County, Virginia: Transportation through 1945.” (Unpublished Paper, March 1985). Vertical File: Transportation, CLH.


290 Griffith Morgan Hopkins, Jr., "Alexandria County, Va, 1878," [1878]. Maps Division, LOC.

1900 there were only 379 farms. Many of which were small “truck farms,” where farmers sold their modest harvest at local markets. By the mid-twentieth century the farming lifestyle would be a thing of the past in Arlington.

Transportation was necessary but not sufficient in encouraging this early suburban growth. These transportation improvements occurred at the same time as many other changes in the American city. Immigration and population booms made city centers denser. People began to fear epidemics and crime associated with urban centers. Cities also became more industrial with the rise in larger-scale factory work over smaller shops, creating more noise and pollution. At the same time social and health opinions which pushed the importance of fresh air and space were growing in prominence. The single family home also became a central tenet of middle class respectability and aspiration, greatly increasing “the actual and symbolic value of the house as a physical entity,” as historian Kenneth Jackson has shown. So beginning in the early 1800s, and expanding following the Civil War, suburban environments were created as a way to use the city’s strongest features, culture and employment, while living within the best aspects of the country, spacious, owner-occupied, mostly single family homes.

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292 US Census, 1900, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office); Howell and Taylor, “Map of Alexandria County, Virginia for the Virginia Title Co.,” [1900], Map Division, LOC.

293 Arlington County Register of Historic Places, Reevesland, Torreyson Farm, by Beth Bolling (Arlington, March 2002).

At this time Arlington’s enterprising land owners created the area’s earliest white suburban communities. One such landowner who decided to make the jump from farmer to land developer was Frank Corbett. In 1864 Corbett, a transplant from New York State, purchased 162 acres of land along Columbia Pike, a major road between Arlington and Washington to the north and the markets of Fairfax and beyond to the south.\(^{295}\) For more

than a decade Corbett lived on and farmed this land. Then in 1885, Oscar Haring of Georgetown approached Corbett about purchasing two acres of his sizable farm. In addition to its location along Columbia Pike, Corbett’s land sat along the Washington and Ohio Railroad. Opened in the first years of the 1870s, the line’s twice daily trains serviced stations throughout the county, including the “Arlington Station” at Columbia Pike and Four Mile Run, along Corbett’s property.Haring wanted to purchase the small tract across from the Arlington Station to build a home and commute into the city. Corbett now saw an opportunity to change the trajectory of his land.

Living through these trends, Frank Corbett realized that Oscar Haring’s offer to purchase two acres of land in 1885 could be the start of something much larger. By 1886 he hired a surveyor to lay out a forty-acre subdivision. Corbett imagined an upper middle class suburb, dominated by Victorian homes on large lots. He laid out a grid land use pattern common at the time with seven blocks with seven one half-acre lots per block and a park. This deep grid pattern mirrored the English parks of the 1820s and 1830s.


that became the blue print for exclusive residential developments across the country.\textsuperscript{301}

This environment attracted upper-middle class residents to Corbett's subdivision, many of whom owned their own businesses. John Newlon moved to Arlington from the District in 1885 in order to open his own mill. Before relocating to the neighborhood Newlon served as head miller of Herr and Cissel millers in Georgetown. Another early resident Florence T. Johnston, an independently wealthy woman, purchased three lots, totaling one-and-a-half acres. These upper-middle class residents built large, two-story single family frame houses set far back from the street.\textsuperscript{302}

The 1880s and 1890s saw an explosion of development in Arlington. A small number of pre-Civil War communities, like Ballston, had developed slowly since the early 1800s. As farming plots became increasingly smaller, the Ballston community grew primarily around the farming plot of John Ball.\textsuperscript{303} But most of Arlington's white communities came about during the last decades of the nineteenth century. The subdivisions of Glencarlyn, Bon Air, Fostoria, East Falls Church, Cherrydale, Clarendon, and Fort Myer Heights all emerged.\textsuperscript{304} Unlike their earlier counterparts, these communities all grew very quickly. The rapid development of these pre-planned

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Though on larger lots than later suburban environments, these homes were designed to exist together within Corbett's subdivisions as a part of a suburban environment rather than maintaining older agrarian models of settlement. Walter, "The Original Developers of Barcroft." \textit{Arlington Historical Magazine}, (Oct 2003).
\item Eleanor Lee Templeman, “Ballston’s Beginnings,” \textit{Arlington Historical Magazine} Vol. 1, No. 3 (Oct 1959) p 52-54
\item Rose, \textit{Arlington County, Virginia}, (1976).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
subdivisions is easily illustrated with the establishment of post offices across the county in the 1880s and 1890s. As neighborhoods grew and blossomed they needed their own amenities, like post offices. The neighborhood post offices for Arlington View (1885), Rosslyn (1888), Carlin Springs (1891), Cherrydale (1893), and Fort Myer (1895) all came about as a result of developers actively planning for Arlington’s domestic-centered future.\(^{305}\) Even the small grouping of homes around Ballston, growing over the course of more than eighty years, reached a critical mass in 1881 when it finally had enough residents to warrant its own post office.

Unlike their African American counterparts, these communities grew in social as well as physical isolation from one another. White neighborhoods were physically separated, dotted across the county along the trolley strops of Arlington’s growing rail lines, with expanses of still rural lands between them.\(^{306}\) While many of Arlington's black communities also grew in physical isolation, these communities were linked by ties of kinship, church, and social institutions. With the exception of Green Valley and Hall's Hill, all of Arlington's other African American enclaves and communities grew as a result of the closure of Freedman's Village. And even those two earlier communities were linked to the Village through social and political ties. Their initial interconnection at the Village meant that Arlington's black communities were linked socially despite their scattering physically across the county. But Arlington's white communities did not share

\(^{305}\) Arthur W. Trust, "Clarendon Presbyterian Church: A Partial History through 1947," (paper presented July 1, 1975), RG 6: Arlington Churches, Box 2. CLH.

\(^{306}\) Glencarlyn Citizens’ Association, “GCA Meeting Minutes,” 1922, RG 62: Glencarlyn, Box 3, File 7, CLH.
these connections. Residents either looked beyond Arlington for social connections, feeling well-served by existing accommodations in Washington to Alexandria cities, or creating amenities for their immediate residents alone, spurning broader social connections. For example, unlike Arlington’s black neighborhoods, early white churches were created exclusively by and for members of individual communities. Clarendon United Methodist in 1901, Trinity Episcopal in 1902, and several other white congregation churches formed throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. When beginning the Sunday School that would grow to become Clarendon United Methodist Church, the Overal family, for example, focused entirely on the spiritual needs of “the families of the neighborhood” but did not focus on encouraging fellowship beyond their immediate neighbors.\footnote{Dorothy Overal Hook, James F. Overal, and William J. Overall (Grandchildren of William Joseph Overal) interview by Phyllis W. Johnson. RG 6: Arlington Churches, Box 1, File: Clarendon United Methodist Church, CLH.} The founding for each of these churches tells the same tale of individuals within a community wanting to create a congregation within their own communities to serve those individual suburban communities alone. As new subdivisions formed, rather than join existing congregations, residents formed new churches.\footnote{St. George’s Episcopal Church, “100 Years, 1908-2008,” (Arlington, Virginia: 2008). RG 6: Arlington Churches, Box 4, CLH.} This isolationist attitude stemmed from the fact that, unlike black communities, white communities considered themselves to be in competition for resources. For example, as the community of Bon Air began to grow, nearby Glencarlyn did not celebrate this expansion. Glencarlyn residents worried that Bon Air’s rapid
growth would mean those residents would use and eventually take control of their school
and community resources.  

Arlington’s ever expanding suburban development meant that these suburban
villages were increasingly pushed together. As rail lines continued to expand
neighborhoods’ physical isolation became a thing of the past. By 1900 trolley lines linked
Clarendon, Ballston, Cherrydale, Bon Air, Glencarlyn, and Barcroft. The rail became
“the cleanest and quickest way between Washington and Arlington, Fort Myer,
Clarendon, Ballston, Falls Church,” and beyond.  

A swelling population also expanded the geographic boundaries between communities, bringing them in closer contact.

Existing communities, such as Clarendon, expanded through additions by new
developers, such as Robert W. Moore's "Moore's Addition to Clarendon" and Frank
Lyon's "Lyon's Addition to Clarendon". From 1900 to 1910 the County's population
rose from 6,500 to 10,000. New white residents were drawn to Arlington from Virginia
and throughout the South for the county’s suburban homes and neighborhoods with their
easy access to employment in Washington. As these communities became increasingly

309 Glencarlyn Citizens’ Association, “GCA Meeting Minutes,” 1922, RG 62: Glencarlyn, Box 3, File 7, CLH.

310 Washington-Virginia Railway, “Railway” (advertisement), 1910, Vertical File: Transportation, CLH.

311 These additions occurred between 1904 and 1919. Ruth P. Rose, “The Role of Frank Lyon and His
Associates in the Early Development of Arlington County,” Arlington Historical Magazine, Vol. 5, No. 4


linked physically boosters realized that if they were to have any chance at controlling the trajectory of Arlington’s growth, court more buyers, and make more money they needed to link these neighborhoods socially and politically. To move beyond isolated suburban villages in conflict with one another Arlington would need a politically active group of professional developers at the helm of county affairs.

Figure 16
This map shows the pre-planned grid plans now used by developers in Arlington’s new suburban village neighborhoods. HW Newby & Co., "Plat of Curtis & Burdett’s Subdivision of Carlin Springs, Alexandria County." [1887], Maps Division, LOC. <http://www.loc.gov/resource/g3884c.ct003577/>

The Era of Good Government
The Good Citizen’s League and their Clean-Up Campaign
As Arlington’s suburban villages began to transition to more interconnected neighborhoods via population and physical expansion, enterprising developers realized
that in order to control the aesthetics, class and race make-up, and wealth at stake in these communities they would need to create a system of county-wide control. Arlington’s boosters and developers increasingly turned their attention to state and county politics to continue their suburban vision.

One of the primary developers and leaders at this time was Frank Lyon. Like many Arlington developers, Lyon hailed from an elite Southern family. Born in Petersburg, Virginia, during the Civil War, he came from a long line of Old Dominion elites. When Lyon moved to Arlington County in 1889 to attend Georgetown Law School the county had rapidly expanded, but still had large sections of rural lands open for development. In this environment Lyon saw the possibility to impact the landscape and have a hand in developing the county. This goal was impacted by his family line - Lyon’s grandfather Daniel Lyon was one of the primary builders of the Petersburg area - and his experience working for the railroads. Throughout the 1880s Lyon traveled across the South as a clerk with the Richmond and Danville Railroad, the Southern Railroad, and later with the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC). This extensive

314 Land values in Arlington soared as neighborhoods were created, infrastructure was further solidified, and trolley lines continued to expand. Lands in the early 1900s were worth ten-times more than they had been just a decade before, and many contemporaries speculated that even this was an underestimation of Arlington’s true wealth and potential. Article, The Monitor, October 30, 1803.; Rose, Arlington County, Virginia, (1976) p 157.


travel influenced Lyon’s land development ideas and choices. For example, while working for the Richmond and Danville line, Lyon lived in Charlotte, North Carolina. Charlotte at this time was a changing city, moving from a rural village to a hub of finance and trading. As Charlotte became an economic hub the city developed streetcars and the beginnings of suburban neighborhoods.\footnote{Thomas Hanchett, \textit{Sorting out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975}, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998) p 47-68.} Here, Lyon could see the kind of wealth and prosperity possible in the changing environments of the New South. But in Charlotte, Lyon also learned that developments needed much more than attractive planning and access to transportation to build a successful suburb. For example, the Dilworth subdivision in Charlotte grew along the street-car line and opened to much fanfare. But ultimately Dilworth was unsuccessful for nearly a decade. This was because the neighborhood lacked the appropriate social and political support.

Frank Lyon was not the only leader in Arlington who understood the necessity of creating a controlled environment where developers dominated not only neighborhood creation but also the laws and politics which governed them. Another major influencer of Arlington County affairs was Crandal Mackey. Born in Shreveport, Louisiana, in the back of a Confederate ambulance in December of 1865, Mackey came from a prominent Southern family.\footnote{Michael Lee Pope, \textit{Shotgun Justice: One Prosecutor’s Crusade Against Crime and Corruption in Alexandria and Arlington}, (Charles, London: The History Press, 2012).} The Mackey family is filled with generations of prominent law men who made their name serving as sheriffs, lawyers, and judges in South Carolina as far back as the 1770s, when Revolutionary War hero James Mackey immigrated to the
United States. Crandal Mackey continued this tradition of service to the law. In 1885 Mackey moved to Arlington's Rosslyn neighborhood to work for the War Department while studying law at Georgetown. There he met Frank Lyon. The two men had similar social and political opinions. They served as co-vice presidents for the Bryan, Stevenson, and Rixey Club, a young men’s club for the expanding Democratic Party.

Following the end of Reconstruction, Virginia politics underwent an extended period of political shift. An initially strong interracial Republican Party lost power in Virginia in the early 1870s. In Arlington the November election of 1872 saw strong victories for both national and local Republican candidates, with President Ulysses S. Grant and County Clerk John Syphax, the African American champion of Freedman’s Village, both winning strong majorities. But soon thereafter this strength diminished. Facing stiff opposition from the increasingly powerful Democratic Party, Republicans began to move away from their commitment to rights and social progress for blacks and the lower classes. Dissatisfied with both parties, African Americans and working class whites seeking expansion in social reforms, like schools, as well as a meaningful voice in political participation, through government appointments and other means, joined together to create the Readjuster Party. Under the unlikely direction of Confederate officer and railroad executive William Mahone, the Readjuster Party controlled Virginia

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politics from 1879 to 1883.\textsuperscript{323} Though their ascendancy was brief, the Readjusters were the most successful interracial political party in the post-emancipation South.\textsuperscript{324} To counter this interracial alliance Democrats used fear mongering tactics centered around allegations of corruption, miscegenation, violence, and black political control over whites. Democratic political power solidified by 1885, the same year Mackey relocated to Arlington, with a changing of the guard in Virginia politics. In Virginia, and indeed across the South, a new generation of Democrats came to be dominated by a more cosmopolitan middle class of prominent businessmen, lawyers, and railroad men.\textsuperscript{325} In pedigree and opinion Mackey and Lyon fit in to this new political order, spearheading these kinds of political changes in Arlington County.

The two men became actively involved in Arlington County politics beginning in 1890 when they helped to establish the Good Citizen’s League.\textsuperscript{326} The League was a loosely organized social and political organization comprised of about twenty of the county’s wealthiest and most prominent residents.\textsuperscript{327} Many of their aims centered on bringing more municipal improvements to the county, recognizing a lag in public works

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{323} RL 00863, William Mahone Papers, 1853-1895, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.
\item \textsuperscript{324} Dailey, \textit{Before Jim Crow}, (2000).
\item \textsuperscript{326} Rose, \textit{Arlington County Virginia}, (1976); Pope, \textit{Shotgun Justice} (2002).
\item \textsuperscript{327} Full League membership can be found within Frank L. Ball, \textit{Mt. Olivet Methodist: Arlington’s Pioneer Church}, (Virginia: Southern Printing and Lithograph, Inc., 1965) p 99.
\end{itemize}
and regulatory laws in Arlington’s suburban communities as the area dramatically grew from a small farming hamlet to a more densely settled suburban environment.\textsuperscript{328} The League pushed for water and sewage improvements, gas and electric expansion, and road and trolley improvements.\textsuperscript{329}

The League was a part of the Southern Progressive Movement.\textsuperscript{330} Late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Americans became active in reform programs designed to solve modern problems ranging from temperance, child labor, unchecked capitalism, and corruption in politics, all under the banner of Progressivism.\textsuperscript{331} In the American South these reformers took on these same issues while being greatly influenced by the region’s geographical isolation, ideological mistrust of big government, and racial hierarchy.\textsuperscript{332} Hailing from a growing suburban area, Arlington’s leaders were a part of the drivers behind the Southern Progressive Movement rather than identifying with those in rural areas who sometimes resisted centralized reforms. Many contemporaries considered

\textsuperscript{328} Rose, \textit{Arlington County Virginia}, (1976) p 121.

\textsuperscript{329} Dorothy Ellis Lee, \textit{A History of Arlington County, Virginia}. (The Dietz Press, 1946).


\textsuperscript{332} Link, \textit{The Paradox of Southern Progressivism}, (1997).
League member William Ball, whose family founded Ballston in the 1730s, a central leader of Arlington's Progressive Movement.\textsuperscript{333}

While tackling real municipal needs, for the League in Arlington these issues were undertaken for the purpose of expanding the suburban infrastructure so that League members could control the path of that development. “Those interested in developing real estate in the County” helmed the League.\textsuperscript{334} They saw their organization as “a life or death struggle” without which “Arlington would [never] have grown into a fine residential community.” These men knew that they could not attract buyers unless they gained political control.\textsuperscript{335} The League members who were developers all created racially segregated communities. To shape public opinion in accordance with the League's focus on white, middle class suburban development, Frank Lyon purchased the weekly newspaper \textit{The Monitor}.\textsuperscript{336} Under Lyon’s leadership as owner and editor, \textit{The Monitor} pushed League policies and opinions. Framing their social and political changes in language of Progressive reforms the Democrats set out curbing African Americans’ social and political rights.\textsuperscript{337} Leaguers joined many other Virginians calling for a new state

\textsuperscript{333} Pope, \textit{Shotgun Justice}. (2012). Throughout it’s history Ballston has also been called both Birch’s Crossroads and Ball’s Crossroads. Templeman, “Ballston’s Beginnings” \textit{The Arlington Historical Magazine} (Oct 1959).

\textsuperscript{334} Frank Ball quoted in Ball, \textit{Mt. Olivet Methodist} (1965) p 97-99.

\textsuperscript{335} Rose, \textit{Arlington County, Virginia}, (1976) p 151.

\textsuperscript{336} Lyon purchased \textit{The Monitor} newspaper in 1901. Rose, \textit{Arlington County Virginia}, (1976) p 165.

constitution to limit voting rights of those opposed to their reforms to create a climate more amenable to their control.

Virginia state representatives, including those from Arlington County, sought to limit the scope of social, political, and civil rights guaranteed under the existing 1870 Constitution. Several League members were directly involved with the new Constitution - Lyon acting as the court reporter for the convention and Mackey serving as one of Arlington’s three representatives at the event. This new Constitution attempted to remove the African American voice entirely from formal politics. On June 16, 1902, Virginia's constitutional convention presented their new constitution. The Old Dominion's voting guidelines were drastically changed, and required citizens to re-register to vote. The new requirements stated that anyone over twenty-one years of age could vote only if they themselves or their parents had fought in the Civil War, had paid a minimum property tax of $1.00, which required owning more than $300 in property, and if they could interpret a part of the state's constitution. Later, a poll tax of $1.50 was added to these requirements. Poll taxes must be paid six months before an election without the courtesy of a bill or notice.


This state-wide change fit with county desires. Despite small population numbers and restricted rights for African Americans, to drum-up support through racialized fear mongering, white citizens in Arlington falsely claimed “largely black majorities” had to be overcome to ensure Arlington would be a “white man’s county” with “white man’s rule.”\textsuperscript{342} The new voter registration requirements resulted in the disfranchisement of African Americans in Arlington and across the state. “The overall effect of the new franchise requirements was to cut the total vote in half” in Virginia and lower voter turnout would continue to shape Virginia politics for decades.\textsuperscript{343} Many Progressive reformers at the time believed disenfranchisement to be necessary to help African Americans, whom they saw as woefully unprepared for the responsibilities of suffrage following Emancipation.\textsuperscript{344} The aim to disfranchise African Americans was overt. Virginia State Senator Carter Glass of Lynchburg could not have been more explicit when he explained “Discrimination! Why that is exactly what we propose… That exactly is what this convention was elected for – to discriminate to the very extremity of permissible action under the limitation of the federal Constitution, with the view to the elimination of every negro voter who can be gotten rid of.”\textsuperscript{345} This movement was not isolated to Virginia. New South progressivism led to disfranchisement of African Americans.

\textsuperscript{342} “Article,” \textit{Alexandria Gazette}, May 22, 1901. CLH.


\textsuperscript{344} Link, \textit{The Paradox of Southern Progressivism}, (1992) p 79. For then contemporary evidence of this sentiment see the writings of Thomas Dixon’s “Trilogy of Reconstruction.”

Americans in South Carolina in 1895, Louisiana in 1898, North Carolina in 1900, and Alabama in 1901.\textsuperscript{346}

Figure 17
The delegates of the Constitutional Convention. Frank Lyon, titled as the Clerk of the Committee, is photographed fourth from the left on the second to last row. Foster’s Photographic Gallery, “Members and Officers of the Constitutional Convention of Virginia, Richmond – 1901-2” (1901). Library of Virginia. Richmond, Virginia (Here after LVA).

Testing the impact of the new voting laws, the League fielded their own candidate for the first time in 1903 with the decision to nominate Crandal Mackey for Commonwealth's Attorney. This election was significant for Arlington because it was the first election following the passage of Virginia’s new constitution. Mackey faced stiff

opposition from incumbent Richard Johnston. Many saw Johnston as the enemy to the League not only for his relationship to what Leaguers deemed non-progressive politics, but also because Johnston, and his father before him, sold their land to African Americans who formed the community of Johnson's Hill. Mackey and Johnston engaged in a bitter race. With the virtual elimination of the African American vote, the election for Commonwealth’s Attorney was a testing ground to see how much the disenfranchisement of African Americans would impact the course of local elections. The contest was a dead heat. In the end Mackey won by only two votes. According to newspaper accounts of the time “the reduction of the negro vote… under the new Virginia constitution, helped Mackey wonderfully.” This marked the beginning of the end of formal African American political participation in the county. Despite charges of corruption due to the extraordinarily small margin of victory, Mackey and the League used the election as a mandate.

The decisions made at the 1902 constitutional convention about the voting rights of African Americans impacted both politics and suburban development in Arlington. In

347 Pope, Shotgun Justice (2012).


advertising literature for a new community, Arlington’s restrictive racial politics were promoted as an advantage of the area. Crandal Mackey reassured potential buyers that though there were about “one-hundred colored” voters, that white registered voters outstripped them eight to one. He further highlighted that, beyond this advantage in numbers, “the strictness of the election laws has improved the quality and character of the voter” by preventing these individuals from voting via the new, stringent voting laws.

Figure 18
This image shows saloons in Rosslyn Virginia, 1903. These were the kinds of businesses Lyon, Mackey, and the Good Citizen’s League sought to remove from the county in order to create their ideal bedroom communities. Rosslyn, 1903, Vertical File: Lyon Park, CLH.

The links between race and League policies about development and reform can also be seen in the League's dramatic and violent “clean up” of Rosslyn. Beginning in the 1870s Rosslyn’s location immediately across the Aqueduct Bridge from Washington and

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about one mile from Fort Myer made it a hotspot for gambling and saloons. But Rosslyn was also home to an African American enclave. Rather than seeing a small working class black community, how Rosslyn’s black residents would define themselves, League members characterized the enclave as “a gathering of shacks” that were “inhabited by the riff-raff” of the county. The League wanted to work against Rosslyn’s African American enclave “until the whole crowd was wiped out.” In its place they hoped to “establish a community with a high standard of living” and “improve this area” for their own benefit. With the protection of the law and political power in their corner Mackey and the League decided to violently overthrow the less desirable elements in their county.


On Sunday, May 30, 1904, Mackey and members of the Good Citizen’s League armed themselves and set out to clean up Rosslyn once and for all. Mackey and the League set out to reform Rosslyn in order to send a message to the county as a whole about exactly what their rule meant. Mackey sent letters to thirty county residents asking them to rally to his aid. In total a posse of six embarked on the raid – Mackey, Lyon, and other League members Will Douglas, Lemuel Marcey, Luther Walter, and T.J. DeLashmutt.\textsuperscript{357} They met in Washington, D.C. and boarded the Mount Vernon Railroad into Rosslyn. Mackey deputized the men and handed out several sacks of weapons on the trolley – including sledgehammers, axes, and a sawed-off shotgun. The armed men

disembarked at Rosslyn and headed to their first target, a “building in which all kinds of games were in the habit of being conducted.” Bursting in on the saloon resulted in chaos and violence: as patrons attempted to flee “it did not bother [the posse] whether they left through the open doors or the closed windows.” Next the raiders moved on to Eddie Heath’s bar, Heath’s Place. But Heath would not let Mackey and his League men enter his business without a fight, threatening the men with a shotgun from the door of his business. After a brief scuffle Mackey disarmed Heath and the raiding party entered Heath’s Place. The men used their weapons to hack up bars and slot machines, destroy alcohol, and arrest employees and patrons. “Glassware was smashed and the contents of the bottles, demijohns, and decanters was allowed to flow, giving the room the appearance of having passed through a Potomac flood.” During this break up, the League’s racial politics played a central role. The scene was violent, but the -event saw only one shot fired. A League member fired his gun at the back of a fleeing black man, who luckily was not struck.

While temperance and fears about political corruption from gambling interests were real concerns for League members and similar progressive reformers across the South, their obsessions with respectability and lawlessness were not color-blind. These


lawless elements were invariably tied to African American neighborhoods. County residents did indeed hope the League would be successful and “zealous in wiping the stain from the fair name of our community.” Many complained that saloons and gambling houses were not segregated. Throughout these decades housing, recreation, and indeed life generally became increasingly segregated across the county, state, and South. But at these bawdy houses “there are no distinctions made on account of class or color.” Racial fears of integrated drinking and socializing sparked anti-saloon Progressive policies throughout the South. These kinds of interactions across the color line were a threat to the kind of New South order Arlington’s white leaders wanted to impose. As a result African American neighborhoods throughout the South were attacked at this time under accusations that they were hotbeds of dangerous and illegal activities.

Saloons were not only integrated zones, they provided a source of employment for local residents of Rosslyn’s black enclave. John Richard Bowen owned and operated one of the saloons in Rosslyn, the first black-owned saloon in the county. During this

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362 The opinion that these black communities were entirely made of criminal elements that required the League men to rehabilitate them was reiterated in histories of the area. Lee, A History of Arlington County, Virginia. (1946).


reform push John Bowen lost his business. Without the saloon to sustain them, Bowen, his wife Rachel, and their five young children left Rosslyn. They were fortunate however in that they were able to use the extended networks of Arlington’s black community to land on their feet. The Bowens were members of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Queen City and had extended kin-networks in the county.367 With the support system of church congregation and relatives, the Bowens relocated to Johnson’s Hill, choosing a property across the street from their grandmother and in the same area as another relative, Sarah Thompson.

Even though only half a dozen arrests were made during the infamous raid of Rosslyn’s saloons by Mackey and his League men, a clear message was sent to the county. There was a new power structure in town made up of an active ruling class with an eye to suburban development. With this work Arlington’s leaders continued to move beyond suburban villages and toward a county-wide fabric of interconnected communities in an attempt to push out all undesirable elements. “With the reclamation of Rosslyn, commercial and real estate development proceeded almost immediately.”368

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Suburban Boom

From Villages to Suburb

From 1900 to 1910, seventy new neighborhoods and communities developed in Arlington. During the same decade the County’s population continued to expand from 6,400 to 10,000. Boosters and planners actively courted this population by promoting the clean-up campaign and using their new civic power to push more development. Arlington’s politicians and developers overlapped immensely. Once county leaders controlled Arlington’s government they used Arlington’s existing suburban village model and rail networks to expand even further towards an interconnected suburban environment. In 1903 Crandal Mackey purchased nine acres to develop the new community of Maywood. Mackey chose a location in western Arlington along the Great Falls and Old Dominion railroad line. Advertisements boasted that Maywood sat “only one car fare to any part of the city.” For a decade Mackey worked to subdivide and sell lands in Maywood for an average price of $524. By 1915 approximately 39 smaller, late-Victorian homes were constructed in Maywood. This development grew from Mackey’s active cultivation of his neighborhood. In 1907 he published the book A


373 The line opened in 1906, but was under construction when Mackey began his subdivision. Silberman, et. al., “Maywood,” Arlington Historical Magazine, (Oct. 1987) p 47.

brief history of alexandria county which served as a propaganda piece for the strengths of living in the growing suburbs of arlington.375

mackey was not alone in taking an active role in both politics and development at this time. attorney and superintendent of schools james e. clements sold lots for $200 each with $5 down and $5 a month in the area around fort myer.376 a large part of his advertisement strategy revolved around the clean-up campaign and white, middle class, democrat hegemony of the area.377 league member charles i. simms developed several properties within the glencarlyn neighborhood where he also resided.378 a lawyer by trade, simms overtly linked his suburban ambitions to the rise of political and economic control of the county by league members like himself when advertising his neighborhoods. he boasted that upon his arrival to the county in 1894 “he immediately exerted an active interest in the political and economic affairs of the county, being particularly active in the crusade against gambling.” simms said that because of this involvement he was able to create some of “the choicest suburban properties”, instrumental in “bringing to the county some of its leading citizens.” frank lyon also used this tactic to sell his properties.

375 mackey, a brief history of alexandria county, virginia. (1907).

376 rose, arlington county, virginia (1976) p 157.; james e. clements, “lots” (advertisement) ca. 1900.; mackey, a brief history of alexandria county, virginia, (1907) p 42.


378 charles i. simms, “simms real estate” (advertisement), ca. 1900.; mackey, a brief history of alexandria county, virginia, (1907) p 46.
During the late 1910s and early 1920s Frank Lyon and his Lyon & Fitch Realty Company subdivided and sold 465 acres in Arlington – nearly three percent of all the land in the county. In accordance with the tenets of the City Beautiful Movement, “Lyon stressed the virtues of the family and clean living, and hoped that developing neighborhoods that stressed these values would improve this area.” These acres were divided between his two communities: Lyon Park and Lyon Village. The Lyon properties helped to transform Arlington’s built environment. After cutting his teeth on an addition to the growing subdivisions within Clarendon, Lyon set his sights on creating an entirely pre-planned subdivision where he would be able to control all elements of the environment.

After years developing smaller additions to existing communities, Lyon began his creation of a standardized, middle class environment in 1919 with the creation of Lyon Park. The larger of his two developments at 300 acres, Lyon Park was “the largest real estate development in Virginia” upon its opening. From the offices of Lyon Park Station in Clarendon Frank Lyon and his business partners within Lyon and Fitch Realty, C.W. Fitch and Charles W. Smith, Lyon’s son-in-law, actively sold their pre-platted community.

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For his next project, Lyon Village, Lyon focused on adding an upper-middle-class neighborhood to Arlington. Though they only emerged four years apart, these two communities emerged at the shift between the rail and the personal automobile. The Park’s development and advertisements focused on its connection to the Vinson railway.
station, whereas the Village highlighted the community’s road connections to Washington, just fifteen minutes by car across the upcoming Memorial Bridge.\(^{383}\) In 1923 when Lyon Village began, Lyon sought to make a name for his community in the “substantial suburban existence” that he himself had helped to create in Arlington. Like Lyon Park and many of the other suburbs of the time, Lyon Village had standardized, pre-platted lots, each with 50 foot frontages, and included a park and community center for community residents.\(^{384}\)

Many of these new communities found success in seeking out members of the new middle class, including builders, bookkeepers, lawyers, and teachers.\(^{385}\) But, a great portion of the success and growth of these communities relied on the growth of the federal government and the successful courting of federal workers to come to Arlington.\(^{386}\) Administrations and federal staffs that first grew in Reconstruction continued to expand with World War One and remained high following the conflict, greatly expanding federal employment. As the federal government continued to expand “the pressure of population upon area and upon subsistence in the District of Columbia is

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\(^{384}\) Ballard, “Historical Analysis of Lyon Park,” (1988), CLH.


\(^{386}\) Mackey, A Brief History of Alexandria County, Virginia. (1907) p 36.
forcing her people into [Arlington] County,” where "blocks of small houses within reach of... government clerks" were busily being constructed.387

Frank Corbett’s "Corbett Tract," originally targeted at upper-middle class residents able to buy large lots and Victorian homes, was rebranded as "Barcroft" to actively court federal workers with smaller lots and Cottage style homes.388 Carlin Springs syndicate advertised “to all men and women of moderate means, or who receive stated salaries” for their $1,000 cottages.389 Federal government workers accounted for the vast majority of the residents for the Maywood community. Clement’s development in Fort Myer wooed potential buyers by highlighting that its location makes “it especially convenient to employees of the government.”390 When the Krigbaum family decided to relocate from Southeast Washington in 1911 Samuel Krigbaum, born shortly before the move, recalled that his parents chose to move to “safer and less crowded suburban Virginia.”391 Like many of their neighbors, they chose a bungalow in Lyon Village near the trolley, allowing household head Orlando Krigbaum to continue to work for the Bureau of Printing and Engraving.


389 Carlin Springs Syndicate, “Carlin Springs” (advertisement), 1887, RG 8: Glencarlyn, Box 1, File 1, CLH.


391 Mr. Samuel Krigbaum, interview by Mary Ellen Didion, February 25, 1988, Vertical File: Lyon Village, CLH.
These new and expanding communities were the result of increased attention and investment by developers and boosters on the county-wide level. This process began at the turn of the century and grew throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century. The continued development linked the County together as one suburban environment, resulting in the end of the separate and isolated suburban village model. This can be seen through the 1914 Suburban Control Ordinance which required all new developments to get approval by the County Engineer.\(^{392}\) This was meant to ensure that the developments’ aesthetics, amenities, and vision fit with the county’s overall trajectory and could be incorporated into the fabric of the county beyond that subdivision’s borders. This legislation was approved by the County Board of Supervisors Edward Duncan, Robert L. Walker, and W.C. Wibirt, with the influence of county politicians Crandal Mackey, Treasurer E. Wade Ball, of the Ball family, and Clerk George H. Rucker, a builder and frequent contractor on Lyon’s developments.\(^{393}\)

At the same time that these boosters were actively creating neighborhoods the residents of their communities began to embrace their aims of active involvement in county-wide politics. As Arlington’s suburban neighborhoods expanded their residents began creating community organizations. Contemporary observers boasted “the county abounds in... subdivisions each having its association of citizens who exercise a decided


influence upon county affairs.”

Alcova Heights neighborhood advertisements encouraged future residents to "participate in the development of a civic community, to share your responsibility in the maintenance of our government, to be a citizen and a voter” through participation in these organizations.

Between 1910 and 1914 community associations came into being in Cherrydale, Fort Myer, Rosemont, Ballston, Court House, and Clarendon. In two years Clarendon’s Association grew from forty members to 350, making it the largest citizen’s association in the state of Virginia.

To this end other community organizations developed. Many white Arlingtonians were slower, with some exceptions, than their African American counterparts in creating schools, churches, fraternal organizations, and businesses within their communities, for their communities. Perhaps they considered themselves well served by options open to them in the nearby metropolitan areas of Washington and Alexandria. Or perhaps their trajectory from suburban village to cohesive suburban community evolved more slowly than their black counterparts who had once lived together in Freedman’s Village. But much like their creation of suburban communities, once white Arlingtonians began this kind of social growth their development moved exceptionally quickly. White residents established branches of Mason and Patron’s League fraternal organization, as well as the Eastern Star ladies auxiliary. Community stores developed alongside these new social

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394 Mackey, A Brief History of Alexandria County, Virginia, (1907) p 26.

395 American Realty Exchange “Alcova Heights” (advertisement), ca. 1915, Vertical File: Alcova Heights, CLH.

institutions. Expanding beyond community stores, by 1920 Clarendon even featured two large chain stores, a host of smaller stores, including a barber shop and auto-supply store, five grocers, five physicians, one dentist, and several businesses linked to the housing market, including building contractors and realtors.\textsuperscript{397} These social and economic links helped create an interconnected suburban environment amongst residents, reinforcing the work undertaken by Arlington's politicians and developers towards that end.

Throughout these periods of growth and centralization of county affairs, the county’s odd relationship to Alexandria City continued to loom. After the county separated from the city in 1870 Arlington’s wealth and growth boomed. Throughout the early 1910s as Arlington’s suburban environment expanded, Alexandria saw the true value of the lands they had lost and began to position themselves to take land from the county.\textsuperscript{398} In two court cases concluding in 1915 and 1929 the state’s Supreme Court of Appeals deemed that “it is necessary and expedient that the corporate limits of the City of Alexandria should be extended.”\textsuperscript{399} With these new boundaries Arlington lost 3,000 acres to Alexandria. This significant loss of territory, resources, rail-lines, sources of revenues, communities, and tax base shook Arlington’s boosters. They realized that an even more


powerful county government with even more cross-community control must be created if they were to control the county's development and suburban vision.

Figure 21

Impacts on Black Arlington
Beyond the impacts on black Rosslyn, all of these political, physical, and ideological changes in the white community had substantial impacts on all of Arlington’s black
communities. The physical growth of so many white communities meant that new neighborhoods encroached on existing black communities. That was the case in Queen City. In 1910 the Arlington-based Barbor Williams and Co. Real Estate and Insurance group began subdividing lots for the white Highland Park neighborhood.\(^{400}\) Developers realized that the land around Queen City, “three and one-half miles from and 450 feet higher than Washington City… situated on both steam and electric roads” created an ideal location for a “beautiful suburban subdivision.”\(^{401}\) Arlington’s black community’s unique existence in desirable areas meant that, according to Highland Park’s advertisements, these black families had access to the views and “cool air” that helped “make life worth living.” But it also meant that white land developers sought out these same areas, putting Arlington’s black communities at risk of white encroachment.

Beyond encroaching physically on lands previously designated as African American, these communities also established housing types distinct from black Arlington. The distinct aesthetic choices between made by black and white residents established racial inconsistencies visible across neighborhoods. These conflicting visions of preferred suburban environments provided whites with allegedly non-racial grounds to attack black suburban communities as undesirable. In Arlington’s African American communities homes were predominately constructed by individual builders. This resulted in more diversity in type and a slower development for a community generally. But in


\(^{401}\) Mackey, *A Brief History of Alexandria County, Virginia.* (1907) p 48.
Arlington’s new and expanding white communities entire neighborhoods were subdivided and homes were built at once. Frank Lyon’s developments for example went beyond just a centralized community design to create a streamlined environment with homogenous houses. “Ready cut houses” provided residents with a few choices of styles to be built by professional builders with relationships to Lyon. Many Lyon Park homes were constructed as somewhat modest wood frame Queen Anne and Bungalow. Later builders used suburbanized iterations of the Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival styles. Similarly, the homes developed in Lyon Village were professionally built, single family, large, brick homes restricted to the Classic, Colonial, Mission, or Tudor revival styles. This standardization was not unique to Lyon's subdivisions. In Highland Park for example the Barbor Williams Company not only subdivided lands for the entire neighborhood at once, they also constructed all the homes for their purchasers. Arlington's subdivisions were becoming increasingly standardized at this time. This standardization existed within subdivision borders, with uniform lots, layouts, and home choices, and across communities, creating an increasingly uniform environment across Arlington's new neighborhoods. This similarity was true across communities because

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many were constructed and designed by the same developers and builders. For example, Merton E. Church, a pharmacist by trade, developed homes in Clarendon, Ballston, Livingston Heights, and Falls Church.406

These homes also tracked more closely with national trends than Arlington’s black communities. This can be seen most clearly with Arlington’s Sears and Roebuck houses. Sears mail-order houses were extremely popular in the white community. Some of the most popular models in Arlington were the large eight-room Vallonia model, the Crescent and Westley Bungalow models, and the Hathaway cottage model.407 These homes tracked with national trends. The popularity of these houses for white Arlington began almost immediately upon Sears offering their homes for sale. In 1908, the year Sears began marketing their homes, the Newman family of Cherrydale purchased the blue-print and materials for their four-square style Sears home for $1,000.408 George Robert Jackson, Newman worked as an engineer in the District.409 Before moving the family to Arlington to build their own home the family lived in southwest Washington. The Newmans chose to modify their Sears four-square model to meet their needs as a


family by turning the downstairs bedroom into the kitchen and making the kitchen an additional room to the rear of the house.

Delivery of large scale building materials required access to rail lines in order to obtain a Sears house, making Arlington’s ready access to rail lines throughout the county helpful to their endeavors. The neighborhoods of Rosslyn, Cherrydale, Barcroft, Glencarlyn, Fort Myer Heights, Clarendon, Lyon Park, and Lyon Village, among others, were all serviced by the area’s expansive rail service, including the Washington and Old Dominion line in north Arlington. In addition to access, Sears houses may have been so popular in Arlington because of the county’s close proximity to the Sears sales offices

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in Washington, D.C. where residents could get more information about houses and styles beyond the catalog. Sears houses were so popular that in 1927 Sears featured county resident John L. White of Clarendon in a national advertisement announcing how pleased he was with his Hamilton model Sears home.

Though black and white Arlingtonians alike had access to these services, there is no evidence that African Americans in Arlington purchased Sears houses in a manner similar to their white neighbors. Perhaps Arlington’s African American residents did not enjoy the style of mail-order homes. But from 1908 until 1940 Sears and Roebuck mail-order catalog sold four-hundred different styles of homes. With so many models to account for varying tastes, this seems unlikely. Additionally, individuals could modify the Sears homes they purchased, as the Newmans did, allowing for further personalization of these diverse designs. Perhaps price served as a barrier to entry for some of Arlington’s African American purchasers. Materials for White’s Hamilton model cost between $1,023 and $2,385, depending on additions and style choices. But, recall that the Volins paid $1,100 in building supplies alone for their Queen City home. And African Americans in Arlington had access to loans through African American fraternal organizations, like the Odd Fellows, in the County, as well as from nearby Washington’s

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412 Sears, Roebuck & Co., “Model Home No. 102 - The Hamilton,” *Book Of Modern Homes*, (1908) p 12. This home model was sold from 1908 to 1914.

strong black community.\textsuperscript{414} Additionally, the diversity of models also meant diversity in price point, making a purely economic explanation unlikely. Despite the possible reasons ranging from personal tastes to access to funds, the fact remains that the mail-order house played a major part in Arlington’s expanding white suburban landscape while it remained almost absent from Arlington’s black communities. This difference in aesthetic choices meant that moving forward as white Arlingtonains sought to further a streamlined and consistent vision for their county they would see Arlington’s black homes as different not only because of their residents but because of their styles, providing an allegedly color-blind critique that black suburbanization did not fit with the county’s residential aesthetics.

As each of these communities grew and expanded they also created themselves in opposition to Arlington’s pre-established African American communities by ensuring they were whites-only zones. Nearly all of Arlington’s new communities contained restrictive covenants. Lyon Park's restrictive covenant stated “neither said property nor any part thereof nor any interest therein shall be sold or leased to any one not of the Caucasian race.”\textsuperscript{415} Alcova Heights covenants stated that “no portion of said land shall be sold or leased to anyone of African descent.”\textsuperscript{416} Barcroft did not feature restrictive covenants in their community’s home sales.\textsuperscript{417} Instead, African Americans were kept out

\textsuperscript{414} Yellin, \textit{Racism in the Nation’s Service}, (2013).


\textsuperscript{416} Alcova Improvement Company, “Deed,” 1916, CLH.

through unofficial channels of mutual understanding. Bylaws for the Barcroft School and Civic League formally articulated this exclusion, stating that membership be limited to residents “who are members of the Caucasian race.”

This racial make-up was a big selling point for Arlington's white neighborhoods. A Clarendon advertisement from 1915 advertised not only the community's access to transportation, views, and suburban homes but also that there was "not a colored resident within the borders." When establishing the Town of Potomac in 1908, a company town for Potomac Yard railway workers in south-eastern Arlington, town promoters advertised it as the first exclusively white neighborhood in the state. Lyon Village’s advertisements ensured potential buyers that their beautiful suburban community was “destined to become a community of particular people” as it was “reserved for the white race alone.” This assertion comes on the heels of stating the community is “restricted against objectionable structures from the standpoint of architectural harmony.” This highlights how community planners saw standardization in the built environment and racial homogeneity as two parts of one greater whole for improving and controlling the future growth of Arlington to create exactly the kinds of environment they thought ideal. Once these two elements were mastered they could “provide ample assurance of the

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integrity and permanence of land values” for themselves and Arlington’s new residents into the future.

**Conclusion**
White Arlingtonians began creating suburban neighborhoods at the close of the Reconstruction era. Though slower than their African American counterparts to develop communities and move on from Arlington’s rural past, once whites in Arlington County realized the potential of the area for suburban homes and development to fulfill the need of Washington workers they developed dozens of new communities. Rail line expansion aided this development throughout the county. With “electric railways at almost every door and costly villas on every hill” Arlington County moved into the future. Suburban villages, centrally planned within their borders but isolated socially and physically from one another, dotted the county.

But more than just commuter connections were needed to spark suburban development in Arlington. Arlington’s boosters and developers became actively involved in state and county politics. They understood that being able to create a lucrative investment required control of county affairs through political control. Leaders like Crandal Mackey, Frank Lyon, and the other businessmen-boosters of the Good Citizen’s League undertook political reform movements designed to put themselves in control of Arlington’s growth and development. This increased control allowed boosters to move on from isolated suburban villages to begin the creation of one contiguous suburban environment. These aims were increasingly embraced by Arlington’s white citizens who

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also moved from seeing their communities in competition with neighboring areas to being a part of a county-wide whole with shared laws, institutions, and aims. In 1914 the first steps toward this level of control became a reality with the Suburban Control Ordinance, the first piece of legislation controlling suburban development on the county-wide level. Now planners and boosters were ready to expand their vision for the county even further as they moved into the first decades of the twentieth century.

Their particular vision for the county was one based on a centralized, standardized, pre-planned environment filled with the latest styles of middle class homes. A large part of this developmental vision relied on an environment dominated by all-white communities. To obtain the political control necessary to shape county politics Arlington and Virginia politicians worked together to remove African Americans from formal politics with Virginia’s 1902 Constitution. With this new racially restrictive constitution removing African Americans from formal political participation Arlington’s Good Citizen League reform candidates such as Crandal Mackey began to “clean-up” the county by attacking saloons and gambling houses which served integrated clientele, served as one source of black business, and existed in Rosslyn along with an African American enclave. Once they were in control of county politics and had undertaken their clean-up campaign, these men as well as other enterprising developers took an active role building and advertising streamlined, centralized, and pre-planned suburban communities. These ever expanding communities were increasingly linked physically and socially to the neighborhoods around them, moving beyond the suburban village model. In advertising these new communities Arlington’s strict racialized control of county
politics and whites-only buying policies were featured selling points. Because whites in Arlington were slower to create these suburban communities they were forced to develop around pre-existing African American communities which often existed in locations developers thought of as ideal. This would lead to conflicts moving forward.

The kinds of environments created within these whites-only zones were distinct from their black counterparts. White Arlingtonians were more likely to live in communities platted, planned, and built at once by a central developer. This made them more standardized than their black counterparts. The homes constructed in these communities were also more likely to be built by professional builders and fit with national trends, such as Sears mail-order houses which were very popular for white Arlingtonians but are virtually unseen in the neighborhoods of black Arlington. This meant that, as Arlington continued to develop, differences in aesthetic between black and white became increasingly acute, giving white developers something beyond race to point to as they sought to take blacks’ lands for themselves, just as they had done with the closing of Freedman’s Village. These same trends continued and amplified moving forward, as Arlington’s leaders continued to push the county towards a densely settled, white, streamlined vision whose development and profits they controlled. These trends had profound effects on black Arlingtonians.
CHAPTER THREE - "SO THAT WE MAY OCCUPY OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE": POPULATION BOOM AND CHANGING REALITIES FOR BLACK ARLINGTONIANS

Figure 23
This map shows the increasingly subdivided and suburban landscape of Arlington at the turn of the twentieth century. Howell and Taylor, “Map of Alexandria County, Virginia for the Virginia Title Co.,” [1900], Map Division, LOC.

423 Elks, Proclamation, 1927, RG 11: Papers of Edmund C. Fleet, Box 3, File 7, CLH.
Realizing the potential of the county as a suburban residential environment, Arlington’s white leaders created multiple suburban communities. Disconnected by physical space and developed by individual boosters without one central vision, these white communities created distinct suburban villages. Throughout the first thirty years of the twentieth century, Arlington’s white boosters, planners, and politicians expanded their suburban visions of pre-planned, white, middle class communities. Their visions moved from community level regulation to broader attempts at control through county-wide legislative changes which governed where and how communities and their people could live and grow. The physical expansion of new and existing white communities, and the laws governing them, continued to increase until Arlington was a “thickly settled,” continuous suburban environment.\textsuperscript{424}

As these realities changed, Arlington’s black families and communities had to continually adapt. As Arlington’s white leaders entrenched their social and political power, and white communities transitioned from suburban villages to a densely settled suburban environment, local black communities took a path that was similar but distinct. The suburban village model of Arlington’s white communities never fit with the realities of black communities in Arlington. Though neighborhoods sometimes grew up in physical isolation from one another, such as Hall’s Hill in north-western Arlington or enclaves dotted across the county, they were never socially isolated the way white suburban village communities were. A result of the Freedman’s Village diaspora,

\textsuperscript{424} Bennett v. Garrett, 132 VA 397, (Opinion June 15, 1922); Cases Decided in the Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia, Vol. CXXXII, (Richmond: David Bottom, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1922) p 400.
Arlington’s black churches and other community institutions were all cross-community organizations which were built for, supported by, and in support of black Arlingtonians from across the county.\footnote{African Americans from nearby Fairfax County and Alexandria City also attended these churches. Alexandria City Government, \textit{Finding The Fort: A History of an African American Neighborhood in Northern Virginia, 1860s-1960s}, by Krystyn R. Moon, (Virginia, September 2014).} Even community institutions that provided services on a more narrow community level, like small stores and schools, also provided links across communities by serving those beyond their borders.

Arlington’s changing realities towards a more densely settled environment with more racially motivated legislation joined local and state-level legal changes to establish residential segregation laws that were policed by increasingly hostile white Arlingtonians. With these new realities, black Arlingtonians used new and pre-existing community institutions, familial relations, employment, and new strategies to preserve communities in an attempt to maintain a space for themselves in suburban Arlington. This occurred during a time when community numbers declined as a result of outside pressures and Arlington’s black population remained fairly stable. In 1900 Arlington’s African American population represented 38\% of the total population at 2,467 out of a total population of 6,430. By 1930 the county’s total population rose to 26,615, while the African American population remained fairly consistent at 3,337, now only accounting for about 12\% of the county’s population.\footnote{C.B. Rose, \textit{Arlington County, Virginia: A History}, (Virginia: Arlington Historical Society, 1976) p 247-248.}

\textbf{Multiple Generations of Community Organization}
Arlington County lost over 3,000 acres in the annexations to Alexandria City in 1915 and 1929, 65% of Jefferson District’s total land and tax base.\textsuperscript{427} Despite this loss of land, more and more white communities continued to grow and push against Arlington’s black communities and enclaves. But following these significant losses of land, Arlington leaders realized that they needed to expand their control over the county’s growth beyond the community level if they were going to be able to remain in control of their county. In response, Arlington’s white boosters, developers, and politicians sought to create a unified suburban environment through increased zoning, planning, and municipal improvement laws. These laws were created in opposition to black communities in an attempt to take those lands for themselves. In the state of Virginia all local, county-level legal powers must be specifically granted by the Virginia General Assembly, and so these leaders also vigorously pursued state-level changes to provide the county more influence to govern itself and its people.

At the same time that white Arlington communities grew and expanded their social and political power over the region, the black communities that had been created or expanded following the closure of Freedman’s Village continued to solidify their place within the county as strong, black neighborhoods. The strengthening of these communities was due in large part to Arlington’s black community institutions and their stable population.

New churches were formed while existing church buildings and congregations grew. These churches were pillars of the community, providing religious, social, and community support. Though they grew up within specific communities, churches provided cross-community links. When St. John’s Baptist Church was founded in the Butler-Holmes neighborhood in 1903, for example, it was “formed to provide for the people within the [Green Valley], Johnson’s Hill,” and Butler-Holmes communities, pointing to the more inclusive and broader reaching social institutions of Arlington’s black communities compared to their white counterparts.\(^{428}\)

Neighborhood founder Henry Holmes and his children were founding members of St. John’s Baptist Church.\(^{429}\) Church institutions were family affairs, allowing entire families to participate together. At Green Valley’s AME Zion Methodist Church, three generations of the Rowe family worshiped together. Community leader William A. Rowe, who relocated to that community after Freedman’s Village’s closure, worshiped there with his entire family. Rowe’s son-in-law Thomas Henry West, who married Anne Rowe in the late 1880s, was also an early supporter of the church. In 1922 when the church’s original 1876 structure was in need of improvements he and other community leaders, including Solomon H. Thompson, each donated $500 for the church’s construction.\(^{430}\) Rowe’s son George K. Rowe, his wife Martha Ellen Burke, and their

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428 Marcia M. Miller, *St. John’s Baptist Church: Arlington, Virginia*, (Virginia: St. John’s Baptist Church Pamphlet, October 31, 1988), RG 6: Arlington County Churches, Box 4, CLH.

429 Ibid.

nine children were also congregation members.\textsuperscript{431} George Rowe served as a deacon at AME Zion. The church was often the first place Arlington’s black leaders began to serve the community. Edmund Fleet, Jr. was the third generation of Fleets in Arlington – his grandfather Hiram had migrated to Freedman’s Village in 1865, where his father Edmund was born. Like his grandfather and father before him, the younger Fleet was particularly active in the community, beginning his life of participation and leadership at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church.

Young Arlingtonians coming of age in the first decades of the twentieth century also gained community connections through schools. Black schools were created or expanded in Green Valley, Rosslyn, Johnson’s Hill, and Hall’s Hill.\textsuperscript{432} Kemper School in Green Valley grew in 1903 from a simple one-room, wood-frame building to a much larger four room, two-story brick building. Local Green Valley resident Noble N. Thomas built this new school, making Kemper School the first public building in Arlington designed and constructed by an African American. Schools acted as inter- and intra- community institutions. They fostered cross-county connections by hosting community social functions. This became a necessity because new laws and practices made all recreation in Arlington County segregated during the early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{433}

White-only recreation zones included Luna Park amusement park, Arlington’s bathing

\textsuperscript{431} “History of the Rowe Family,” (Unpublished Paper, N.D.), Vertical File: Black History 1, CLH.


beach on the Potomac, and Carlin Springs picnic ground. In response to a lack of services provided by public and private entities in Arlington, Arlington’s black institutions provided youth and family activities.

These schools were not without their problems. Most black schools had poorer accommodations, larger class sizes, and fewer grades than their white counterparts. Arlington’s parents and leaders continued to push for more and better schools for the children of their community. Many from Arlington’s second generation of middle class families contributed to this development as teachers. For example, all three of Harry W. Gray’s daughters, Julia, Sara, and Martha, served as teachers in the county. Henry Holmes’ son Sumner and his daughter Marie were both community leaders, working as teachers at Kemper School beginning in 1904. These teachers joined parents to lobby Arlington for improved schools, attempting to match the opportunities provided to white children. Since the creation of their first communities, Arlington’s black population had sought neighborhood schools as part of their community development and to create a protected space for their children to grow and learn. This lack of in-county education impacted the generation that came of age in Arlington in the early 1900s, shaping how they felt about the importance of local education for their own children. In 1913 Kemper Principal Ella Boston petitioned Arlington County Superintendent for the creation of an eighth grade. Before that time black students who completed the seventh grade must either travel into the District to attend one of Washington’s black junior and senior high

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schools, or, as was the case for many students, leave school and join the workforce. Boston’s petition was successful and she was able to open an eighth grade, the same level of education then provided to white students in the county. Kemper’s first eighth grade class included Henson Thompson, a fourth generation Green Valley resident and son of community leader Solomon H. Thompson.\textsuperscript{435} Each school was also connected to Arlington’s black middle class through the scholarship programs of county-wide fraternal organizations. Despite disparities in accommodations, by the 1910s each of Arlington’s three magisterial districts had at least one school to provide for the education of African Americans.\textsuperscript{436} This was significant because Arlington’s population was very young, filled primarily with young families and their children. In Queen City in 1910, children between the ages of 8 and 15 made up half of the total community population.\textsuperscript{437}

Like the churches and the schools, the Odd Fellows and the Masons continued to grow. Other organizations, such as the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World Lodge in 1911, were established and expanded in Arlington. It was not uncommon for individuals to be involved with several or all of these organizations, helping to foster a tightknit community. Edmund C. Fleet, Jr. was as a member or officer in Arlington’s Odd Fellows, Elks, and Masons. The new members of these organizations drew from the new generation of black Arlingtonians. Many membership rolls feature

\textsuperscript{435} Taylor, Bridge Builders of Nauck/ Green Valley, (2015).


several generations of families. Father and son Edmund C. Fleet, Sr. and Jr. and extended kin Henry, Ammon, and Ammon, Jr. Holmes served together as Elks. This was also true for the women’s auxiliaries, the Daughter Elk and Household of Ruth lodges, which formed for the first time during these decades. For example, Edmund Sr.’s wife Mary E. Fleet was an officer and founding member of the Daughter Elks.

The new generation of Arlington leaders was well educated in local schools and grew in an interconnected community, filled with family and institutions supporting their confidence and leadership. The core values of Arlington’s black families and community “emphasized academic education and church membership, as well as civic knowledge and personal competence.” George and Esther Cooper of Green Valley valued education so dearly that they saved to purchase a set of encyclopedias for their three daughters before the family had either electricity or indoor plumbing in their home.

Under their leadership Arlington’s black institutions provided for the diverse needs of their community and became increasingly political. With changes to Virginia’s state constitution in 1902, which limited black voting rights, Arlington’s community

438 Henry and Ammon are brothers. Elks, “Elk Membership,” 1924, RG 11: Papers of Edmund C. Fleet, Box 3, CLH.


organizations took on more political issues. These organizations took active stances on questions of black civil rights. In their annual “Proclamation,” the Elks announced that “we demand more civil rights for which we must fight so that we may occupy our rightful place as citizens of our great country.”

In June of 1918 the first rural branch of the NAACP formed in Falls Church with the express goals of working against discrimination and segregation. The Town of Falls Church straddled the line between Arlington and neighboring Fairfax counties from its founding in 1875 until 1936, at which point the area of East Falls Church which fell within Arlington was ceded to the county. Falls Church was thought of as “the largest incorporated community within” the county.

Piggy-backing off of the formation of this local NAACP, in 1920 Green Valley community leaders, including Noble N. Thomas, spearheaded the creation of the Arlington County Colored Citizen’s organization. This association was another early cross-county organization for African Americans with the express purpose of increasing social, political, and civil rights for Arlington’s black residents. So, even though few black Arlingtonians were active in formal politics, they remained civic minded.

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442 Elks, Proclamation, 1927, RG 11: Papers of Edmund C. Fleet, Box 3, File 7: Minutes and Resolutions 1924-5, CLH.


444 Because of this, the development of the Falls Church branch of the NAACP is very much connected to Arlington’s black community. John F. Bethune, Mayor to Senator Frank L. Ball, January 31, 1930, RG 12: Papers of Frank L. Ball, Box 1, File 1, CLH.

The institutions, connections, and familial ties first forged at Freedman’s Village continued to grow and expand even as a new generation of residents who never experienced living together in one, central community came of age. Arlington’s new generations of African American residents continued cross-community connections because they were raised in a socially tight-knit community, even though they lived in geographically separated suburban communities. The continued development and interconnectivity of black Arlington’s community institutions was due in large part to the stability of their residents. Residential stability and support for institutions were self-reinforcing. The children of the freedmen who came to Arlington, many of whom were born in the county, continued to live in the communities where they were raised. Rosia Washington Lewis, the daughter of one of Hall’s Hill’s earliest purchasers James Washington, continued to live in her childhood home after marrying husband Richard Lewis.446 When the children of their Hall’s Hills neighbors, the Robinsons, set out on their own Benjamin “Benny” Robinson and one of his sisters also chose to stay within the Hall’s Hill community where they were raised.447 Both established homes of their own.


just a few blocks from their childhood home. Edmund C. Fleet, Jr. continued to live in the Butler-Holmes Community where he was raised, as did Solomon H. Thompson in Green Valley. These examples are representative and not unique, creating a stable black population with deep roots as opposed to the new white migrants coming into Arlington’s white communities from across the state.

**Federal Employment and Land Boom**

As the area became a contiguously settled suburban environment during this period, more than just institutions expanded in Arlington’s black communities. The area’s increased development impacted and was impacted by changes in employment. In 1900 the county continued to be home to small farms, continually subdivided for sale to real estate developers. Dairy farming expanded in Arlington, where many of the 379 farms in 1900 were dairy farms. Dairy farming requires very few acres, allowing even small farms to provide fresh milk to Washington’s urban markets in a time when such a perishable product was safest when purchased locally. As the twentieth century progressed, small farms also increasingly became “truck farms,” where farmers grew

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448 His childhood home was located at 19th Road and 21st Street North, Arlington, Virginia. Benjamin “Benny” Robinson, interview by William Moris, November 6, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.


modest crops, usually vegetables, for sale at local markets, primarily in the District.\textsuperscript{451} Residents beyond farms continued to garden and keep some animals. Noble N. Thomas, for example, continued to keep hogs on his Green Valley property.\textsuperscript{452} Even though farms were on the decline, they still provided employment opportunities and a rural lifestyle for a declining number of Arlington’s residents.

Some commerce began to grow in each of Arlington’s black communities. Unlike other black communities in the South, Arlington never created a distinct black business district or “black downtown.”\textsuperscript{453} But black Arlingtonians continued to establish small shops within their communities, supporting one undertaker in Johnson’s Hill and small black owned industrial shops along the rail-lines in Queen City.\textsuperscript{454} Most of black Arlington’s commerce was made up of small stores. Such stores included Vance Green’s barber shop in Hall’s Hill as well as the Community Beauty shop and Friendly Lunch counter, both operated in Green Valley by the Collins family.\textsuperscript{455} For the first time, each of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{452} Arlington County Government, \textit{Community Voices: The Nauck Community Heritage Project}, by Arlington Cultural Affairs (Virginia, August 2008).
\item \textsuperscript{454} Mr. Ernest W. Bowen and Mrs. Josephine Pollard Mitchell, interview by Elsie Smith, 1970, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, Center for Local History, Arlington Central Library, Arlington, Virginia.; Katherine Mosley Ross, interview by Annon., 1995, RG 103: Freedmen’s Village, Box 2, File 30, CLH.
\item \textsuperscript{455} Arlington County Government, \textit{High View Park Neighborhood Conservation Plan}, by Evelyn Bell, Darnell Carpenter, Daphine Ruffner, Inez Waynes, Frank Wilson, and Sherri Young, (Virginia, January 1992).
\end{itemize}
Arlington’s black communities had at least one black owned general store or grocer; Johnson’s Hill supported two such stores. George Johnson ran the community general store in Green Valley. Johnson’s mother Agnes lived and worked in Freedman’s Village before relocating the family to Green Valley following that community’s closure. She continued to work late into her life as a cook for a local white family. Living his life in freedom in Arlington’s stable black community, George was able to own his own business and serve the community as a member of the Odd Fellows. These community stores were often small endeavors, run by families out of their private homes. Green Valley resident Thomas H. West ran his contracting and construction business from his home in Green Valley and took the opportunity to teach his children about business. All eight of the West children, male and female, were taught “the intricacies of carpentry and business,” providing them not only with a craft but also skills easily applicable in other fields “such as… delivering a finished product, customer relations, pricing work, and planning ahead.” Many of the stores provided delivery services which helped expand a store’s reach beyond neighborhood borders to help the black community more broadly. These new businesses provided employment options closer to home. They also provided Arlington’s black residents some insulation from outside sources of discrimination by staying within their community to do business.

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458 Ernest Bowen worked as a delivery boy for the community store in Johnson’s Hill. Mr Ernest W. Bowen and Mrs. Josephine Pollard Mitchell, interview by Elsie Smith, 1970, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.
The ability to run stores from one’s home was also important because it provided new ways for families to supplement incomes as subsistence farming, such as that undertaken in Hall’s Hill when the community began in 1865, became less of a possibility in an increasingly densely settled suburban environment. When further work outside of the home was needed, domestic labor was the most common employment type open to African American women and girls. But, working outside of the home generally and in domestic labor as a maid, nanny, or cook specifically could put African American women and girls in precarious situations. Such close personal interactions and the system of living-in left women open to all kinds of vulnerabilities, including little to no free time, as well as emotional, physical, and sexual violence.\textsuperscript{459} In Johnson’s Hill, Savannah and Maud Chase worked as domestics to help their parents John and Susan support their ten person household. Their contribution, as well as that of their brother Garfield, who worked as a farm hand, helped their younger siblings attend school. The Chase girls seem to have lived at home, but other domestics lived with their employers.\textsuperscript{460}

Hall’s Hill residents Eleanor V. Hayson and at least one of her daughters, Margaret Evelyn Wright, worked as domestics.\textsuperscript{461} Eleanor worked as a cook for a local


\textsuperscript{461} Margaret Evelyn Wright, interview by Terry Townsend, Zonta Oral History Project Program, December 15, 1974, CLH.
family and her daughter Margaret first began working as a live-in maid at the age of thirteen. As a live-in domestic she only had one day off a week. When her free Sunday finally came she would try to return to her family’s home for visits. But extenuating circumstances or bad weather meant that visits were not always possible. On her fourteenth birthday heavy rains prevented Wright from traveling home for her day off. The next Sunday when she was able to make the journey home after nearly two weeks away from her family a neighbor asked Wright “How do you like your little brother?” to which she cheekily replied “I reckon same as I always liked him.” The neighbor explained that her mother had given birth the week before. A stunned Wright then replied “I didn’t know I had a baby brother.” Her youngest sibling had in fact been born on her birthday, but living and working in isolation from her family she was disconnected from family events. This shows how domestic work left girls like Wright isolated from their families. This was one of the reasons black families avoided this type of labor if possible and instead preferred to take control of their economic situation by opening stores within their homes that benefitted themselves and their neighbors.

Beyond these small stores and domestic labor, Arlington’s black residents worked for local gas, oil, fertilizer, water, and lighting companies located across the county and into Alexandria City. Rosslyn was a primary business district, with a packing house, storage lots, and a wholesale coal business. These industries employed both white and black workers. The area’s largest industrial business was brick making. Skilled craftsmen

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462 Ibid.
and unskilled laborers alike were drawn to the area by Arlington’s five brick yards.\textsuperscript{463} Though the brick yards employed black and white laborers, they were a major employer of African Americans. Josephine Pollard Mitchell, daughter of community leader and politician James Pollard, recalled that when she was growing up in Johnson’s Hill most of the local men worked at the nearby brickyards.\textsuperscript{464} Wilson Gray, who lived in Johnson’s Hill along with the growing Gray family, worked as a brickyard worker. Charles Johnson, resident of the Butler-Holmes community, worked as a brick burner for the Blick-West brick company.\textsuperscript{465} The Blick-West brick company in Arlington had an expansive business. This business continued to grow because they provided bricks for Arlington’s growing suburban home development as well as many federal building projects.

Some of these federal building projects reached into Arlington County. New federal installations grew on the periphery of the existing federal projects Fort Myer, Arlington National Cemetery, and the Department of Agriculture’s Experimental Farms. This area also had the highest concentration of Arlington’s black neighborhoods because neighborhoods formed just beyond the boundary of Freedman’s Village after government foreclosure. As a result, Johnson’s Hill, Butler-Holmes, and Queen City all called this area home. Thus, new federal expansion projects in the first decades of the twentieth


\textsuperscript{464} Mr Ernest W. Bowen and Mrs. Josephine Pollard Mitchell, interview by Elsie Smith, 1970, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.

\textsuperscript{465} Louise Gray quoted in Oswald G. Smith, Mount Zion Centennial, 1866-1966, (Virginia: Mt. Zion Baptist Church Pamphlet, 1966), RG 6: Arlington County Churches, Box 3, File 1-18, CLH.; Suburban Trust Company, Suburban Trust Salutes: West Brothers Brick Company, (Virginia Suburban Trust Company Pamphlet), Vertical File: Brick Works, CLH.
century especially impacted Arlington’s black neighborhoods and people. This impact was often negative, especially in the case of the “three sisters”. In 1913 the Navy erected three huge radio towers between the Johnson’s Hill and Butler-Holmes neighborhoods. These radio towers, nicknamed the “three sisters,” were marvels of modern communications technology and engineering in their time. They were among the tallest man-made structures in the world upon their completion in 1913, smaller only than the Eiffel Tower in Paris and towering over local pillar the Washington Monument.\textsuperscript{466} This military experiment was likely upsetting to local residents because of unknown health risks with the new radio wave technology, the constant humming noise associated with towers of this size, and the blight on their view-scape.\textsuperscript{467}

\textbf{Figure 24}
As seen in this image, the scale of the Three Sisters radio towers made them an unprecedented addition to Arlington’s built environment. National Photo Company, \textit{Wireless Tower, Arlington [Virginia], 1916-1917},

\textsuperscript{466} Department of Defense measurements bring the towers to 400-600 feet respectively on their 200 foot elevation upon a hill.

\textsuperscript{467} Electromagnetic Frequency information on radio waves courtesy of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Washington.
The government’s expansion into Arlington was part of federal expansion more broadly. Administrations and federal staffs that first grew in Reconstruction continued to expand with World War One and remained high following the conflict, greatly expanding federal employment. Federal work was the largest and most desirable employment type in the area. In the first decade of the twentieth century, 25% of all local Washington, D.C. jobs were federal jobs.\footnote{Statistics for the years 1900 to 1910. Yellin, \textit{Racism in the Nation’s Service}, (2013).} New residents came to the area from across the country for federal employment, and many set up homes in Arlington’s thriving black neighborhoods. In 1913 Esther Irving moved to Arlington from Cleveland, Ohio to become a stenographer with the Forest Services within the Department of Agriculture. George Cooper relocated from Tennessee for the opportunity to work as a technical Sergeant in the Quartermaster Corps at Fort Myer.\footnote{Taylor, \textit{Bridge Builders of Nauck/ Green Valley}, (2015).} Both Irving and Cooper set up lives in Green Valley and the pair quickly married.\footnote{The pair was married in September of 1913. Taylor, \textit{Bridge Builders of Nauck/ Green Valley}, (2015).} While new residents were drawn to the area for federal work, a great portion of this workforce was made up of long-term residents. Seventy-five percent of all federal positions were filled by local residents of the District, Maryland, and Virginia.\footnote{The remaining 25% of federal workers were primarily made up of elected officials’ constituents who lobbied for jobs. Yellin, \textit{Racism in the Nation’s Service}, (2013).} Federal employment was thus a major career
opportunity for Arlington’s residents. Black Arlingtonians had a long tradition of federal employment stretching back to Freedman’s Village. This pattern of employment and the possibility of advancement in federal positions was expanded and solidified through the creation of the United States Federal Civil Service and the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act in the 1870s and 1880s. Through these reforms, federal positions were secured by merit, creating possibilities for all races.472

Federal employment offered opportunities for skilled and unskilled laborers. Leonard L. Gray, a descendent of the Gray family living in Green Valley, worked as a carpenter’s helper at the Experimental Farm.473 Solomon H. Thompson worked as a laborer for the government.474 Thompson’s grandfather, Henson Thompson, moved the family from Freedman’s Village to Green Valley in the 1880s. There Thompson’s father, Solomon Sr., and mother, Elizabeth, raised Solomon, his three sisters, and his cousin. Other Green Valley neighbors also worked in unskilled positions for the government, including a laborer for the Navy Yard, a government watchman, a janitor, and a chauffeur.475 Unskilled federal employment did not always lead to significant social advancements. Postal worker Wilson Masterson’s salary for example was not enough to provide for himself and his wife Fanny. To get by he took a second job as a handyman,

472 Federal Civil Service Act, 5 USC § 2101, (1871); Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act, (1883), ch 27, 22 Stat. 403.


performing odd jobs including chopping wood and even cleaning kitchens. Before 1910, 83% of black federal workers made less than a messenger’s salary of $840 per year. However, employment for the federal government, even at these low levels, was still seen as desirable because of its stability. Beginning in the 1890s the federal government adopted many labor reforms before the private sector, establishing eight hour work days and provisions that dismissal require demonstrable and just cause. Because of this, Arlington’s black residents aimed to move from general labor to government labor.

But the true appeal of federal employment was white collar work. Beyond federal employment, white collar jobs in Arlington were rare, with a few notable exceptions. Recall that Sumner Holmes worked as a teacher in Arlington. He did this to pay his way through medical school at Howard University. Upon graduation he continued to live and work in Arlington as a well-known and respected physician until his death in 1930. Sumner Holmes’ services as a doctor were crucial for the county as Arlington did not have many black professionals. Beyond Holmes, there were few other medical professionals in Arlington in the first decades of the twentieth century. Thorton Gray, Henry W. Gray’s only son, became an attorney. But, there were few black doctors,

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476 Hadassah Backus, “Glencarlyn,” (Unpublished Paper, 1952), RG 8: Glencarlyn, Box 2, CLH.


lawyers, or other professionals in the county in the early twentieth century. Federal employment was thus a distinct opportunity. Solomon H. Thompson worked to move up from a laborer for the government in 1910, to a printing assistant with the U.S. Printing Office by 1930. Harry W. Gray also worked his way up within the government. He began his more than forty years of service to the federal government as a messenger, but finished his career as a clerk for the U.S. Patent Office.

Clerk was the primary white collar federal job type for African Americans from the 1870s to the 1910s. Clerks were known as the “back bone of the city.” Clerk was a broad title used to describe “copyists, stenographers, typewriters, transcribers, indexers, cataloguers, assistant librarians, certain kinds of attendants, translators, statisticians, section chiefs, abstracters, assistant chiefs of divisions, and a large number of miscellaneous employees.” Green Valley native Noble N. Thomas, architect of Kemper School, also worked as a stenographer in the district. Several other Green Valley residents worked as clerks for federal offices, including the War Department, the U.S.

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Post Office, and the U.S. Treasury.\textsuperscript{486} Clerks were paid up to $1,600 per year. These clerks expanded and solidified Arlington’s black middle class.

Though African Americans continued to find work in the nation’s service in blue and white collar jobs, the nature of this employment changed throughout the early 1900s. During the Roosevelt and Taft administrations, the commitment to black employment that created unique opportunities for black Arlingtonians began to backslide.\textsuperscript{487} These reversals of rights continued during Woodrow Wilson’s time in the White House. The Wilson administration marked the first time that a Southern Democrat held the White House since the Civil War. Wilson, his administration, and Congressional Representatives from throughout the South brought intensified racism and sectionalism with them to Washington. Civil service reforms were reversed, offices became physically segregated, and blacks were barred from jobs and promotion opportunities had been previously available to them. “With the arrival of Southern Democrats, Washington was becoming more like other southern cities,” rather than a place of black opportunity.\textsuperscript{488} With this decline in pull factors, fewer new African Americans were drawn to Arlington. And the multiple generations of families now living in Arlington since the opening of Freedman’s Village continued a stable black population, made up of those who came to


the area prior to the 1910s. As new generations of black Arlingtonians came of age they continued to live in the county and communities where they had grown up.

At the same time that federal jobs were less of a draw for black residents, Arlington’s white population boomed as whites from across Virginia were pulled to the area for federal employment. In the first decades of the twentieth century, Arlington’s population soared. Doubling from 1870 to 1900 and continuing with massive growth in each decade of the twentieth century, this population increase was made up of primarily white residents.\(^{489}\) As Arlington’s white population expanded its black population instead stayed consistent. This stability however provided black Arlingtonians with the benefit of deep running social and familial ties.

**County-Wide Legal Changes**

**Municipal Changes, Zoning, and Planning**

The changing racial climate in Washington employment represented a broader change in race relations, which became increasingly hostile during the Wilson administration and continued following World War One. These same changes were seen in Arlington. As previously mentioned, laws and customs segregated accommodations in the twentieth century, forcing black schools, churches, and fraternal organizations to provide their own social activities. County and state-wide legal changes expanded segregation to many other areas of life, including amenities, transportation, and housing, adversely impacting black Arlingtonians. These changes profoundly shaped the physical development and built environment of Arlington’s black communities.

In 1912 the Virginia General Assembly passed two laws which greatly influenced Arlington. First, the “Act of Assembly of 1912” gave all “counties with a population of three hundred or more to the square mile” the right to the same legal powers as a city. This law gave Arlington County, the only county that met the criteria at that time, the same legal status as a city for all acts passed by the Virginia Legislature. This allowed the county to create developmental control ordinances and growth regulations. Second, in 1912 the Virginia Legislature passed “An Act to Provide for Designation by Cities and Towns of Segregation Districts for Residences of White and Colored Persons, for the Adoption of This Act by Such Cities and Towns, and for Providing Penalties for Violation of its Terms.” This law gave towns and cities, which now legally included Arlington, the legal right to segregate residential areas. As a result Arlington was able to use these laws to legally segregate their expanding residential suburban environment. Individual neighborhoods in Arlington already used community-level restrictive covenants to block African Americans from living within their borders. For example, Frank Lyon’s Lyon Park’s restrictive covenants stated “neither said property nor any part thereof nor any interest therein shall be sold or leased to any one not of the Caucasian


As subdivision creation and control of that development began to boom, Arlington had the legal right to segregate on the county-wide level. For the next five years segregation in Arlington was undertaken formally through this law. Then, in 1917 the U.S. Supreme Court deemed such legislation unconstitutional in Buchanan v. Waverly. But this was not the end to residential segregation; rather it was just an end to this particular brand of legal discrimination.

These state and local laws regarding development were impacted by federal changes. For the first time in the 1920s the federal government became interested in zoning and planning legislation on the state level. Under Calvin Coolidge’s administration the Standard State Zoning Enabling Act (SEZA) and the Standard City Planning Enabling Act (SCPEA) were created in 1924 and 1928 respectively to support state-level master planning procedures for development. With this federal sanction on controlled development, Arlington lobbied the Virginia assembly for more special zoning

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494 Buchanan v. Waverly, 245 US 60 (1917).


496 For more on how federal changes shaped residential segregation on the local level see LeeAnn Lands, The Culture of Property: Race, Class, and Housing Landscapes in Atlanta, 1880-1950 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009).


These federal, state, and county level reforms were a part of the housing reform movement of the 1920s. They had roots in the Progressive ideals of the City Beautiful Movement and the Garden Movement. With overcrowding becoming a real problem in American cities in the 1910s, reformers realized that it would take more than piecemeal, private investment to solve the housing crisis. The City Beautiful Movement focused on cultural improvement, environmentalism, aesthetics, order and symmetry.\footnote{499}{William H. Wilson, \textit{The City Beautiful Movement: Creating the North American Landscape} (Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).} City Beautiful reformers played a large role in reshaping Washington, the National Mall in particular, through the Senate Parks Commission’s McMillan Plan in 1902. Similar academic ideas created the Garden Movement. A central tenet of the Garden Movement was the importance of government involvement in city planning to create walkable, orderly, and clean middle class housing developments. With this ideological base, Arlington’s housing reform advocates wanted to create one continuous, controlled, centrally planned environment with standardized, visually appealing housing for the upper and middle classes. It was believed that through their ordered and centrally planned aesthetics these new development principals would create a cohesive democratic society, while also meeting market demands for housing.\footnote{500}{Gail Radford, \textit{Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era} (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1996) p 29-58.}
Through the Special Act of 1927 Arlington created a zoning commission and sought technical assistance from the contracting firm of Allen J. Saville. Saville, a city planner based out of Richmond, was committed to the principals of the Garden Movement. He helped to plan the Windsor Farms community in Richmond, one of the state’s earliest entirely pre-planned white neighborhoods.\(^{501}\) Saville created a plan for Arlington County, known as the “Saville Plan,” that shaped county zoning laws and practices for the next decade. This direction and leadership supported land use and building restrictions “for the purpose of promoting the general welfare of the community.”\(^{502}\) It was believed that zoning and planning laws were necessary to shape the county in ways “deemed best suited to carry out” the purpose of promoting “health, safety, morals, comfort, prosperity, [and the] general welfare of the public.”\(^{503}\) With the backing of federal law, a new planning movement, and professional city planners, Arlington’s leaders had new support for their racialized land use and design principals. These county-wide planning impulses represented an expansion of earlier ideas. Regulations which previously only applied to individual subdivisions were now used to regulate the county as a whole. Under these control principals Arlington fully moved on from the suburban village model. The continuously settled suburban environment was

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\(^{503}\) Ibid., p 12.
now made up of interconnected white communities with one central, county-wide planning vision.

**Impacts on Arlington’s Black Community**

Housing choices for African Americans in Arlington were significantly limited by these new laws. In 1908 Abraham Syphax, nephew of Freedman’s Village community leader John B. Syphax, purchased land for subdivision. He set out actively subdividing and selling lots to African Americans until 1920. But, this kind of development in Arlington was becoming increasingly rare.504 Where many new black communities were created throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century, by the 1910s racialized restrictions and segregation laws established by Arlington’s white leaders meant that new expansion was not open to African Americans. Previously restrictive covenants and community-wide segregation practices were executed on the individual home owner and community level. With the 1912 segregation act these practices were expanded to *all* new developments. The ability to restrict where and how black communities developed became especially important to white Arlingtonians a few years later following initial annexation by Alexandria in 1915. With less land to expand, white Arlingtonians sought to keep the best lands for themselves and took measures to prevent black expansion into those lands. Where possible, whites also sought to take back the space currently occupied by African Americans.

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The smallest black areas were most susceptible to these attacks. White communities used these laws to root out existing small black enclaves as they pushed against African Americans living in the county.\textsuperscript{505} In the 1910s, a few of Arlington’s black families continued to live in small enclaves on the fringes of white settlements. But increasingly black enclaves across the county were purchased and cleared for white settlement. Not only did black enclaves disappear from white communities, but white homes also disappeared from black areas, a change from the intermingling of white and black neighbors seen previously. Even the black families who established their homes in the predominately white neighborhoods where they served as domestics were not immune from this removal process. The African American Low and the Lee families lived on the outskirts of twenty white families in the Barcroft neighborhood. Both were domestics in Barcroft’s white households; Billy Low was a longtime servant for Dr. John W Barcroft, the community’s namesake. But even working for local whites was not enough to save black enclaves. The few black residents of Barcroft before 1910 were gone from the community by 1920.\textsuperscript{506} The quickening decline of Arlington’s small black enclaves greatly limited where and how African Americans could live in the county. They had no choice but to relocate to the existing black communities or leave Arlington entirely. But many stayed local. Arlington saw neither the extreme swell of nor the


\textsuperscript{506} Elizabeth J. Walter, \textit{Barcroft: The Beginnings of a Suburban Neighborhood}, (Virginia: George Mason University Press, 2002).
exodus of people during the Great Migration experienced elsewhere across the country at this time.⁵⁰⁷ Individuals and families wanted to stay close to the strong roots already connecting them to Arlington’s other communities through church and institutions, and existing black communities worked to make room for them.

Because of segregation laws and discriminatory real-estate practices from the 1910s forward, the physical boundaries of Arlington’s black communities did not grow. Existing black communities became more densely subdivided. That was the case in Johnson’s Hill. In 1913, following Harry W. Gray’s passing at the age of 48, the Gray family subdivided their land to create Gray’s Subdivision within Johnson’s Hill.⁵⁰⁸ The community began as just four plots in 1880, but by 1913 that same land contained 70 plots and homes. This increased subdivision was also the case in Green Valley. Longtime Green Valley resident Thomas H. West subdivided his land into six parcels. Here he constructed five new homes for five of his eight children.⁵⁰⁹ Beyond just familial divisions, Green Valley saw a huge surge in population and subdivision. The neighborhood grew by seventy families during World War One alone.⁵¹⁰ This subdivision was made up of arrivals from rooted out black enclaves and new generations of black Arlingtonians setting up households within their childhood neighborhoods.

⁵⁰⁷ Nancy Perry, Spencer Crew, Nigel M Waters “‘We didn’t have any other place to live’: Residential Patterns in Segregated Arlington County, Virginia.” *Southern Geographer*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Winter 2013).


These new families created smaller and more simplistic homes that could be erected quickly and easily on their small lots. In Hall’s Hill during the 1920s modified shot-gun shacks were increasingly built in the community. These simple, one-and-a-half story structures were smaller and more simplistic than the modified Four Square, farm houses created in the community even ten years earlier.\footnote{Arlington County Government, \textit{Neighborhood History Preservation Study of Hall’s Hill, High View Park}, by Ellen Simmons, (Virginia, 1987), Appendix A.} As available lands decreased, prices increased. By 1920 the average price of a lot in Hall’s Hill for example was $250.\footnote{Benjamin “Benny” Robinson, interview by William Moris, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, November 6, 2003, CLH.} Early black residents the Gray family in Johnson’s Hill embraced multi-family housing and more urban visions for Arlington’s future than their peers when building their Italianate-style row-home. These trends continued as Arlington’s black communities suffered restrictions. Without the opportunity to expand into new lands, several of Arlington’s black communities began looking to multi-family developments to shelter their growing population in the 1920s.\footnote{O’Brien "Historic Survey of Nauck Neighborhood, Arlington County, Virginia," (1987), CLH.} Though only small portions of homes county-wide were multi-family units, there was an increase in duplexes, row homes, and apartments in Arlington’s black areas, including Green Valley and Rosslyn. Many whites saw these changes as threatening to the kind of ideal single family suburb envisioned in Arlington’s planning legislation as far back as 1900. “All sections of Arlington County are threatened” by row houses, warned a flyer generated by the Civic Federation.
organization within the elite, white Lyon Park community.\textsuperscript{514} The people of the Federation felt row homes would threaten the segregated, middle class suburban ideal they sought.

Figure 25
This headline helps to highlight the resistance some local Arlingtonians felt towards row houses and other non-single family housing in the county. “Row Houses Condemned,” The Arlington Courier, August 11, 1938.

In addition to these restrictions, the lives of African Americans in Arlington were impacted by zoning and planning which dictated how they could live. Following the passage of \textit{Buchanan v. Waverly} in 1917 formal residential segregation became illegal and Arlington's 1912 segregation law was nullified. To fill the void, municipalities turned

to racially restrictive zoning and planning laws.\textsuperscript{515} For the first time in 1930 Arlington passed a comprehensive Zoning Ordinance.\textsuperscript{516} The 1930 Zoning Ordinance was partially written by Edward Duncan. Duncan was a county politician who served on the Board of Supervisors beginning in 1908. As such he played a hand in developing 1914’s Suburban Control Ordinance and was well versed in Arlington’s racialized building and planning practices.\textsuperscript{517} The new Zoning Ordinance introduced the idea of different residential types, each type having their own standards. These types were “‘A’ Residence Districts, ‘B’ Residence Districts, ‘C’ Local Business Districts, ‘D’ General Business Districts, ‘E’ Light Industrial Districts, and ‘F’ Heavy Industrial Districts.”\textsuperscript{518}


\textsuperscript{516} Arlington County Government, \textit{Zoning Ordinance Adopted by Board of Supervisors of Arlington County}, by Edward Duncan, et. al., (Virginia, April 26, 1930); Dieter, “Early Planning Progress in Arlington County, Virginia to 1945,” \textit{Arlington Historical Magazine} (Oct 1967).


\textsuperscript{518} Arlington County Government, \textit{Zoning Ordinance Adopted by Board of Supervisors of Arlington County}, by Edward Duncan, et. al., (Virginia, April 26, 1930) p 1.
This legislation had significant impacts on Arlington’s black communities. For example, Green Valley, like almost the entire county, was zoned mostly “A Residence.” Zone “A” was exclusively for single family homes. Zone “B” was for multifamily homes like apartments and duplexes. But Green Valley, like many other black areas, had both single and multi-family homes. By zoning most of Arlington’s black areas “A,” the 1930 Zoning Ordinance effectively limited African Americans from building new multi-family homes, preventing Arlington’s black population from growing too large. This was one of the ways in which Arlington leaders attempted to side-step the decision of *Buchanan v. Waverly* and continued to create racially restrictive zoning and planning laws designed to
limit the black community. Though this law did not have overtly segregationist language, it certainly had racist undertones and implications. Because this development type was only prominent in Arlington’s black communities, it shows how zoning and planning laws set out to attack black development patterns specifically.

![Figure 27](image)

African American row-homes in the Rosslyn neighborhood of Arlington. These kinds of multi-family building patterns were not supported by the new zoning laws. John Vachon, Backyards. Rosslyn, Virginia, September 1937, Farm Security Administration Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, LOC.

Being zoned in the “A” category also meant that residents had the strongest regulations. These stipulations pushed the kinds of sleek, streamlined, standardized homes that were already a reality in places like Lyon Park. In contrast, homes in Green Valley were described as “non-descript, obsolete, …poorly built, and unattractive.”519

Black Arlingtonians continued to live in older homes and new homes were constructed in older styles, hence the charge that they were “obsolete.” Even though they were well

maintained by residents, many homes in Arlington’s black areas did not meet the new standards within the zoning laws.

The law required that all home construction be undertaken by professional contractors and be approved by the Directing Engineer. These stipulations added additional red tape and raised costs for black homeowners, who predominately built their own homes. This cost hike was difficult for any working class home owner, but the regulation that professional contractors must be used rather than individuals was particularly hard on black neighborhoods. Many professional contractors were not willing to work for African American families. Some enterprising black Arlingtonians saw a demand with little to no supply and created a black housing industry in Arlington. Green Valley’s Solomon H. Thompson left his job with the federal government to become a realtor, and Johnson’s Hill resident Tommy Crawford became a contractor. Leonard L. Gray took the skills he learned as a carpenter’s helper with the federal government at the Experimental Farm to work as a contractor. He built many homes in his Green Valley neighborhood. In this way, black Arlingtonians remained active in crafting Arlington’s suburban environment even as many local whites attempted to remove them through regulation. However, even with these resourceful efforts, the new


521 Ibid., p 664.


zoning laws put extreme pressure on Arlington’s black communities and growth stagnated.

Arlington’s 1930 Zoning Ordinance had other racial implications. Section 14 of the law specifically allowed for “the construction of a rear fence or wall to a height not exceeding seven feet.” In the context of the Ordinance’s many other restrictions this allowance stands out. When dealing with garages, porches, yards, and even gardening plots, the Zoning Ordinance is centered on restrictions and not allowances. This addition to allow for rear property walls and fences made way for racialized building practices. Along the rear property line of the white homes bordering Hall’s Hill, including the neighborhoods of Fostoria and Waycroft, residents constructed a seven foot tall cinderblock wall. This tactic of “out of sight out of mind” when dealing with neighboring black areas was a long standing practice in Arlington’s white communities. Recall that in previous decades white neighbors of Ballston’s black enclave had built tall hedges to prevent being confronted with their black neighbors. This wall construction was executed on an individual home-owner level, however, it was planned out enough that within a decade of this legislation the entirety of Hall’s Hill was quartered off.

Since its founding Hall’s Hill’s residents had used strategies of isolation to insulate

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524 Arlington County Government, Zoning Ordinance Adopted by Board of Supervisors of Arlington County, by Edward Duncan, et. al., (Virginia, April 26, 1930)


themselves from hostile white neighbors. Early roads and institutions faced into the community and had few external access points. However, this new more pronounced division by local white residents created a physical barrier to punctuate Hall’s Hill’s segregated status in an area otherwise considered the domain of white suburban development. Arlington’s other black communities were concentrated in eastern Arlington along the outskirts of what had been Freedman’s Village. The wall meant that the community could not expand and that their streets did not connect to streets in the surrounding white communities, restricting access to the community to just a few points.527 This special provision written into Arlington’s first comprehensive, county-wide zoning code highlights the desire for Arlington’s white leaders to allow this kind of separation to endure as they continued to push against the presence of African Americans in Arlington.

Residential segregation laws and community-wide restrictive covenants, that limited where African Americans could live, and zoning and planning laws that dictated how they could live, severely hindered continued black neighborhood creation and expansion in Arlington. Though causing many issues, the restrictions imposed by Arlington’s government spurred by the expansion of white suburban neighborhoods increased black neighborhood identity as they had to fortify themselves in opposition to local white areas. With a decline in availability of new homes and new regulations against multi-family developments, black Arlingtonians found new solutions. Because of the reality of limited room for growth, more and more black households took in boarders

to help accommodate those who were unable to find homes of their own. Solomon H. Thompson took in a boarder in Green Valley, as did Butler-Holmes residents Claude Richard and H. Hanson.\textsuperscript{528} There was also a rise in renting in some of Arlington’s working class black communities. In Queen City in 1910 seven out of fifteen households in one area of the community rented rather than owned their property, a drastic change from previous decades.\textsuperscript{529} Rents in the 1910s averaged between $20 and $30 a month.\textsuperscript{530} Despite issues with a decrease in lands available to African Americans and a sharp rise in renting in some of Arlington’s working class black neighborhoods, home ownership rates remained high across most of the county’s black communities.\textsuperscript{531}

Concurrent with new zoning and planning laws, during the first decades of the twentieth century Arlington undertook many new municipal improvement programs. After five years of work, the county had a centralized public water supply system beginning in 1927.\textsuperscript{532} Throughout the 1910s and 1920s the county created a centralized sewer system. Arlington also undertook significant road paving campaigns, sidewalk and


\textsuperscript{531} By the 1920s, Arlington had approximately 7,000 homes county-wide which were 75% owner occupied. A majority of Arlington’s African American neighborhoods were consistent with these levels of home ownership.

curb construction, and additions of streetlamps and telephone lines.\textsuperscript{533} These municipal improvements were easily secured by white neighborhoods. But white Arlington officials cared little about the lack of amenities in black parts of town. When speaking about the county’s water and sewage systems county officials assured that with the new water system families never had to worry about sewage making its way into ground water. This contamination was a serious worry when the county relied solely on wells for potable water. But now the county had made significant improvements in every “neighborhood where there are a number of respectable white people residing.”\textsuperscript{534} No such assurances were made for black neighborhoods.

Politicians were very interested in securing these amenities for white voters. But beyond this interest, white Arlingtonians also saw success because they created a slew of citizen’s organizations to petition on their behalf. Almost every white community had a citizens’ association lobbying county officials for amenities as the county became increasingly focused on linking communities through these provisions. The Good Roads Association, created by the county to undertake road improvement, held frequent meetings with representatives from white community citizens’ associations.\textsuperscript{535} For all of


\textsuperscript{534} John M. Johnson was testifying to the state of the County’s water supply, arguing that the condition of groundwater is not an issue because all white neighborhoods have access to potable water beyond wells. There is no mention of the state of wells or water access in black communities. Testimony of John M. Johnson, City Legal Counsel, Record No 773, \textit{City Council of Alexandria v. Board of Supervisors}, (Circuit Court of Arlington County, VA 1927); Rose, “Annexation of a Portion of Arlington County by the City of Alexandria in 1915,” \textit{Arlington Historical Magazine} (Oct. 1964) p 28.

\textsuperscript{535} Glencarlyn Citizen’s Association, “GCA Meeting Minutes,” RG 62: Glencarlyn, Box 3, File 7, CLH.
their community organizations, black Arlington had no similar institution. Most of their community organizations focused on internal black community needs, or, in the case of the NAACP and Colored Citizen’s Association, in more rights-based rather than municipal needs. In an attempt to secure resources, Green Valley created the Nauck’s Citizens’ Association in 1926. Arlington’s leadership passed to a younger generation raised in Arlington’s increasingly suburban environment. This impacted how they could respond to pressures against the black community. After watching Arlington’s white communities successfully use these suburban community organizations for their rights, Arlington’s black community mirrored these types of suburban organizations. Nauck’s Citizens’ Association was created for the express purpose of gaining access to the county’s new water system. But their petitions for county help were unsuccessful and Green Valley remained reliant on wells with potentially contaminated ground water.

Figure 28
A view of Queen City showing unpaved streets in the 1930s. Queen City, ca. 1930, CLH.

Similarly, other county municipal improvements were not extended to black Arlingtonians. After a decade of road improvements, Arlington’s black neighborhoods did not have paved streets.\footnote{C.L. Kinnier, Directing Engineer, “Map of Road Improvements, Arlington Virginia” [1928-1931], Map Collection, CLH.} Green Valley, Queen City, and Hall’s Hill all had “unfinished roads [and] un-surfaced streets.”\footnote{Arlington County Board, \textit{Nauck Village Action Plan}, (Virginia, July 10, 2004) p 11.; “The Day a Yankee Gunboat Came: Memories Bind Him to Hill,” \textit{The Washington Post}, February 21, 1969.; Stanford, \textit{Suburban Black Elderly} (1978) p 31.; Gilpin, “Queen City,” (1984) p 4, CLH.} Without access to paved streets, residents continued to rely on older forms of rail travel. But connections to the rail lines could also lead to problems. William H. “Willie” Pelham, son of community founder Moses Pelham, lived in the Pelham Town community with his family. When he was a boy he was responsible for watching the tracks during the summer when “the broom sage [grass] would grow tall.”\footnote{William H. Pelham, Sr., interview by Ednumd D. Campbell and Cas Cocklin, November 21, 1986, p 6-7, Arlington County Library Oral History Program, CLH.} White rail workers would “take a shovelful of hot coals and throw it over in that brush” when passing through Pelham Town. With homes lining the tracks, local children “would have to get out there with pine brushes and all that kind of business to smother the fire out before it got to our homes.” Pelham believed that “they did it deliberately” when passing through the black community.

Although the county provided white communities with improvements, black communities had to take their municipal needs into their own hands. In addition to unsurfaced streets, Green Valley, Queen City, and Hall’s Hill also had “no street
lights." With street lights in Hall’s Hill each resident put lanterns in their front windows as a way to light their streets. The use of lanterns was consistent enough across each household that residents used this lantern-light to give directions. Resident Robert Nickerson recalled that you would “tell a friend how to come to your place [by] counting off so many lanterns to here and turn, and so many lanterns to there and turn, and so many lanterns to my house.” Hall’s Hill also created the county’s first dedicated fire station, Fire Station #8, to benefit their community. In Queen City so many municipal initiatives were undertaken by and for the community by its residents that the Washington Star noted that “a spirit closely akin to communism reigns in the regulations governing” the community. But despite their best efforts, with “every man in the town [acting as] as self-appointed supervisor of the streets,” Arlington’s black communities lacked the large municipal programs they could not afford on their own.

In response to the inability to secure any municipal improvements and as a result of the zoning and planning laws attacking their neighborhoods, black Arlingtonians staged a political protest. Since state voter reforms limited black rights in 1902, black Arlingtonians were not very active participants in the formal political process. They relied instead on their social and fraternal organizations to act as their informal political


542 “Towns Near the Capitol Where Negroes...,” The Washington Star, January 26, 1908, Vertical File: Queen City, CLH.
voices. In 1930, for the first time since 1903, black candidates ran in the November 1931 county elections. George Vollin, Jr. of Queen City ran for the position of County Sheriff. Vollin was a lifelong county resident, his family relocating from Freedman’s Village to Queen City before he was born.\textsuperscript{543} Three other African American candidates ran for County Board—Mary B. Harris of Green Valley, Dr. Edward T. Morton of Hall’s Hill, and C.H. Mosley of Hall’s Hill.\textsuperscript{544}

Despite assertions that “these [colored candidates] are not conceded any chance at all” of victory, the presence of black candidates on the ballot disturbed many whites in Arlington. They worried the county’s cohesive black community could lead to large voter turnout and possible victories for the black nominees.\textsuperscript{545} In response, Arlington’s representatives in the State Legislature, Senator Frank L. Ball and Delegate Hugh Reid, along with county social and political leaders, lobbied the Virginia General Assembly for a change in Arlington’s electoral system. They sought a new system that could thwart this political challenge from the black community.\textsuperscript{546} State leaders supported white


\textsuperscript{546} Anderson “Arlington Adopts the County Manager form of Government,” \textit{Arlington Historical Magazine}, (Oct. 1958) p 55.
Arlingtonians aims to limit black voting power, and so state and local politicians together passed the 1930 Acts of Assembly. This voter legislation gave Arlington the right to call a special election to change the county’s form of government.

With this provision secured Arlington’s white political leaders immediately began to lobby support for a new form of government. Many of those leading the charge were the same leaders who spearheaded Arlington’s “Good Government” reforms at the turn of the century. Uniting under a banner of “Better Government,” the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, the Arlington Civic Federation, and the County Bar Association used their power and influence to push for voter reform. These organizations and their zealous supporters campaigned hard, undertaking “the most intensive campaign ever waged in the County.” They lobbied through newspapers, by courting civic federations, and by distributing a sixteen-page pamphlet about the benefits of reform. Through their efforts they secured 1,027 voter signatures, far exceeding the 200 needed, and called for a special election in 1930.

With racially discriminatory overtones, this special election did away with voter districts in favor of county-wide elections. At large voting gave individual

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547 Virginia House of Delegates, Voter Code, Chapter 14, Title 15, Section 15.1-669.


549 Ibid., p 60.


551 Ibid.
communities less control. With this, “the continuous, contiguous, and homogenous nature of Arlington now found expression in its form of government.”

Doing away with voting districts, the County Board was replaced with a County Manager form of government, the first of its kind nation-wide for a county. With this change the County became governed by a five member County Board. The board then appoints a County Manager who “serves as the chief executive officer and exercises direct supervision and operational control, generally, of the executive branches of the County local government.”

Now running on the county-wide level, none of Arlington’s black candidates won in November of 1931. Instead, Arlington’s leaders, concentrated in the new, affluent suburban communities of northern and western Arlington, all but handpicked the new board. The 77-member Better Government Committee, later the Better Government League, supported four of the five elected candidates in the 1931 elections. A significant feat in itself, this was especially significant because the board saw little turnover. In forty years, the county had only four County Managers. These changes were undertaken with the purpose of decreasing African American voting clout and discouraging them from running for office. The tactic worked. It would be fifty years

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555 From 1932 to 1975 there were only four county managers: Roy S. Braden (1932-6), Frank C. Hanrahan (1936-47), A.T. Lundberg (1947-62), and Bert W. Johnson (1962-75).
before another African American candidate ran for office in Arlington. With black voting rights diluted, white Arlingtonians could continue to push racially motivated planning laws.

**Racial Conflict**

These legal, zoning, planning, and municipal attacks on Arlington’s black neighborhoods were not the only shifts that represent more aggressive attitudes towards African Americans in Arlington. Arlington also saw an increase in racial violence. This was a part of larger regional and national trends. Beginning at the close of the nineteenth century, and continuing into the early decades of the twentieth, overt violence against African Americans was on the rise across the South. Violence and lynchings grew as a tool for regulating black behavior and policing boundaries of racial propriety.⁵⁵⁶ Though not without its problems, Arlington did not see any lynchings in the early 1900s, a fact whites were very proud of.⁵⁵⁷ Local white resident George W. Keys boasted that this made Arlington County much more civilized than their contemporaries.⁵⁵⁸ White Arlingtonians turned to a more ordered form of racial control through restrictive laws

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rather than outright violence consistent with Progressive Era ideals of the time. Still, racial tensions, aggression, and new segregation laws led to conflict as the new reality of segregation was enforced by white Arlingtonians through violence and threats of violence.

One of the earliest segregation laws to lead to overt racial conflict in Arlington was the segregation of the trolley lines. In 1902 the Virginia Act Concerning Public Transportation passed, “allowing but not requiring segregation on streetcars” and giving conductors police powers of enforcement. One white editorialist observed that “no act since the close of the Civil War has tended to arouse a more bitter feeling of racial antagonism” than the segregation of the trolley cars. Rail transportation was especially important in Arlington owing to the fact that the County relied on it so heavily for its white suburban expansion. Because of this residents felt that “if you said anything about that railroad you said it about the whole community.” In 1904 an African American man was severely beaten and thrown head-first through a trolley car window after he and the two women he was traveling with got into a verbal altercation with a white man over


seating on a trolley. The injured black man was fined five dollars for swearing while the white man who beat him was not prosecuted. 563

In 1908 African American residents Sandy James and Lee Gaskins traveled home on the streetcar. Accusing them of rowdiness, the conductor attempted to remove the men in Rosslyn. Rosslyn was the first stop in the county after crossing from Washington, D.C. putting them a good distance from their Falls Church stop, the last stop in the western portion of the county. Far from their destination, the men declined to leave. When they refused the “whole carload” of white passengers began to beat them, including Ernest Putnam, a local blacksmith who “hit them with a batch of horseshoes.” 564 Fleeing this attack, James and Gaskins left the trolley car and waited at the Rosslyn stop for the next car to arrive to take them the rest of the way home. When the next car arrived Jack Bolden, a local white resident, refused to let the bloodied men board. Weighing-in at nearly 300 pounds, Bolden blocked the men from boarding the second trolley by kicking them “as hard as he could” until the trolley pulled out.

Later that night, someone was accused of throwing rocks at a trolley car in Falls Church, then attempting to derail the car by piling stones on the track. Rumors of the violence on the trolley car, the attempted derailing in Falls Church, and James’ and Gaskins’ involvement spread through the county. A white mob formed in Ballston. The gang went door to door, searching twenty-five black homes, with “shotguns, pistols,


rifles, and axes” as they hunted the men.565 Gaskins was found, tried, and sentenced to ten years in jail despite flimsy evidence.566 Still, his fate is likely better than that of James. After that night Sandy James was never seen again. Some speculate that he was murdered by longtime Arlington Sheriff Howard Fields. In the years following the incident on the trolley, Fields boasted that “he hit Sandy James with a blackjack with lead in it twenty-five times just as hard as he could hit him in the head.”567

The trolley was not the only zone of racial conflict in Arlington. Segregation which began on trolleys continued onto bus service when it began in the 1920s. The white owned bus lines provided segregated service. Hall’s Hill had a black owned bus line, the Hicks Bus Line, for a brief period in the 1920s and 1930s in an attempt to prevent racial conflict on the white bus lines. But the Hicks line was not able to compete with ever-expanding white bus services.568 With so many social and legal changes in the first decades of the twentieth century, black Arlingtonians lost some physical and ideological space in the county, but they were determined to police those new lines

565 Ibid.
568 The Hicks line began about 1924, but could not compete with multiple white businesses - including the R.L. May bus line, later the Alexandria, Barcroft and Washington (AB&W) line, as well as the Washington, Maryland and Virginia bus line. Hicks closed during the Depression years. Rose, Arlington County Virginia, (1976); Benjamin “Benny” Robinson, interview by William Moris, November 6, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.
carved out for them within the system of segregated accommodations. Because of this, racial tensions arose on the bus lines not over the existence of segregation, but when white patrons attempted to take space designated as black. When white passengers entered the areas of the bus reserved for African Americans, black riders had the option to either sit in the front of the bus or to take a stand against the white passengers. Both options had potential risks. Lifelong Hall’s Hill resident Benny Robinson recalled that if you sat in designated white seats, it was likely that the police would be called and they might “take you off the bus and lock you up for disorderly.”569 While this had its risks, taking a more defiant stand against white passengers was more dangerous because, as Benny and his fellow black residents knew, this tactic meant “the Klan was goin’ to say something” to you.

569 Benjamin “Benny” Robinson, interview by William Moris, November 6, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.
The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was active in Arlington. The years after World War One saw a huge surge in the political power and membership of the KKK nationally. Changing realities after the war came together to create the perfect storm of social anxiety amongst the Klan’s primarily middle class, Protestant, white, male members. Some of these changes included, the presence of black servicemen from a new generation increasingly assertive about their rights, the rise of labor movements, economic recession, the rise of women’s rights movements, an uptick in immigration, and general fears of anti-Americanism. The Klan’s national offices lay just miles away

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in downtown D.C. and a Klan propaganda radio station broadcast two miles from Green Valley.\textsuperscript{571} “Klan Klavern Number Six” operating out of Ballston had more than one hundred members. Klansmen terrorized local black residents through violence and threats of violence.\textsuperscript{572} Robert Nickerson of Hall’s Hill described Klan intimidation tactics. Klansmen marched through Hall’s Hill from nearby white Cherrydale.\textsuperscript{573} They also burned crosses in areas of black recreation, including Peyton Field in Green Valley, and carried out their ceremonies in public, in neighborhoods such as Ballston and Rosslyn.\textsuperscript{574} Klan threats and violence often centered on voter intimidation, sometimes running motor convoys through Arlington’s black neighborhoods on election day to deter voter turnout.\textsuperscript{575} They used these tactics as a form of general intimidation and racial policing to remind black residents that Klansmen were always present should they step out of line.

The same issues that led to the rise of the Klan and racial violence in Arlington were connected to changing realities in Washington, D.C. In the years following World War One strains over black servicemen, post-war recession, and the hostile and segregated environment under the Wilson administration all created an extreme amount of racial tension in Washington, which had one of the largest urban black populations in

\begin{footnotes}
\item[574] Perry, et. al, “‘We didn’t have any other place to live’,” \textit{Southern Geographer}, (Winter 2013).
\end{footnotes}
the country.\textsuperscript{576} Despite the decline in upward mobility in federal service previously discussed, federal employment for blacks was still a major source of tension. One white Southerner who relocated to the District explained that he “deeply resented the idea that colored people should have any government positions.”\textsuperscript{577} These tensions came to a head in the summer of 1919.\textsuperscript{578} Known as the “red summer,” 1919 saw race riots in Chicago, Knoxville, Omaha, and several other U.S. cities and towns, including Washington, D.C.

During the spring and summer of 1919 Washington’s white press played up a string of alleged sexual assaults carried out against white women by black men.\textsuperscript{579} Washington’s NAACP warned the press they were “sowing the seeds of race riot” with their salacious and irresponsible reporting. On Friday, July 18, 1919, while walking home from her job at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the white Elsie Stephnick was accosted by two black men, ultimately escaping unharmed. Washington police questioned African American Charles Ralls about the attack but let him go due to insufficient evidence. Hearing about the attack and Ralls’ release, a mob largely made up of servicemen formed. With tensions particularly high between black and white servicemen, local enlisted, retired, and civilian employees for the armed forces took up the cause of


\textsuperscript{578} Other growing tensions of the time regarding modernization, the Red Scare, and economic recession were also contributing factors to racial violence. Dittmer, \textit{Black Georgia in the Progressive Era} (1977) p 203.; MacLean, \textit{Behind the Mask of Chivalry} (1994).; Wood, \textit{Lynching and Spectacle} (2009).

policing the color line enthusiastically. Creating a “mob in uniform,” the crowd of more than one-hundred marched with pipes, clubs, and pistols the half-mile across the National Mall toward Ralls’ home, beating black passersby as they went. Ralls’ African American friends and neighbors rallied to his defense, protecting their neighborhood through return fire while hunkering down into their homes, preparing for a fight.

Though the police effectively dispersed this initial mob, the violence that had been unleashed did not stop with this event. Every night from July 19 until July 24, violence swept through Washington. White mobs, made up largely of servicemen, attacked black communities while black retaliatory mobs formed to defend themselves and their communities. In the end fifteen people lost their lives and more than 150 were injured. During the riot much of the violence centered on streetcars, as black passengers were pulled from the trolley cars and beaten. On July 19 a mob formed at the trolley depot at Pennsylvania Avenue, a connection site for Arlington’s Washington, Alexandria, and Mt. Vernon line. Some of Arlington’s black residents, commuting between work or social activities were no doubt affected by this violence.

Some African American residents relocated from the District to Arlington following the race riot of 1919. Arlington provided many draws for those looking to relocate. Firstly, the County was very nearby, allowing for easy commuting. Within the County, there were several black communities to choose from. Though these communities lacked some of the amenities of living in the District, Arlington had a stable black population of longtime residents, with strong institutions. And perhaps most

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580 Ibid., p 73.
appealing at the time, Arlington experienced comparatively peaceful race relations.

Though the initial violence erupted at Ninth and D streets Southwest, just two miles from Arlington’s Queen City neighborhood, Arlington did not see similar violence. While Arlington was not without its violence, its race relations were still more stable than those seen in Washington or elsewhere in the South. Though the Klan was active in Arlington, their tactics were based largely on threats and intimidation. Even in situations where mob violence did arise, such as when the white mob formed to search for James and Gaskins, they restrained their violence for those men alone. When searching black communities for the men, violence and destruction did not sweep through these areas widely. Even some political leaders took the time to give lip-service to local black Arlletonians. Sheriff Howard Fields stated that “County Negroes are as good as any that can be found anywhere,” while Commonwealth Attorney Crandal Mackey praised Queen City for its “almost unblemished reputation.”

This is not meant to excuse or downplay Arlington’s racial violence, threats, and intimidation, but rather to show the county’s somewhat restrained levels of racial violence when compared to the realities of their time.

One such family to relocate following the riot was the Drew family. Richard Drew was a skilled carpenter. He was one of the few black members of the secretary of the Local 85 Carpet, Linoleum, and Soft Tile Layers Union. Drew even served as

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secretary of the union. His wife Nora was college educated. After attending Howard University, she became a stay at home mother to the family’s four children. Educated, skilled, and active in community institutions, this family relocated to Arlington. Like so many other Americans, black and white, the Drews saw success in the suburbs. A fifth child was born in Arlington and the five Drew children, Charles, Joseph, Elsie, Nora, and Eva, were brought up in a household which emphasized education, church membership, and civic knowledge and responsibility. In Arlington they found a community that shared these values. The Drew’s oldest son Charles Drew went on to attend Amherst College and Howard Medical School. Charles had an exceptional career in medicine. He became the first African American surgeon selected to serve as an examiner on the American Board of Surgery and pioneered blood transfusions for the military during World War Two. While Charles’ career took him beyond Arlington, his siblings remained attached to their adopted home. Joseph, Elsie, Nora, and Eva all continued to live in Arlington, where they each served as leaders in the community through church and civic service.

When the Drews came to Arlington, they relocated from the Foggy Bottom neighborhood of Washington. In Arlington the family chose to establish their home in Johnson’s Hill. The Drews’ pull to Johnson’s Hill makes sense because of that neighborhood’s middle class status and its connections to their former neighborhood of Foggy Bottom. Recall that the Gray family had relatives in Foggy Bottom and that this


connection influenced the architecture of their home. In Johnson’s Hill the Drew family purchased a large four bedroom Queen Anne. By 1920 the style was no longer popular amongst area whites. Homes in middle class neighborhoods like Butler-Holmes and Johnson’s Hill continued to be constructed in the Queen Anne style. White neighborhoods had moved on to more modern home styles, including the Bungalow and mail-order, kit houses. With a decline in economic upward mobility, particularly within the federal government, a lack of new styles in black neighborhoods could reflect their inability to afford these new homes. Perhaps family size impacted home preference. Nationally, the average home had 4.5 residents in the first thirty years of the twentieth century. In comparison, Arlington’s African American households were often large. James Pollard and his wife Elizabeth had nine children, including Josephine, in their Johnson’s Hill home. In Butler-Holmes the Chase family had ten members. Many households also included extended kin networks and borders. Recall that in Green Valley the Thompsons’ nephew lived with the family. And in Butler-Holmes the Holmes household was comprised of ten people, including two cousins and a boarder. Or


perhaps, older home styles remained popular because they were constructed within existing communities where these styles already existed, unlike white Arlingtonians who were able to expand into new areas. However, this divergence of trends in middle class tastes between black and white which had previously been consistent could reflect African American families continuing to prefer styles from a time when their full participation in Arlington’s suburban vision was still a reality. In an increasingly hostile environment that used segregation, violence, zoning and planning laws, and political changes to end black enclaves and push against black neighborhoods, black Arlingtonians made new choices in an attempt to maintain the homes and communities they had been building for nearly seventy years.

**Conclusion**

Racialized zoning, planning, and municipal laws challenged the validity of Arlington’s black community by legislating against the types of homes and environments they created in their neighborhoods. Against these mounting pressures black Arlington used their strong community institutions and stable population to adapt to the county-wide legal and social changes that worked against them. Where possible they provided their own municipal amenities. Fraternal, school, and church organizations provided community wide social and recreational activities. Individual communities took minor municipal improvements into their own hands, improvising solutions to missing services like street-lights. For the larger projects like paving and water systems black communities

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could not undertake these large and expensive projects on their own. In response, they attempted an unsuccessful bid into formal politics to secure these changes. They also formed Arlington’s first black citizen's associations, including the Nauck Citizens Association in Green Valley, mirroring the citizens associations of white Arlington communities.\(^{589}\) Though unsuccessful in getting improvements from the County at this time, many more black community organizations were formed following the 1920s to lobby the county for municipal aid. These organizations added to black Arlingtonians’ line-up of organizations designed to fight for their communities and rights.

Discriminatory laws and practices prevented local black communities from expanding physically. But they adapted so that more families could create their homes in Arlington. They increasingly subdivided land within their pre-existing communities, created multi-family homes where possible, and took in boarders to allow more African American families to establish homes in Arlington. These families were primarily second and even third generation county residents. Despite these adaptations, black enclaves, including those in Rosslyn and Ballston, were largely lost from the county and other homes were threatened due to their inability to meet new building codes. In an attempt to prevent this loss black-owned real estate and construction companies were established. During the first decades of the twentieth century black Arlingtonians carved out a foothold for themselves. Though they lost ground with the inability to expand their communities and the loss of smaller enclaves throughout the county, their communities

were able to resist mounting pressures from white Arlingtonians in an increasingly hostile environment.

Beyond impacting Arlington’s black communities and peoples, these changes in planning and zoning laws showed a changing county. Where the suburban village model of small dispersed communities interested in only their own development reigned at the opening of the twentieth century, by 1930 these communities were interconnected through county-wide municipal improvements and zoning and planning legislation which moved from the community level to the county level. Arlington was now a “thickly settled” continuous suburban community. This dense environment was due in large part to Arlington’s population boom. The county’s population jumped from 6,430 in 1900 to 26,615 in 1930, making it “the fastest growing county in America.” This growth was dominated by white in-migration from Virginia and other southern states.

In the first decades following the Civil War, Arlington’s black population had greatly expanded from a small pre-war enslaved and free black population. These individuals and families were drawn to the area by Freedman’s Village, employment opportunities, especially in the District, political rights, and because of available lands sold by a struggling white population. However, in the first thirty years of new century,


592 Rose, Arlington County Virginia, (1976).
these draws began to stagnate. Federal employment opportunities shrunk, legal rights backtracked, and physical community development stopped and even reversed as enclaves were engulfed by expanding white communities. As a result of these factors, Arlington was not a major destination for the early phase of the Southern Diaspora. Only about 3% of the county’s black population came from states south of Virginia. Where new white residents came to the area in droves with suburban land booms and the expansion of federal employment, Arlington’s black population stayed consistent. The decrease in Arlington’s black population in proportion to total population numbers did not represent an exodus of African Americans, but a consistent population where other new whites were entering. Though these changes put Arlington’s black population at a disadvantage it also meant that this relatively small black population was connected by county-wide social and communal institutions across multiple generations. This made an organized and strong community prepared to make their voices heard as the county continued to see significant changes in the second half of the twentieth century.

During the next two decades Arlington’s population, environment, and realities would change rapidly. The white population would undergo a huge transformation as New Deal and World War Two federal workers came streaming into Arlington from around the country. These individuals were not the native-Virginians of Arlington’s past. They brought with them new moderate, and sometimes progressive, ideas about race relations. The extreme population boom along with more urban sensibilities from these

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new residents also changed Arlington’s built environment into a far more densely settled suburban environment than Arlington’s early twentieth century developers imagined or desired.
Arlington experienced a population and building boom during the first two decades of the twentieth century that changed the area from an environment of suburban villages to a landscape characterized by contiguous suburban developments. This environment was filled with a swelling white population made up primarily of Virginians and southerners. At the same time Arlington’s black population largely remained steady. But this early twentieth century growth pales in comparison to the extremes of suburban boom which hit the county in the decades to come.

Beginning in the 1930s and continuing through the 1950s, federal expansion during the New Deal, World War Two, and continuing into the early years of the Cold War created a huge number of new federal jobs. This expansion of the government necessitated the spread of federal facilities beyond Washington. Many of these facilities, including the War Department building, were built in Arlington County. Newly arrived federal workers from around the country chose to settle in Arlington County, long considered a premiere bedroom community of Washington, in record numbers for these expanding federal jobs. Arlington had a population of 26,615 in 1930 and 57,040 in

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1940.\textsuperscript{595} Those numbers continued to rise. In 1950, Arlington’s population was 135,449; growing to 162,401 by the close of that decade.\textsuperscript{596} Suburban development throughout the county exploded in response to this rise in population and corresponding demand. This chapter deals with the physical changes brought about by this new population boom, while the next chapter deals with the social impacts of this change. A 1948 magazine article observed that all “separate communities are now merging,” making it “hard to distinguish between the various separate parts of Arlington... through the maze of wartime and postwar... new houses.”\textsuperscript{597} Existing communities expanded their borders and became increasingly subdivided, while more than half a dozen new neighborhoods formed.

These people and the built environments they created in some ways were a continuation of the suburban trajectory Arlington’s leaders worked hard to establish at the turn of the century. However, in other significant ways this was a departure from the visions of developers, planners, and politicians like Mackey, Lyon, and the League. To accommodate such an influx of population, these neighborhoods increasingly used higher density duplex, garden-apartment, and apartment developments. These building types joined Arlington’s almost exclusively single family neighborhoods. Many of these

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developments were funded by new federal building programs, with the Federal Housing Authority and Public Housing Administration assisting in the building of apartment village complexes across the county. This marked a change in Arlington’s built environment that many existing leaders and residents did not plan for or agree with. These developments were often pushed through despite protest because of war-time housing necessities and increased federal involvement. New residents and the development patterns they ushered in led to conflicts between new arrivals and existing residents who resisted the changes they saw in their county and greeted new residents with skepticism if not hostility.\(^{598}\)

All of these changes impacted Arlington’s black communities. Expansion of federal jobs had both positive and negative components. More federal work opened up more jobs to existing black residents and attracted new arrivals from elsewhere in the U.S. Though blacks were drawn to Arlington for federal jobs, Arlington’s African American population grew only slightly. Black populations largely continued existing patterns of relative stability, comprising only 7,000 residents of the just over 135,000 population in 1950.\(^{599}\) Throughout this boom Arlington’s African American communities continued to be squeezed into an increasingly dwindling number of areas available to them. Civilian and federal home loans discriminated against African Americans, while

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individual neighborhoods restricted black residents from purchasing homes through strategies like restrictive covenants. Expansion of segregated all-white neighborhoods for federal workers pressed against Arlington’s black neighborhoods. Developers bought land that had previously been black-owned, boxing in and shrinking black communities, and leading to the end of others. This expansion of neighborhoods combined with the expansion of the federal government’s facilities beyond Washington for the first time. The government used a combination of eminent domain and payment to seize lands that once belonged to African Americans for their construction projects. The government took over land in east Arlington, dominated by black communities since the closure of Freedman’s Village, for the construction of the War Department’s Pentagon building, the Navy Annex, and the federal airport. These forces combined until only three anchor communities remained – Hall’s Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley.

Like the generations before them, Arlington’s African American population used strong social and cultural institutions to resist these outside pressures, relocating many institutions and families to the precious few remaining communities, just as they had done following the closure of Freedman’s Village. Arlington’s stable black population was well organized and solidified after generations of organization and shared community development. Though not able to resist all closures or constrictions to their borders, Arlington’s African American people and institutions were able to hold those final three communities.

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The Arrival of New Federal Employees

A large influx of federal employees and their families flowed into the area as part of President Franklin Roosevelt’s expanded New Deal government. In 1940 Washington, D.C. led all states in growth with an increase in population to about 690,000, up from about 488,000. Through the 1930s, Arlington continued to grow and expand as a suburban community. From 1920 to 1940 Arlington County’s population more than tripled – from about 16,000 to 57,000. More than half of the county’s employed adult

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residents worked for the federal government. In many ways the New Deal’s federal programs can be seen as a continuation of the reform politics which came before, especially Progressivism. But unlike those earlier reform movements, the New Deal’s primary focus was to recover a society rocked by the complete economic collapse of the international Great Depression. New Deal policies of reform were thus broader in scope and more overtly economic.\(^{603}\) This system of reform was impacted by not only powerful political players in the federal city, but also by the civically minded citizens and professionals, businessmen, and lawyers who settled in Arlington. In Arlington these political actors were comprised of the men and women who used their diverse talents to power the reform machine of the New Deal, shaping policies in their areas as lower-level federal employees.\(^{604}\)

Federal expansion only continued into the 1940s with militarization of the United States in the years before and during World War Two. From 1941 to 1945 the county’s permanent population rose from 57,000 to 120,000, and would reach 135,000 by 1950.\(^{605}\) Relocating from across the nation to serve their country, many of these individuals and their families made their homes in Arlington.

Though the vast majority of new arrivals and federal positions went to white workers, changes on the federal level impacted African American employment as well. The federal government had long provided a unique job opportunity for African

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Americans living in Washington. Even with declines in job availability and advancement opportunities following the Wilson administration, the spike in federal job opportunities greatly expanded the possibilities for African American employment beginning in the 1930s. Many existing Arlington residents transitioned into federal employment during this time as opportunities rose. In 1910 twenty-year-old Arlington native Edward Moorman worked as a live-in domestic servant. But by 1940, thanks to expanded positions within the federal government, he was able to transition into working as a laborer with the U.S. Printing Office. More than 90% of federal jobs open to minorities were blue-collar and sub-professional posts like the one held by Moorman. The remaining posts were clerical. Though still performing manual labor, Moorman’s new position provided him with more flexibility in his schedule, better pay, and job security. Many other Arlington natives came to work for the federal government at this time. Lifelong Hall’s Hill resident Mary Gardner was still a teenager when she was first hired as a messenger with the War Department, eventually working her way up to the post of file clerk.

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608 Mary Gardner became Mary Scales and eventually Mary Koblitz. Mary P. Koblitz, interview by Shawna Helene Reed, December 3, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.
Despite these limitations, federal jobs open to African Americans increased by 56% throughout the 1930s and 1940s, helped by the Ramspeck Act of 1940. The Ramspeck Act prohibited discriminatory hiring, giving Washington one of the best hiring rates for African Americans. Many African Americans were drawn from farther south to Washington, D.C. by these war-time industries, making up the second wave of the Great Migration in the 1930s. James N. Gregory tracks the Great Migration in two phases: phase one from 1900 to the 1920s, and the second phase from the 1940s to the 1970s. The Washington area’s regional pull for the Great Migration began earlier in the 1930s because of the unique reality of New Deal-era federal job expansion, while the rest of the nation experienced an interlude from migration during the Great Depression. The majority of these new arrivals settled in Washington proper, but a portion came to Arlington. Twelve percent of Arlington’s African American residents in 1940 arrived during the Great Migration. This growth was dwarfed compared to the surge of white arrivals. While white to black ratios in Washington was 2 to 1 in 1950, that rate was 12 to

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1 in surrounding suburbs. On the whole Arlington’s African American population continued to be dominated by a stable population of families present for generations.

In 1938 12.8% of Arlington’s African Americans worked in Civil Service jobs. And that number continued to rise during the 1940s. The majority of these federal positions were low-level, sub-professional jobs, 90% of which were custodial. The War Department alone employed a custodial staff of 700 in 1942. Pay-rates, even for low-level employees making less than $1,600 per year were still better rates than those of their peers in the private sector. To match her federal salary as a custodian at the War Department when she left federal service, Mary Gardner had to work two jobs, cooking in the Langston School cafeteria by day and at People’s Drug Store at night. Esther Irving Cooper found herself in a similar situation. Recall from the previous chapter that Cooper moved to Green Valley from Ohio in 1913 to work as a stenographer for the

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615 In 1938 of African Americans employed in Civil Service Jobs in Washington, D.C. 90% were custodial, 9.5% were clerical, and 0.5% were sub-professional. Perry, et. al., “‘Everybody was Looking for a Good Government Job’,” Journal of Urban History (Mar 2014).


617 These were “general schedule” GS-2 or GS-3 positions. In the 1940s federal employees at level GS-4 made $1,600 annually. Vogel, The Pentagon, (2007); Reverend David T. Ray, “Integration of Church” (Unpublished Paper, July 1964), RG 6: Churches, Box 4, File: Our Lady Queen of Peace. CLH.

618 Mary Gardner worked at the Pentagon for about four years before post-war downsizing made her position redundant. Mary P. Koblitz, interview by Shawna Helene Reed, December 3, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.
Department of Agriculture. She left federal services in the mid-1920s to work part-time teaching stenography while her three daughters were young. After her departure the family still had the benefit of a federal salary because her husband George continued to work in federal service at Fort Myer. But when George passed away in 1937 the family was in a tough financial position. Esther attempted unsuccessfully to regain federal employment. To supplement a federal paycheck she had to work several teaching jobs. Despite the technically low level of these federal positions, federal employees took great pride in their positions with the government.

This pride in federal employment was not simply wedded to income. When Celestine Dole came to Arlington in 1936 from southern Virginia she settled into “a little white house” in Queen City and found work as a domestic in Clarendon. But in 1942 she transitioned to domestic work for the government, “doing custodial work.” Though this transition increased her salary, it also gave Dole other, less quantifiable advantages. Despite the inherent limitations on advancement, Dole felt that in a government office “everybody was treated equal.” Though Dole noted “it was hard work” she enjoyed working in an environment where her race didn’t guarantee harsh treatment. “I’d never worked in a place like that,” she observed. “It felt good.” A local priest working with the African American community saw many others experiencing the pride Dole described.

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He noted these men and women treated their federal employment as “a prized possession.” Federal positions allowed employees to insist whites treat them with respect, not “the way [they] would treat Southern Negros.” With this professional respect in the workplace African Americans saw themselves as “a new element: the government elite.”

This expansion of jobs and reputation for minimal discrimination attracted new black residents to the area. In August of 1933 nineteen year old Lula Mae Graham arrived in Arlington from her family’s farm in North Carolina in the hopes of finding better pay and more opportunities. She had worked as a domestic in North Carolina for fifteen dollars a month, but “it was thirty dollars a month” in Arlington, which was “a whole lot of money” to her. This relocation was no doubt a daunting prospect, but she was not entirely on her own. Lula Mae’s older brother Johnny and his wife Mae, had recently migrated from North Carolina. Johnny found government work and Mae worked as a domestic for a white family. Lula Mae quickly made contacts beyond her brother, as she joined a church congregation, connected with fellow domestics, and met her future

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624 This family had also relocated recently from North Carolina for the husband’s job in the government. Lula Mae Graham, interview by Eleanor Edwards, December 4, 2003, Halls Hill Oral History Project, CLH.
husband, Linton Graham.\textsuperscript{625} Much like Lula Mae, Linton was a native North Carolinian. He was pulled to the area generally by work opportunities, finding a position as a laborer at the Peoples’ Chemical Plant associated with the regional drug store chain. Linton came to Arlington specifically because of familial ties – his aunt, uncle, and cousin lived in Hall’s Hill.\textsuperscript{626} Many of Arlington’s new arrivals were drawn not only by employment, but also by friends and family who had come before them. Kinship networks of African Americans were very influential in drawing people to specific suburban areas from specific regions of the country, with entire families migrating in a stepwise fashion.\textsuperscript{627}

\textbf{Suburban Sprawl}

Beyond the federal government, local African Americans found employment in the area’s booming construction economy. Local building supply company, Murphy and Ames Lumber, expanded rapidly due to the boom in Arlington’s housing production. Founded in 1908 by Thomas B. Murphy and N.T. Ames in Rosslyn, by 1939 Murphy and Ames Lumber had two locations in Arlington with Rosslyn and Falls Church lumber yards, and an additional yard in neighboring Fairfax County.\textsuperscript{628} The lumber yard was a


\textsuperscript{626} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{628} Murphy and Ames Lumber, \textit{Anniversary in Arlington}, 1948, brochure, RG 51: Murphy and Ames Business Files, CLH.
major supplier of Arlington’s suburban boom; as one newspaper reported, “Murphy and Ames… have provided many millions of dollars’ worth of the building material that has gone into the tremendous growth of the Northern Virginia suburban area” during the 1930s and 1940s. Arlington’s construction projects relied heavily on local sources of labor for their employees. Beyond lumber, brickyards were still present in south Arlington near Queen City. Local bricks were in high demand to create the suburban homes of Arlington, a great majority of which were one- or two-story red brick houses almost as a rule. Establishments like the brick and lumber yards provided local employment opportunities beyond the federal government to both skilled and unskilled laborers.

While providing a source of employment, unfortunately, many of these jobs were day laborer positions that did not provide stability. Black men looking for jobs in the sprawling construction sites across Arlington and northern Virginia waited in Arlington at what became known as the “Hard Corner” to be picked up as laborers. They worked

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629 “Old Firm in New Quarters,” *Northern Virginia Sun*, April 16, 1953, RG 51: Murphy and Ames Business Files, CLH.

630 Murphy and Ames provided upwards of 70 jobs to local residents, some positions were held by African American laborers. “Old Firm in New Quarters,” *Northern Virginia Sun*, April 16, 1953, RG 51: Murphy and Ames Business Files, CLH.; Andrew Friedman, *Covert Capital: Landscapes of Denial and the Making of the US Empire in the Suburbs of Northern Virginia*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013) p 33.


632 Arlington Forest Citizen’s Association, “Arlington Forest Neighborhood Conservation Plan” (14 November 1990) p 5-12. In the early 1940s a skilled bricklayer was paid $1.75 per hour. This was about $0.60 an hour lower than the most skilled laborers in the area, such as an iron foreman, but was a good salary. Vogel, *The Pentagon*, (2007) p 179.

633 Friedman, *Covert Capital*, (2013) p 44.
for only $2.00 per hour, doing unskilled hard labor, clearing land, and grading roads.\textsuperscript{634} One of these men was Tommy Crawford from Hall’s Hill. Crawford was trained as a contractor. But despite that training Crawford’s step-son James Taylor remembered the unreliability of the work.\textsuperscript{635} Crawford “would build something” whenever he “got a chance,” Taylor recalled. Between construction jobs he made and sold food for construction workers from a “chuck wagon” which he moved between different construction sites. These men worked building the suburban homes that did not welcome them as residents.

\textbf{America’s Fastest Growing County}

From 1930 to 1950 Arlington was the fastest growing county in the United States. And the changes in the built environment associated with this boom seemed as sharp and they were sudden. A local builder noted, “Arlington County awoke one day to the fact that it was busting out at the seams [with] people from all over America, coming to our nation’s capital to help our government grow even greater.”\textsuperscript{636}

\textsuperscript{634} Day laborers were paid only $2.00/ hour into the 1950s and 1960s. While $1.75/ hour marked a skilled labor position in the early 1940s, one- to two-decades later this same pay scale could not match post-war inflation and cost of living rates. Friedman, \textit{Covert Capital}, (2013) p 33.

\textsuperscript{635} James “Jimmy” E. Taylor, interview by Chloe E. Muhammed, January 30, 2004, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.

\textsuperscript{636} Murphy and Ames Lumber, \textit{Anniversary in Arlington}, 1948, brochure, RG 51: Murphy and Ames Business Files, CLH.
These two aerial shots of Arlington County show the same area in central Arlington along the major thoroughfares Fairfax Drive, Wilson Boulevard, and Glebe Road in 1934 (Left) and 1955 (right). The expansion of roads, explosion of home density, and lack of green space twenty years after the image on the left helps illustrate Arlington’s extreme home expansion. Arlington County, Aerial Photographs, 1934, 1955. <http://gis.arlingtonva.us/gallery/map.html?webmap=28ea281cba6a4a5a8050df04c7fbb478>

These people looked for homes within Arlington’s suburban developments. Each of Arlington’s existing neighborhoods expanded, subdividing land and removing green space to allow for more residents. In addition to expansion of existing neighborhoods, seven new communities were constructed – Arlington Forest, Dominion Hills, Fairlington, Madison Manor, Tara Leeway, Williamsburg, and Westover. One reason that these neighborhoods were able to grow so quickly and completely was because of Arlington’s comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of 1930. That law classified almost the entire county, including then unsettled land, as “A Residential.” So, when demand

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637 Arlington County Government, Zoning Ordinance Adopted by Board of Supervisors of Arlington County, by Edward Duncan, et. al., (Virginia, April 26, 1930).
suddenly rose for housing, Arlington’s existing neighborhoods and unsettled land alike were ready to become residential housing.\(^638\)

This housing expansion required serious development of Arlington’s road networks. While Arlington’s suburbs initially developed along rail lines, local community advertisements highlighted road over rail access beginning in the early 1920s. By the 1930s the personal car dominated the suburban landscape.\(^639\) Builders of individual suburban developments were responsible for creating internal roads for those communities. Thus a major part of Arlington’s construction business centered on clearing and grading for roads.\(^640\) But for more than internal community roads were needed to accommodate the boom of new residents and their commuting needs.

With their population boom local Arlington residents recognized that “Arlington has a lot to do,” and among the most pressing was that “highways will have to be improved.”\(^641\) Highway creation was a major part of the process of suburbanization, providing easy access between home and businesses.\(^642\) So much expansion was needed


\(^{640}\) Friedman, Covert Capital, (2013) p 33.

\(^{641}\) George Kennedy, “Arlington,” Evening Star, June 5, 1951, CLH.

because of “low density residential development [spreading] throughout the area” and because of federal employment expansion within and beyond the boundaries of the District. Local and Virginia state officials joined with regional representatives from Maryland and D.C., as well as federal representatives from the National Capital Planning Commission and the military to create Arlington’s road networks. This meant that local Arlington officials lost some of their power in controlling the area’s development to state and federal authorities. Jefferson Davis Highway, Henry G. Shirley Memorial Highway, Columbia Pike, Lee-Jackson Highway, Lee Highway, the Falls Church By-Pass and Fairfax Drive, the George Washington Memorial Parkway, Glebe Road, and Arlington Mill Drive all required expansion to meet demand. The largest of these highways, Shirley Highway, expanded to 6 lanes of traffic at a cost of $4.6 million dollars and saw as many as 1,565 cars per lane, per hour by 1962. Of these roads only Columbia Pike, expanded to four lanes, was a cross county road whose construction


would benefit county residents exclusively. All others aided commuters within the county and to farther out suburban developments in Fairfax County traveling to businesses within Arlington, mostly federal installations, or into Washington. Even with this preference for commuter needs over local needs, Arlington’s road system was largely modernized and complete by the mid-1950s. The meetings on highway expansion were limited to officials, meaning the voices of common citizens were left out of the discussion of road expansions that would greatly impact their lives and communities.

Despite their lack of representation within road decisions, Arlington’s expanded road network greatly aided the expansion of suburban communities. Though distinct in some ways, these neighborhoods shared many similarities. These communities were all segregated. While existing communities, like Lyon Village continued to state their homes were for “whites only” in their advertisements, new communities like Dominion Hills and Tara Leeway, whose name was inspired by the Tara Plantation in Gone with the Wind, were established with the same racially restrictive policies. They were also

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649 Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Highways, Henry G. Shirley Memorial Highway Improvement, (Virginia, July 2, 1962), James J. McDonnell Transportation Collection, SC&A.


651 Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Highways, Henry G. Shirley Memorial Highway Improvement, (Virginia, July 2, 1962), James J. McDonnell Transportation Collection, SC&A.

primarily for middle class residents. A two-story, three bedroom brick new-build single family home in the new Arlington Forest community located in western, central Arlington cost $5,990 in 1939. By contrast, a much larger existing home in the older Lyon Park community in central Arlington went for the same rate around the same time. This shows a preference for the new buildings of Arlington’s rapidly expanding suburbs. Architect Robert O. Scholz and builder Meadowbrook, Incorporated construed all of Arlington Forest’s 850 homes. These homes were entirely standardized 1,100 square foot houses. These houses were constructed in one building boom beginning immediately following their purchase of the land in 1938. At these price points, both new and existing neighborhoods provided single family housing for middle class residents. Other new neighborhoods, like Bellevue Forest, used larger houses, irregularly shaped lots, and inclusion of natural landscaping to attract more upper-middle class residents.

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654 Homes were advertised for $5,950. “Home” (advertisement), ca. 1930-1950, Vertical File: Lyon Park, CLH.


656 The main phases of construction are from 1939 to 1946, with all major neighborhood construction completed by 1951. Ibid.

This building boom was enough to make “older real estate men dizzy” from the unbelievably soaring land and home price points, according to *Evening Star* writer George Kennedy.\(^\text{658}\) With so much rapidly expanding development, the handful of Arlington leaders who acted as builders and developers in the suburban expansion of the previous decades were replaced with a new generation of builders. Rather than a small elite group, Arlington now had a hugely expanded number of professional architects, builders, developers, and landscapers leading the charge of development in the county. The rapidly expanded demand in housing and increasingly available financing for building also encouraged individuals with little experience as developers to break into the housing development market. Lou Pomponio founded the A&H Plumbing Supply Company in Arlington as a family business in the 1930s.\(^\text{659}\) When Arlington’s land values and building demands began to boom the Pomponio family decided to turn their small plumbing business into a construction firm, building on the family’s land holdings in Rosslyn.\(^\text{660}\) Pomponio’s son, Lou Jr., “took charge of construction,” while his brother Peter “handled design” and another brother, Paul, handled finance. Other families joined this pattern. After seeing the success of centrally planned community developments in Arlington, the DeLashumutt family decided to create their own housing development

\(^{658}\) George Kennedy, “Arlington,” *Evening Star*, June 5, 1951, CLH.


\(^{660}\) The Pomponio family concentrated on office buildings, constructing the Lyon Building, the Donata Building, and five other office buildings which were in planning or construction phases in the early 1960s. Ibid.
within the Barcroft community.\textsuperscript{661} Brothers Thomas, Charles, John, and Basil DeLashumutt were all trained as engineers. Seeing the economic prosperity associated with Arlington’s construction boom they formed the DeLashmutt Brothers Construction and Engineering Company. The DeLashumutt family had moved to Arlington in the early twentieth century. Their father T.J. DeLashmutt was involved in county politics with Mackey’s Clean-Up campaign, participating in the violent raid of Rosslyn in 1904. Basil followed in his father’s footsteps, participating in county politics as a member of the Arlington County Planning Commission and Arlington County Board.\textsuperscript{662}

\textsuperscript{661} The DeLashumutt family constructed the FHA funded Barcroft Apartments. They were inspired by 1935’s Colonial Village apartments, discussed below. Historic Preservation Committee, Arlington, Virginia, \textit{The Barcroft Apartments: Arlington, VA}, by Marilyn M. Harper (April 25, 1986), Vertical File: Barcroft. CLH.

\textsuperscript{662} Basil served in these political offices from the late 1930s to late 1940s. Ibid.
Figure 32
In their March 10, 1941 “Washington Worker” issue, LIFE Magazine featured Arlington Forest as representative of the new ideal for suburban housing in the Washington, D.C. area. Cast in sharp contrast with the snow from above, the standardized size and shape of the homes within the community is evident. Once forest land, during their construction blitz to create the neighborhood trees were clear cut, making the “Arlington Forest” name ironic. “Greatest US Boom Town is the Nation’s Capital,” LIFE, March 10, 1941.

But despite the building boom, single family housing alone was not sufficient to meet Arlington’s growing housing needs. Some of Arlington’s white neighborhoods introduced garden style apartments for the first time. Arlington’s African American neighborhoods had previously embraced multi-family housing types to accommodate expanding populations in the face of consistent or shrinking lands in their communities as populations grew. But until the 1930s, white neighborhoods in Arlington hardly ever employed multi-family housing as an option. In the 1930s Arlingtonians joined the ranks of builders and developers across the U.S. looking to European models of housing and planning to find solutions for the shortage in housing that plagued the country during and
after the Great Depression. These multi-family units were centrally planned to help decrease waste and sprawl while providing the most amenities at the best cost.

**Federal Involvement in Arlington’s Suburban Growth**

The first large scale garden apartment complex built in Arlington, indeed one of the first complexes of its kind in the nation, was 1935’s Colonial Villages by Gustave Ring. Professional developer Gustave Ring was a pioneering force in the garden apartment style with his work in Washington during the early 1930s. Born in West Virginia in 1910, Ring grew up in the District and attended George Washington University before establishing Ring Construction Company in 1928. Despite his successes in Washington, Ring struggled to get funding for his ambitious building project in Arlington. Banks were hesitant to invest in apartments, whose foreclosure rates were particularly high during the national housing crisis of the Great Depression. They were also hesitant because Arlington had so few apartment units before this time that investors were not sure how popular they would be in a county dominated by single family homes.

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“People kept telling me I was crazy to build over there,” Ring recalled. Lacking private investment in his project, Ring decided to turn to the newly formed Federal Housing Administration (FHA) for support. The National Housing Act of 1934 created the FHA to stimulate housing growth for lower- and middle-income Americans by supplying federally sponsored loans for construction. Ring changed his intentions for the development, lowering rents to $12.50 per room for the one- and two-bedroom units in order to qualify for funding. Using section 207 of the National Housing Act, which focused on rental housing and suburban development, Ring secured funding for the Colonial Village project.

The first stage of construction began with 276 units on twenty-five acres of land off of Wilson Boulevard between Rosslyn and Court House. From October 1935 to July of 1937 construction continued until 233 two- and three-story Colonial Revival red brick buildings, containing just under 1,000 total apartments, were complete. Despite the huge number of buildings, structures only comprised about 18% of the total land in the

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671 Twelve buildings designed by DC Architect Harvey Warwick consisting of 85 apartments were added in the final phase of construction in the mid-1940s without FHA funding. National Register of Historic Places, Colonial Village, by Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey, 1979.
Colonial Village complex. Landscaping and comprehensive design was an important element of the garden apartment movement and the design of Colonial Village. Buildings were nestled in low density, non-standardized formations called “super blocks” with interior green spaces and courtyards professionally landscaped by designer James K. Wright. This stands in sharp contrast to the clear cutting of trees and absolute abandonment of landscaping that occurred to construct communities like Arlington Forest. Called “one of the outstanding developments of its kind in America” by *Architectural Forum* magazine in August 1939, Colonial Village apartments were hugely popular.\(^672\) The national attention on the project, with Colonial Village alone garnering twenty articles in various architectural magazines and journals from 1935 to 1940, the complex’s desirable aesthetics, and the need for moderately priced housing in Arlington where demand for housing from newly arrived federal workers far outpaced supply, are all reflected in the 15,000 applicants Colonial Village received for the first 276 units made available.\(^673\)

Ring secured FHA loans to make Colonial Village possible. Meanwhile, the FHA participated in discriminatory lending practices, known as red-lining. These policies broke down an area’s worthiness for receiving loans based on eight criteria.\(^674\) These were: relative economic stability; protection from ‘adverse influences’; freedom from

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special hazards; adequacy of civil, social, and commercial centers; adequacy of transportation; sufficiency of utilities and conveniences; level of taxes and special assessments; and appeal. These criteria allowed personal biases of an area's desirability to influence an individual's ability to get a federally insured loan. The FHA’s 1938 underwriting manual asserted that “if a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continue to be occupied by the same social and racial classes.”

Figure 33
The FHA’s discriminatory lending process was called ‘red lining’ because different zones of desirability were broken down by color – with the best A zones being Green, B zones being Blue, C zones being Yellow, and D zones being Red. In this color-coded breakdown of communities, seen above in Richmond, Virginia, red zones were almost exclusively minority and working class neighborhoods. Federal Housing Administration, “Map of Richmond, Virginia,” RG: 195, Box 141, Folder “Richmond, VA Master File—Security Map and Area Descriptions,” Entry 39, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (Here after NARA)

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Gustave Ring played a role in shaping the trajectory of discriminatory lending within the FHA. The discriminatory lending practices of the FHA have long and complicated roots. They were certainly shaped by earlier discriminatory policies within federal bodies dealing with housing. But scholars like Louis Lee Woods and Paige Glotzer have shown how these federal institutions relied heavily on local building professionals. Federal institutions were not looking to reinvent the wheel when it came to crafting federal housing policies. Associate Director of the FHA’s Division of Economic Statistics James Taylor highlighted the power of local leaders on national policy when he said that “mortgage lenders and real estate men can aid” federal officials by directing them in existing lending practices so that “we can all ride to town together” and be prosperous. This power on the part of local bankers, realtors, and developers allowed Ring to shape early FHA policies.

Colonial Village was among the very first FHA insured projects, serving as a prototype for similar instillations across the country. Ring worked with members of the


FHA’s large scale housing division to shape their policies for future developments. Before working with the FHA, Ring created apartment complexes throughout the Washington area. In these developments Ring instituted a selection process for applicants that sought-out exclusively white, middle class people. With this existing commitment to single race and single class communities, Ring’s Colonial Village FHA application included racially based restrictive covenants. Architectural Forum noted Ring’s influence with the FHA, stating that “All big businesses have their big men, and one of these usually stands head and shoulders above the rest. In the FHA-insured rental housing business this man, first, last and always, is Gustave Ring.” Indeed, by 1939, Ring controlled $37 million of the FHA’s $100 million worth of mortgage insurance. Though certainly not the only factor leading to the creation of the FHA’s discriminatory loan policies, as one of their premiere builders Ring played a

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hand in their creation through his work in Arlington. These policies in turn applied “ethnic and racial worth to real estate appraising on an unprecedented scale.”

Though it was the earliest, Colonial Village was far from the only development of its kind in Arlington. Other FHA sponsored apartment complexes included the DeLashmutt’s Barcroft Apartments, the Commons of Arlington, and the Ring-helmed Arlington Village in south Arlington. These projects as well as other large scale apartment communities, such as Buckingham in central Arlington near Lyon Park, were whites only. Other similar housing units quickly followed. From the late-1930s to the early 1950s, the core years of Arlington’s suburban boom, garden and low-rise apartment complexes became a dominant home and architectural type in Arlington until a total of 176 individual apartment buildings existed throughout the county.

Despite their need, popularity, architectural praise, and racial policies which fit local customs, many local Arlingtonians resisted garden apartment communities. This was especially the case when apartment complexes neighbored or fell within existing single family home communities. The Citizen’s Association of Lyon Village took an

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687 Arlington County Government, Buckingham Community Conservation Plan, (Virginia, October 2006).


active role resisting apartments. Despite their resistance, Lyon Village Apartments opened during the boom of apartment housing in the 1930s. For decades after its construction residents continued to encourage residents to work to “[keep] out apartment houses” and other “encroachment.” 690 Though the apartment buildings of Lyon Village Apartments were within the boundaries of their community, Lyon Village residents were told to “man the ramparts” by community organizers, working to keep the people living within these apartments from participating in community organizations. 691

Resistance from Arlington’s existing populations to new arrivals was not restricted to apartment dwellers. When Dr. B.T. and Lillian Simms relocated their family in 1945 it was for his new position as the chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry. 692 The Simms family settled into the Aurora Hills neighborhood in south Arlington where they purchased a newly constructed home. 693 Aurora Hills was first established in 1915 in eastern Arlington. 694 Initially, bungalow homes dominated the community, which featured a fire station and library branch by the mid-1920s. But the neighborhood became


692 Mrs. Lillian Simms and Mrs. Sue Renfro, interview by Helen Blackwell, March 1983, Arlington County Library Oral History Program, CLH.

693 Today the area is called Aurora Highlands in honor of the three local communities that came together in the late twentieth century to form one larger community – Addison Heights (1896), Aurora Hills (1915), and Virginia Highlands (1930). Ibid.

694 Aurora Hills is located very near Green Valley and bordering Queen City. Arlington County Government, Aurora Highlands Neighborhood Conservation Plan: Update, by Aurora Highlands Civic Association, (Virginia, 2008) p 4-10.
increasingly subdivided as more contemporary WWII-era 1.5 story brick box homes were added to the mix. The Simms’ house was actually constructed for a different federal family. But, according to Lillian, “just six months before we bought the house, the people were transferred to Ames, Iowa.” Rapid turnover of federal positions kept the area and its people changing. This was a source of contention between longtime residents and new arrivals. The Simms family did not feel welcomed by their new neighbors. “They wanted regular people who were intending to stay there.” Indeed this characterization of not being “regular” because they were drawn to the area for federal employment was a sentiment commonly expressed to new arrivals. Existing white Arlingtonians saw both the new homes and the people living within them, mostly newly arrived war workers from across the country, as something entirely different from Arlington’s pre-1930s single family homes filled with native Virginians. These Arlingtonians did not feel that federal employees were true members of their community, and thus they bitterly resented the new opinions, attitudes, and building styles brought with these individuals.

In their new neighborhood the Simms were one of many federal families. “There were a lot of people from the Department of Agriculture living in Aurora Hills,” and B.T. participated in a neighborhood car pool. The prevalence of federal workers was a reality across all of Arlington’s existing neighborhoods. In Lyon Park federal work

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695 Mrs. Lillian Simms and Mrs. Sue Renfro, interview by Helen Blackwell, March 1983, Arlington County Library Oral History Program, CLH.


697 Mrs. Lillian Simms and Mrs. Sue Renfro, interview by Helen Blackwell, March 1983, Arlington County Library Oral History Program, CLH.
became the dominant type of employment by the late 1930s. Professionals spanning from clerk, to engineer, to lawyer, to physician, to architect, to chemist all fell within the umbrella of “federal employee.” Entire households often worked in federal service. Patrick and Saidee Byrne of Lyon Park both worked for the federal government as clerks. This pattern of employment was true despite family size. Couples with children, such as the Byrnes who had one son, Patrick, Jr., as well as couples without children, like federal clerks Norman and Dorothy DeNeale, were frequently dual-income houses with both spouses working in federal service. Not just couples contributed to the predominance of federal employees within households. For extra money and to accommodate the population swell, more and more of Arlington’s white residents took in boarders. Harry Hay, an auditor with the Department of Revenue, and his family rented a room in their Lyon Park bungalow home to a fellow federal employee, a young man named Edwin who worked as a clerk.

For the first time women moving on their own came to the area for federal employment. Nationally during WWII, almost 400,000 women served in the armed forces, with millions of American women going into civilian service towards the war


Some were older women, such as War Department clerk Kate Ricker who was in her mid-60s at the outbreak of the war. Some were married with husbands serving over-seas, but the vast majority were young, single women just out of high school or college. Most of these unmarried young women worked as clerks, including Bessie M. Blincot of New York and Emma Brown of Georgia. These women often stretched their incomes, which ranged from about $1,200 to $1,600, by living with roommates. Ricker lived intermittently alone or with a lodger in her Lyon Park home. When moving to the


area from New York to work as clerks, sisters Maretta and Nellastine Hartshorn shared the cost of their small, brick single family home in Lyon Park. Marjorie Downey came to Arlington from Iowa in May of 1942 at the age of 22 to work as a typist for the Social Security Office. She rented a room in a house near Virginia Square. But workers were so many, and accommodations so limited, that she shared that one room with “six of us girls who worked for the government.” This situation was not unique, as many newly arrived federal employees found themselves sleeping in shifts in rooms rented out by impromptu landlords.

**Federal Building Projects**

Many younger women who migrated to Arlington found housing in emergency war-time federal housing. Beginning in 1940 in anticipation of the arrival of even more federal employees the government began constructing temporary wartime housing throughout the greater Washington area. The largest were the dormitories built on the recently vacated Arlington Experimental Farm grounds. Commonly called “Girl Town,” the twenty-eight acre complex dotted with gray, concrete dormitories housed up to 4,275 female federal employees. One such resident was Mary Olena Adams, a former...

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school teacher from Missouri. Residents included service women, primarily from the Naval Reserve’s Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services (WAVES), but largely consisted of federal civilian employees. Like the FHA funded projects, this dormitory was racially segregated. African American women in federal service were housed at Langston Hall in northeast D.C.

These dormitories were one of many federal civilian emergency war-time building projects in Arlington at the time. Despite the rapid building of suburban homes and apartment housing with both private investment and federal funding assistance, there were still not nearly enough homes to match the sharp increase of federal employees looking to settle in Arlington. This was especially true after federal expansion ballooned further with the United States’ entrance into World War Two in 1941. A 1942 survey found that 650 family housing units received 4,300 applicants. The Public Housing Administration stepped in to fund building programs in 1943. The largest and most ambition of these projects was the Fairlington community.

Located in south Arlington, across the small Four Mile Run creek from Green Valley, Fairlington construction was undertaken from 1942 until 1944. In those two


713 National Register of Historic Places, Fairlington Historic District, 1998. For more about federal housing and communities at this time see Richard Longstreth, “Housing Reform Meets the Marketplace:
years 3,449 one, two-, and three-bedroom Colonial Revival apartment and townhouse units were built along curving, landscaped streets consistent with contemporary building ideals.\textsuperscript{714} The project was publically financed via the Defense Housing Corporation (DHC). A piece of the National Housing Agency, DHC focused on building housing for defense workers and their families. Fairlington was their largest project, accounting for 61\% of the organization’s total apartments built, and 31\% of all dwellings built. Unlike many of the WWII-era emergency housing projects created for war workers, Fairlington was always meant to remain a permanent part of the county after the war’s end. This was reflected in the community’s detailed architectural care, landscaping, and the inclusion of parks, a community center, and a school.

In 1941 the DHC also authorized the construction of Columbia Forest neighborhood. Columbia Forest was intended to provide housing for “young married officers and ranking government officials.”\textsuperscript{715} With this federal backing and focus on housing federal civilian and military personnel, the Army Corp of Engineers designed houses and supervised construction of the community. Unlike its neighboring community of Fairlington, Columbia Forest had far less design integrity, filled with simple brick two-story box homes and less landscape and community planning. Though more simplistic

\textsuperscript{714} National Register of Historic Places, \textit{Fairlington Historic District}, 1998.

these homes still conformed to suburban ideals of the time. Demand was so high that construction was undertaken hastily, and the community’s development hit many snags. While county, state, and federal forces all came together to push major highway projects in the 1940s and 1950s, recall that roads in individual communities were still the responsibility of developers. Though bordering several major county roads, including Columbia Pike, the neighborhood’s internal road networks were not linked to the county’s road networks, creating problems for residents’ commutes.\textsuperscript{716} While Columbia Forest’s roads were inconvenient, other issues were dire. In March of 1943 Arlington County officials had to evict several families from the neighborhood after it was discovered that they had been living for two months “without sewer services on a street pitted with yawning holes filled six feet or more deep with water.”\textsuperscript{717}

While Columbia Forest had design issues, subsidized barracks style homes were created even more quickly and with even less consideration for design integrity and municipal needs. One such barracks project was the George Pickett Homes development built within the Columbia Heights neighborhood in eastern Arlington. Emergency overflow housing for newly arrived war workers, homes were utilitarian in look and feel, constructed quickly on concrete slabs. Unlike their counterparts, these projects were undertaken without regard for Arlington’s existing zoning or planning laws. In addition to George Pickett, Shirley, J.E.B. Stuart, and Jubal Early homes were all emergency

\textsuperscript{716} These roads were not connected to county roads until the 1960s. Arlington County Government, \textit{Columbia Forest Neighborhood Conservation Plan}, by Columbia Forest Neighborhood Conservation Plan Committee, (Virginia, November 2000).

wartime housing projects. These whites only developments were named after
Confederate officers, highlighting the racial underpinnings behind their construction as
well as the degree to which this racialized thinking was normalized within the framework
of Virginia’s Civil War “heritage.”

These federal housing projects were undertaken as a part of a broader trend of
federal building in the county. During the 1940s as existing institutions and the alphabet
soup of federal projects created under the New Deal continued to expand in response to
increased federal needs during WWII, the federal installations in Washington began to
outgrow the boundaries of the federal city. Virginia politicians like Senator Carter Glass,


719 (Left) Historic American Buildings Survey, Colonial Village, Arlington, Arlington County, VA, 1940,
Theodor Horydczak Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, LOC. (Center) Gottscho-Schleisner, Inc,
Fairlington Houses, Arlington, Virginia. Exterior II, 1943, Prints and Photographs Division, LOC. <
https://www.loc.gov/item/gsc1994020328/PP/ > (Right) “J.E.B. Stuart Homes,” ca. 1940, Arlington Central
Library, Center for Local History.
the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, pushed hard to ensure war-time spending pork came to Virginia.\footnote{Vogel, \textit{The Pentagon}, (2007) p 79-104.} Arlington had a long tradition of federal installations within the county borders, with Arlington National Cemetery, the Experimental Farm, and Fort Myer. With this tradition of building in Arlington and active courting from Virginia politicians, federal building projects looked to Arlington. With its existing federal sites and new additions 18\% of Arlington’s total land became federally controlled.\footnote{This figure represents total land used by 1959. The largest of these were the War Department’s Pentagon and the Navy Annex, built in 1941 to house overflow personnel from the Department of the Navy. Deines, “A Survey of Development of Arlington County Virginia, 1940-1965.” \textit{Arlington Historical Magazine} (Oct. 1995).}

The largest of these developments came with the War Department’s new headquarters, commonly called the Pentagon. In 1941 the War Department opened a brand new headquarters in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood of Washington. But the institution found it had outgrown the location of its new headquarters immediately upon its opening.\footnote{Vogel, \textit{The Pentagon}, (2007) p 21-34.} Its ever growing staff was scattered across more than seventeen buildings. The lack of centralization led to delays and inefficiencies which went from inconvenient to potentially catastrophic with the arrival of war. Ground was broken for the Pentagon in September 1941, and seventeen months later on February 15, 1942 the War Department’s comprehensive headquarters was complete.\footnote{Ibid. p 295-318.} The site contained 3.6 million square feet of office space, making it the largest office building in the world upon its opening. As a
child living in Lyon Village, Larry Palmer and his friends used to go to the Pentagon site to watch the dizzying pace of construction.\footnote{Larry Palmer, “North Harvard Street: Recollections,” \textit{Arlington Historical Magazine}. Vol. 13, No. 4 (Oct. 2008) p 17-28.} A fourth grader when WWII began, Palmer and his friends found Arlington’s construction boom thrilling – watching construction at the Pentagon, playing in the dirt and bricks of building sites, and daring one another to race across the tar of newly paved streets. Local black residents directly impacted by the new installation’s construction had a different perspective about the building’s erection.

When choosing a location for the Pentagon building the Army Corp of Engineers, Department of Interior, National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Congressional committees, and other affected parties originally looked to lands nestled between existing federal projects.\footnote{For a comprehensive history of the building and planning process of the Pentagon see Vogel, \textit{The Pentagon}, (2007).} This plan to fit yet another federal building into the federal corridor between Arlington National Cemetery, Fort Myer, and the newly expanded airport is what led designers to propose the unique pentagonal shape for which the building gets its nickname. But those interested in maintaining views from Arlington National Cemetery and continuing L’Enfant’s original plans for the federal city strongly resisted such a large federal project in that area. So another site was scouted for the building, but its unique shape remained.

Arlington politicians fully supported the government’s move into the County. Indeed, before the final site for construction was even chosen County Board Chairman Freeland Chew told the Senate committee investigating locations “we are 100% behind
anything that the government wishes to do.\textsuperscript{726} This kind of blanket support without requirements for preserving existing neighborhoods put Arlington’s black populations at great risk. Federal authorities were exploring locations almost exclusively in southern Arlington. With the exception of Pelham Town and Hall’s Hill in northern central Arlington, all of Arlington’s remaining black communities, including Green Valley, Queen City, Johnson’s Hill, and Butler-Holmes, were in southern Arlington. Local black residents, like Vivian Bullock of Hall’s Hill, called south side Arlington “the black side.”\textsuperscript{727}

**Impacts on Arlington's Black Communities**

While the expansion of the federal government offered employment opportunities, it resulted in increased housing discrimination. The majority of federally built and subsidized projects were segregated whites-only, and federal building projects targeted black neighborhoods for removal in order to build new government installations. This destroyed neighborhoods. It also limited the size and availability of existing black neighborhoods where the displaced could relocate. While politicians and planners were preoccupied with aesthetics, they cared little about the existing African American neighborhoods directly impacted by the construction. Indeed, while planners’ paid “special attention” to maintain the “aesthetic values… [of] the Pentagon,” they were


conscious that such provisions were not made for “adjacent properties.” This included the neighborhood Queen City and the bordering area of East Arlington.

In Queen City, more than 200 working class families lived in modest but well-kept frame houses. Generations of families grew in Queen City after the community was founded following the closure of Freedman’s Village. Native Queen City resident William Vollin, grandson of George Vollin, was one of the community’s earliest residents who relocated to Queen City from Freedman’s Village. Two generations later, the Vollins again found their home and community threatened. William Vollin described his neighborhood as a “real happy, solid community.” While Vollin saw a strong working class community, federal authorities surveying the area for a location for the War Department saw something else entirely. Just as was the case in Freedman’s Village, where residents saw a thriving community, outsiders saw the black

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728 Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Highways, Henry G. Shirley Memorial Highway Improvement, (Virginia, July 2, 1962), James J. McDonnell Transportation Collection, SC&A.

729 Both East Arlington and Queen City were formed following the closure of Freedman’s Village. East Arlington remained a small area adjacent to the Queen City neighborhood in a fashion similar to Pelham Town’s relationship to Hall’s Hill. Because Queen City was by far the larger development, relocation information focuses on that area.


neighborhood as a ghetto. The neighborhood was described as an “industrial slum” by developers.733 One highway consultant constructing road networks for the Pentagon went so far as to call the homes within Queen City “darkey slave cabins” that must be removed in order to “clean up that strip” of land.734 When President Roosevelt came to Arlington to view the site of the future Pentagon building, it was pointed out that though not within the grounds of the building itself, the houses of Queen City would “mar the environment of the new building.”735 Upon this observation “the President said they out to be acquired” and torn down.

And that is exactly what happened. In January of 1942 construction began for the Pentagon’s road networks in the path of the communities. Plans moved forward for construction without anyone informing occupants. Queen City resident Gertrude Jeffress recalled that after authorities told her their home had been condemned and they must relocate, “they only gave you a short length of time, and next thing the bulldozers were there.”736 Indeed, it was not until February of 1942 that residents received word that on March 1 of that year they would have to move.737 Property was seized through a


combination of eminent domain laws and modest payments. Residents who owned their homes were paid $2,052. These funds were not enough to buy or build homes in other communities. Even the least expensive homes in the county sold for more than double that price, and the average home price was exponentially higher. Still this was preferable to the case for renters, like Celestine Dole, who were not eligible to receive relocation funds. Despite these modest payments residents like Ruth Shanklin recalled that people were distraught. This was justifiable, after all, as Shanklin asked, “If somebody took your home, wouldn’t you be upset?”


741 For more on renters rights and the use of eminent domain to remove African Americans see N.D.B. Connolly, A World More Concrete: Real Estate and The Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida, (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

This aerial photograph shows Shirley Highway snaking through Arlington County. This area was once home to the African American neighborhoods of East Arlington and Queen City. Arlington saw a huge up-tick in federally funded highway construction during the 1940s and 1950s due to the expansion of the federal government, especially within the boundaries of Arlington County through installations like the Navy Annex (left) and the Pentagon (center). Regional Highway Planning Committee, Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Study: A Recommended Highway Improvement Program, Vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Department of Highways, 1952), James J. McDonnell Transportation Collection, George Mason University: Special Collections and Archives, Fairfax, Virginia.

With the push of war-time urgency, residents of East Arlington and Queen City were not able to delay eviction notices as residents of Freedman’s Village had two generations before. Despite comments from federal authorities, like construction supervisor Lieutenant Bob Furman who said the area was only “really, really rough shacks,” Queen City residents like Jeffress pushed back against this categorization of her neighborhood.743 She insisted “whoever said it was nothing but shacks, well that ain’t

true. This was a nice little neighborhood.”\textsuperscript{744} Almost all of those who lost their homes were black. Where Queen City and the neighboring East Arlington were demolished to make way for the Pentagon, Navy Annex, and their road networks the nearby white neighborhood of Columbia Heights, which also bordered the projects, was left largely untouched.\textsuperscript{745}

![Figure 36](image-url)

The image above shows Queen City with the Pentagon in the background in early spring of 1942. Mt. Olive Church, in the left-hand corner of the shot, as well as brick and wood frame homes are visible. Though modest, they are a far cry from the “shacks” many federal builders alleged made up Queen City. Within days the community was demolished. U.S. Army, \textit{Pentagon}, April 1942.

But more than homes were lost. Churches, community institutions, and businesses were also demolished. Like Queen City, Arlington’s brickyards bordered the Pentagon’s construction site. These yards had long provided Arlington’s black men an option for skilled labor employment beyond the federal government. They were shuttered due to the Pentagon. Like many of her neighbors, Jeffress was employed at the Pentagon. That job


gave her the opportunity to leave the world of domestic service for the stability and better pay of a federal job. This reality for Jeffress and her federally employed neighbors highlights the contested relationship African Americans had with federal explosion at this time. While expansion provided good jobs, it greatly restricted housing through demolition and the support of housing segregation through federal building and lending processes. While Jeffress worked for the government, her mother and grandmother ran a catering business out of their home, selling food to local brickyard and construction workers. So when their home was taken the Jeffress family lost both home and business.

Even Mt. Olive Church was demolished. Mt. Olive was first established in Freedman’s Village. Its lands became the basis for the community when its parish members were cast out from Freedman’s Village by the government in 1900. The church had been renovated and expanded just three years before. In 1939 the Mt. Olive congregation pooled their modest resources to expand and remodel their church, building a beautiful brick structure at the center of the Queen City community many of the members called home. The church provided more than just worship for members, it provided recreation, education, and fellowship for the entire community. In July of 1942 residents held their last service in their community church - now “a roofless, partly


demolished church, void of furniture.”  

The loss of their church on top of the loss of their individual homes and neighborhood as a whole was especially distressing for Queen City residents. A member of the church, Dole pointed out that “the church looked out for the people,” so when that institution also found itself without a place to call home, “it was kind of rough.”

These residents were not sure where to go. Lt. Furman admitted that he and his men didn’t “think… much about their welfare” when removing residents from their homes. One resident, Eunice, who was only twelve years old when the communities closed, recalled “it was just such a sad story because so many people had nowhere to go… no idea what to do.” Relocation was especially onerous because there were so few homes. Consistent with national trends, Arlington was experiencing a housing crisis in general. And this crisis was especially acute in the black community. As was the case regionally and throughout the country, residential segregation and restrictive covenants barred Arlington’s African Americans from living in the majority of

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752 Eunice, interview by Nancy Perry, October 3, 2012.; Perry, et. al., “‘We didn’t have any other place to live’,” Southern Geographer, (Winter 2013).

Arlington’s new suburban community and apartment complexes.\textsuperscript{754} In this kind of housing market “Where in the world [can] we find a place?” Celestine Dole reasonably asked.\textsuperscript{755}

After losing their homes with little notice, few funds, and little supply many people left the area entirely. Friends and families who had lived together in a community for a generation never saw each other again. John Henderson remembered, “everyone who lived there was really separated,” as previously tightknit residents were pushed apart.\textsuperscript{756} But many families affected did stay local. One of the primary options for these individuals was the federal government’s emergency housing. To help with displaced residents in need of immediate assistance to avoid homelessness the federal government created a trailer camp on mud flats on the outskirts of Green Valley. Like Freedman’s Village, these trailer camps were constructed to serve only as temporary housing. But their construction was far inferior to the emergency war-time housing the government provided in 1863 for the formerly enslaved. Entire families, no matter their size, squeezed into trailers equipped with stoves for heat and cooking, convertible couch-beds meant to


\textsuperscript{755} Celestine Dole, interview by Steve Vogel, April 2004.

\textsuperscript{756} John Henderson quoted within Jessica Wallach, “The Loss of a Neighborhood, the Cost of Progress” \textit{The Patch} (October 14, 2011).
sleep four people, and no running water. The tight quarters, lack of proper sanitation, and muddy environment led to rats so large that Henderson recalled they could shake the boards of the walkways constructed so residents could traverse their muddy environment.

Trailers were actually illegal in Arlington County and officials were anxious to remove the camp.\textsuperscript{757} Gertrude Jeffress and her sister Mary got a trailer when they were relocated from Queen City.\textsuperscript{758} They lived in that trailer until “the government put up temporary housing for us.” The government created barracks style wartime emergency housing. While whites had George Pickett, Shirley, J.E.B. Stuart, and Jubal Early emergency wartime housing projects, Arlington’s African American residents in need of emergency housing could live in the George Washington Carver Homes in Johnston’s Hill or Paul Dunbar Homes in Green Valley.\textsuperscript{759}

\textsuperscript{757} Trailers went against Arlington’ County zoning laws, but were allowed in Alexandria City. Vogel, \textit{The Pentagon}, (2007) p 182.

\textsuperscript{758} Gertrude Jeffress, interview by Steve Vogel, April 2004.

Some African Americans ousted from Queen City were relocated to trailer camps in Green Valley, pictured on the left. Despite losing their homes to the government’s war efforts in the county, residents of these camps continued to aid the war effort through federal work and by planting victory gardens, like the one pictured on the right. Arlington, Virginia.\textsuperscript{760}

While many relocated to federally sponsored housing, some residents from Arlington’s closing black neighborhoods were able to tap into extended family networks within Arlington to find housing. Eunice and her family moved to her grandmother’s home with the closing of Queen City.\textsuperscript{761} But her family of ten was too large for her grandmother’s small house. After leaving their home in Queen City they were forced to move into a wooden shed with a dirt floor in her grandmother’s backyard.

Beyond just family, residents from Arlington’s former black communities were able to tap into the strong social, church, and fraternal networks that linked them across


\textsuperscript{761}Perry, et. al., “‘We didn’t have any other place to live,’” *Southern Geographer*, (Winter 2013) p 420.
neighborhoods and, with such a stable African American population, across generations. John Henderson recalled that “it was quite a trying time,” but “I think the love and association of people is what kept people together.” Arlington’s African American population worked in cross-community organizations, such as the Odd Fellows. In 1946 local African American columnist Maggie B. Speller detailed a “day in the life” of an average African American resident in the area. The individual was anchored by a strong black community built around church, recreation, sharing meals, and attending community organization meetings. Church congregations also reached beyond their borders. Mt. Olive Church relocated to nearby Johnson’s Hill after being demolished in Queen City.

Through this tradition of community organizations working across all of Arlington’s black communities, individuals living beyond the affected black communities also did what they could to help. James Gaskins, Sr. relocated with his family from Yonkers, New York in the 1940s. Gaskins saw that Arlington’s black neighborhoods were congested and in need of more housing following community closures. After graduating from Virginia State University, Gaskins began a lifelong career with the U.S. Postal Service. In his spare time he began building, selling, renting, and remodeling

762 John Henderson quoted in Jessica Wallach, “The Loss of a Neighborhood, the Cost of Progress” The Patch, October 14, 2011.


houses across south Arlington. Through his efforts, Gaskins created forty affordable housing options for African Americans in the area. And lifelong Green Valley resident Leonard L. Gray, descendent of Freedman’s Village transplant Selina Gray, also worked as a contractor in his spare time, constructing homes for African Americans in Green Valley when he was not working as a carpenter for the federal government. By 1950 there were twenty black construction companies and three black realtors in Arlington.\textsuperscript{766}

Whether individuals and families moved in with family, moved into federal housing, or found their own housing, if staying local, residents had limited choices of where to move. Formalization of building, planning, zoning, and segregation laws had restricted Arlington’s African American populations to only a few neighborhoods, closing smaller enclaves. At the same time the extreme expansion of white neighborhoods across every portion of the county physically pinned in the remaining communities and worked against them. With more and more encroachment from white suburban sprawl, black and white neighborhoods were pushed even closer together. This brought the two into sharp contrast. In Green Valley, \textit{Washington Post} reporter Isolde Weinberg noted that “homes ranging from little more than shacks… comprise a ghetto” in Green Valley, while just across the street a white neighborhood forms “[uniform] middle class… housing.”\textsuperscript{767}


But more was at stake than just aesthetics by this proximity. White neighborhoods created physical barriers keeping existing black communities from growing. Expansion also led to land speculation, sharp increases in taxes while black incomes held steady, and a desire amongst white communities to buy these lands. In 1943 even the National Capital Housing authority reported that while “the white population is very conscious of Negro expansion into areas formerly occupied by whites” in the Washington area, they were “scarcely aware of white expansion into areas formerly occupied by Negroes. The net result is loss of territory by Negroes.”

Beyond areas cited for federal expansion projects, the most at risk neighborhoods were Hall’s Hill and Pelham Town in northern Arlington, isolated from the other black communities in southern Arlington. William Pelham, Jr., grandson of Pelham Town founder Moses Pelham, recalled that in the 1930s and ‘40s the land on the outskirts of Pelham Town was purchased for a white housing development. When new roads were constructed for this development they boxed Pelham Town in by not connecting to the community’s existing streets. Though, as Pelham noted, “they’ve been traveling back and forth through [that area] since my father was born,” residents could no longer use these routes to enter and exit their neighborhood. This pressure really “put the screws” to the Pelham family and the others who lived in their small neighborhood. This physical

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isolation coupled with rising costs and the fact that the new white community’s developer was willing to buy their property led to the end of Pelham Town.

Other communities faced similar fates. The Butler-Holmes community slowly ceased to exist as an exclusively African American community in a similar way, though the neighborhood kept a sizeable black presence. Members of the Hall’s Hill community observed simply and tragically that “the land left us.” After years of permit denials and rejections of home improvement loans, many black homes did indeed need to be torn down. This excuse allowed developers and planners who wanted the land for themselves as an excuse to seize black real estate. Shrinking black communities and expanding white communities meant that by 1950 Arlington’s black population made up only 5% of the county’s overall population, down from 38% in 1900. But this was a population of nearly 7,000 who all needed to be housed within an ever shrinking geography.

Where eleven black communities started at the turn of the century, by the 1950s only three remained: Hall’s Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley. These communities

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771 Marcia M Miller, St John’s Baptist Church, Arlington, Virginia, (Virginia: Brochure, October 31, 1988), p 8-12. RG 6: Arlington County Churches, Box 4, CLH.


773 Perry, et. al., “Everybody was Looking for a Good Government Job,” Journal of Urban History (March 2014); Perry, et. al. “We didn’t have any other place to live,” Southern Geographer, (Winter 2013).

were almost 100% African American.\footnote{In 1940 the entire county was 95% segregated. Individual neighborhood breakdowns are not possible before 1950 because the areas were not yet defined in individual census tracts. By 1970 Hall’s Hill was 84% black, while Green Valley and Johnson’s Hill were 100% black. Perry, et. al. “‘We didn’t have any other place to live’,” Southern Geographer, (Winter 2013) p 414-415.} New residents as well as those relocating from Queen City, Pelham Town, and Butler-Holmes had to relocate to one of these three neighborhoods. These communities became incredibly overcrowded. In Hall’s Hill for example while the community absorbed the residents from Pelham Town in addition to other new arrivals, the boundaries of the community shrank. Though Hall’s Hill was “two-fifths of its original size,” only spanning six blocks by five blocks, it “increased seven times in its population density” - hosting 263 families totaling 1,251 people by 1950.\footnote{Arlington County Government, Hall’s Hill – Highview Park Proposed Community Conservation Program, by James M. Langston Citizen’s Association, (Virginia, February 13, 1965).} Hall’s Hill’s active community organizations, especially the politically minded John M. Langston Community Organization founded to keep the community abreast of changing zoning and planning laws, attempted to keep the community intact against such outside threats. But without county-wide support beyond the black community they were no match to the slow push of white expansion against their borders. Johnson’s Hill and Green Valley found themselves similarly squeezed.\footnote{Arlington County Environmental Planning Divisions Neighborhood Conservation Program, Arlington County Virginia, Nauck, (Virginia, May 1973).} Green Valley grew by more than 17% from 1950 to 1960.\footnote{Green Valley’s population increased by 17.2%, or 4,467 people. During those same years, the County’s overall population grew by 20.6%, or 27,952 people. Arlington County Government, Report (Arlington, ca. 1968) p 39, RG 6: Arlington County Churches, Box 4, CLH.} Residents did what they could to make room for new arrivals,
renting out spare rooms, further subdividing lots, and creating more multi-family housing
units where possible.

The federally created George Washington Carver and Paul Dunbar homes were an
important addition of multi-family housing units in Arlington’s black communities. Like
the trailer camps, these barracks housing units did not comply with county zoning and
planning laws. Because of this, at the war’s end Arlington’s county government pushed
to have the buildings condemned and closed. The white housing developments, almost
exclusively populated with recent arrivals of war workers, quickly folded to such
pressures and the white housing complexes, George Pickett, Shirley, J.E.B. Stuart, and
Jubal Early, closed shortly after the war. But Carver and Dunbar homes were populated
with a more diverse mix of residents. Some were recently arrived war workers, but the
majority were individuals with long roots in the county who had been displaced by
closing black communities. African Americans in Virginia’s Tidewater region also
created cooperatives to successfully save wartime housing following World War One.779
Joining this tradition, both created cooperatives to help residents stay in their homes. At
Dunbar Homes, within six years of its completion the eleven-acre complex was home to
86 black households.780 Facing yet another potential closure residents Robert McGregor,
Frances W. Burgess, William H. Horton, James M. Smith, and others banded together to
form the Dunbar Mutual Homes Association. The Association pooled resident resources

779 The Truxton community is in Portsmouth, Virginia. Carroll, “The Racial Politics of Place,” Journal of
Urban History (May 2014) p 518.

File: Nauck, CLH.; Thomas O'Brien "Historic Survey of Nauck Neighborhood, Arlington County, Virginia,"
(Unpublished Paper, December 1987), CLH.
and enlisted the help of supporting lawyers and real estate men, black and white, until they had enough money for a down payment. They purchased their homes from the federal government for $264,000 with a $30,000 cash down payment and $234,000 in mortgages. 781 But even with these and other types of building projects, there was a finite amount that could be done, and Arlington’s black neighborhoods had reached their outer limits by the end of the 1950s.

But the population density also meant that Arlington’s black neighborhoods could support new and diverse kinds of all-black businesses and professions. Arlington never had a large enough population to support a “black downtown” like those seen in other areas of the New South. Instead only small stores existed to serve a community, with larger specialty items secured in Alexandria or Washington. This lack of local amenities put Arlington’s black communities in sharp contrast with the growing commercial zones dedicated to white shoppers developing in tandem with Arlington’s sprawling segregated suburban neighborhoods.

White Arlingtonians saw an expansion of their commercial districts. Clarendon established itself as a major shopping destination for locals during the 1920s. But by the 1940s “Clarendon glittered as the shopping center of northern Virginia.” 782 Between 1940 and 1951 the area became home to JC Penny, Sears, GC Murphy, Kann’s, and Hecht’s

781 White developer James A. Hewitt helped secure a loan from a New York based bank, while lawyers Preston H. Harris (black) and Roy Halquist (white) helped with the legal aspects of creating the Cooperative and bidding on the property. Marilyn Chase, “Dunbar Homes: Paying Their Own Way” Green Valley News, October 31, 1974. Vertical File: Nauck, CLH.

department stores. But in addition to expansion of Clarendon’s shopping district, which gave that area a “downtown atmosphere,” Arlington also experienced the rise of the strip mall shopping center. The spread-out nature of new suburban homes and the mass consumer culture of WWII-era America saw its physical representation in the shopping center. The inclusion of shopping centers in new community developments was a common practice in Arlington. For example, Colonial Villages included a multi-phased business complex, while Arlington Forrest, Williamsburg, and Westover communities each created community shopping centers.

These commercial zones were convenient for local white residents. But they served residents within these communities almost exclusively and thus did not provide benefits for Arlingtornians writ large. Because each of these new communities was racially segregated, the location of commerce in shopping centers within white, middle class suburbs, meant African Americans did not have equal access to these new, attractive economic spaces. African Americans were able to use some of these facilities,

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but accommodations were still segregated. Completed in 1945, the Fairlington Shopping Center located near Green Valley brought the county’s first lunch counters. Here black customers could shop, but were not served at the segregated lunch counters.

As a result of this restriction from expanding white commerce and increased population density in Arlington’s existing black neighborhoods there was more demand for various goods and services that Arlington’s previously smaller black community could not sustain. More and more of Arlington’s residents established new community businesses. Many of these new businesses were helmed by women. Decorator Grace Scipio of Hall’s Hill and designer Ann Walker of Green Valley joined the ranks of many local black women advertising services like tailoring, dress making, and calligraphy to their ever expanding array of neighbors. “Mamie” Mell Mackley Brown used the cosmetology degree she earned from Storer College in West Virginia to open Friendly Beauty Salon and cosmetology school in Green Valley in the 1930s. Her institution

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788 For more on segregated lunch counters and Civil Rights demonstrations challenging these accommodations see the digital history site “Built By the People Themselves.” <http://lindseybestebreurtje.org/arlingtonhistory/>


790 “Advertisements,” *The Virginia Arrow*, RG 11: Papers of Edmund C. Fleet, Box 4, File 7, CLH.

graduated more than 100 black female students in cosmetology, providing them with the education to improve the lives of themselves and their families.

Restaurants were another major source of employment within black communities. Evelyn B. Simms and her family owned the restaurant in Hall’s Hill, where she worked as the cook. Though Arlington’s white restaurants served black customers beginning in the late-1950s, black patrons did not feel welcome here. Simms’ husband Princeton recalled that despite being allowed to eat at these restaurants proprietors would destroy any plates used by black patrons. “Anything we ate out of they broke it up… Right in front of you, right on the counter. After you finished eating they’d pick up the plate and throw it in the trash because they wasn’t going to serve any white person out of that plate.” Because of this kind of outward hostility black customers continued to prefer to patronize their own restaurants despite integration. Green Valley featured the Shady Dale Restaurant. Owned by the Oliver family, Hattie Berger Oliver spearheaded the enterprise, working as head chef, buyer, manager, and even dishwasher, while her husband worked two custodial jobs to keep their family of five afloat. The County’s property yard, which houses county equipment such as buses and snow plows, borders the Green Valley community on South Arlington Mill Drive. Into the 1950s, Shady Dale Restaurant was the only local establishment within walking distance where these drivers and county

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793 To avoid fines Arlington’s restaurants ended formal segregation policies in 1956. Ibid.

workers could purchase their lunch. Because of this the County made a special arrangement with the Oliver’s so that they could serve black and white patrons. Though Shady Dale actually served an integrated clientele it remained primarily an African American restaurant. Residents used the opportunities available to them within the realities of mid-century Arlington to create businesses and opportunities within the three anchor communities still open following Arlington’s suburban boom and federal expansion.

Conclusion
Federal expansion greatly shaped Arlington. New arrivals of war workers resulted in an explosion of suburban development. This development created more single family housing communities while also adding multi-family housing options to Arlington’s built environment, changing the character of the county’s residential landscape.

The expansion of housing for federal employees significantly impacted Arlington’s black communities. All of these new communities were segregated white-only spaces that prevented black Arlington from expanding. White neighborhoods and developers used existing zoning, planning, and buy-out tactics to take land they wanted for themselves. Federal building projects, including FHA funded communities, added new tools to this land grab from African Americans. Through these tactics communities like Pelham Town and Butler-Holmes ceased to exist as black neighborhoods, while areas like Hall’s Hill shrank geographically despite increasing in population density. Expansion of government buildings into Arlington, most significantly with the War
Department’s Pentagon building, led to the closure of additional black communities in Arlington.

But Arlington’s remaining anchor communities – Hall’s Hill, Johnston’s Hill, and Green Valley – worked to absorb people from these lost neighborhoods as well as new arrivals. They used the people, churches, community organizations, and social institutions that worked within and across all of Arlington’s black neighborhoods as their support system when their immediate community was lost. Arlington’s stable black population was well organized and solidified after generations of organization and shared community development.

Although the expansion of Arlington’s suburban growth and the area’s federal expansion put pressure on African American communities, both realities provided opportunities as well. Arlington’s built environment was not all that changed as a result of the sharp rise of new federal employees. The residents themselves also marked a break from Arlington’s previous growth. Like the previous generation of new residents, these new arrivals were predominately white. But unlike those who came before them, these residents came from across the country and not just from elsewhere in Virginia or the south. Mostly college educated, this new batch of residents brought with them more socially liberal ideas about race, education, and the proper role of government. These new opinions had profound impacts on Arlington’s social and residential policies.
CHAPTER FIVE - “WE CANNOT LOSE THIS FIGHT AS WE LOST OUR FREEDOMS DURING RECONSTRUCTION DAYS”795: CHANGING POLITICAL REALITIES, THE CAMPAIGN FOR SCHOOL INTEGRATION, AND NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

Arlington’s new arrivals, who were drawn to the area for the federal expansion of the 1930s through 1950s, dramatically changed the county’s built environment. This physical change had a marked impact on Arlington’s African American communities. A drastically expanded white population led to an unparalleled housing and construction boom that resulted in the closing of black enclaves and communities and the shrinking of the three remaining communities – Hall’s Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley.

Not just the numbers of new residents but the residents themselves also marked a break from Arlington’s previous growth. Like the previous generation of new residents, these new arrivals were predominately white. But unlike those who came before them, these residents came from across the country and not just from elsewhere in Virginia or the South. This group was very educated, the majority having attended college.796 This new batch of residents brought with them more socially liberal ideas about race,


education, and the proper role of government that had profound impacts on Arlington’s social and residential policies.

In many ways the county was finally the community that early planners had sought for the past half-century – the county was squarely suburban, with communities interconnected by large-scale social programs and municipal services which made it a premiere residential community for Washington’s federal employees. But the influx of so many federal employees changed the character of the county. The skyrocketing population caused a housing shortage which changed the character of housing to a mixture of town homes, multi-family homes, and single family residences. Before World War Two Arlington’s housing was 73% single family homes. These homes were 75% owner occupied. But by 1950 that number had shrunk to 51% single family homes. This had a “marked effect upon the living patterns of Arlington residents and their identification with the community.” This broke with the picture window, exclusively single family ideal of early developers. Additionally, the people living within these new home-types did not care as much about stamping out the African American presence in Arlington. Some new residents had very progressive views on race which called for inclusion and equality. But most were white moderates who wanted what was best for themselves and their families, including good schools and increased spending on municipal needs, regardless of potential ramifications on race. The fact that Arlington’s

black population was small, making up only 5% of the county as of 1940, and contained within the three black communities also helped many embrace this moderate attitude.\textsuperscript{798}

With the breathing room created by an increasingly moderate social and political attitude from the white majority, Arlington’s African American communities which had long been organizing and carving out a place for themselves were able to secure more rights and social, political, and physical space within the county. Long-tested African American institutions, like churches and fraternal organizations, were helped by new institutions and an increasingly active, young African American population pushing for more and more rights. The majority continued to work in federal service. One federal report noted that these positions within the professional class helped Arlington’s black population, “some of them whose families have been in Virginia for generations,” in “leadership and community spirit” to ensure the continuation of their communities.\textsuperscript{799}

**New Arlingtonians and Changing Political Realities**

The new residents of Arlington greatly changed the social and political make-up of the county from the political realities in place since the early 1900s. In the first decades of the twentieth century Arlington politics were dominated by men like Frank Lyon and Crandal Mackey. These politicians, businessmen, and developers used local and state politics to bolster a vision of Arlington dominated by white residents in single family homes. Arlington’s leaders and residents were also predominantly Virginians and


Southerners committed to the Democratic Party. Though economically and socially more diverse and urban than their counterparts farther south, “politically,” as one mid-century commentator put it, the county had “traditionally been one party (Democratic), poll-tax, Southern.”

In the twentieth century the Virginia Democratic Party was dominated by the Byrd political machine. Named for Harry F. Byrd, who served as a state Senator, Governor, and U.S. Senator during his tenure in public office, the Byrd Organization began in the 1920s. Byrd took an already tightly run Democratic Party in Virginia and turned it into a formidable political machine. The Byrd Organization controlled Virginia almost completely. They were defined by a commitment to racial hegemony, small government, and fiscal conservatism. This push for small government and little spending meant that funds were not spent even for needed social and municipal improvements, creating an environment that could hurt the very individuals who supported the organization. While not as engrained in machine politics as their counterparts in south-side Virginia, for example, Arlington’s political and social leaders before and during the 1930s very much agreed with and worked within the policies of the Byrd Organization. These old guard Arlingtonians stood in opposition to newly arriving residents, whom they referred to as “outlanders” and “foreigners.”

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Simms family relocated to Arlington for federal employment they did not feel welcomed by their new neighbors in their Aurora Hills neighborhood. Lillian Simms said her “neighbors were very awful to [federal workers].” And unless you had lived in the area for “eight years or so” you could expect Arlington’s pre-WWII population to be “aloof” if not downright hostile. The experiences of the Simms family were far from unique.

This sense of othering was sharply felt by all federal families. But this resistance to their presence in the county was especially pronounced for African Americans who came to the area to work for the federal government. First Lieutenant James Franklin McCall was the first African American officer assigned to the Army’s Third Infantry at Fort Myer in Arlington. There his tasks included the honor of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. A native of Philadelphia, McCall had served in Kentucky and abroad in Europe before being assigned to Fort Myer. Despite his experience at other military installations within and beyond the South, the McCalls had a difficult time penetrating the “clique” they found in Arlington. As the only black family at the base, McCall felt that he and his wife Yvonne Jackson McCall had to act as role models for the entire race. Yvonne in particular worked hard to charm

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803 Mrs. Lillian Simms and Mrs. Sue Renfro, interview by Helen Blackwell, March 1983, Arlington County Library Oral History Program, CLH.

804 James Franklin McCall, interview by Debra Murphy, 2001, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, LOC. <https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/bib/29772>


806 James Franklin McCall, interview by Debra Murphy, 2001, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, LOC. <https://memory.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/bib/29772>
the officers and their wives at social events, and over time the pair found acceptance. At military social functions held beyond the base, an integrated military clashed with segregated society. In these situations an advance team from the military had to go to restaurants to warn the facilities managers that the party would be integrated. At these facilities the service staffs were frequently black. But, over time on Fort Myer the Mc Calls found more tolerant families who went above and beyond to make them feel welcome. James felt “there was a desire to say ‘we’re not like those people you may have heard about.’”

This story of gradual acceptance helps to highlight the ways in which Arlington’s newly arrived majority of federal employees stood in contrast to the old guard Arlingto

nians on issues of race. Though not pushing for overt equality or civil rights, neither were Arlington’s new residents willing to shun the Mc Calls and people like them. This reality fits with narratives that challenge the idea of a “solid South” and with those of scholars like Matthew Lassiter, Andrew B. Lewis, and James H. Hershman, Jr. who explore the political and social strengths and limitations of moderates in Virginia. In some ways the progressive shift seen in Arlington challenges narratives like those of Thomas J. Sugrue, Andrew Wiese, and Jeanne Theoharis who argue that racism and segregation were national, not southern, problems. While I do not question that these issues were national problems, Arlington shows how a significant shift in a population to people who are college educated, white collar, and not exclusively Southern in an area
with a small black population can allow for the embrace of racially progressive policies.\textsuperscript{807}

\textbf{Figure 38}
When attending social events like the one above with other military families the Mc Calls, seen at the center of the photograph, were often the only people of color present outside of the wait staff. Because Virginia was segregated, the Army sent advance teams to make sure facilities knew the party would be integrated. The Mc Calls felt that these African American men and women were very excited to see them there as guests, giving Yvonne special accommodations as a way of saying “we’re with you.” 

Black and white digital print of sing-along social of officers of the 3rd Infantry, Fort Myer, Virginia, ca. 1950, James Franklin Mc Call Collection (AFC/2001/001/29772), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, LOC.

Federal families were more likely to be well educated, to have been born or raised in states beyond the South, to express more moderate social and racial views, and to work as white collar professionals. By 1950, Arlington County’s adult education level was twice the national average.\footnote{In 1950 less than 40\% of US residents graduated high school, but in Arlington most residents had college degrees. McKee, \textit{The People Act}, (1955) p 148. \textit{United States Census, 2000: Report}, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office) p 158.} When people like Lillian Simms came to Arlington with their families they brought with them a distinct worldview that was not consistent with Arlington’s existing political environment. Before coming to the area for an assignment with the Department of Agriculture the Simms family spent nearly 25 years in Oregon. There she and her husband B.T. worked for Oregon State University, he as a researcher and professor and she as a secretary.\footnote{Mrs. Lillian Simms and Mrs. Sue Renfro, interview by Helen Blackwell, March 1983, Arlington County Library Oral History Program, CLH.} Lillian was born in Minnesota and raised throughout the western United States and Canada. Highly educated, raised beyond the South, Lillian was also active in social and political institutions, like the League of Women Voters and the PTA, upon her arrival in Washington. The Simms family represented a new kind of Arlington resident.

Disagreements on social issues and the proper role of the government in people’s daily lives was also a major source of contention. Arlington’s new residents were not committed to the political austerity of the Byrd regime. Many were shaped by societies beyond the south where this worldview did not reign supreme. And, as federal employees, many believed in a more actively involved government. Beyond this theoretical disagreement with a lack of county organizations, the arrival of huge numbers
of new people greatly strained Arlington’s existing resources. By the late 1940s, all municipal and recreational services needed expansion. New residents wanted and needed more services, and they were prepared to pay for them. “Why assume the sidewalks, additional garbage collections, and additional recreation facilities can be provided without additional taxes?” asked Arlington County Board Member Florence Cannon.\(^{810}\)

Part of the reason for a lack in responsiveness had to do with Arlington’s local form of government. In 1930 Arlingtonians had called for a special election to establish a County Manager form of government.\(^{811}\) Supported by Arlington’s existing white residents and those in power before the influx of new arrivals, this government rejected district voting for an at-large voting system that elected five county board members for four-year terms.\(^{812}\) These members in turn appointed an individual from their ranks to serve as County Manager. The County Manager in turn appointed county department heads.\(^{813}\) Instead of coming from a cross-section of the county, new board members most frequently hailed from the wealthier and less diverse northern section of the county. Because local districts no longer voted for their own representatives, this at-large system made the county government less responsive to individual community needs. And,

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810 Mrs. Florence Cannon quoted within “Arlington Women Urged to Study Budget,” \textit{The Sun}, September 1948, RG 96, Box 2, Folder 7-2, CLH.

811 Virginia Code Chapter 14, Title 15, Section 15.1-664-9 allows for Counties of less than 60 square miles of highland with a minimum of 500 inhabitants per square mile to hold special elections for a change in government representation type as long as a minimum of 200 registered voters sign a petition. Sherman W. Pratt “Arlington’s At Large Electoral System: A Study of its History, Strengths, and Weaknesses” \textit{Arlington Historical Magazine} Vol 10 No 3 (Oct. 1995) p 19-36.


because county politicians generally subscribed to the Byrd Organization political theory of small government and little spending, they were disinclined to spend money on regional improvements. The change to the County Manager form of government also had “racially discriminatory overtones.”  

814 The change of government representation came after four African American residents ran for office in 1930 stood a chance of winning, because of residential segregation that isolated the black vote to south Arlington’s Jefferson District.  

815 The switch to an at-large system all but guaranteed African American candidates could not win a county-wide election.

As a result of a less responsive county government, beginning in the 1940s and 1950s local residents looking to fill the gap between needs and government provisions created new county political organizations. One such organization was the Better Government League, a non-partisan group with overtly political aims. They sponsored events with local and state officials to discuss local issues, like public utilities and recreation, as well as governmental reforms, like improvements to the state’s financial and tax systems.  

816 The Better Government League was joined by organizations like Arlingtonians for a Better County (ABC) and the Arlington Independence Movement


<http://proquest.com.library.access.arlingtonva.us/docview/150124216?accountid=46215>

(AIM) by the mid-1950s.\footnote{Dean C Allard, “Arlington, 50 Years Ago: Continuity and Change,” \textit{Arlington Historical Magazine}, Vol 13, No. 2 (Oct. 2006) p 43-44.} These organizations were nick-named “Agitators By Choice” and “Arlington Is Mine” by their detractors from Arlington’s old guard residents. Together new residents hoped that “these [groups] will mark a turning point in the drive of Arlington’s civic-minded groups and individuals for a more democratic, more enlightened local government.”\footnote{Harley M. Williams, Better Government League, to Members, September 1949, RG: 60: Eastman Fenwick Family Papers, CLH.} One of the major organizations in this swell of new participatory groups was the Arlington Civic Federation. The Federation combined thirty-nine civic groups into one body that could work to shape municipal and governmental policies in the county and state. A large part of their reform aims had to do with attempting to remove the Byrd organization from local politics. As one person wrote, “it is more important that the voice of the people should prevail in Arlington election matters at the nominating level.” They pushed for non-partisan primaries for local officials.

These organizations were non-partisan and pushed for the removal of party politics from many local elections because of the status of many Arlingtonians as federal employees. Federal employees were limited in their political participation by the 1939 Hatch Act.\footnote{McKee, \textit{The People Act}, (1955) p 147-169.} Named for Senator Carl Hatch of New Mexico, the Hatch Act prevented federal employees from "any active part" of campaigning in any federal, state, or local
elections with candidates from national political parties. Additionally, controlled primaries were an important tool of the Byrd Democratic machine. Because of the power of the political machine, primaries all but decided who would come out victorious in the general elections. And only small numbers of the population participated in primaries. From 1925 to 1941 only 11.5% of eligible voters in Virginia voted in the Democratic primaries.

One reason for such low turn-out, was confusion over Virginia’s voting system for new residents. Recall, the amendments the new state constitution in 1902 included a large number of voting restrictions, including poll taxes. These taxes must be paid in advance of the election without a bill being sent. While created to target African Americans specifically, these voting restrictions also hurt Arlington’s new arrivals, black and white. With many residents arriving from beyond Virginia and the South, these taxes led to a great deal of confusion for new residents. The League of Women Voters sent out directions explaining bills and timelines to new residents. Once over twenty-one years of age, an individual must live in Virginia for one year, Arlington for six months, and their

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voting district for thirty days before being eligible to vote.\textsuperscript{823} This meant that the newest arrivals could not vote in Arlington. After that first year, “in order to vote you must have paid, six months before the November election, any poll taxes due for the three years preceding the year in which you wish to vote.” Taxes of $1.50 were levied annually, regardless of voting intention, without bills being sent. The Lyon Village Citizen’s Association reminded existing residents to help their new neighbors understand the system. They encouraged members to look out for “any new residents in your immediate section tell them that poll taxes must be paid… if they wish to vote either in the primary or the general election this year,” providing reminders about due dates and details about how to identify your poll tax receipts – “it’s pink in color.”\textsuperscript{824}

Delays in voting eligibility, combined with complicated poll tax billing systems that saddled voters with debts they were not aware of, led to decreases in voter participation. As a result some new residents were discouraged from voting in Arlington.\textsuperscript{825} In 1955 Arlington’s PTA organized a “voter drive to qualify more voters in Arlington by encouraging payment of poll taxes.”\textsuperscript{826} Citizens’ groups lamented that “in Arlington, Federal employees… constitute the largest segment of the population,” but


\textsuperscript{824} Lyon Village Citizen’s Association, \textit{Lyon Village Bulletin}, (Arlington, Virginia, April 1941), RG 84: Lyon Village, CLH.


because of restrictions on voting “their lack of an adequate role in local elections …has been the reason for the inadequate services and poor community facilities provided by the county government.” New arrivals strained resources and were incapable of voting for municipal expansions which Byrd Democrats refused to finance.

While these restrictions hurt new arrivals, they targeted African Americans specifically and their impacts were most felt within that community. The level of activism in Arlington’s black community would suggest a high level of political participation. But all but a small number of Arlington’s black residents were blocked from voting into the mid-twentieth century. For example, despite an active local community, only 16% of Arlington’s black female population attempted to register to vote in 1941. That same year nearly 30% of Arlington’s white female population attempted to register to vote. While people, black and white, ran into issues registering to vote, nearly half of all of Arlington’s black population were blocked via poll tax laws. Additionally, the white women were registering to vote as recent arrivals to the county. In comparison, the majority of Arlington’s black female voters thwarted from registration were lifelong residents seeking to vote for the first time, not just for the first time in a new place of residence. Women like Alice Fleet, Lula Pelham, and Selina Syphax who

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827 Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF), Report of Local Government Committee, (Arlington, March 1, 1949), RG 84, Box 2, CLH.

had lived in Arlington all their lives, and whose families had lived in Arlington for generations, could not register to vote because of voting discrimination.

Figure 39
The arrival of an unprecedented number of federal workers to Arlington in the 1930s, ’40s, and ‘50s greatly expanded the area’s suburban environment and profoundly shaped Arlington’s politics. Despite voting restrictions that prevented many from voting easily, new arrivals were more politically engaged. This photograph shows a long line of white Arlington residents snaking around the block, as they wait to vote in the Presidential election of 1944. Their determination to participate in the political process resulted in an explosion of new social and political organizations, and a recalibration of existing organizations to more political ends. Maria Ealand, *Arlington, Virginia*, 1944, Farm Security Administration Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, LOC. <https://www.loc.gov/item/owi2001041880/PP/>

Beyond formal political organizations, Arlington’s new and increasingly active residents also used social and cultural organizations to tackle the lag between community needs and provisions. They created new organizations to deal with these problems. That was the case in the Rock Spring community. Here new arrivals found older residents to be extremely hostile to their presence and ideas. Like many of Arlington’s neighborhoods, Rock Spring began as a small clustering of homes around the time of the Civil War and grew into a streetcar community with the expansion of the Great Falls and
Old Dominion railroad in the area. This growth continued as 150 additional acres within the community were subdivided and sold beginning in 1946. At that time Marvin T. Broyhill and Sons construction erected three bedroom brick ramblers en masse in the north Arlington community. The people who occupied these homes were active and engaged WWII federal employees, including notables like Major General Charles “C.G.” Helmick who helped lead U.S. troops into Paris when liberating France. Helmick joined with other socially active neighbors Elizabeth and Edmund Campbell, Virginia Stitzenberger, Anna Barber, and Dudley Babcock to form the Rock Spring Civic Association (RSCA) in 1950. The RSCA sought “to promote the mutual interests and general welfare of the community.” Group leaders felt that this was necessary because they observed an extreme lag between Arlington’s growing needs and its realities. And many of their neighbors agreed. The group began with 500 members in 1950, and continued to grow in membership into the 1960s. The group became very active in community and county affairs, working towards school improvement, helping found the

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829 The community first grew around Rock Spring Road which connects Falls Church to the Chain Bridge. In 1946 the home and land of original community founder George Nicholas Saegmuller were sold to make room for this suburban development. It is located in north Arlington and is bounded by Fairfax County on the west, Little Falls and Rock Spring roads on the South, and North Albermarle and Kensington streets to the north and east. Arlington County Government, Rock Spring Neighborhood Conservation Plan, by Rock Spring Civic Association, (Virginia, March 2009), p 5-9.


Rock Spring Cooperative Nursery, creating a county homeless shelter, working with at-risk teens, and much more. These activities put the RSCA in a state of constant conflict with older members of the community who resisted all social programs that might raise taxes.

In addition to the creation of new organizations, existing social and community organizations were reimagined at this time to reflect new residents’ ideals and visions for the county. This can be seen with the Lyon Park Women’s Organization. Founded in 1924, in the 1940s the functions of this organization shifted from community social and local campaigns, such as improvements for pedestrians, to a group interested in international and governmental affairs. Educational programs on the United Nations, the state of relations with Russia and China, and the Greek economy all show up on meeting minutes. The Organization sent provisions to Germany and the Philippines. Though local issues remained on the docket, this shift reveals the changing attitudes of the county’s new residents whose numbers and connection to the federal government through their spouses and their own employment shaped what they hoped their community organization would bring to them. Other organizations were similarly affected. Lillian Simms was active in politics on the west coast, and brought those sentiments with her to Arlington, becoming a member of the League of Women Voters of Arlington. Founded in 1921, the League of Women Voters was active in political and social issues, primarily on the local or state level.\textsuperscript{832} Member Sue Renfro recalled a real conflict within the

\textsuperscript{832} League of Women Voters of Arlington, “History” (February 21, 2010); Mrs. Lillian Simms and Mrs. Sue Renfro, interview by Helen Blackwell, March 1983, Arlington County Library Oral History Program, CLH. 
organization beginning during World War II between women who wanted to be active participants in politics and those she dubbed “the tea party group.”

In the late-1950s the new political groups formed by Arlington’s new moderate voter base had a great deal of political power. In 1956 ABC and AIM candidates each held two seats on the County Board, with the fifth seat going to a moderate Democrat. Though county politics became increasingly influenced by new residents, this was not the case across the board. The county was still at the mercy of hardline Byrd Democrats in Richmond. “Is the voice of Arlington fairly heard in Richmond? Decidedly not,” complained residents of Lyon Village. Because local areas must be awarded specific rights by the state before they could govern their own affairs, Arlington’s citizen’s still had an uphill battle against state politicians and the older powers that be in order to create effective reforms in Arlington County.

**Arlington’s Rising Civil Rights Movement**

Much of the conflict in Arlington emerged in response to the growing Civil Rights Movement. In the 1940s Arlington’s black population became even more active in pushing for social and political rights through their longstanding social and civic organizations. Recall that the area had the earliest non-urban branch of the NAACP with

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833 Mrs. Lillian Simms and Mrs. Sue Renfro, interview by Helen Blackwell, March 1983, Arlington County Library Oral History Program, CLH.


the nearby Falls Church chapter, founded in 1918. Support for the NAACP and its causes continued to expand until Arlington County could support a separate dedicated branch in 1940 with 71 members. The branch would continue to grow and soon became one of the largest branches in the state. This long civil rights movement fit with national trends during the 1940s, as African American middle and working class individuals were no longer willing to accept the slow moving strategies of uplift often employed by elite blacks. In Arlington this shift towards more pronounced organization for social and political equality was reflective of national trends that saw returning veterans of color from World War Two push for increased rights, and was also influenced by county realities that saw the arrival of increasingly liberal and active federal workers, black and white.

The first African American in the state of Virginia to challenge the poll tax in court was Arlington’s Jessie Butler. Butler was a resident of Green Valley who was

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838 Arlington, Alexandria, and Fairfax county branches made up the NAACP’s 7th District. Virginia was the NAACP’s most active Southern state with 22,000 members in 1955. The 7th District branches were the largest in the state, combining for 1,054 members. Morris, "A Chink in the Armor," Journal of Policy History, (2001).


active in her church congregation and Arlington’s chapter of the NAACP. Like many women of color throughout the South, Arlington’s black female population played an important role in challenging poll taxes and voting restrictions in the county. Butler’s case made it to a three judge district panel, but was dismissed in February of 1951 under the argument that because poll taxes applied to both black and white voters, this “plaintiff [cannot] maintain that she personally has been discriminated against by virtue of her race.” Though unsuccessful this court battle highlights the growing activism of black Arlingtonians in the strengthening Civil Rights Movement and its legal challenges.

Arlington’s proximity to Washington often shaped the area’s connection to major national Civil Rights players and organizations. Princeton Simms of Halls Hill was working as a cab driver in the early 1940s when he happened to pick up noted Civil Rights activist Mary McLeod Bethune on a fare. Bethune’s work with the National Association of Colored Women and the National Council of Negro Women on issues of education and social welfare for African American children and families propelled her to national prominence. Beginning in the 1930s she was frequently consulted as an expert


by the President and became a close friend with the Roosevelts. Simms recalled he was surprised when “this well dressed black woman” requested to go to the White House. After this chance encounter Bethune took an active interest in Simms and he became her personal chauffeur. Simms’s wife Evelyn insisted that “everyone knew Mrs. Bethune” because of her local work. In addition to her work nationally for African American advancement, Bethune was known amongst many in Arlington for her efforts securing jobs in the federal government for local African Americans, especially young people. Under her encouragement Simms became a civilian employee at the Pentagon in 1943.

A few years later Simms transitioned from the Pentagon to a position with the Post Office. But the Post Office was not initially a welcoming environment for Simms. On his first day as a mail carrier Simms’ white supervisor asked him “Boy, what do you want?” When Simms told the supervisor that he was the new hire, he was told “We don’t need no help here” and was sent home. Postmaster Roy North, who had hired Simms directly, reprimanded Simms’s supervisor who eventually got in line, even calling Simms “Mr. Simms” when he later returned to work. Despite this hostility, Simms worked hard at his position with the Post Office, eventually receiving promotion to utility carrier. “I got the job,” Simms recalled, “because… nobody in the post office knew as much about Arlington County as I did, so they couldn’t pass over me.” But advancement was slow. It took Simms seven years to receive a promotion because any time a new white man was hired Simms was “bumped off my route.” When reflecting on the discrimination he

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experienced in his workplace, “That made me angry,” he recalled. Simms took that anger and transformed it into constructive change. In addition to working to improve his personal condition in the workplace through promotion, Simms became an active member of Arlington’s NAACP where he worked to end segregated accommodations in Arlington’s facilities and sought fair treatment.

**Arlington’s Schools**

**The School Improvement Movement**

While Arlington’s civic groups pushed changes including abolishing the poll tax and reforming the state constitution and judicial process, school improvement was by far the biggest issue for these organizations. New and existing black and white organizations focused on improving Arlington’s schools. But the scale and scope of these organizations changed dramatically within the white community. The Better Government League sought members amongst “all those who believe… in better government and better schools for Arlington County.” Though Arlington’s first schools were established at the close of the Civil War, sixty years later they remained small, neighborhood institutions without rigorous curriculums. A report created by the US Bureau of Education in 1930 ranked Arlington’s school system 24th out of 28 comparable

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847 Harley M. Williams, Better Government League, to Members, September 1949, RG: 60: Eastman Fenwick Family Papers, CLH.
school districts. In 1930 Arlington’s white parent and teacher organizations from across the county banded together to create the County Council of PTAs. The issue of school improvement was on the rise throughout the 1930s, but the situation became even more serious for Arlington parents when Washington, D.C.’s schools began limiting their institutions to city residents or requiring tuitions in 1946. Until these restrictions were put into place, parents interested in elite educations for their students, be they black or white, sent them into Washington to be educated. The elimination of this option spurred many of Arlington’s parents into action.

Local parent and federal employee Warren E. Cox warned that “the tide of younger children threatens to overwhelm the limited facilities of our Arlington Public Schools.” There were so few classrooms that nearly 1,000 white students had to attend classes in shifts. In the 1940s and early 1950s school budgets and policies were still controlled by Byrd Democrats and old guard Virginians who avoided spending at all costs. Arlington’s School Board was appointed by the County Manager and was either “incapable or unwilling to meet the resulting problems” from the huge population influx

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when “the Federal Government engulfed the area with new population.”  

This attitude is highlighted by School Superintendent Fletcher Kemp. When asked about the status of schools in the Fairlington community, Kemp replied that since that development was built by the federal government for federal employees that those children were not his responsibility. Kemp quipped that “the children can sit on the curb and shuck peanuts” until their schools were built for all he was concerned.

In 1946 Arlingtonians for a Better County (ABC) got involved with school and School Board reform. At the same time the County Council of PTA’s membership soared. Starting with 1,000 members in 1931, the group had more than 12,000 members by 1949. These members were predominately made up of Arlington’s newly arrived federal workers. The Citizens Committee for School Improvement (CCSI) was formed to merge civic, professional, cultural, and PTA groups all working towards school improvement. The CCSI held monthly meetings with parents, representatives from each of Arlington’s school districts, as well as members from civic organizations


including the Arlington Civic Federation and the Better Government League. All of these organizations came together under the umbrella of Arlington’s Better School movement.  

The ranks of these varied organizations were filled with men like Warren E. Cox. Born in Nebraska, Cox was educated in public schools in Florida and Georgia before studying law at Emory University in Atlanta. Cox moved to Arlington in 1941 to serve as a lawyer with the Legal Division of the Federal Housing Administration. Arriving in Arlington with two school-aged children, Cox valued public education and became actively involved in school reform, serving as County Council president in 1949. New residents like Lillian Simms became involved in the school movement through other organizations. Recall that Dr. B.T. Simms relocated his family to Washington to serve as the Chief of the Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Animal Industry. Both B.T. and his wife Lillian were highly educated. These educated people wanted a strong public school system for their children. Their reforms sought not only more buildings but also improved curriculums and better teachers. Journalist Elmore M. McKee noted that “because of their special abilities and interests, government researchers and administrators were particularly alert to the mental and environmental needs of their children.” Long time Arlington residents disagreed, resisting the intervention of new

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arrivals into their school system. One Arlington native complained “If you know how to stick a pin in a butterfly you can get a job in the Agriculture Department, and that’s the kind of nitwits we have living here and trying to ruin our schools.”

All of these organizations together successfully campaigned for bonds to support Arlington’s schools. But most significantly, together these groups worked to create a quorum to call for, and then win, a special election in May of 1947 to make membership on the School Board an elected position rather than an appointed position. Ten thousand Arlingtonians voted on the issue, making it the largest special election turnout to date. One Arlington resident involved in the reform movement, Harley M. Williams, predicted “these actions will make a turning point in the drive of Arlington’s civic-minded groups and individuals for a more democratic, more enlightened local government.” When finally able to vote for their own school board candidates every individual who campaigned on platforms of school improvement won. In fact, the winning candidate with the fewest votes still earned more than 2,300 more votes than the highest of the old-guard candidates supported by the Byrd organization. The first board was made up of Barnard Joy (chair), Elizabeth Campbell, Colin MacPherson, O. Glenn

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860 Harley M. Williams, Better Government League, to Members, September 1949, RG: 60: Eastman Fenwick Family Papers, CLH.


862 Ibid., p 155.

863 Harley M. Williams, Better Government League, to Members, September 1949, RG: 60: Eastman Fenwick Family Papers, CLH.

Stahl, and Curtis Tuthill. These individuals had a different kind of background than their predecessors. Two were federal employees, the Hatch Act allowing for participation in non-political posts; one was a professor at George Washington; and one was a teacher.\textsuperscript{865} Most were involved in Arlington’s better schools movement as well as other new mid-century reform organizations – such as Campbell who was a member of the CCSI, her local PTA, the League of Women Voters, and was a founding member of the Rock Spring Civic Association.\textsuperscript{866} This group began making changes to Arlington’s schools. By the mid-1950s Arlington County schools had several new buildings, more than a half-dozen renovation projects, new special needs services for both disabled and gifted students, curriculum improvements, and the addition of music, health, and physical education classes.\textsuperscript{867}

These school improvement organizations were not intended to help further black education. Despite this fact and, though not distributed evenly, school improvements reached Arlington’s black schools thanks to the hard work of an engaged population. In the late-1940s the NAACP supported ABC candidates for school board in exchange for a

\textsuperscript{865} Joy worked for the Department of Agriculture, Stahl the Federal Security Agency, Tuthill was a psychology professor at George Washington University, and Campbell was a teacher. McKee, \textit{The People Act}, (1955).

\textsuperscript{866} Arlington County Government, \textit{Arlington Convention on School Board Candidates}, (Arlington, VA: Flyer, September 1951), RG 60: Eastman Fenwick Family Papers, Box 2, CLH.

promise that black schools would also be improved.\footnote{The information about the NAACP’s participation in the selection of candidates is found in the Papers of Barbara Marx, Local NAACP Activity Files, CLH.} Education had long been a cornerstone of African American community development in Arlington. Since the first calls for schools in Freedman’s Village, black Arlingtonians saw schools and education as important in their own right and for the future opportunities they would provide. Recall that Arlington’s black community had been involved in school improvement programs since the 1910s, when Ella Boston successfully lobbied the county for an African American eighth grade.\footnote{See Chapter Three “So That We May Occupy Our Rightful Place.”; Taylor, Bridge Builders of Nauck/ Green Valley, (2015).} Arlington’s black parents founded PTAs in each of the black schools. Green Valley resident Esther Cooper greatly valued education for her three daughters. The family saved to purchase a set of encyclopedias even before installing electricity or indoor plumbing into their home. Cooper’s interest in improved education was not isolated to her own home and children. She herself worked as a teacher and was very active with the PTAs at her children’s schools, even serving as PTA President for several years.\footnote{Cooper taught English, shorthand, and typing in Arlington and D.C. See Chapter Three “So That We May Occupy Our Rightful Place.”; Taylor, Bridge Builders of Nauck/ Green Valley, (2015) p 41.} Green Valley neighbors Alice B. Fleet, also a teacher, and Edward Stother also became actively involved with the PTA in the community.\footnote{Barbara Ann Mower, “The Vanishing Blacksmith,” The Washington Star, January 31, 1960, Vertical File: Nauck, CLH.}

Beyond individual school PTAs Arlington’s black leaders also participated in county-wide school improvement organizations. Black and white civic groups took up
education and school improvement as a cornerstone of their aims. This made Arlington’s school improvement movement a powerful social and political force in the 1940s and 1950s. Stother became a member of ABC. Others in the African American community created parallel institutions for school improvements, including the Arlington County Civic League. The League worked to be a unified voice for African American parents, teachers, and schools. At the start of the 1930s Arlington’s black schools were in an even worse condition than their white counterparts. Though supported by community funds and bolstered by a commitment to education, Arlington’s African American population had fewer schools, with larger student bodies, no high school, and African American teachers earned lower wages. Despite these realities, many teachers were very committed to their students. Clarissa Thompson remembered that “one teacher, Miss Coles, let me know that she expected me to ‘step up to the bat,’” working hard with Thompson on her academics until school felt like “my home away from home.”\textsuperscript{872} Her brother Stephen Thompson also felt that some teachers “took… interest in us and were concerned about whether or not we succeeded.”\textsuperscript{873}

Focused lobbying by black community and parent groups resulted in the establishment of Hoffman-Boston High School in 1931 in the Johnson’s Hill neighborhood. Founded six years after Arlington’s first white high school Washington and Lee opened its doors, Hoffman-Boston served all of Arlington’s black students. Its

\textsuperscript{872} Clarissa Thompson Sligh, \textit{It wasn’t Little Rock}. (Visual Studies Workshop Press, 2005), University of Virginia Special Collections and Archives, Charlottesville, Virginia (Here after UVA).

\textsuperscript{873} Stephen Thompson, interview by Clarissa T. Sligh. \textit{It wasn’t Little Rock}. (2005). UVA.
location in southern Arlington was convenient for students from Johnson’s Hill and Green Valley, but required students from Hall’s Hill to travel across the county, past closer white schools, in order to receive their education. Though successful in securing a black high school, Arlington’s black parent and civic organizations were not content. Hoffman-Boston did not have a rigorous curriculum, with many of its courses focusing on vocational training. Because of its subpar facilities and curriculums which did not prepare students for college and the great distance that some of Arlington’s black students had to travel to school, the drop-out rate was very high. In 1953, 135 African American students began the seventh grade, but only thirty-six graduated the twelfth grade, the majority dropping out in ninth grade.\textsuperscript{874}

**The Court Challenges, Resisting Massive Resistance, and School Integration**

Education and reform was a focus of African American communities not just in Arlington, but also throughout the South and the nation.\textsuperscript{875} Because of this, some of the

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\textsuperscript{874} Additionally, the economic realities of many of Arlington’s black families required older children to work. Hoffman Boston High School, Memory Book 1959 Yearbook, (Arlington, VA: Graduating Class of 1959, 1959), RG 7-B: Records of Hoffman Boston School, Box 1, CLH.

earliest Civil Rights challenges took aim at school segregation.\(^{876}\) Arlington’s NAACP chapter was especially rigorous in pushing for reforms to Arlington’s schools through the courts. In addition to her work with school organizations, Esther Cooper served as the first President of Arlington’s NAACP branch, further solidifying the joint aims of racial and school improvement. In 1947 the NAACP helped Hoffman-Boston student Constance Carter go to court over unequal facilities and coursework when she could not take Civics II, Spanish, Typewriting, or Physical Education.\(^{877}\) Rather than resulting in integration, this court battle brought improvements to Hoffman-Boston. In June 1950 the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ordered Arlington to provide equal facilities for its black students. Thompson remembered coming back after summer break to find “a new gymnasium, auditorium, cafeteria, and chemistry lab.”\(^{878}\) But the improvements were only skin-deep. “The lab had no equipment,” Thompson complained, and yet “the purpose of this renovation was to show that we were getting an ‘equal’ education.”


This 1948 photo of Hoffman-Boston’s library highlights the lacking provisions at Arlington’s black high school, as most of the shelves are empty of books. Library of Hoffman-Boston, 1948, Records of the US District Court for the Easter District of Virginia, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

After this initial court case Arlington’s black community continued to work through the court system with several other court challenges. Arlington’s active NAACP was aided in their court battles by national opinions from Civil Rights organizations at the time about how best to combat segregation. In the 1950s the NAACP’s legal defense saw areas like Arlington with smaller African American populations as the key places to challenge school segregation. These court cases were predominately filed by African American families on behalf of their children, but sometimes featured white plaintiffs as well. While school reform was important to a majority of Arlington’s white parents,

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especially new arrivals, for them school improvement did not necessarily mean integration. But, some of Arlington’s white parents also supported full integration. White parents like Barbara Marx joined the cause for integration by adding her children Claire and Ann to the court cases challenging Arlington’s segregated schools. Others joined Arlington’s NAACP, which featured both black and white members who worked with other like-minded parents to push for full integration.

These integration cases are part of a larger story of similar challenges to segregation taking place across the country. Eventually these challenges made it to the Supreme Court in the landmark 1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka case. With Brown the highest court in the land reversed the Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) case that created the precedent of “separate but equal” to deem school segregation on the basis of race unconstitutional. Following the Brown decision the Virginia General Assembly created a board to study the process of integration. The state-wide commission was known as the Gray Commission for State Senator Garland Gray who headed the group. The Gray Commission, comprised of thirty-two white members, met for an entire year before releasing their segregationist plan veiled in conciliatory language in November of

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880 Clarissa S. Thompson et al. v. the County School Board of Arlington, 159 F. Supp. 567 (E.D. Va. 1957); William Korey, “Prejudice Knocked the Enemy’s Sights Out of Focus in the Private War on Barbara Marx,” Midstream, September 1, 1956. RG 11: Papers of Edmund C. Fleet, Box 4, File 3, CLH.

881 Arlington, Alexandria, and Fairfax counties made up the NAACP’s 7th District. Virginia was the NAACP’s most active Southern state with 22,000 members in 1955. And the 7th District was the state’s largest chapter with 1,054 members. Morris, “A Chink in the Armor,” Journal of Policy History (2001).

1955, a few months following the 1955 *Brown II* ruling which called for “good faith compliance” as quickly as possible.\(^{883}\) Because Arlington was the only county in the state with their own school board, Arlington held a parallel commission to explore the process of integration in their county and present their findings. School Board member Elizabeth Campbell read Arlington’s findings, which recommended the continuation of public education and compulsory attendance laws, that state officials give local schools latitude to decide for themselves how to integrate, and that the state comply with all federal mandates.\(^{884}\) Alongside this proposal Arlington School Board Chair Dr. E.R. Draheim also made it clear that Arlington would “comply with any action taken by the State Legislature.”\(^{885}\) The Gray Commission created a plan for local control of student placement, assuming that locales would not allow integration, and established state ability to close any schools that did integrate.\(^{886}\) This set Virginia on a path of massive resistance.

County leaders hoped to balance the demands of both the state and federal mandates. Arlington’s school board created a pragmatic policy which they hoped would comply with both the Supreme Court and the State’s rulings. The county established “a


\(^{886}\) The measure was popular in south side Virginia voting districts at a rate of 4 to 1, however it lost in Arlington County. Lassiter, et. al., *The Moderate’s Dilemma*, (1998).
plan which would permit integration in a few elementary schools in the fall, several
junior high schools the following year, and one senior high school in 1958.” This was
the minimum amount of integration which could occur in order to comply with federal
law while also attempting to comply with Virginia’s resistance to integration. Arlington’s
plan for integration was a moderate, stepwise plan that would have affected a maximum
of sixty students. Arlington’s 1958 school integration plan affected so few students
because of the realities of Arlington’s extremely segregated residential environment.
Only the black Hall’s Hill community was located amongst white communities in
northern Arlington. Johnson’s Hill and Green Valley were located near one another in
southern Arlington, allowing county officials to argue the school segregation of those
communities was the result of de facto residential factors.

Despite this moderation, the General Assembly patently rejected the plan. Those
who supported massive resistance refused to allow Arlington to make its own plan to
integrate, fearing that if “you ever let them integrate anywhere, the whole state will be
integrated in a short time.” Virginia’s General Assembly threatened the state with
school closures should any schools integrate despite court orders, and they threatened
Arlington specifically with loss of their elected school board. Attempting to keep their
county schools open while also keeping the elected school board system they had won in
1947, the school board immediately began backtracking on their plan. In February of

888 J. Douglas Smith, “When Reason Collides with Prejudice: Armistead Lloyd Boothe and the Politics of
1957 the Virginia State House revoked Arlington’s right to its elected school board. Virginia politicians led the charge of southern states rejecting integration plans and instead chose to set out on a path of opposition. Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr. promoted the “Southern Manifesto” in 1956. Signed by nineteen Senators and seventy-seven Representatives, the document said that they would fight integration through “all lawful means,” creating a policy known as “massive resistance.” In September of 1958 Governor Lindsay Almond began closing Virginia’s schools rather than allowing them to integrate.

While Arlington’s school board took a moderate approach, many of its citizens agreed with Almond and the massive resistance movement. One such organization was the American Nazi Party. In 1958 the American Nazi Party was founded in Arlington County by George Lincoln Rockwell. Several factors drew him to Arlington specifically to create his hate group. Rockwell saw “New Deal liberals” as a great threat to the American society.


threat to America.\footnote{George Rockwell, “Rockwell Report,” *The American Nazi Party Magazine*, 1962. RG 60: Eastman Fenwick Family Papers, Box 2, CLH.} Sneering at them as “race mixers,” Rockwell saw Arlington’s large population of federal workers as a stain on the nation and the “white power” he hoped to encourage.\footnote{Rockwell became famous for promoting the slogan “White Power.” Clark “The Assassination of an Arlington Nazi,” *Arlington Historical Magazine*, (Oct. 2005).} Rockwell was also drawn to Arlington specifically because residents provided him with support. Local sympathizer Floyd Fleming bought the group a house to use as their headquarters in the Ballston neighborhood.\footnote{Floyln Fleming lived in Washington, D.C. Another local resident, Noel Arrowsmith, Jr. from Baltimore, also donated property to the group. Clark “The Assassination of an Arlington Nazi,” *Arlington Historical Magazine*, (Oct. 2005).} Rockwell and his American Nazi followers supported continued segregation at all costs. The fifty to sixty members active in the organization in the late-1950s and early-1960s frequently attended school board meetings in their Nazi uniforms as a form of intimidation.

Arlington’s branch of the Ku Klux Klan also reasserted itself at this time. The Klan had declined in visibility in the area following its heyday in the 1920s but reemerged in the wake of school integration. Many participants in Arlington’s integration court cases had crosses burned on their front lawns. Barbara Marx, like many of her peers, received phone calls from self-identified Klan members alleging they would “drive her out” of Arlington and bomb her house.\footnote{William Korey, “Prejudice Knocked the Enemy’s Sights Out of Focus in the Private War on Barbara Marx,” *Midstream*, September 1, 1956. RG 11: Papers of Edmund C. Fleet, Box 4, File 3, CLH.} Though Marx kept her daughters’ names on
the court case these threats were too much for other parents, who chose to remove their children from the proceedings.\footnote{897 Marx’s neighbors Mr. and Mrs. Jack Orndorff originally filed for integration on behalf of their son Eugene, but they dropped out only days after news of the court case broke because of threats of violence. Ibid.}

Other supporters of segregation and massive resistance worked against Arlington’s plans on integration through new social and political organizations. One Arlington mother told a newspaper that she would rather the schools close than integrate, stating that “a year or two years without any schools is a cheap price to pay if it staves off integration.”\footnote{898 “Virginia at Crossroads,” \textit{Richmond Times Dispatch}, January 4, 1959. Governor J. Lindsay Almond Papers, Section 4, Box 28, VHS.} Arlingtonians founded a chapter of the Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberty. Virginia’s equivalent of the White Citizens Councils that emerged throughout the Deep South, this group supported massive resistance and preventing integration at all costs.\footnote{899 “Arlington, Va., May Defy State On Issue Of School Integration,” \textit{Courier Journal}, May 18, 1958. Almond Papers, VHS.} Arlingtonians like founder Jack Rathbone came together to create the Tenth District Education Corporation. This group raised money, filed anti-integration court cases, and founded an alternate school system in Arlington. Rathbone and his supporters opened the private George Mason Grammar and Academic High School in a four-square style single family home in Arlington to accommodate white families who did not want their students to suffer forced integration. Likening the school to a “bomb shelter” put in place in case integration “strikes” Virginia, Rathbone
told a reporter from CBS that “the South will never accept integration.” Despite assuring a solid education, the group misspelled grammar “Grammer” on their sign, thus belittling their own cause. Groups like the Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberty and the Tenth District Education Corporation provided a more law abiding and measured response to the threat of integration than those in the Klan and American Nazi Party. These organizations together show the continuation of the social and political attitudes of old guard Arlingtonians despite changes made in the area.

![Figure 41](http://crdl.usg.edu/do:ugabma_wsbn_39536)

In this map the area of Johnson’s Hill and Green Valley is represented by the pink area labeled “18” on the lower right-hand side of the map, while the area of Hall’s Hill is represented by the pink area labeled “5” on the upper-middle left-hand side of the map. This highlights the distance the children of Hall’s Hill had to travel for school. Franklin Survey Co., “Atlas of Arlington County, Virginia” [1938], Map Division, LOC.

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While Virginia set out on a path of massive resistance, Arlington’s NAACP continued to challenge segregation in court. In May of 1956 Clarissa Thompson and three other Arlington families filed suit against Arlington’s School Board. The African American students on this case were all from Hall’s Hill. This was because of the community’s position as the only black neighborhood in northern Arlington, where the other two anchor black communities existed in southern Arlington. Because of this isolation from other black communities, when creating Arlington’s black high school district, county officials dubbed Hall’s Hill as the “Hoffman-Boston ‘north’” district. This school district circled the adjacent Green Valley and Johnson’s Hill communities and then ran in a thin line up Glebe Road for about four miles until it reached Hall’s Hill. This location of Hoffman-Boston far from Hall’s Hill provided black Arlingtonians a strong foothold to challenge the county’s segregated school system by showing that the segregation was indeed based around de jure legal changes and not de facto neighborhood segregation.

Though Clarissa Thompson was nervous at the prospect of leaving Hoffman-Boston, that hesitation mattered little. “How you felt was not something you talked about,” Thompson recalled. “I looked in my mother’s face. I knew what she expected of

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901 Clarissa S. Thompson et al. v. the County School Board of Arlington, 159 F. Supp. 567 (E.D. Va. 1957). The Thompsons were one of four original families signed onto the case. They were joined by the Hamm and Stother African American families, and the Marx and Orndorff white families. The Orndorffs dropped out because of threats made before the trial.
me.”\textsuperscript{902} Clarissa’s mother Ethel Mozelle Jordan came to Arlington from North Carolina circa 1934, leaving her rural farm to find work as a messenger for the federal government.\textsuperscript{903} After settling in Arlington she married Clarence Thompson, whose family had long roots in the county. In the late 1940s, Ethel joined Arlington’s branch of the NAACP. Though her daughter recalled that “she was quite a passive-seeming woman,” Ethel held a deep commitment to African American rights and education. This commitment stemmed from her own difficulties securing an education in the face of adverse poverty and the tragic unprosecuted lynching of her older brother, Council, when he was twelve.

The Thompsons and the other committed families pushed for integration. In 1957 Judge Albert V. Bryan, an Alexandria native, called for the admission of seven African American students into white schools. Judge Bryan defended his decision, stating that in Arlington, integration would change little. Judge Bryan noted “into a white population of 21,345, only seven colored children will enter.”\textsuperscript{904} Despite the limited scope of the ruling it was still challenged in court. This resistance was because people of the time saw changes in places like Arlington as significant on the national stage. One Louisville, Kentucky newspaper observed that “what happens in Arlington is vital to the Deep South. It could mean school chaos. Or it could mean that a new pattern is beginning to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[902] Sligh, \textit{It wasn't Little Rock}. (2005). UVA.
\item[903] Born in 1913, Ethel came to the area shortly after graduating from high school at the age of 21. Sligh, \textit{It wasn't Little Rock}. (2005). UVA.
\item[904] “Text of Judge Bryan’s Ruling on Arlington” \textit{The Evening Star}, September 17, 1958. J. Lindsay Almond Papers, Box 27, VHS.
\end{footnotes}
While supporters of segregation worried about a break-down of massive resistance, segregation, and the theoretical solid south, continued appeals prevented Arlington’s schools from integrating. Students like Clarissa Thompson graduated and moved on to college without school integration. But Arlington’s parents and NAACP continued to push new challenges to segregation with more and new students, such as Thompson’s sister Gloria who joined the court cases.

Figure 42
As a strategy to delay integration and limit the numbers of students affected, Virginia established the Pupil Placement Board. This board evaluated students’ educational and psychological preparedness to attend school with white pupils, as well as the motivations of their parents for submitting for transfer to a white school. “Application Form,” (1958). Records of the Virginia Pupil Placement Board, Series 1. Correspondence and Subject Files, Box 1, Folder 3. State Records Collection, LVA.


906 Sligh, It wasn’t Little Rock. (2005). UVA.
In September of 1958 Arlington’s School Board, again made up of appointed members, met with thirty students who applied for transfer to white schools through the state’s Pupil Placement Act.\textsuperscript{907} One tool created by Virginia to prevent integration, the 1956 Pupil Placement Act made it so any student transferring from their current school must be approved by a state board which evaluated the academic, physical, and emotional preparedness of the child.\textsuperscript{908} The panel denied twenty-five of these students on the grounds of either attendance area, overcrowding at white schools, academic accomplishment, or psychological problems.\textsuperscript{909} The final five students were denied admission to white schools on the vague grounds of lack of adaptability. This adaptability stemmed from the argument from Arlington’s school superintendent that the students would be harmed when going from black schools where they were leaders, to white schools where they would be average pupils. This despite the fact that all tested “just above the achievement median” of their prospective schools. Judge Bryan upheld the rejection of twenty-six black students to white schools, but ruled that Arlington must admit four students to its all white schools come the winter semester of 1959.\textsuperscript{910}

\textsuperscript{907} School Board members were once again appointed by the County Board. Arlington County Government, \textit{Arlington View Neighborhood Conservation Plan}, by Bert W. Johnson, County Manager. (Arlington, 1965) p 5.


\textsuperscript{909} “Text of Judge Bryan’s Ruling on Arlington” \textit{The Evening Star}, September 17, 1958. J. Lindsay Almond Papers, Box 27, VHS.

\textsuperscript{910} Student “A” was not admitted to a white school despite passing all but the “adaptability” test because this student was an elementary schooler who would have attended the white Patrick Henry Elementary on their own. Judge Bryan ruled that to be on one’s own would cause too much pressure. “Text of Judge Bryan’s Ruling on Arlington” \textit{The Evening Star}, September 17, 1958. J. Lindsay Almond Papers, Box 27, VHS.
Throughout the rise of massive resistance and the ongoing court battles
Arlington’s moderate white majority, already active in school reform, pivoted from
reform in general to the specific task of keeping Arlington’s school open. Arlington’s
white moderates feared a reversal of all the progress they had made in reform
organizations should Virginia continue on the path of massive resistance. Beyond the loss
of their school board, Arlingtonians greatly feared the reversal of school spending bonds
to improve school structures, raise teacher salaries, and purchase new text books. They
also feared the end of a more responsive county government which they had been
creating for a decade.911 Parents and education groups created the Arlington Committee
to Preserve Public Schools (ACCPS) and the save our schools movement.912 Many of the
members and leaders within this group were recent arrivals brought to the area by federal
employment, such as Theda Henle. Henle was born and raised in California and attended
Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania before coming to Arlington in 1949 when her
husband Peter took a position with the federal government.913 Henle was active in social
and political organizations in her new home county, and as a mother of three school age
children took an active role in ensuring schools stayed open in Arlington.914 ACCPS
stated that “we are here concerned neither with perpetuating segregation schools nor

913 Young Democrats Club of Arlington, An Old Fashioned Candidates Rally, (Arlington, VA: pamphlet, June
12, 1965). RG 60: Eastman Fenwick Papers, CLH.
Instead, they wanted to pursue any avenue to keep the improved public schools they had helped create over the previous decade open. This stance highlights the limits of white Arlington’s progressivism. They were not interested in integration or racial equality, but rather wanted to keep their own schools open while working within the legal system.

Beyond parents, business leaders also came to reject massive resistance. They recognized that the end of public education would hurt business development because without a school system new arrivals would cease to see Arlington as a viable place to raise their families. One realtor complained of “a big drop off in the number of families moving here in the past month or so – they don’t want to come to a town whose schools might close down.”

Were this to continue Arlington would see a downturn in home building, buying, and selling. Real estate was Arlington’s largest employer beyond the federal government. Real estate developers and politicians with stakes in Arlington County did not want to see this decline. Congressman Joel T. Broyhill, who represented Arlington as a part of Virginia’s 8th Congressional District, initially resisted integration, even signing his support to the “Southern Manifesto”.

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became the policy of the day he worked hard to prevent closures in Arlington. This change in positions was partly because of potential economic consequences for the county. Broyhill was a major real-estate developer in the county. Before entering Congress in 1952, Broyhill was the general manager of the Broyhill and Sons real estate firm, which built new housing in the expanding Rock Spring community. As a congressman Broyhill continued to hold a one-third interest in the firm, amounting to $2.83 million in real estate holdings in the county. This support from liberal and moderate whites who were motivated by fears that massive resistance would hurt their own lives and interests bolstered the cause of integration. Coinciding with Judge Bryan’s decision on Arlington’s schools, the massive resistance policies of Governor Lindsay Almond, Virginia, and the Byrd Machine were found unconstitutional.

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On February 2, 1959, four African American students in Arlington were the first to integrate Virginia’s public schools. These students were Hall’s Hill residents Ronald Deskins, Michael Jones, Lance Newman, and Gloria Thompson. Together they integrated Stratford Junior High School. The four students were selected for their academic excellence, but also under the hope that beginning at a new school as seventh graders, a time when all Arlington students were moving from elementary to middle school, would help ease their transition into integrated environments.

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920 “Text of Judge Bryan’s Ruling on Arlington” The Evening Star, September 17, 1958. J. Lindsay Almond Papers, Box 27, VHS.
Though it was deemed “The Day that Nothing Happened” by contemporaries, integration was a tense process for these four students, their parents, and their communities.\footnote{David L. Krupsaw, “The Day Nothing Happened,” \textit{The Anti-Defamation League Bulletin}, February 1959.} Ronald’s mother said that though she hoped there would be no violence that she “didn’t know what to expect.”\footnote{“Film Gathers Voices of Arlington’s School Fight.” RG 7-B: Records of Hoffman Boston High School, CLH.} Ronald feared he would be spit on and that his father’s car would be stoned.\footnote{Michelotti, “Arlington School Desegregation,” \textit{Arlington Historical Magazine} (Oct. 1988) p 5-20.; Allan Jones “Four enter school in Arlington” \textit{Richmond Times Dispatch}, February 3, 1959. Governor J. Lindsay Almond Papers, Section 4, Box 28, VHS.} Newman became so nervous that on the way to school he got sick and “lost his breakfast.” The Arlington chapter of the Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties announced plans to picket the school and passed out signs to children reading “2-4-6-8 We Don’t Want to Integrate.”\footnote{Allan Jones “Negroes to enter Arlington School,” \textit{Richmond Times Dispatch}, February 2, 1959, Governor J. Lindsay Almond Papers, Section 4, Box 28, VHS.} As a preventative measure one-hundred uniformed police officers, twenty-five per African American student, ringed the school in anticipation of violence. Stratford school counselor Joseph Macekura recalled that “a lot of the teachers were World War II vets, and they were saying it was like a war zone out there.”\footnote{“Film Gathers Voices of Arlington’s School Fight.” RG 7-B: Records of Hoffman Boston High School, CLH.} Some locals and newspapers began calling the event “D Day” for “desegregation day.”\footnote{John Connors “Violence ruled out in Arlington crisis” \textit{Richmond News Leader}, July 31, 1958. Almond Papers, Box 25. VHS.} And though Rathbone frequently spoke out
against “violence of any kind” as the spokesman for his organization, he also made clear that should violence begin, he and his supporters were “ready and willing.”

Some local white allies stepped in to help the parents of the four students. Theda Henle lived near Stratford. Recall that Henle was a member of ACCPS, working to keep schools open through massive resistance. She was also an active member of Arlington’s Democratic Committee, the League of Women Voters, and ABC. Her husband Peter worked with CCSI for county school improvement. They lived in the increasingly progressive Rock Spring community which neighbored Stratford. At the time one of Henle’s three children was a student at Stratford. Henle “became worried about what that first day would be like for them and their parents.” She offered to allow the parents of Stratford’s newest students to wait in her home during the day “so they could be closer to their children.” On the morning of school integration Arlington police escorted four mothers and two grandmothers to Henle’s home. Stratford could be seen from the house’s bedroom window. Throughout the day parents took turns looking out at the school, confirming all was well. “Every once in a while, one of the mothers would get up and walk back to the bedroom to make sure the school hadn’t been bombed.


then she would come back and nod to the others,” Henle recalled. A bomb threat was indeed called in to the school. No one was told of the threat while the building was searched because “school authorities, convinced the call was a hoax, decided against evacuating the school.”

Figure 44
Stratford Junior High School was turned into a fortress with the presence of one-hundred uniformed officers and several under-cover plain clothes officers. Arlingtonians feared integration would lead to violence after what they had seen in places like Little Rock, Arkansas and because many of those families challenging segregation received threats. On the left officers block the entrance to the school, while a line of uniformed officers line a path in the distance. On the right the Deskins, Jones, Newman, Thompson, and a few white students walk toward school.

Though thankfully no violence occurred, these students still faced trying times ahead. Twelve-year-old Gloria Thompson recalled that “at first all the attention was

931 Allan Jones, “Four Enter School in Arlington, Richmond Times Dispatch, February 3, 1959. Governor J. Lindsay Almond Papers, Section 4, Box 28, VHS.

fun.” However, this quickly wore off and soon “it wasn’t fun… it was very isolating.” She felt that “our blackness, the thing that had always made us so visible, now made us disappear.” The four black students were escorted between classes. They were prevented from “milling around in the school hall or grounds,” making socialization difficult. Additionally, they were discouraged from participating in social functions and activities. Though overt threats were officially not tolerated, with reports of students being sent home due to racial slurs, policy and reality were not always in sync. Gloria recalled threats and the taunts of “Nigger.” Some of the prejudices came from teachers. Thompson lamented that “you could tell which teacher was prejudiced” by the way they “were trying to say ‘there was no room for us inside their white schools’” with their actions. But, for Thompson “the abuse was just to be taken for granted… it wasn’t something you came home and told your parents about.”

The four students continued on and in the coming years more African American students integrated Arlington’s elementary, middle, and high schools thanks to the pioneering efforts of Arlington’s organized community and institutions. As an elementary schooler, Hall’s Hill resident and daughter of Clarissa Thompson, Tammy Sligh recalled

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934 Allan Jones, “Four Enter School in Arlington, *Richmond Times Dispatch,* February 3, 1959. Governor J. Lindsay Almond Papers, Section 4, Box 28, VHS.

935 In June 1960 black students graduating from Stratford were asked not to attend prom by Principal Richmond. Morris, “A Chink in the Armor,” *Journal of Policy History,* (2001) p 357.

936 Allan Jones, “Four Enter School in Arlington, *Richmond Times Dispatch,* February 3, 1959. Governor J. Lindsay Almond Papers, Section 4, Box 28, VHS.

the wall around her community which had divided the black residents of Hall’s Hill from their white neighbors for decades. Though the wall around Hall’s Hill remained in place, it could no longer keep black and white apart. Tammy and her classmates “went through the opening in the wall to school.” With integration over time Arlington’s retention rate of black students improved. In 1950, the average Hall’s Hill resident had only an elementary education, but that number rose slowly to a middle school education in 1960 and a partial high school education in 1964. From 1950 to 1960 the number of high school graduates rose by 20%, and from 1950 to 1964 the number of college graduates more than doubled. More and more residents completed high school and many went on to college.

**Fighting for Preservation**

At the same time that school integration unfolded in Arlington, black residents pushed for neighborhood improvements. Arlington’s school integration story played out in a time of nearly complete residential segregation in the county. By 1950 Arlington’s small black population was isolated to the three anchor communities of Hall’s Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley remained. While pushing for integration in schools to improve the lives of future generations of African Americans in the county, Arlington’s black residents took a different route when it came to community improvements. Home

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938 Thomasina “Tammy” was the daughter of Gloria Thompson, niece of Clarissa Thompson, and granddaughter of Ethel Thompson. Sligh, *It wasn’t Little Rock*. (2005). UVA.


940 Residents with a high school degree increased from 50 people in 1950 to 60 people in 1960. And residents with a college degree increased from only 7 people in 1950 to 19 people in 1964. Ibid.
ownership was thought of as crucial to racial justice and civil rights improvements during the mid-twentieth century as African Americans sought to gain rights as property owners. In addition to homeownership generally African Americans wanted to maintain their presence in Arlington’s suburbs, lest they be forced to relocate to the only other property open to them in the declining inner city.

These three communities were filled with generations of Arlington’s black families, many of whom came from lost neighborhoods like Butler-Holmes, Pelham Town, and Queen City. Thus they were particularly motivated to work to save their new homes and communities. Residents used the people, churches, community organizations, and social institutions that worked within and across all of Arlington’s black neighborhoods to gain recognition and improvements for their existing communities in order to maintain them as black spaces lest planning legislation and continued threats by white expansion again be used to push them from the county entirely. Additionally, Arlington’s black residents had particularly strong ties to their homes and communities because they had literally been built by the residents themselves. Second generation Green Valley resident Alfred O. Taylor, Jr. lived in a home his father constructed. He

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941 For more on the development of this connection between homeowner rights and civil rights in the black and white communities see N.D.B. Connolly, A World More Concrete: Real Estate and The Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida, (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

recalled his father telling him “I built on this land for us. It should stay with us.”

Arlington’s small but stable black population spent generations building homes, neighborhoods, and community institutions which they wanted to preserve. They sought assistance in the continuation of these neighborhoods through calls for improvements and services from the county. For the first time, these calls were met with a new level of responsiveness in the wake of changing social, political, and community preservation realities.

During the 1950s and 1960s these realities were largely shaped by Arlington’s more socially liberal white majority who took on many reform initiatives. Beyond the political and school reforms discussed, they improved streets, undertook public health initiatives and the opening of Arlington’s first hospital, improving county wide sewer and water systems, and forming more community planning initiatives. Many of these improvements continued with well-known existing patterns, where improvements would make it only to the outskirts of Arlington’s black neighborhoods without actually providing these improvements to its African American residents. Individual neighborhoods pushed for improvements, seeking funds to develop community features and to direct any potential redevelopment. For example, Lyon Village residents used their Civic Association to lobby for neighborhood improvements, calling out the “need for additional curbs, gutters, [and] sidewalks.” These improvements and other various


“zoning problems” were addressed almost immediately by the County Board. Board Chairman Leo Urbanski even attended the Lyon Village meetings as a show of support from government officials.

Residents of Hall’s Hill also lobbied county officials for these same changes. In 1956 Leslie Hamm, who would join Arlington’s integration lawsuits, wrote to the Arlington County Board requesting sidewalk, curb, and gutter work for Hall’s Hill. Unlike the experience of the Lyon Villagers, county officials were not responsive to Hamm’s request for the community. This was despite the fact that the needs of Hall’s Hill were arguably much more pressing than those of Lyon Village. Where the Village sought improvements to existing systems, Hill residents “lacked curb and gutters” entirely. For the next five years Hamm continued to write the board requesting these minimal municipal needs. Though seemingly aesthetic complaints, these lacking amenities resulted in serious “traffic and pedestrian hazards,” led to frequent flooding, and meant that children walking to and from school had to walk in the street.

These problems were not isolated to Hall’s Hill, they were present in all of Arlington’s three anchor black communities, as many of the county’s general road, sidewalk, and municipal improvements were not extended into their communities. Green Valley also did not have sidewalks, curbs, or gutters. The community remained physically isolated, with no direct bus lines to Washington, the Pentagon, Crystal City.


Rosslyn, or Arlington Court House. Green Valley was also isolated because of several dead end streets, including where the neighborhood’s 16th Street should have connected with the major county thoroughfare Walter Reed. The county’s water, sewer, and trash pick-up theoretically extended into Arlington’s anchor black neighborhoods, but service was infrequent and repairs were slow. Hamm also pushed for many other improvements to Hall’s Hill roads, trash and municipal services, and recreation facilities, arguing they were “so badly needed to help bring this community up to the desired standards of our county.”

With the sharp rise of suburban development in the 1940s and 1950s Arlington’s leaders realized that they needed to create new community planning laws and procedures to harness Arlington’s growth. County officials played a large role in the 1950 long range capital improvement planning, in 1954 the county created the Arlington Committee of 100 designed to use leaders from Arlington’s communities to solve planning problems, and in 1957 Arlington joined with other regional governments in the Metropolitan Area’s Council of Governments, all to help expand planning and neighborhood improvement initiatives. Arlington Planning Director and county resident Tom Moore observed that

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"Arlington is a planner’s paradise." Builders welcomed these changes. One builder observed “Arlington County had been consistently re-zoning the… area, giving builders a fair shake and getting results. Money flowed into the area. Buildings mushroomed.” In 1961 the county adopted a new Master Plan for development. Arlington’s Master Plan had three broad goals: the preservation of open space, the improvement of roads, and redevelopment of declining areas.

With their requests for improvements so often ignored, residents of Arlington’s three anchor black communities were apprehensive about the final aim of the 1961 Master Plan, the “redevelopment of old and obsolete areas.” Residents worried that these zoning and planning laws would be used to push them from their homes as had been the case with Freedman’s Village, Butler-Holmes, Pelham Town, and Queen City amongst others. In addition to suffering these same municipal shortfalls, in Johnson’s Hill residents worried about how the new laws would impact the area because of changes in

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zoning designations that came out of the 1961 plan. Though the community was predominantly zoned residential, with 43 of the community’s 62 acres occupied by homes, four acres bordering the community were ominously zoned “undetermined” in the 1961 Land Use Plan. Residents feared this would “encourage detrimental speculative activity within the neighborhood.” This in turn could threaten the community’s racial and residential make-up as residents sought to improve their neighborhoods while also ensuring that they were not lost.

But only two years after the creation of the Master Plan, the county’s planning policy shifted yet again. In 1963 the County created a special planning commission to “conserve values found in neighborhoods” and “establish a program of neighborhood conservation.” The commission was staffed by nine county residents who were meant to be a cross-section of the community. However, the majority of these individuals lived in the more affluent north Arlington, all but one lived in single family homes, and all

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955 80% of the community’s roads, curbs, and gutters were designated as needing improvements. Arlington County Government, Conservation Program, by Arlington View Civic Association, (Arlington, 1965).

956 Thirty-six acres were single family homes, while seven acres were multi-family homes. Arlington County Government, General Land Use Plan, by Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development, (Arlington, 1961); Arlington County Government, Conservation Program, by Arlington View Civic Association, (Arlington, 1965).


were white living in segregated communities.\textsuperscript{959} This additional zoning and planning work was the result of the dual forces of a national trend towards preservation and a local push for changes in the greater Washington area’s transportation network. Throughout the early 1960s local communities around the country responded to two major national developments to increase interest in historic and neighborhood preservation.\textsuperscript{960} These national changes were urban renewal programs of the 1940s and 1950s and Eisenhower’s National Interstate and Defense Highways Act of 1956 which together resulted in the destruction of historic sites, homes, and communities to make room for new road and housing construction projects.\textsuperscript{961}

Calls for renewal and redevelopment concerned black Arlingtonians.\textsuperscript{962} Though they worked to keep their houses in order, dilapidated homes and facilities in need of

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{959} Commission members were Dr. John Lohman, Sidney O. Dewberry, Preston C. Caruthers, H. Hall Gibson, Colonel J. Fuller Groom, Lutrelle F. Parker, Alice Sufit, Roy C. Wadlan, and Mrs. Elizabeth Wiehe. Lohman, Parker, and Sufit hailed from south Arlington. Sufit was the only individual not living in a single family home, residing in the garden-apartment and town-home community of Fairlington. Arlington County Government, \textit{The Planning Commission Report}, (Arlington, 1961), RG 51: Murphy and Ames Business Papers, Box 1, Arlington Central Library, Center for Local History. Arlington, Virginia.


\end{footnotesize}
repair were almost entirely restricted to the county’s three black neighborhoods. A minister serving the Green Valley community noted that you could almost see “the invisible dividing line between racially separated neighborhoods” because of the presence of run-down homes within black communities.\textsuperscript{963} This was despite the fact that residents worked to ensure the area “is a neat, well cared for neighborhood.”\textsuperscript{964} Even in Johnson’s Hill, which remained a solidly middle class community – home to eleven community, civic, and social organizations with a large number of newly constructed single family homes – the neighborhood still struggled with dilapidated and vacant homes.\textsuperscript{965} Of the community’s 233 residences, sixty-five were newly built single family homes. But thirty-one were deteriorating, three were dilapidated, and three were vacant, meaning nearly 16\% of Johnson’s Hill’s homes were in some state of disrepair. In comparison, of the 256 homes in the white Maywood community, only twelve were described as deteriorating and none were either dilapidated or vacant.\textsuperscript{966} This reality was due in part to the age of Arlington’s black communities compared to many new and expanding white

\textsuperscript{963} Isolde Weinberg, “New Church Center Spans Gulf Between Ways of Life” \emph{The Washington Post} (10 July 1966). RG 6: Arlington Churches, Box 4, CLH.


neighborhoods that sprang up during World War II.\textsuperscript{967} It was also due to the lack of available funds for home improvements, a lack of contractors willing to work with African Americans, as well as the increased regulation on construction created under Arlington’s zoning and planning laws of the 1930s. The state of individual houses was compounded in Arlington’s black neighborhoods by the fact that officials refused to extend county improvements, amenities, or resources into these communities, creating the appearance of dilapidation despite the presence of active citizens and groups.\textsuperscript{968} One Hall’s Hill resident lamented that county neglect makes the community “seem unattractive and presents the appearance of many county and state neglected communities of the Deep South.”\textsuperscript{969} Because of these conditions Arlington’s political leaders asserted that the county’s black neighborhoods had “all the classic elements [that] created the center city urban slum,” and thus should be considered for renewal and redevelopment.\textsuperscript{970} This pattern of outside white politicians and individuals seeing a slum where black residents saw a strong community in need of some municipal improvements first began with Freedman’s Village and clearly continued into the Civil Rights era as black and white residents continued to battle for space.


\textsuperscript{968} Cleveland Gambill “Housing Opportunities for the Black and the Poor in Arlington County, Virginia” Special Report No 2 (Metropolitan Washington Housing Opportunities Project, April, 1971) p 1-32.


While redevelopment concerned Arlington’s black residents, both black and white county residents worried even more about road creation disturbing their county through the expansions of the existing road networks and the threat of new roads, most notably Interstate-66. This was especially true as areas beyond Arlington in Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William counties “began to attract more and more of the families pouring into the… area” in the 1960s. In the early 1960s the Washington-metro area’s planners transitioned from a focus on roads to a focus on rail development. In 1962 a plan was launched for a greatly expanded rapid transit plan linking suburbs like Arlington to downtown Washington, D.C. The development of the Washington Metro-rail system had the capacity to greatly impact Arlington through construction of the lines themselves and to change the nature of the county’s growth by encouraging urban development patterns. With these local and national trends both serving as potential threats to Arlington’s existing neighborhoods, black and white, Arlington’s various neighborhood and community groups, which first began in the 1920s, came together to lobby the county for a new governmental organization to help create changes to zoning and planning policies that would ensure neighborhood preservation. When the Arlington Planning

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Commission established the Neighborhood Conservation Program, 
black Arlingtonians knew that this program would need to be harnessed to secure 
improvements and preservation for their neighborhoods, to prevent it from becoming yet 
another tool used to shutter their areas. 

The Neighborhood Conservation Program was a county-wide program designed 
to provide development guidelines for individual neighborhoods. Created in 1963, the 
overall goals were to improve street conditions, update traffic and transportation 
management, and encourage business development. The program provided 
neighborhoods with funding to support municipal, recreational, building, and planning 
improvements on a larger scale than the typical, smaller scale one-and-done county 
projects. All of this was so that the character of Arlington’s neighborhoods could be 
maintained. This “character” was determined by the people living within the community, 
as access to funds and support from the county required a minimum of 75% participation 
from community residents. Requiring wide-scale community participation in the effort 
sought to ensure residents, not developers, decided what the character of the community 
would be in the years to come. The idea was to improve Arlington’s neighborhoods so 
that they might be better maintained. This would put them at lower risk of being razed as 
building trends with highways and rail encouraged both the development of higher 
density development and the destruction of existing neighborhoods to make way for this 
kind of expansion. In making their pitch for municipal improvement funds neighborhood 
residents needed to successfully make the argument that their community was historically 
significant to Arlington County, and thus deserved to continue into the future.
The program’s requirement of strong participation from residents within the neighborhoods helped black Arlingtonians. After decades of community activism and participation, Arlington’s three remaining African American neighborhoods were in a unique position to rally support from residents for these programs. For example, Hall’s Hill residents who had lobbied the county for improvements to no avail for a decade immediately sprang into action. In the early 1960s Hall’s Hill was continuing to battle Arlington County for their place. In 1964 alone zoning changes were proposed by the County Board to build high-end apartments in the neighborhood, and to tear down the community to expand the area’s hospital system, first for a residents hall for the Arlington Hospital’s doctors and nurses, and then for a nursing home. But the Hall’s Hill John M. Langston Civic Association saw the Neighborhood Conservation Program as a chance to secure their neighborhood’s place once and for all.

Established in the fall of 1937, the Civic Association was active in all matters concerning the welfare of the community. It tackled issues such as equal access to employment, as well as zoning and development issues. The Association understood what was at risk if they did not solidify their community through the new program. On July 15, 1964 the Association held a mass meeting so that Mr. Hall Gibson, Chairman of the Committee on Conservation of Residential Areas, and others from Arlington’s Planning Staff could explain the details of the new neighborhood provisions. The

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Association created the Neighborhood Conservation Committee specifically to tackle this project. It was headed by community residents Birdie Alston, Captain George S. Burke, Leslie Hamm, and Alonzo Spriggs. With such an active neighborhood, Committee members easily obtained the necessary 75% participation of residents and gave presentations to the County Board calling for change, including a “Look-See” neighborhood tour for county officials. The residents proposed rezoning, land acquisitions, improvements to playgrounds, creating curbs, gutters, streetlights, and sidewalks, street improvements (including providing more outlets out of the neighborhood to major roads), and creating a community recreation center.

But unlike earlier zoning and planning changes that had led to the end or shrinking of black communities these changes occurred in a different social and political climate in Arlington. As evidenced by the eventual rejection of massive resistance in favor of public schools remaining open even in the face of some school integration, Arlington’s new white arrivals were unwilling to continue on the trajectory established by previous leaders and residents. Instead of denying black rights while attempting to squeeze them out of the county, they shifted to an unwillingness to hurt black causes if it would damage their own positions as had been the case when the Byrd political machine blocked all spending no matter how needed. This resulted in tacit support of black aims. Following Civil Rights victories of the 1950s and after generations of community building, Arlington’s black population was ready to move to call for more rights with the

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emergence of this more inclusive attitude, taking the opportunity to cement civic
organizations, call for neighborhood betterment, and secure better housing.

In February of 1965 Arlington announced the three initial neighborhoods which
would be a part of the first round of Neighborhood Conservation. Among them were
Johnson’s Hill and Hall’s Hill. The fact that two of the three communities were
African American is significant. After decades of creating civic, social, church, and
political organizations to push for their rights black Arlington was uniquely poised to
secure the high rates of community participation needed to get county funds through the
Neighborhood Conservation Program. Additionally, the intense residential segregation
imposed upon Arlington’s African American communities meant that they each had well
defined boundaries that helped them easily articulate existing community conditions and
future needs in their reports. Though Green Valley also initiated their studies in
neighborhood conservation in 1965 along with Hall’s Hill and Johnson’s Hill, their
neighborhood conservation plan was accepted during the second round of conservation
plans in 1973. Each neighborhood’s age also helped in their argument for historical
significance. Many of Arlington’s white communities were created in the World War
Two era, but Green Valley dated back to 1844, Hall’s Hill to 1865, and Johnson’s Hill to

977 Arlington County Neighborhood Conservation Program, “Neighborhood Conservation’s 50th

978 In 1973 the Nauck, Arlington Ridge, and Lyon Park Neighborhood Conservation Plans were accepted in
Arlington County. The Aurora Highlands Neighborhood Conservation Plan was adopted between these
the 1870s. Each was also home to institutions dating back to Freedman’s Village, providing strong bids for historical significance.

In Arlington’s first round of preservation funding Hall’s Hill and Johnson’s Hill were joined by the white Maywood community. Maywood was platted in 1903 by Crandal Mackey. First developing along the Great Falls and Old Dominion Railroad, the community now lay along Lee Highway (Route 29). Residents feared that planned construction of Interstate-66 could lead to the destruction of their neighborhood, which consisted of a combination of styles from late-Victorian of the 1910s to Ranch style homes of the 1960s. But residents were not particularly organized and they were not aware of the county’s preservation program which could help them resist potential changes threatened by highway construction. Maywood’s residents did not even know about the program until they heard about Johnson’s Hill’s participation in the project, which “aroused our interest in preserving Maywood.”

The ability for Arlington’s African American communities to use a planning program to their advantage during the late-1960s and early-1970s when the preservation movement became powerful is distinctive. Nationally many African American communities were singled out for redevelopment and destroyed under similar improvement programs because of the same kinds of problems experienced within Hall’s

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Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley. This same pattern was also repeated locally.

The preservation movement led to the destruction of the African American communities Fort and Macedonia/Seminary in neighboring Alexandria City, and the loss of Navy Hill and Fulton in Richmond, Virginia.

Though these programs offered an unmatched possibility for Arlington’s black communities to use county planning changes to their benefit, the recognition from the county came with an odd stipulation. Each of Arlington’s anchor African American communities changed their name in their forms for county finances. Hall’s Hill became High View Park, Johnson’s Hill became Arlington View, and Green Valley became Nauck. High View Park was a subdivision platted in 1892 by Dr. John Pickering Lewis. Lewis purposefully purchased land immediately adjacent to the growing Hall’s Hill community, advertising his property to African Americans eager to become a part of the

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Hall’s Hill community. Arlington View was the name of a subdivision created near the existing Johnson’s Hill community, as was Nauck, a subdivision named for the land platted by John Nauck within the Green Valley community in the 1880s. This pattern of re-naming existing black communities after subdivisions created by white developers was the standard choice in the renaming of Arlington’s black communities. Though these new names had historic roots and connections to their communities, before their presence on preservation documentation they were never the names used for these communities. The strongest connection to the new name came from Green Valley. While residents always called the community itself Green Valley, they named many community institutions, such as their civic association and revitalization organization, after the early Nauck subdivision. Residents did not embrace these formal name changes and instead continue to use the original names into the present. Hall’s Hill resident Amanda Lewis recalled “I been calling it Hall’s Hill all my life … I didn’t really pay attention that they was trying to change it.”

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985 Arlington View was not subdivided until the 1930s on an area in Johnson’s Hill bounded by 13th Road South, 14th Road South, South Rolfe Street, and South Queen Street. For more on John Nauck and his subdivision see Chapter 1 - “Where They Had Lived Undisturbed for Nearly a Quarter of a Century”. “Hall’s Hill, High View Park” (advertisement), *The Washington Bee*, September 17, 1892.; Arlington County Government, *A Guide to the African American Heritage of Arlington County, Virginia*, by Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (Arlington, 2016).


987 Mrs. Amanda Lewis, interview by Laura Annalora, November 26, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.
There is no formal record of why these name changes occurred. The fact that residents of these communities continued to use the original names for their communities and not the new designations, and the fact that no white communities experienced similar name changes, suggest a top-down insistence on change. Perhaps county officials found it more palatable to provide formal recognition to Arlington’s African American neighborhoods if they had new names which were not associated with black communities by local white residents. It is also possible Arlington’s politicians wanted to focus on builders and developers in their name changes, privileging the role of white developers over black community builders and members.

These plans showed how far each of the neighborhoods had come in successfully organizing their residents so that they could fight against the kinds of racialized legislation that had been used for decades in an attempt to push them from their homes. Hall’s Hill community activist Dorothy Hamm recalled that “we had a dream that our community could be ‘The Model Community,’ and that dream was becoming a reality because the County Board approved our plan.”

The neighborhoods’ desires for improvements and to maintain their environments in a way which was in line with broader county goals, suggests that by the late twentieth century, African American ideals of the built environment could be reconciled with white visions. Beyond the single family homes which all communities black and white shared, Arlington’s black communities were also aided in their applications by changes in

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Arlington’s built environment during the 1940s and 1950s. Recall that since the 1930s Arlington’s black communities included multi-family housing types. But at that time, multi-family housing was not embraced by white Arlingtonians and their communities. However, in the decades of the 1940s and 1950s the extreme population boom in Arlington led to the establishment of many row-house, garden apartment, and apartment buildings in white communities that had previously been all single family homes. This diversification of white communities brought them closer to Arlington’s black communities in the style of their built environment. So, when making the case for community funds and preservation, the diversity of housing type to include both single- and multi-family homes in Arlington’s black communities was no longer an issue upon which they could be ostracized as other.

Additionally, the creation of the Neighborhood Conservation Plan provided hope. Unlike earlier legal changes that were used to push against black Arlington, this new law happened following two fundamental changes in the county. The first was the demographic shift away from native Virginians and towards a more socially and racially progressive populace who wanted to improve conditions in the county but did not dwell on the racial politics of these changes. Increasingly college educated individuals who had been born, raised, educated, and lived in diverse locations around the country, these individuals brought with them different ideas about the proper functions of government, planning, and race that were often more progressive than their earlier counterparts, if not necessarily egalitarian. Arlington’s new white residents were no longer willing to sacrifice their own standards just to prevent African Americans from meaningful
improvements, in a political philosophy articulated in the school battles that showed that while racial equality was not an aim, programs would not be abandoned just because it could be a byproduct. Additionally, emerging in the 1960s these legal changes occurred at the same time as a strengthening and spreading of local, state, and national Civil Rights challenges.

Because of the implementation of these plans, Arlington County finally provided the improvements and municipal needs that the three anchor black communities needed. Hall’s Hill residents Lula Mae Graham recalled that once the plans were approved, the county “had to keep the streets clean and pick up our trash” and put in new “sewage and running water” lines. 989 One Green Valley resident and business owner noted that “Once this place [was] cleaned up you [could] even feel it in the air… Pride.” 990 With these community-generated plans, the improvements they secured, and the county’s approval of them, the place of Arlington’s three black anchor communities seemed to finally be secure. Green Valley resident and community leader Alfred O. Taylor, Jr. hoped that through these improvements he could ensure “the land doesn’t leave us.” 991

989 Lula Mae Graham, interview by Eleanor Edwards, December 4, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.


Conclusion
From the 1940s into the 1970s Arlington underwent many changes. It saw a huge population boom in response to federal expansions under the New Deal, World War II, and the Cold War which brought huge numbers of new residents to the area. These new residents were primarily white, educated individuals and families from across the United States, standing in contrast to Arlington’s previous generations of residents who were primarily native Virginians. The increasingly progressive social attitudes that these individuals brought with them manifested themselves in Arlington through increased governmental spending and involvement in municipal affairs. These people wanted to secure improvements to communities, roads, and schools. And unlike previous generations, they were not willing to compromise on improvements because of potential ramifications to racial politics and improvements within the black community.

After one hundred years of community formation and institution building dating back to Freedman’s Village, Arlington’s stable but small black population used new and existing community associations and a strong organizing tradition to push for the changes and support they had long worked for – now with more room to make real progress due to the new social and political climate. One of the most significant battles fought and won by these communities was the battle for school integration. Their strong organizing tradition and small black population, which made court challenges more likely to succeed than those in the black belt of the Deep South, helped Arlington County to become the first municipality in the state of Virginia to integrate in February of 1959. The location of Hall’s Hill within the otherwise white communities of northern Arlington aided these segregation contests by challenging the idea of the allegedly de jure segregated
community school. Though school integration continued to be negotiated into the 1970s with battles over busing, the more progressive stance taken by Arlington’s politicians, educators, parents, and students after years of activism and calls for change from Arlington’s black community was a significant turning point for the county, highlighting the ways in which the social and political realities of the white populace had shifted since the re-emergence of an active white Arlington at the dawn of the twentieth century.992

Unfortunately, of the many varied black communities at the turn of the twentieth century only three remained to see these changes. During the Jim Crow era of residential segregation zoning and planning laws coupled with pressures from white builders and buyers pushed against Arlington’s black communities. From the nearly dozen communities established in the years surrounding the Civil War and the close of Freedman’s Village, by 1950 only Arlington’s three anchor black communities of Hall’s Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley continued as majority-black neighborhoods. Each of these communities had active church, school, social, Civil Rights, and community groups which helped them survive. That was also the case for ghost-communities like Queen City. Both Johnson’s Hill and Green Valley were more middle class in their make-up, providing them with more resources to challenge closure. But, the same class status could be said for other neighborhoods, like Butler-Holmes, which ceased to exist. It was the strong institutions, active individuals, and stable population of Arlington’s black

communities which helped them endure past the forces working against them throughout the first half of the twentieth century. It was a matter of chance, luck, and hard work that it was these three communities which survived into the modern era.

But because residents had saved these communities they were poised to take the increasingly socially liberal attitudes of Arlington’s government and turn them towards their own aims of neighborhood preservation. While planning legislation had previously challenged and led to the end of black neighborhoods in Arlington, the 1963 Neighborhood Conservation Program emerging from the 1961 Master Plan resulted in the preservation of Arlington’s three remaining black communities. Black residents ensured this was the case through their active citizens and community institutions ready to take advantage of county improvement and planning funds once changing social and political realities afforded them a place of their own within the county’s social system and physical environment.
CONCLUSION

An End to Residential Segregation
Arlington’s African American communities continued to thrive into the late-twentieth century, thanks in part to their ability to secure preservation and improvement funds through Arlington’s Neighborhood Conservation program. By mid-century Arlington was very residentially segregated, with nearly all of its black residents living in the three communities of Hall’s Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley.993 Though they sought to preserve their neighborhoods, this did not exclude Arlington’s black population from also seeking homes beyond their communities. Though improvements had been made, Lyle Bryant, a member of the Committee of 100 and the Arlington County Planning Commission, felt that the statement “no blacks wanted here”… would be the most succinct statement summarizing the policies of Arlington’s white neighborhoods and the attitudes of many of their residents.994 Since the 1930s Arlington’s African American neighborhoods were prevented from growing by segregation, zoning, and planning laws that restricted their borders. Lots were increasingly subdivided and multi-family housing


options were added throughout these communities in an attempt to deal with the housing demands.

This practice had its limits, however, and in the improved social and political climate of 1960s Arlington, black Arlingtonians pushed for more space. In the late 1960s a now familiar pattern emerged in which Arlington’s black community organized through existing organizations and created new organizations to help aid their community and demand increased rights. Local citizens, church groups, the League of Women Voters, the Northern Virginia Fair Housing Alliance, the Coalition for Open Occupancy Legislation (COOL), and the American Association of University Women all worked together to lobby Arlington County’s government for access to fair housing.995

These efforts became the center of federal attention in Arlington in the late-1960s. Because of the large number of military installations in the county in the form of the Pentagon, Fort Myer, and Navy Annex, the Department of Defense (DOD) became involved with housing and discrimination issues in Arlington. In 1967 DOD found that only 10% of Arlington’s available housing units had open, non-discrimination policies. The military decreed that servicemen could only live within complexes and communities with open housing. While this policy was only for military families, it opened up more housing options for both military and civilian home-seekers by forcing changes in individual housing unit policies. The next year federal changes targeted residential

995 Cleveland Gambill “Housing Opportunities for the Black and the Poor in Arlington County, Virginia” Special Report No 2 (Metropolitan Washington Housing Opportunities Project, April, 1971) SC&A.
segregation nationally. In 1968 the Civil Rights Act and Fair Housing Act made de jure segregation in housing illegal.

The effects of these local and federal changes were not immediate. One federal report on Arlington’s housing segregation found that many black residents were hesitant to make “such a pioneering step” by moving into previously all white neighborhoods.996 In June of 1968 Arlington became the first county in the South to pass a local ordinance against housing discrimination based on race and created the Fair Housing Board. Within a year twelve formal and six informal complaints were lodged against various individuals and apartment complexes selling and renting single family homes and apartment units. Though none of these initial cases resulted in action, residents like Bryant said that they trusted the five-person board and its decisions, partly because Arlington’s only black realtor, Harold Mann, served as a member Slowly over the course of the 1970s and 1980s Arlington’s formerly segregated communities, black and white, began to integrate.997 This process of residential desegregation took place not only in Arlington, but across the nation, providing increased opportunities for the next generation of black Arlingtonians to move not only beyond the three anchor black communities, but beyond the county, state, and region.

996 Ibid.
While the decline in residential segregation provided existing and new residents with more housing options, it also threatened the continuation of Arlington’s anchor black communities as historically black neighborhoods. Lifelong Hall’s Hill resident James Taylor felt that “once they had integration… it seemed like they took away something from the black man” because of the deterioration of black neighborhoods and businesses.\textsuperscript{998} With more opportunities opening to African Americans, fewer young people stayed within their childhood communities to make their homes in adulthood.\textsuperscript{999} For example, after three generations of living in Hall’s Hill, three of Lula Mae Graham’s four children moved beyond Arlington after graduating from Hoffman-Boston.\textsuperscript{1000}

While many from the next generation of Hall’s Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley residents moved on, new residents were increasingly non-black. Hall’s Hill resident Saundra Green recalled “Hall’s Hill is really changing. One time it was all African American, you cannot say that anymore. It’s really diverse and becoming more and more so every year.”\textsuperscript{1001} By 1990 Green Valley’s Asian and Latino population

\textsuperscript{998} James “Jimmy” E. Taylor, interview by Chloe E. Muhammed, January 30, 2004, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.


\textsuperscript{1000} One son and one daughter moved to Maryland, and one moved to Massachusetts to find work. One daughter remained in Arlington, purchasing a town home in Johnson’s Hill. Lula Mae Graham, interview by Eleanor Edwards, December 4, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.

\textsuperscript{1001} Ms. Saundra Green, interview by Kevin Carney, November 20, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.
doubled, while the white population rose by 21% and the black population declined by 16%.\textsuperscript{1002}

**Changes in Arlington**

Beyond the beginnings of community integration, Arlington saw many changes in the late twentieth century. The county’s black communities began to struggle with new issues of violence and drugs.\textsuperscript{1003} Hall’s Hill resident Lillian Ambers recalled a shift in Hall’s Hill, with more and more “teenagers – children – [getting] into trouble and drugs on the corner.”\textsuperscript{1004} Her Hall’s Hill neighbor, Amanda Lewis, also lamented the impacts of drugs on Arlington’s black neighborhoods. “It was bad around here, is them drugs and them drugs would tear you down, tear you down that is what it was.”\textsuperscript{1005} Ambers recalled that because of these changes some people became “scared to leave their homes.”\textsuperscript{1006}

Arlington also saw demographic shifts. For the first time since before the Civil War Arlington’s population began to stagnate in the 1960s as many chose to make their homes in outer-ring suburbs.\textsuperscript{1007}

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\textsuperscript{1004} Lillian Ambers, interview by Danielle Tope, February 3, 2004, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.

\textsuperscript{1005} Mrs. Amanda Lewis, interview by Laura Annalora, November 26, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.

\textsuperscript{1006} Lillian Ambers, interview by Danielle Tope, February 3, 2004, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.

well as the Washington’s Metro public transit system helped support this shift.\textsuperscript{1008} This population decline was partly the result of white flight due to Arlington’s school integration.\textsuperscript{1009} The loss of population led to school closures throughout Arlington.\textsuperscript{1010} According to an economic survey of the county, “by late 1960s Arlington began to experience declines – in population, number of families, school enrollment, and importance as a retail center.”\textsuperscript{1011}

Beyond changes in rates of growth, Arlington’s population was changing in other ways. Residents were increasingly younger individuals without families. One economic analysis of the county published in 1978 found that “concurrent with these losses were gains in the number of households, young adult segment of the population, labor force and at-place employment.” Many of these young individuals were renters and not home owners. Additionally, for the first time Arlington was not defined racially by only black

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1011} Arlington County Government, Economic Fact Book: Arlington, Virginia, (Arlington, August 1978), Verlin Smith Collection, Box B-52, VHS.
\end{itemize}
and white.\textsuperscript{1012} In 1940 Arlington’s population was 95% white and 5% black, with statistically inconsequential numbers of other races tracked by the census.\textsuperscript{1013} This reality changed following the 1960s, partly as the result of changes to national immigration policies. The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 eliminated the quota system for immigrants and focused on relocating entire families. These shifts had particularly dramatic impacts on the number of Latino and Asian immigrants.\textsuperscript{1014} In the 1970s Arlington became home to a small but distinct and active Vietnamese population. These individuals and families were primarily refugees who had served American forces in Vietnam in various capacities. They were drawn to Arlington because of its proximity to the nation’s capital and the county’s military installations.\textsuperscript{1015} This group changed the face of some of Arlington’s neighborhoods. For example, the Barcroft community expanded to include the Blessed Vietnamese Martyrs Church in 1970 to accommodate a growing Vietnamese population.\textsuperscript{1016} A distinct Vietnamese business district known as

\textsuperscript{1012} For more on similar changes in suburban demographics around the country see Michael Jones-Correa, “Reshaping the American Dream: Immigrants, Ethnic Minorities, and the Politics of the New Suburbs” in \textit{The New Suburban History}, edited by Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2006) p 183-204.


\textsuperscript{1014} Muzaffar Chishti, Faye Hipsman, and Isabel Ball, “Fifty Years On, the 1965 Immigration and Nationalist Act Continues to Reshape the United States,” \textit{The Immigration Policy Institute Policy Beat} (Oct. 2015).


“Little Saigon” also emerged in Clarendon.\(^{1017}\) Beyond the Vietnamese population, Arlington saw a rise in other Asian nationalities as well as the Hispanic population. By 1980, the county was 83% white, 9% black, and 5% Asian and Hispanic.\(^{1018}\)

These demographic changes along with continued changes in work patterns combined to alter Arlington’s built environment. One journalist noted that “the decentralization policy of Washington [businesses] is forcing Arlington out of its pattern of a residential suburb.”\(^{1019}\) Due to the rise of businesses and federal installations in Arlington more and more people worked in the county. This meant that individuals either commuted to Arlington or stayed in the county to live and work. As early as 1960, 11,678 workers commuted into Arlington from neighboring Fairfax County alone.\(^{1020}\) The rise of more businesses and the commuters they brought with them led to many transportation changes in Arlington as roads were expanded and mass-transit developed in the county. These changes all moved Arlington away from a suburban environment, primarily defined by commuters from pre-planned homes and neighborhoods, and toward an edge city environment, made up of road networks and businesses that made Arlington a


Because of these changes Arlington became the wealthiest county in the Washington-metropolitan area, with the highest pay rates and property values.\footnote{Arlington County Government, \textit{Economic Fact Book: Arlington, Virginia}, (Arlington, August 1978), Verlin Smith Collection, Box B-52, VHS.} Indeed, Arlington had one of the highest per-capita incomes in the nation, with an average annual income of around $11,000 in 1965 and $22,000 in 1976.\footnote{Cleveland Gambill “Housing Opportunities for the Black and the Poor in Arlington County, Virginia” Special Report No 2 (Metropolitan Washington Housing Opportunities Project, April, 1971), SC&A.} However this wealth was not spread universally across the county. Pay-rates within Arlington’s black community stagnated during these same years.\footnote{Arlington County Government, \textit{Economic Fact Book: Arlington, Virginia}, (Arlington, August 1978), Verlin Smith Collection, Box B-52, VHS.; Cleveland Gambill “Housing Opportunities for the Black and the Poor in Arlington County, Virginia” Special Report No 2 (Metropolitan Washington Housing Opportunities Project, April, 1971), SC&A.} A 1971 study found that in Arlington’s black community, the majority of people had salaries between $3,000 and $6,900, with many
having salaries below $3,000 and only a handful with salaries reaching up to $12,000.\footnote{1026} These trends continued through the 1980s and 1990s. The rise of Arlington’s average income raised rents, mortgages, and land values, leading to increased poverty in Arlington’s three anchor black communities. Even though prices in Hall’s Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley rose more slowly than the rest of the county, home rates still rose at a rate that made it difficult for existing residents to remain in their homes.\footnote{1027} Despite having ensured funds for municipal programs and neighborhood improvements through the Neighborhood Conservation Program, by the 1990s were in need of revitalization funds. Thus these three black communities were some of the only areas of somewhat more affordable housing in the county. Because of this financial reality combined with the end of legal residential segregation, for the first time the communities became destinations for non-black residents looking to live in Arlington beginning in the 1970s.

**Areas of Hope for Arlington’s Black Neighborhoods**

Arlington’s black communities did not experience only hardships. Despite some of the problems encountered in the late twentieth century and the decline of black businesses and neighborhoods following integration, the successes of creating a more egalitarian and integrated society should not be forgotten. Lula Mae Graham remembered that after the political changes of the 1960s “now we [were] considered as humans, too.”

\footnote{1026} Cleveland Gambill “Housing Opportunities for the Black and the Poor in Arlington County, Virginia” Special Report No 2 (Metropolitan Washington Housing Opportunities Project, April, 1971) Special Collections and Archives. George Mason University.

After working for her children to have a better life than she herself had, she felt that “we have anything anybody else have… it’s much better.”

While there were breakdowns in certain traditional elements of Arlington’s African American communities, other areas of black life in Arlington stayed stable. African American community institutions continued to grow and thrive. The Hall’s Hill civic association continued to work to improve the community. Resident Saundra Green said these efforts were undertaken in order “to always retain the history, to celebrate the culture, and to retain those things that are important to the community.”

New institutions were also added to the ranks. In response to the growing drug epidemic, Arlington’s black communities used the skills they had deployed for generations to organize against this new threat. Edmund C. Fleet, Jr. continued to be active in the community. Fleet came from a family of activists; his grandfather Hiram Fleet helped to found Mt. Zion Church in Freedman’s Village, his father Edmund C. Fleet, Sr. was an active member of the Butler-Holmes community, and his wife Alice E. Fleet worked to challenge political discrimination in Arlington. In addition to being active in church, social, and fraternal organizations, Fleet was a prominent fundraiser for Arlington’s African American branch of the YMCA, founded in Green Valley in 1949. Fleet worked throughout the 1970s to expand and improve the YMCA to help black youths have activities beyond drugs. The Fleet family continued its involvement in Arlington’s black communities.

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1028 Lula Mae Graham, interview by Eleanor Edwards, December 4, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.

1029 Ms. Saundra Green, interview by Kevin Carney, November 20, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.
communities. Son William H. Fleet worked for the Department of the Navy and was an active leader in Green Valley’s Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Meanwhile, their daughter Alice B. Fleet returned to Arlington to teach public school after earning her master’s degree from the University of Pennsylvania. She was a member and leader with the county’s Democratic Party, school board, YMCA, and League of Women Voters.\footnote{Mt. Zion Baptist Church, \textit{Mt. Zion Centennial, 1866-1976}, (Arlington: 1976) RG 6: Arlington Churches, Box 3. CLH.}

Individuals from the Hall’s Hill and Green Valley communities who were already serving on neighborhood watch organizations came together to create the Family Support Group to organize community patrol efforts and help residents feel safe.\footnote{Mrs. Amanda Lewis, interview by Laura Annalora, November 26, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH} Green Valley residents also created the Intensive Drug Treatment Component Advisory Committee and the Substance Abuse Advisory Board to help rehabilitate and guide affected residents.\footnote{Alfred O. Taylor, Jr. \textit{Bridge Builders of Nauck/ Green Valley: Past and Present} (Pennsylvania: Doorance Publishing, 2015).}

To combat the area’s growing need for childcare, daycare centers, resources for working mothers, and early education, pre-school, and kindergarten programs were all created.\footnote{The League of Women Voters, \textit{Arlington Community Guide}, (Arlington, Virginia: Pamphlet, 1979). VHS.} In 1965 President Lyndon B. Johnson established the Head Start program for lower-income children as a part of his Great Society social programs. Two years later Arlington’s Green Valley community lobbied the government to create a Head Start
program in their community. The program was a great success. It educated 135 children, both black and white, in a year-round program.\textsuperscript{1034}

Additionally, while the decline of a stable black population – with children increasingly leaving the area in adulthood and a decline in solidly black community demographics – was in some respects a negative shift, the growing diversity of Arlington’s black communities was also a positive change for these areas. Lillian Ambers of Hall’s Hill remembered lots of new kinds of people moving into the neighborhood.

“At first it kind of bothered [me],” she recalled, but “not no more it don’t.” Ultimately Ambers decided that “that’s the way it is supposed to be, I guess. Everyone seem[s] to get along all right…people are just people.” Beyond just welcoming a more diverse populace into the neighborhoods, other residents actively worked to make these new residents a part of their area’s organizing tradition. Green Valley community organizer John Robinson, Jr. worked to integrate this new population into the neighborhood’s existing organizations and traditions so that both the new residents and the existing institutions could thrive through his work at Green Valley’s community center.

Furthermore, while staying within Arlington’s three anchor black communities was no longer the norm, many with long family roots in Arlington still chose to continue to make Arlington their home. Mary Gardner lived in Hall’s Hill her entire life, along with several members of her extended family. Of Mary’s five children, three returned to Hall’s Hill to establish their own homes after college. She felt that her children and their peers “got their education and came back to the community to give back to the community. And I really think that’s what has held the community together, the young people who got their educations and came back to Hall’s Hill.” That was the case for Clinton N. “Skeeter” West. Great-grandson of community leader and Freedman’s Village and Green Valley resident William A. Rowe, West grew up in Green Valley and

1035 Lillian Ambers, interview by Danielle Tope, February 3, 2004, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.


1037 Mary Gardner became Mary Scales and eventually Mary Koblitz. Three aunts, her brother and his family, and cousins and their families all lived in Hall’s Hill. In adulthood, children Gregory, Elle, and Tia stayed in Hall’s Hill, while Larry moved to Alexandria and Charles lived in D.C. Mary P. Koblitz, interview by Shawna Helene Reed, December 3, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.
remained local, founding his medical diagnostics laboratory in Washington, D.C. after graduating from Howard University. Through their efforts, Mary Gardener found the young people who returned “have stuck together, so they could keep it – so they can keep Hall’s Hill ‘Hall’s Hill’.”

Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s Green Valley actively worked to keep young families within the community. The Nauck Civic Association worked with the Arlington Housing Corporation to renovate twenty-four older townhomes within Green Valley, with preference given to young couples and families who had previously lived in the neighborhood. Nauck Civic Association President Jennie T. Davis helped to create the program because “what I found was we had young people get married who wanted to stay, but there was no housing for them.” This was the case for Cecilia Braveboy. A fourth generation Green Valley resident, she and her husband wanted to return to her childhood neighborhood to be near family and live within a stable community environment. But they found they could not afford to live there without the affordable housing secured through this program. Through the program Braveboy could live “two blocks from where I grew up,” where “people know you and watch out for your kids.” Second generation Green Valley resident Alfred O. Taylor, Jr. recalled his father telling


\[1039\] Mary P. Koblitz, interview by Shawna Helene Reed, December 3, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.

him “never sell the family land.”\textsuperscript{1041} Taylor worked to keep this promise himself, and helped to ensure that other black families could keep their homes.

**Struggles of Gentrification**

This promise became increasingly difficult over time. The cost of homes continued to skyrocket as black incomes remained stagnant, making it difficult for new residents to purchase homes and for existing residents to continue to afford rising property taxes. This issue of income inequality that pushed out all but the most elite became a problem throughout the country.\textsuperscript{1042} While some success was made in keeping younger generations within Arlington’s three anchor black communities, in the 1990s and 2000s the housing bubble, new building preferences that favored new and large homes, and residential patterns that encouraged residents to move back into the inner-ring suburbs they had abandoned in previous decades all combined to dramatically change the neighborhoods’ built environments and threaten the stability of these communities once more through gentrification.

Arlington’s anchor black communities began to see the purchase and demolition of existing homes to make way for larger and more expensive housing. In Green Valley the cooperative Dunbar Homes was tapped for potential redevelopment in 2005.\textsuperscript{1043} Many older residents of the community had relocated to Dunbar Homes following the


demolition of Queen City to make way for the Pentagon. One such occupant was Gertrude Jeffress, a Pentagon employee who had moved with her family from Queen City first to the temporary trailer camp and eventually to Dunbar Homes following the destruction of their home. Within the Green Valley neighborhood that became her new home, Jeffress became involved in community activities as the President of the Mt. Zion Church’s ladies auxiliary trustee board in the 1960s. Now 88 and retired from federal service, Jeffress argued “I am against selling,” both because Dunbar Homes had been her home for sixty years, and also because “they haven’t given us actual figures” of what residents would be paid. After receiving far less than market value for her Queen City home, Jeffress and other older residents were wary. Neighbor Samuel C. Buress, complained “we’re getting robbed. They’re going to make a windfall profit on this land.” Michael Leventhal, Arlington’s historic preservation program coordinator at the time, “didn’t think [demolition] would ever happen to those buildings” because “it’s a nice neighborhood, and they are well kept up.”

After much debate Dunbar Mutual Homes Association cooperative agreed to sell the development to a Reston construction company for $37 million. The amount received by individual residents is unknown, but with 86 units the settlement provided a maximum of approximately $430,000 per unit. In June of 2006 the average price of an existing single family home in northern Virginia was $520,000. This means that residents could

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1044 Oswald G. Smith, *Mount Zion Centennial, 1866-1966*, (Virginia: Mt. Zion Baptist Church Pamphlet, 1966), RG 6: Arlington County Churches, Box 3, File 1-18: Mount Zion Methodist Church, CLH.

not afford homes in Arlington following this settlement even if they received this seemingly large amount per unit, and it is doubtful that residents received this full amount.\textsuperscript{1046} As was the case with the closing of previous historically black communities, some residents stayed local, but many were priced out of the county’s real estate market and left the area. Jeffress relocated to a senior citizens home. In the end Dunbar Homes was replaced with a complex of large, luxury town-homes.

Increasingly new residents were not interested in existing homes, but rather wanted to build new, large homes on the lots. A \textit{Washington Post} report noted that “the

\textsuperscript{1046} Annie Gowen, “Property Value Clouds its Future: Residents of a Historic Cooperative in Arlington May Sell to Developers” \textit{The Washington Post}, May 26, 2005. In this circumstance northern Virginia is defined as Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Fauquier, Clarke, and Warren counties. Lisa A. Sturtevant, “The Northern Virginia Housing Market... Like No Other” (Presentation, George Mason University, Center for Regional Analysis, Fairfax, 2011). <http://cra.gmu.edu/pdfs/studies_reports_presentations/The_Northern_Virginia_Housing_Market_Like_No_Other.pdf>
trappings of modern Arlington now fill swaths of land once dotted by two-story brick houses and wood-frame bungalows that once characterized Green Valley and Arlington’s other historically black neighborhoods. Hall’s Hill resident Lillian Ambers’ home, where she had lived since the late-1920s, was demolished around 2014. “No the house I grew up in is no longer there,” she lamented, “the old house was torn down and the new house was put up there.” These building patterns were common throughout Arlington and not merely its black neighborhoods. The majority-white Barcroft community began seeing these kinds of building changes as early as the 1970s as older homes, especially multi-family housing units, were torn down to make room for new, larger, single family homes. In-fill housing between existing homes was also a major trend. This building technique squeezes homes onto increasingly smaller lots, cutting down on green space and sometimes leading to non-aesthetically pleasing disparities amongst homes.

While these patterns were not isolated to Arlington’s black neighborhoods, the realities of what this construction looked like were divergent between black and white neighborhoods. For example, while both Barcroft and Hall’s Hill experienced loss of older homes and in-fill housing, in Barcroft builders attempted to surround existing homes with housing that was architecturally compatible. Near older homes brick buildings with mansard roofs were constructed, blending modern and traditional

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1048 Lillian Ambers, interview by Danielle Tope, February 3, 2004, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.
aesthetics. In contrast, in Hall’s Hill little to no effort was made to merge new homes into the existing nature of the neighborhood. Additionally, these homes had ever rising price tags. Previously planners protested architectural inconsistencies in Arlington’s black communities as a way to undermine their stability and continued presence using the allegedly color-blind critiques of zoning and planning legislation. But complaints were absent once the price points of the homes rose and the builders and buyers of the homes ceased to be exclusively African American. Residents from within the communities protested these changes to the built environment. Green Valley resident and community activist John Robinson, Jr. complained “some of these corners don’t even look like they’re part of the community anymore.”

Robinson argued that “we need to find a way of making sure this new development doesn’t overrun the old.”

In the 1990s Green Valley attempted to resist and counteract these changes by participating in a county revitalization plan that targeted the community’s social and physical needs to prevent the kind of deterioration that makes communities vulnerable to gentrification. At one meeting about potential community changes “dozens of [Green Valley] residents showed up to discuss their concerns about the development.” A County Board official noted that it was “the most highly attended meeting” in months.

The Hall’s Hill community called out these new buildings and building types as a

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potential threat to the neighborhood they would like to combat in their updated Neighborhood Conservation Plan in 1990. Similarly, Green Valley’s updated Neighborhood Conservation Plan targeted not only community wide needs, but also the need to set aside funds to help maintain individual properties so that older homes would not be lost. Though not always successful, this program has helped residents improve and maintain their homes.

Figure 47
New housing and gentrification during the 1990s and 2000s greatly changed the character of the built environment in Arlington’s black communities. The above images from the Hall’s Hill neighborhood highlight some of these changes. The first two images left-to-right show the inconsistency in housing type and design between older and newer homes. In the first image on the left, a modern home stands in contrast to its four-square neighbor. The narrow design of the new house is a result of in-fill building techniques which built new homes on small lots between existing homes. The second image in the center shows the inconsistency between older, modest homes and new ‘McMansion’ designs. In the third photo on the right, the smaller home from the center image has been demolished and replaced with a large home that uses more of the lot, removing green space. Arlington County Government, *High View Park Neighborhood Conservation Plan*, by Evelyn Bell, Darnell Carpenter, Daphine Ruffner, Inez Waynes, Frank Wilson, and Sherri Young, (Virginia, January 1992).

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Final Thoughts

It is not yet certain whether Arlington’s three anchor black communities will be able to resist the tides of gentrification as they resisted similar threats in the past. Most recently, the Carver Homes cooperative that was constructed in Johnson’s Hill during World War Two suffered the same fate as the Dunbar Homes. The development was razed in 2016 to make way for luxury town homes. But despite these losses there is an increasing urge to recognize Arlington’s black community. In 2015 the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) worked to add recognition of Freedman’s Village back into the landscape of suburban Arlington by naming a bridge in honor of the black community.\(^{1054}\) VDOT Project manager Christiana Briganti-Dunn explained that “we wanted to pay respect to the local significance of Freedman’s Village. Four pylons will show the name and there will be medallions on the bridge replicating scenery in the village, taken from a Harper’s Weekly story from 1864.” This kind of work is important. Saundra Green of Hall’s Hill recognized that “there’s always a danger. You don’t want to lose your history.”\(^{1055}\) Local school teacher Jacqueline Coachman grew up in Green Valley and returned to the community in adulthood in the early 2000s. “The fact that I live in a community settled by freedmen is really important to me.”\(^{1056}\) Not just the historical roots of the community but her personal ties to the area drew Coachman back

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\(^{1055}\) Ms. Saundra Green, interview by Kevin Carney, November 20, 2003, Hall’s Hill Oral History Project, CLH.

to Green Valley. “It’s been important for me to come back here, largely because of my love for what my grandparents did to get and hold onto this land.” Coachman returned to the same shotgun-style home her family has occupied since the early twentieth century.

The next generation of African American residents of Arlington’s three anchor black communities continues to work to make their communities vibrant places to live. Green Valley native Charles P. Monroe became an Arlington County Board Member in 2003, continuing his family’s legacy of service. In 2002 N’Dri Sligh entered public school in Arlington, County. N’Dri was the great-grandson of Ethel Thompson, grandson of Clarissa Thompson, and son of Tammy Sligh. He recalled learning about Arlington’s school integration story and being proud to see “a picture of Aunt Gloria… on a poster that had been put up for ‘Black History’ month.” Clarissa wondered “What would Ethel think?” of this historic moment. She had passed away two years before in 2000. With luck, determination, and continued use of evolving community institutions, the next generation of residents will continue to work to keep Hall’s Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley from losing their identities and help them continue to be an important part of Arlington County.

Whether or not they are able to continue, Arlington’s African American community development expands our understanding of what constitutes a suburb. As we have seen Arlington’s suburban environment not only included African Americans, but

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was profoundly shaped by their presence. Green Valley and Hall’s Hill both existed as transitional communities as Arlington emerged from rural hinterland to suburban enclave. Additionally, Arlington’s first entirely pre-planned community built to adhere to then-contemporary suburban standards was the all-black Freedman’s Village community.

Looking at Arlington’s long development during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries together shows how suburban visions changed over time. As Arlington transitioned from suburban villages to a contiguous suburban environment Arlington’s black communities of all kinds shaped this development, from the working class communities like Queen City, to the middle class communities, like Butler-Holmes and Johnson’s Hill. In response to these varying visions the built environment changed to reflect variations in building trends, current realities, and future aspirations.

Throughout the establishment of Arlington’s suburban environment the rise of Jim Crow society meant that Arlington’s development played out at a time of evolving racial segregation. Local, state, and federal laws, developer practices, and lending policies all came together to create increasingly restrictive residential segregation. These developments prevented Arlington’s black neighborhoods from expanding, led to the end of black enclaves and the loss of several black communities, and severely restricted residential choice for African Americans. As a result of these trends only the three African American communities of Hall’s Hill, Johnson’s Hill, and Green Valley were able to survive into the mid-twentieth century. And these black neighborhoods became increasingly dense with increased subdivision and the rise of multi-family housing. But at the same time residential segregation helped to strengthen community institutions, create
well defined neighborhoods, and spurred an active populace to demand the community improvements they were entitled to.

This suburban development and residential segregation was profoundly affected by Arlington’s proximity to Washington, D.C. The federal city provided blue- and white-collar employment for African Americans, creating a unique employment type not available to most southern blacks. This helped Arlington’s black community to create a strong middle class core. However, Arlington’s proximity to federal employment also resulted in huge influxes of white workers. The communities created by and for these individuals physically encroached on and sometimes pushed out Arlington’s black neighborhoods. At the same time, large portions of Arlington were physically occupied and controlled by the federal government. This occupation led to the destruction of several black neighborhoods, including Freedman’s Village, Queen City, and East Arlington. Of course Arlington is also affected by those federal policies which impacted the entire country during this time, such as FHA lending policies. In the county, the FHA worked closely with developer Gustave Ring to create the Colonial Village garden apartments which served as a “model for subsequent FHA-insured projects.”

The proximity of the federal city, the government’s physical occupation of the county, as well as the federal policies which created suburban subsidies, loans, and tax policies not only for Arlington, but nationwide, meant that Arlington’s development had an exceptional relationship to federal authority.

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NARA: National Archives, Washington, D.C.
SC&A: George Mason University: Special Collections and Archives, Fairfax, Virginia
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VHS: Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

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BIOGRAPHY

Lindsey Bestebreurtje graduated from Centreville High School in Clifton, Virginia in 2004. She received her Bachelor of Arts from The College of William and Mary in Virginia in 2008 with a double major in History and Government. Since 2010 she has been employed as a curator, historian, researcher, and museum educator for diverse organizations, including the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, the National Park Service, the Historic American Landscape Survey, George Mason University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, and the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media. She received her Master of Arts in Public/Applied History from George Mason University in 2011.