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MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD: POWER AND CITIZENSHIP IN CENTRAL
FLORIDA'S BLACK COMMUNITIES

by

GRAMOND MCPHERSON
B.A. Oakwood University, 2014

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the impacts of government policies on community mobilization in Orlando's Parramore neighborhood and the all-black town of Eatonville in Central Florida. The scope of this thesis covers the history of both communities from their formation in the 1880s to the end of the twentieth century. This research reveals the relationships between the predominantly black residents of Parramore and Eatonville and the largely white government officials over the development and maintenance of each community. By understanding the social creation of both communities during the era of Jim Crow, this thesis reveals the differing levels of power each community possessed that would impact their ability to turn their defined black spaces into black places. Moving forward, each community had to adjust to the impacts of integration that weakened the communal bonds that helped the community endure Jim Crow. However, in detailing the rise of citizen activism in the post-World War II period, the theory of infrastructural citizenship shapes this thesis in revealing how black residents in Parramore and Eatonville exercised their rights as citizens in making their voices heard surrounding various infrastructural changes. While their efforts did not always achieve their ultimate goals, it forced decision makers to anticipate and accommodate the opinions of the residents impacted by these decisions. This thesis uses historical analysis to place Parramore and Eatonville within the broader social, political, and economic contexts of events occurring in Florida, the American South and the country at large.

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On a personal note, I am thankful for my family, particularly my parents, George and Gloria McPherson who have offered their love and support throughout my academic career. Special shout-out to my church family, the Shiloh Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ozark, Alabama for their support and prayers. Finally, I thank God in providing me the wisdom, energy, and determination to make it through day by day.

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INTRODUCTION

Black communities in the United States during the late nineteenth century developed as a result of segregation and discrimination during this era or in response to these factors. Often the difference lay in the power of black residents to freely choose their own spaces and the level of restrictions they faced from white institutional powers. In future years, the effectiveness of black residents to utilize their power would contribute to their successes and failures in shaping their communities. Through examining the impacts of government policies on community mobilization, this thesis will seek to demonstrate the power of black residents to exercise their rights as citizens within their communities and their efforts to develop and preserve their communities for the future. In focusing on two of Central Florida's black communities, Orlando's predominately black Parramore neighborhood and the all-black town of Eatonville, this thesis will examine the history from their creation to the end of the twentieth century within the broader social, political, and economic contexts on the local, state and federal level.

Like many black communities across the country, Parramore developed in the 1880s as the defined space that white city and property owners restricted for black residents. Located across from downtown Orlando, the area since the 1980s has been referred to as Parramore, named after James B. Parramore, a former Confederate captain who platted land in the area and who later served as the mayor of Orlando from 1897 to 1902.¹ However, throughout its history, portions of the neighborhood have been referred by other names such as Black Bottom,

¹ The modern boundaries of Parramore are Orange Blossom Trail to the west, Colonial Drive (State Road 50) to the north, Gore Street to the south, and Interstate 4 to the east. Kelly Brewington and Melissa Harris, "An Identity Uprooted," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 14, 2003; Joy Wallace Dickinson, "Exploring the Path to Parramore's Past," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 25, 2005.

Pepperhill and most significantly Callahan, named in 1947 after the death of Jerry Callahan, a prominent black community doctor. In recent decades, the city classifies Parramore into three sections, Lake Dot, Callahan, and Holden-Parramore.² As the home of black Orlando and isolated from basic services by whites during the era of segregation, black residents developed Parramore through the construction of their homes, schools, and churches, which helped the community endure in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In Eatonville, also founded in the 1880s, black residents in the area possessed the power to voluntarily choose to separate themselves in forming an all-black town for blacks, governed by blacks.³ Located a few miles north of Orlando and west of the city of Maitland, Eatonville is named after Josiah Eaton, a former Union captain who settled in Maitland, who provided the acres of land that became Eatonville.⁴ In an era of segregation, as an all-black town governed by blacks, residents possessed greater control than communities like Parramore in developing their community. Central to this power in the early years of the town's history involved the aspiration for homeownership.⁵ Similar to Parramore, Eatonville developed as residents constructed their homes, schools, and churches in advocating self-help and uplift.

Both communities had to adjust to the impacts of integration including expanding infrastructure and weakened communal ties resulting in the exodus of blacks from Parramore and the stagnation of Eatonville's population. In Parramore, the remnant of largely lower-income

² Yielding & Provost, "Callahan Holden-Parramore Lake Dot Historic and Architectural Survey," November 1988, 8, 11–13; Benjamin D. Brotemarkle, *Beyond the Theme Parks: Exploring Central Florida* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1999), 20.

³ Frank M. Otey, *Eatonville, Florida: A Brief History of One of America's First Freedmen's Towns* (Winter Park, FL: Four-G Pub, 1989), iii.

⁴ Felicia Lee, "Road Plan Bypasses Black Pride, City Says," *Miami Herald*, April 11, 1988.

⁵ Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 16.

renters in Parramore faced significant restrictions on their ability to shape their community through the decisions of mostly white city officials and private citizens. Yet while their efforts of resistance did not always succeed, Parramore residents did not act passively in the face of these infrastructural changes in making their voices heard on issues that would impact their community. Similarly, Eatonville would face challenges from the decisions of mostly white Orange County officials that would impact their ability to protect and preserve their cultural heritage. Yet, like Parramore, Eatonville residents made their voices heard in resisting various infrastructural threats and even having success in turning their victory into an opportunity to promote the cultural history of the town.

Understanding the dynamics of race and political power within urban society is complicated. Racism and discrimination are central to understanding the social issues that continue to plague black communities like Parramore and Eatonville. This thesis will seek to answer the questions of the impacts of government policies on black communities and the rise of citizen activism that helped residents engaged in principles of infrastructural citizenship to protect their communities. Thus, this thesis will focus on the racial and economic policies of infrastructure in Parramore and Eatonville from the late nineteenth century at their creation to the end of the twentieth century.

Historiography

As historians have contributed to the scholarship of the city, urban history as a discipline developed in the early twentieth century. During their lifetimes, early scholars like Arthur Schlesinger in a 1940 essay “The City in American History” argued for the increasing need to study the city as distinctions between rural and urban areas began to disappear across the

country.⁶ Yet, in the early twentieth century, historians largely ignored the use of social sciences in favor of traditional Rankean historical methodology that narrowly focused on political and institutional issues rather than social issues within cities.⁷ Yet the social issues of the 1960s such as civil rights for African Americans saw historians begin to embrace interdisciplinary studies of cities. Stephan Thernstrom served as one of the early historians who broke away from traditional historical approaches by analyzing and studying the working classes of Newburyport, Massachusetts, and placing the town's social issues in a historical context. His book *Poverty and Progress* correlated in a historiographical shift in the 1960s that called for a greater historical emphasis on overlooked groups such as African Americans, women and the working class, leading a new generation of historians to utilize social sciences within a historical context.⁸

Black urban history's origins formed earlier than mainstream urban history with various sociological studies such as W.E.B. Dubois's 1899 book *The Philadelphia Negro* and St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton's 1945 book *Black Metropolis* which examined black life in Philadelphia and Chicago respectively. Yet, beginning in the mid-1960s, the black urban experience emerged into a legitimate historical research area, especially as a result of the Civil Rights Movement and urban riots during the 1960s. In producing various case studies of individual black urban centers, early historians chose to focus on the development of black communities between 1890 and 1940 and the role of the Great Migration to race relations in the

⁶ Arthur M. Schlesinger, "The City in American History," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 27, no. 1 (1940): 43, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1896571>.

⁷ Michael Frisch, "American Urban History as an Example of Recent Historiography," *History and Theory* 18, no. 3 (October 1979): 351, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2504535>.

⁸ Frisch, 356–60; Stephan Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964).

urban North.⁹ For instance, Gilbert Osofsky, in his book *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto*, studied black life in Harlem between 1890 and 1930 and black migration from the South before and after World War I. His book detailed the policies constructed by whites that saw Harlem transition from a white upper-middle-class neighborhood to a segregated ‘black ghetto’ to control New York’s black population.¹⁰

However, while most historians focused their attention on urban areas in the North such as New York, Chicago, and Detroit, a dearth of scholarship existed for urban cities in the South and West. In the late 1970s, Howard Rabinowitz’s *Race Relations in the Urban South* served as one of the first attempts by historians to give greater attention to the urban areas in the South. In using a sample of five capital cities in the South including Atlanta and Richmond, Rabinowitz in his book addressed race relations in the post-Civil War South up until 1890. In addressing race relations, he articulated the wave of rural blacks moving to Southern cities for housing and jobs correlating with white Southerners seeking to control the movement of blacks and keeping blacks in their place.¹¹ Yet, even into the late 1980s, few scholars took interest in black communities in the South and West, even as many of these cities had significant black populations.¹²

⁹ Kenneth L. Kusmer and Joe W. Trotter, eds., *African American Urban History since World War II*, 1st Edition (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 1–2; W.E.B. DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (New York: Schocken Books, 1899); St. Clair. Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1945).

¹⁰ Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem, the Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890-1930*, Second Edition (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996), ix.

¹¹ Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890*, New Edition (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), xxi–xxii, 3.

¹² Kusmer and Trotter, *African American Urban History since World War II*, 2.

Nevertheless, the early 1980s saw the historical shift from exclusively studying the pre-World War II era to transitioning to the post-war period. Historians focused on the Second Great Migration from the 1940s to the 1970s that saw not only the migration of blacks from the South to other regions of the country, but also the internal migration of blacks from rural to urban areas within the South.¹³ Arnold Hirsch's *Making the Second Ghetto* served as an early example of focusing on the urban centers from the 1940s forward. He focused on the impacts of urban renewal, expressway construction, desegregation, white flight, and other government policies in Chicago that helped accelerate the creation of a second ghetto in the expansion of black defined areas of cities. He argued that despite efforts by blacks to resist these changes, factors beyond their control helped to exacerbate the conditions in urban black communities.¹⁴ By the 1990s, Thomas Sugrue's *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* focuses on the deterioration of post-war Detroit and the origins of the urban crisis involving poverty and racial strife. Sugrue argues for the impacts and results of capitalism exacerbating the economic inequality that has continued to define Detroit, once a prosperous city due to the automobile industry and a prime destination for African Americans from the South. He uses Detroit as a model for a host of cities across the country that have become characterized by extreme segregation and spatial isolation.¹⁵

In seeking to close the historiographical gap of the urban South, historians began producing various works showing the impacts of policies in the post-World War II South.

¹³ James N. Gregory, "The Second Great Migration: A Historical Overview," in *African American Urban History since World War II*, ed. Kenneth L. Kusmer and Joe W. Trotter, 1st Edition (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 19–20.

¹⁴ Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago 1940-1960* (Chicago, Ill: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), viii, xv–xviii.

¹⁵ Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1996), xv, 3.

Christopher Silver and John Moeser's *The Separate City* uses Atlanta, Richmond, and Memphis as case studies to argue that the role of public policy initiatives such as education, housing, urban renewal and transportation helped fashion the separate city from the historic black communities in Southern cities similar to the developments in inner-city Chicago after 1940. They also detail the significance of the separate city to the increase of political activism of blacks in the urban South that helped facilitate cohesion and community identity, an important factor during the Civil Rights Movement.¹⁶ Ronald Bayor's *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta* details black responses to racially based policies such as urban renewal and highway expansion which impacted their communities. Bayor states how race can be used as an interpretive tool to help in understanding American city development.¹⁷ These works in the 1980s and 1990s largely resulted from decades of viewing firsthand the impacts of urban policies and their effects on the growth, development, and deterioration of various black communities.

Connected to black urban history, particularly in Florida, historians by the 1980s began to focus on the Sunbelt. Kevin Phillips, a political strategist in his 1969 book *The Emerging Republican Majority*, coined the term in addressing the opportunity for the Republican Party to incorporate a new conservative coalition of white suburban voters for the party in Southern and Western states.¹⁸ However, historians have utilized the Sunbelt as a synonym for the rapid economic and urban development within the South and West in contrast to the decline of manufacturing and industries in the Northeast and Midwest which has been categorized as the

¹⁶ Christopher Silver and John V. Moeser, *The Separate City: Black Communities in the Urban South, 1940-1968* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 7–10.

¹⁷ Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), xiv–xv.

¹⁸ Kevin P. Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority*, First Edition (New Rochelle, N.Y: Arlington House, 1969), 38–39.

Rustbelt.¹⁹ For some historians, the Sunbelt became a new way to study the South. David R. Goldfield's *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers* takes a long historical approach in studying the South's history from the establishment of the Chesapeake colony to 1980. In covering the modern South, Goldfield states the three features of a rural lifestyle, race and a colonial economy have defined the distinctiveness of Southern cities despite urbanization, industrialization or economic development. As the book title suggests, he states that "the worlds of the cotton field and of the skyscraper are essentially the same" and the South remains the only region whose past is a major part of its present.²⁰

In the late twentieth century, historians also began giving special attention to the rise of suburbia. Especially relevant in the Sunbelt, urban historians began focusing on metropolitan areas rather than focusing solely on a large central city and incorporating a variety of cities in the South and West.²¹ Carl Abbott's *The New Urban America* gives attention to the development of the Sunbelt both economically and demographically. In discussing the impacts of urban renewal and white flight, and the rapid growth within the Sunbelt, Abbot details the relationships and growing tensions between governments of the largely white suburbia and the largely black and other ethnic minority populations in the central cities within the scope of metropolitan politics.²²

¹⁹ Additionally, the term also references the geographic location in the warmest regions of the country in states like California, Arizona, Texas, and Florida that have seen significant migration from the Midwest and Northeast since World War II. Since Phillips introduced the term, historians have debated the concept of the Sunbelt, particularly in the South regarding whether the entire region or select states or cities should be classified by the definition. Yet, generally, the term seeks to explain the emergence of the South and West becoming more urban, developed and prosperous. David R. Goldfield, "The Rise of the Sunbelt: Urbanization and Industrialization," in *A Companion to the American South*, ed. John B. Boles (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002), 474; Gregory, "The Second Great Migration: A Historical Overview," 21.

²⁰ David R. Goldfield, *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region, 1607-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 3-9, 11.

²¹ Gregory, "The Second Great Migration: A Historical Overview," 4.

²² Carl Abbott, *The New Urban America: Growth and Politics in Sunbelt Cities, Revised Edition*, 2nd edition (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 9.

Similarly, Bruce Schulman's *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt* focuses on the transformation of the South between 1938 and 1980 in highlighting the role of the federal government helping to facilitate this transformation. He argued that the Sunbelt is an attempt by public officials and political commentators to try to pin the hopes of the South on federal intervention despite the uneven results in the region. He highlights the theme of "place over people" concerning how leaders often designed federal policies to uplift poor places without necessarily uplifting poor people, creating a paradox of the coexistence of poverty and prosperity.²³

In recent decades, historians have focused on select Sunbelt cities such as Los Angeles, Houston, Atlanta, and Miami for their economic and political importance nationally. Matthew Lassiter, in addressing Atlanta, examines the emergence of the center-right conservative movement that impacted regional and national politics. He focuses on the tense relationships between the Silent Majority, identified as white Southerners within the newly forming suburbs, and blacks fighting to gain civil and political rights in America.²⁴ Lastly, N.D.B. Connolly focuses on Miami. Connolly focuses on how Miami residents (black, white, immigrants, and indigenous) invested in the racial apartheid during Jim Crow in examining South Florida's real estate industry. While the book largely focuses on pre-Sunbelt Miami, the applications have current ramifications as white and black property owners used segregation and white supremacy to govern society and increase economic growth, which survived even beyond the Civil Rights Movement, making residential segregation more concrete in Miami.²⁵

²³ Bruce J. Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Economic Development, and the Transformation of the South 1938–1980* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 1994), xii, xiv, 175.

²⁴ Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 3–4.

²⁵ N. D. B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 3–4.

As a distinct discipline, black urban history has diversified to enhance the study of the South in focusing on individuals within the city rather than solely focusing on the city itself. Essential to this evolution is the interdisciplinary collaboration between historians, social scientists and other disciplines in addressing issues like racial segregation and economic inequality in a historical context. As various works have incorporated popular cities like New York, Chicago, Atlanta, and Miami, there is still a need to focus on more diverse cities with less significantly known black communities. As every black community has its own unique story, this thesis will seek to contribute to the significance of two black communities in Central Florida.

While the Orlando area is known for tourism, technological innovation, and prosperity, the history of black communities including stories of triumphs and tragedies and the challenges that black residents in Central Florida have faced historically has been less emphasized. Orlando's Parramore neighborhood is relevant to this historiography as a black community formed to contain Orlando's black population and especially since World War II has faced the impacts of public policies upon its residents and within the community. For Eatonville, while the all-black town may not fit the traditional definition for an urban area, with the increased urbanization of Orange County since the 1940s, the town has been indirectly and directly impacted by urban policies in its development. While Parramore and Eatonville still face questions over what the future holds, this thesis seeks to enhance black urban studies in demonstrating black mobilization and ordinary residents' efforts to influence and impact developments in their communities. Overall, this thesis seeks to place Parramore and Eatonville in the historical context of trends in other black communities across the country.

Methodology

An understanding of racial politics is central to identifying key issues that have plagued black communities like Parramore and Eatonville. This thesis will utilize the theories of space and place to show the creation and development of Parramore and Eatonville. Henry Lefebvre, a French philosopher, believed that every society produces their own spaces and that space can be understood as perceived (physical space), conceived (mental space) and lived directly (social space).²⁶ Lefebvre also shows how the dominant discourse uses place and space to control those within a given space.²⁷ In linking space to place, Yi-Fu Tuan, a scholar of humanistic geography, identifies that space and place require one another for definition as spaces became places as individuals become more acquainted and add value to a space.²⁸ Similarly, in linking to Lefebvre's social space, geographer Tim Cresswell argues that social spaces or places are socially constructed by individuals. He also states that place serves as a way of "seeing, knowing and understanding the world."²⁹

In defining space as something abstract or theoretical, this thesis will argue for the social creation of black spaces in an era where whites sought to control black mobility. For Parramore,

²⁶ Lefebvre identifies three different ways to understand space. First, space is perceived meaning space emerges out of spatial practices of everyday routines and experiences that install specific social spaces. Second, space is conceived which involves representations of space or how space is imagined by planners and architects. Third, space is lived directly through associated images and symbols along with its inhabitants and users. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, 1st ed. (Cambridge, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991), 31, 38–39; Sherene Razack, "When Space Becomes Race," in *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*, ed. Sherene Razack (Toronto: Between The Lines, 2002), 8–9; Stuart Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre* (London: Continuum, 2004), 190.

²⁷ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 26.

²⁸ Yi-Fu Tuan defines humanistic geography as "reflect[ing] upon geographical phenomena with the ultimate purpose of achieving a better understanding of man and his condition." Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 5–6; Yi-Fu Tuan, "Humanistic Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66, no. 2 (June 1976): 266, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2562469>.

²⁹ Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2004), 11–12, 30; Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 30.

this involves placing into context the actions of government officials and private citizens, generally white, who sought to maintain order and control over the actions of black Parramore residents. For Eatonville, these principles will show how residents in the all-black town have sought to maintain control of their space as various outside influences have threatened their continued existence. However, this thesis will define the theory of place as space that gains meaning through daily interactions by residents. As created black spaces become black places, this thesis will show that despite limitations, black residents in Parramore and Eatonville played a significant role in the development and maintenance of their communities.

Most importantly, the theory of infrastructural citizenship will also shape this thesis. The theory is drawn from the research of urban historian Kyle Shelton, who studies transportation debates in metropolitan Houston involving white, black and Hispanic communities during the 1970s. Shelton's work is further influenced by Nikhil Anand's work on citizenship in Mumbai, India enabled by the social and material claims by residents to the city's water infrastructure. Additionally, Shelton's work is influenced by James C. Scott's concept of infrapolitics by subordinate groups in resisting more powerful entities.³⁰ Shelton states that while infrastructural citizenship can be applied to events prior to the 1940s, the combination of empowered citizens and increased redevelopments in American cities after 1945 resulted in contentious metropolitan infrastructural debates. Increased citizen activism by those on both the liberal and conservative

³⁰ Kyle Shelton, "Building a Better Houston Highways, Neighborhoods, and Infrastructural Citizenship in the 1970s," *Journal of Urban History* 43, no. 4 (October 2015): 19, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144215611095>; Nikhil Anand, "PRESSURE: The PoliTechnics of Water Supply in Mumbai," *Cultural Anthropology* 26, no. 4 (November 1, 2011): 545, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2011.01111.x>; James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 19.

side of the political spectrum contributed to greater citizen participation in various infrastructural debates and planning.³¹

This thesis will define infrastructural citizenship as the ability of ordinary residents to influence and affect change within their communities along with the challenges residents face in carrying out their agendas. The use of this term will show how black Parramore and Eatonville residents mobilized in response to government policies and proposed infrastructures they perceived will negatively impact their communities. While Shelton's research largely concentrates on the impacts of transportation on communities, this thesis will expand in covering other infrastructural changes caused by increased urbanization that impact residents' ability to shape their communities. This thesis will utilize a wide range of primary sources such as local newspapers, government minutes and community documents along with a wealth of scholarly secondary sources to contribute to the historiography of black urban history, particularly in the South. While Parramore and Eatonville have similar circumstances with other urban black communities across the country, both communities have a unique story to share within this scholarship.

Chapter Outlines

Because this thesis concerns the actions of individuals and the effects of government policies on Parramore and Eatonville, the organization of this thesis is best presented topically in chronological order. This will allow the reader to move through the flow of Parramore and Eatonville's history from their foundation to the contemporary era.

³¹ Kyle Shelton, *Power Moves: Transportation, Politics, and Development in Houston* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2017), 7.

Chapter One explores the history of Jim Crow and its role in the development of the historic black communities of Parramore and Eatonville in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While Parramore and Eatonville differed in their levels of autonomy within a white-dominated society, black residents played an active role in constructing and shaping their communities by building various community institutions. This chapter will place both communities in the context of historical events on the local, state, and federal levels, particularly voting disfranchisement and residential segregation.

Chapter Two examines Parramore in the latter half of the twentieth century. Parramore would be impacted by urban policies on the federal, state and local levels that would contribute to the weakening of the community's core institutions and the advancement of the city at their expense. Especially, since the 1940s, the community has experienced various infrastructural changes such as the East-West Expressway and the Orlando Arena. As black residents began moving away from Parramore, city officials and private investors envisioned the neighborhood's strategic location for further development of downtown Orlando. Yet the remnant of mostly lower-income renters continued to assert themselves as political actors in employing infrastructural citizenship in advocating for greater input over issues that affected their neighborhood.

Chapter Three examines Eatonville in the latter half of the twentieth century. With the growth of Orange County, Eatonville would engage in battles between the future advancement of the area versus preserving the history of the town. The chapter will particularly highlight the success of the grassroots organization, the Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community (P.E.C.) in engaging in principles of infrastructural citizenship to successfully resist the widening

of Kennedy Boulevard through Eatonville which they believed threatened the future of the town. In turn, the P.E.C. would use the opportunity to promote the town's history through cultural awareness.

CHAPTER ONE: BLACK AUTONOMY IN JIM CROW SPACES

Historiography of Jim Crow

The question of the origins of Jim Crow and its effects on African Americans has produced numerous books and articles. The historiography of segregation has evolved over time from the early twentieth century to the present. During the 1950s, C. Vann Woodward argued from a legal perspective of the origins of Jim Crow occurring with the passage of legislation in the 1890s and 1900s enforcing racial segregation between whites and blacks.¹ However, historians, such as Howard Rabinowitz, with newer evidence in the 1960s and 1970s argued for the transition from de facto segregation to de jure segregation existing prior to the legal enforcement of Jim Crow beginning in the 1890s. Woodward even modified his earlier position to account for this newer scholarship.²

Historians have also differed on the modernity of segregation. Rabinowitz argues for the continuity of segregation with the exclusion of blacks from public facilities during the antebellum period as increased black militancy and resistance during the 1890s to white supremacy contributed to the enforcement of legal segregation by whites. Rabinowitz viewed segregation initially as progressive as black leadership during Reconstruction accepted and, in some cases, welcomed the rise of segregated schools, churches, hospitals and other amenities they previously had been excluded from in hopes they would be equal.³ On the other hand,

¹ The origin of the term Jim Crow applied to African Americans came from minstrel shows popularized in the early 1800s. The term is associated with Thomas D. Rice, who wrote a song and dance called Jim Crow in 1832, and the term became an adjective by 1838. The term Jim Crow law first appeared in the *Dictionary of American English* in 1904, but writers in the 1890s used the expression also. C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, Third Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), xiv, 4–7.

² Rabinowitz, *Race Relations*, xii–xiv; Woodward, *The Strange Career*, x.

³ Rabinowitz, *Race Relations*, xiv–xv.

Edward Ayers argued for a discontinuity of segregation of the New South to the racism of the antebellum period. Particularly with the railroad, Ayers argues that “segregation grew out of concrete situations, out of technological, demographic, economic, and political changes that had unforeseen and often unintended social consequences.”⁴ While Ayers’ argument carries validity, the evolution of racial separation from the exclusion of blacks to segregation by Rabinowitz allows for continuities between the Old and New South concerning race relations.

In the twenty-first century, historians have written about African Americans in private and public spaces. Robert Cassanello argues that marginalized blacks in segregated Jacksonville sought to become visible in public spaces through the use of segregated spaces to “foster a consensus about the state of race relations, explore the meaning of black citizenship, and develop strategies to combat white supremacy.”⁵ N.D.B. Connolly, focusing on land real estate in South Florida, argues that certain aspects of Jim Crow’s culture such as minimizing white Americans’ discomfort, protecting property owners’ political power, and generating revenue from poorer residents have become solidified in America’s culture today, even by blacks themselves. Lastly, Stephen Berrey, in focusing on Jim Crow Mississippi, argues that Jim Crow and the meaning of whiteness and blackness constantly remained “in the process of being made, unmade, and remade” through interactions between blacks and whites in public spaces.⁶ These recent works emphasize an active and engaged black populace navigating the world of Jim Crow spaces.

⁴ Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction*, 15th Anniversary (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 143–45.

⁵ Robert Cassanello, *To Render Invisible: Jim Crow and Public Life in New South Jacksonville* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2013), 2–5.

⁶ Connolly, *A World More Concrete*, 3–4; Stephen A. Berrey, *The Jim Crow Routine: Everyday Performances of Race, Civil Rights, and Segregation in Mississippi* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 3–4.

This chapter will first place the creation of the black communities of Parramore and then Eatonville in the historical context of the Jim Crow era. After the Civil War, African Americans sought to exercise their newly obtained citizenship that they hoped would afford them respect, protection, political and civil rights. Yet, Jim Crow personified the preservation of white supremacy through social separation and utilizing laws, customs and physical force to extend white political and economic power at the expense of equal rights for blacks.⁷ Like many states, legal segregation did not develop overnight in post-Reconstruction Florida and arose in response to a new generation of blacks born into freedom who did not easily conform to traditional customs of social control by whites.⁸

Jim Crow encompassed virtually every aspect of society between whites and blacks with rulings such as the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case affirming the constitutionality of ‘separate but equal’ facilities for whites and blacks like public transportation, schools, and businesses.⁹ Limited both by race and economics, Jim Crow shaped the geography of urban America in limiting black mobility, consequences that still impact society presently.¹⁰ Additionally, the disfranchisement of the black vote restricted their political voice in the American democratic

⁷ The Thirteenth Amendment legally acknowledged the personhood of blacks in ending slavery, the Fourteenth defined the qualifications of American citizenship for present and future natural and foreign-born blacks, and the Fifteenth culminated in the ability (for black men initially) to exercise this new citizenship through the right to vote. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1; Stephen A. Berrey, *The Jim Crow Routine: Everyday Performances of Race, Civil Rights, and Segregation in Mississippi* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 2–3; Lisa Crooms-Robinson, “The United States Constitution and the Struggle for African American Citizenship: An Overview,” in *The Oxford Handbook of African American Citizenship, 1865-Present*, ed. Henry Louis Gates et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 519–21.

⁸ Wali R. Kharif, “Black Reaction to Segregation and Discrimination in Post-Reconstruction Florida,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (1985): 161, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30146655>; Rabinowitz, *Race Relations*, 27–28.

⁹ Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 230–34, 243; Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Pantheon Pages, 1998), 23.

¹⁰ Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 235.

process. Yet, despite the circumstances caused by customary and then legally enforced racial segregation, black residents in Parramore and Eatonville constructed their own distinct communities in turning defined black spaces into black places that allowed them to not only withstand but even challenge Jim Crow.

Debate on Black Autonomy

Scholars have engaged in numerous debates surrounding how African Americans demonstrated their levels of autonomy and agency in the midst of segregation and discrimination.¹¹ Anthropologist James C. Scott argues that ‘hidden transcripts’ —a dissident political culture— are used by oppressed groups to challenge those in power, despite appearances of consent. Historian Robin D.G. Kelley utilized Scott’s thesis of infrapolitics to argue that working-class blacks used their hidden social and cultural world to challenge racism and white supremacy under Jim Crow.¹² On the other hand, historians Kenneth Goings and Gerald Smith have countered Kelley’s argument by arguing that working-class blacks in Memphis utilized unhidden transcripts in addition to hidden transcripts to openly challenge Jim Crow. Goings and Smith provide the example of the increased migration of blacks openly challenging whites’ attempts to restrict their movement and keeping blacks in their place.¹³ Both

¹¹ In critiquing the ways that historians have studied agency within the New Social History, Walter Johnson is critical of the notion that scholars can give subjects of study (i.e. black slaves) agency. Instead, he argues that historians must understand agency as the subjects of study being the architects of their own actions versus the historians seeking to give subjects agency for purposes of goodwill. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations*, xv; Walter Johnson, “On Agency,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (Autumn 2003): 114–15, 119–20, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3790316>; Jessica Millward, “On Agency, Freedom, and the Boundaries of Slavery Studies,” no. 71 (Spring 2013): 194, <https://doi.org/10.1353/lt.2013.0021>.

¹² Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 183; Robin D.G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, And The Black Working Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 8, 36.

¹³ Kenneth W. Goings and Gerald L. Smith, “‘Unhidden’ Transcripts: Memphis and African American Agency, 1862-1920,” *Journal of Urban History* 21, no. 3 (March 1995): 376–77, 391, <https://doi.org/10.1177/009614429502100304>.

Cassanello and Berrey affirm the existence of overtly visible actions along with hidden resistance by black communities in Jacksonville and the state of Mississippi respectively.¹⁴

As W.E.B. DuBois described the double-consciousness of being both “an American [and] a Negro,” black residents in communities like Parramore and Eatonville possessed varying degrees of autonomy in establishing their homes, churches, businesses and other institutions, along with raising and educating their children in the promises of America. In their struggle against Jim Crow, residents through hard work and initiative, collective organizing, political protest, efforts of self-improvement, uplift, and endurance “made a way out of no way.”¹⁵ Within both communities, residents strategically utilized methods that openly and covertly challenged white supremacy to create better conditions for themselves under Jim Crow. Creating the modern meaning of blackness to counter whiteness in America, residents used their autonomy to turn Jim Crow spaces into black places.¹⁶

Geography in Jim Crow Florida

One of Jim Crow’s most significant consequences involved the deliberate actions of whites dictating where blacks could live and preventing the mixing of different races in residential areas. The connections between race, space, power, and mobility are evident in the

¹⁴ Cassanello, *To Render Invisible*, 6; Berrey, *Jim Crow Routine*, 14–15.

¹⁵ Bobo, in summarizing Frank Samson’s three essays in *The Oxford Handbook of African American Citizenship*, credits Samson with the phrase “made a way out of no way.” For more, see the *Oxford Handbook*. Lawrence D. Bobo, “An American Conundrum: Race, Sociology, And The African American Road to Citizenship,” in *The Oxford Handbook of African American Citizenship, 1865-Present*, ed. Henry Louis Gates et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 53; W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*, Second Edition (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Company, 1903), 3–4; Paul Ortiz, *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organizing and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920* (University of California Press, 2006), xv–xvi, xvii–xviii.

¹⁶ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 22.

creation of distinct white and black spaces in America.¹⁷ Still, this process differed from city to city. Ayers argues that the later a Southern city developed, the more likely that city would be segregated by race and the faster a Southern city grew, the faster that city became segregated.¹⁸ In an older Southern city like Charlotte, founded in 1768 and remaining modestly sized until World War II, residents did not immediately cluster into homogenous neighborhoods, as whites and blacks often lived side by side in the 1870s and 1880s. Even as late as the 1920s with neighborhoods clearly defined by race, black areas remained adjacent to white areas, resembling a multicolored quilt compared to Charlotte's current status of sectors largely defined by race.¹⁹

Yet, in Miami, residential segregation occurred immediately with the creation of Colored Town after the city's founding in 1896 as the city rapidly grew. After the construction of Henry Flagler's Royal Palms Hotel, Flagler, a wealthy industrialist, bought a separate plot of land for his black workers to build their own homes and churches of various denominations. These lots of houses in Colored Town, now Overtown, established the color line between white and black Miami as blacks crossed the line to work on the white side during the day before returning to their side at night. Orlando, founded twenty-one years earlier in 1875, shares in many of the characteristics of the creation of distinct black areas with the younger and faster growing city of Miami.²⁰

¹⁷ Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, 235; David Delaney, *Race, Place, and the Law, 1836-1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 9.

¹⁸ Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*, 67.

¹⁹ Thomas W Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 3, 14.

²⁰ Connolly, *A World More Concrete*, 20, 26; James C. Clark, *Orlando, Florida: A Brief History* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2013), 28.

In Central Florida, the process of creating distinct black communities began slowly after the Civil War. Prior to Parramore and Eatonville's founding in the 1880s, Orange County's already sparse population included even fewer black families with only 198 black residents out of 2,195 in 1870 and 1,023 residents out of 6,618 in 1880. As this small black populace sought to expand their citizenship in utilizing their social, economic, and political power to create a new society, whites in the county sought to preserve white supremacy.²¹ Orlando historian Eve Bacon tells a story of an election during Reconstruction in Orlando in which forty black men attempted to vote, but a local white man Jack Ramey whipped them out of town. While the authenticity of the story is debatable, it is used in the context of describing the lack of racial strife during Reconstruction as long as the small black population knew their place in society.²² William Wallace Harney, a native Midwestern who relocated to the county in 1869, viewed the few black families in the county as good citizens, but opposed any increase of black settlers as detrimental to whites' labor and quality of life in the county.²³ Even stronger, Dr. Z.H. Mason of Apopka and the vice president of the Orange County Immigration Society, declared Orange County to be "white man's country."²⁴

Yet, the arrival of railroads, like the South Florida Railroad in 1880, helped expand the cattle and citrus industries and contributed to the county's development and diversity in drawing

²¹ Bureau of the Census, *Eleventh Census: 1890*, Vol. 1 Part I (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), 13, 405. Ortiz, *Emancipation Betrayed*, 34.

²² Bacon does not provide any citation as to the source of this story. Eve Bacon, *Orlando: A Centennial History*, vol. 1 (Chuluota, Fla: The Mickler House, Publishers, 1975), 29.

²³ Harney wrote a series of letters published by *The Cincinnati Commercial* between 1870 and 1878 about his experiences since moving to Orange County. William S. Morgan V, *Pine Castle Anthology: The Collected Writings of Will Wallace Harney*. (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2010), 2, 6–7, 336, 403.

²⁴ Z. H. Mason, *A General Description of Orange County, Florida, Its Soil, Climate, Health, Productions, Resources, and Facilities of Transportation* (Orlando: Printed by Mahlon Gore, 1881), 17; James C. Clark, *Orlando, Florida: A Brief History* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2013), 34.

black and white migrants to the area. Orange County's black population grew proportionally with the white population, as black men labored in the railroad, citrus, lumber and turpentine industries while black women labored in tilling gardens and citrus groves or as domestic workers for wealthy whites.²⁵ White employers established various settlements in Orange County such as Georgetown near Sanford, Hannibal Square in Winter Park and Mead's Bottom and Johnson Town in Apopka for their black employees.²⁶ Around the early 1880s, James Magruder established Orlando's first permanent black settlement to house black laborers in southeast Orlando near a large sinkhole north of what is today Greenwood Cemetery. Various black families settled in this area named Jonestown after the first settlers, Sam and Penny Jones.²⁷

Establishment of Orlando's Black Community

In the creation of Orlando, black residents, despite not having direct input, influenced the geographic space that became Parramore. Before the legal ramifications of 'separate but equal' laws and policies of the 1890s, whites in the area already practiced conventions of separation by choosing to establish separate housing for their black employees.²⁸ Yet the labor that blacks in Orlando provided represented a limited form of autonomy. Although many blacks in the late 19th and early 20th centuries remained economically dependent on whites for employment, many

²⁵ Tana Mosier Porter, "Orange County," in *Historic Orange County: The Story of Orlando and Orange County*, by Tana Mosier Porter et al. (San Antonio: Historical Publishing Network, 2009), 14; Tana Mosier Porter, "Segregation and Desegregation in Parramore: Orlando's African American Community," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 82, no. 3 (Winter 2004): 292, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30149526>; Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 8; Clark, *Orlando, Florida*, 41–42.

²⁶ Prior to 1913, Orange County also consisted of modern-day Seminole County which included Sanford. Porter, "Segregation and Desegregation," 292; Porter, "Orange County," 10.

²⁷ Porter, "Segregation and Desegregation," 292–93; Tana Mosier Porter, "Orlando," in *Historic Orange County: The Story of Orlando and Orange County*, by Tana Mosier Porter et al. (San Antonio: Historical Publishing Network, 2009), 54; Barbara Knowles, "Vanishing Communities," in *Historic Orange County: The Story of Orlando and Orange County*, by Tana Mosier Porter et al. (San Antonio: Historical Publishing Network, 2009), 81.

²⁸ Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 124.

whites remained equally dependent on their black laborers, especially in agricultural work or as domestics. As many early black residents lived in Jonestown, white employers constructed housing in Parramore for their black employees. While still separate from whites, Parramore developed across the railroad tracks from their white employers as black laborers avoided the long and tiring walk to and from Jonestown.²⁹

W.R. O’Neal, an early pioneer of Orlando, highlights the role of black men and women to the early history of the city. He wrote:

The negroes who were here, were hard-working, capable men, who had the respect of the white people: who cleared the lands, felled the pine trees, built the houses, set out the groves, and served the people... They were a God-fearing, hard-working honest class of people. Their word was to be relied on. The service to be rendered was the best they had, without regard to hours or pay; from sun up to midnight, if necessary... The women were nurse-maids, cooks, laundresses. Many a sick room when there was not a trained nurse in all South Florida, was cared for by a colored many [sic].³⁰

In context, O’Neal, writing in 1938, compares the current generation of blacks in Orlando to those in early Orlando history in stating if the present black generation possessed the previously stated characteristics, the world would be a more comfortable place to live.³¹ While whites viewed these services as proof of blacks’ subservient status, early black residents played an unheralded role in the early history of Orlando.

Like Miami’s Overtown, Parramore developed from scattered rental housing units of black laborers working on the rail lines and orange groves west of downtown across the railroad tracks. Eventually, some black families established and built their own homes in the area. In the

²⁹ Porter, “Segregation and Desegregation,” 293.

³⁰ W.R. O’Neal, “Negroes Large Factor in Orlando’s History,” *Orlando Sentinel*, July 24, 1938.

³¹ O’Neal, “Negroes Large Factor.”

early 1880s, James B. Parramore platted land west of the railroad.³² By 1882, George Macy, a local blacksmith, commissioned Whildom Whildin to build the first black housing on West Central Avenue for his black workers. By 1886, Reverend Andrew Hooper expanded housing in the area by building several small cottages which became known as Hooper Quarters, north of Central Avenue.³³ Initially, this area north of Central Avenue and west of the railroad became known as Colored Town, though the area has undergone various names since then.³⁴

South of Colored Town, the area that became known as Holden-Parramore formed in the 1880s from land platted and houses built along Division Avenue, eventually stretching between Division and Parramore Avenues and Church and Carter Streets. Yet, unlike Colored Town and Jonestown, early city directories show a mixture of black and white residents in the Holden area who resided on Lime, Church, and Long Streets along with Division and Parramore Avenues. In the 1891 City Directory, a heavy concentration of black residents lived along Division Avenue as laborers and laundresses. Yet, early directories show that apart from Jonestown, most blacks in Orlando lived along or west of the railroad tracks from downtown. By the 1910s, the Holden-Parramore area became more exclusively black as newcomers replatted portions of the Holden area as they built additional housing in the western portion of the neighborhood. Unlike Colored

³² Kristin Larsen, "Harmonious Inequality? Zoning, Public Housing, and Orlando's Separate City, 1920-1945," *Journal of Planning History* 1, no. 2 (May 2002): 159–61, <https://doi.org/10.1177/153132001002003>; Porter, "Segregation and Desegregation," 293; Joy Wallace Dickinson, "Exploring the Path to Parramore's Past," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 25, 2005.

³³ LeRoy Argrett, *A History of the Black Community of Orlando, Florida* (Fort Bragg, CA: Cypress House Press, 1991), 21; Bacon, *Orlando Vol. 1*, 1:66; Porter, "Segregation and Desegregation," 293.

³⁴ Larsen, "Harmonious Inequality," 159; *1912 Orlando City Directory* (Orlando, FL: Orlando City Directory Publishing Company, 1912), 32; *A Guide to Orlando's Afro American Heritage* (Orlando, FL: Central Florida Society of Afro American Heritage, Inc., 1990), 5.

Town, residents owned most of the original housing as opposed to renting property, thus the Holden neighborhood would house many of Orlando's affluent black residents.³⁵

During Jim Crow, most black sections of established cities like Parramore spatially never became very large and in being surrounded by white areas, black communities faced limited room to expand.³⁶ Yet, despite having little influence in choosing the geographic location of Parramore, black residents used their limited degree of autonomy to develop their own distinct community within segregated society and soften the impact of Jim Crow. In response to Jim Crow, Leon Litwack argues that black residents in communities like Parramore created their own separate world through establishing their homes, businesses, churches, and schools. "This interior life, largely unknown and incomprehensible to whites, permitted black Southerners to survive and endure."³⁷ Additionally, Earl Lewis argues that as black political influence declined and cities enacted more restrictive laws and policies, blacks saw improvements in their home sphere as the most critical means of realizing the advancement of their race.³⁸

In Parramore, black residents established various institutions meant to survive the conditions of Jim Crow. The Gabriel Jones House, established in 1907, served as a rooming house for immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean. In 1924, the Booker T. Washington Library, housed in the St. John's Episcopal Church rectory, served Orlando's black community.

³⁵ The 1891 edition of the city directory details the name of each head of household, their occupation, and which side of the street they lived on. The directory also identifies residents along streets divided by the South Florida Railroad through downtown, listing their location in relation to the railroad. For areas outside of Colored Town and Jonestown, which even then are understood to be black areas, black residents are identified by the designation col'd. See the *Orlando City Directory 1912*, 28–29; Larsen, "Harmonious Inequality," 159–61, 170, 177n28; *A Guide to Orlando's Afro American Heritage*, 6.

³⁶ Kharif, "Black Reaction to Segregation," 170.

³⁷ Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, xvi.

³⁸ Earl Lewis, *In Their Own Interests: Race, Class and Power in Twentieth-Century Norfolk, Virginia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 22.

William Monroe Wells, a prominent black doctor, established the Wells' Built Hotel and Casino during the 1920s to provide lodging and entertainment for visiting blacks and locals in Orlando.³⁹ Additionally, the institutions of black churches and schools also proved important to black autonomy in Parramore in producing many of Parramore's leaders. Using limited forms of autonomy, black leaders and residents in Parramore sought to ensure the needs of their community gained attention, despite social, economic, and political restraints by whites. Serving as a black space mostly inaccessible to whites, churches gave a voice to the black community and served as meeting places for protesting and resisting Jim Crow. As blacks formed their own religious denominations independent of white control, Parramore residents established churches of various denominations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, beginning with Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Institutional Church in 1880.⁴⁰

In seeking to provide quality education to blacks in Orlando, leaders established a school known as Orlando Black in 1886 before relocating to Johnson Academy, named after principal Lymus Johnson in 1895. In 1912, new Johnson Academy principal L.C. Jones would initiate another site for a new school on land donated by his family. Upon its completion, the school became known as Jones High School in honor of the Jones family and initially served grades six through ten. Eventually, all remaining grades moved from the academy to Jones High as the school graduated its first 12th grade class in 1931. Increased black population by the 1930s saw the construction of Holden Street Elementary in 1935. During segregation, Parramore's Jones High along with Eatonville's Hungerford Normal and Industrial School offered the only

³⁹ Kevin M. McCarthy, *African American Sites in Florida* (Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press, Inc., 2007), 198–99.

⁴⁰ Berrey, *Jim Crow Routine*, 130; Argrett, *Black Community of Orlando*, 22, 25; Porter, "Segregation and Desegregation," 293.

continuous secondary education for blacks in Central Florida.⁴¹ Isolated from white institutions and limited in their political power, residents of Parramore utilized their degrees of agency to progress the community forward.

Black Autonomy Under Restraint in Orlando

Nevertheless, despite the institutions and community awareness that black residents developed in Parramore, whites still dominated and controlled the administration of the city.⁴² As early as the 1880s, a limited number of black residents appeared before the city council to petition and advocate for community and personal needs. For example, in 1884, a petition from black residents in the northwest portions of town asked the city to allow T.G. Gilbreath to be appointed as special policeman for their area, which the council referred to the Committee on Streets.⁴³ In 1892, John Shufton, the principal of Orlando's black school, petitioned the council for the need for additional rooms in the school along with supplies such as securing a flag and pole for the school to commemorate the Colombian celebration on October 21, 1892.⁴⁴ In 1924, black representatives asked permission to hold a circus for blacks earlier than previously established, which the city granted.⁴⁵ Still, black participation within the public sphere came

⁴¹ Officials constructed the Orlando Black School on the southwest corner of Garland Avenue and Church Street. Later, officials established Johnson Academy on the corner of Douglass Street and Chatham Avenue. Sometime after 1912, Douglass would be renamed Jefferson Street. The original Jones High, now the site of the Callahan Neighborhood Center, is located at the corner of Jefferson Street, Parramore Avenue, and Washington Street. Argrett, *Black Community of Orlando*, 30–32; McCarthy, *African American Sites in Florida*, 198; Jerrell H. Shofner, *Orlando: The City Beautiful* (Tulsa, OK: Continental Heritage Press, 1984), 162; *Orlando City Directory 1912*, 10.

⁴² Kharif, "Black Reaction to Segregation," 172.

⁴³ Orlando City Council, "August 22nd Minutes," August 22, 1884, 1.

⁴⁴ After a joint resolution approved on June 29, 1892, President Benjamin Harrison appointed October 21, 1892, to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus coming to America as a general holiday. Orlando City Council, "September 1st Minutes," September 1, 1892, 2; Orlando City Council, "October 10th Minutes," October 10, 1892, 4; *Public Papers and Address of Benjamin Harrison* (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1893), 244.

⁴⁵ Orlando City Council, "November 8th Minutes," November 8, 1924, 131.

more from whites granting an audience to hear black concerns than blacks having accessibility to the public sphere. For instance, Shufton became a prominent black voice in Orlando for accommodation in blacks abandoning their quest for political power in seeking to prevent further conflict with whites and to maintain permanent peace between whites and blacks.⁴⁶

Like other blacks across the South, residents in Parramore struggled in their ability to have complete autonomy, especially concerning having their civic needs addressed. For example, a black physician from Norfolk, Virginia, decried Norfolk's disbursement of civic improvements monies to a white visitor in stating:

We pay equal taxes, but because colored people live in these streets the city won't repair the roads. They are all rich people living in these houses, all Negroes. Several of them own cars... Now look on the other hand at this street. It's a white street, all smoothly repaired. What a beautiful surface; see the difference!⁴⁷

Black residents of Parramore and Jonestown, whether affluent or of the working class, experienced similar challenges, despite paying their fair share of taxes. As the city of Orlando began providing infrastructure and city services in the 1880s, services to Parramore and Jonestown remained virtually nonexistent, despite blacks making up about thirty-six percent of the city's population by 1890. Even in cases where the council authorized improvements, black residents received a reduced quality of city services which lasted well into the twentieth century.⁴⁸ One of the most common complaints from black residents such as Shufton concerned flooding in Parramore and the need to build additional ditches for relief. Despite various requests

⁴⁶ Shufton, listed as a lawyer and author, provided an interview with the *New York World* on November 5, 1889, where he expressed his views of accommodation to promote racial peace. Charles Henry James Taylor, *Whites and Blacks or The Question Settled* (Atlanta: Jas P. Harrison & Co., Printers, 1889), 26–27.

⁴⁷ Lewis, *In Their Own Interests*, 80.

⁴⁸ Bureau of the Census, *Eleventh Census: 1890*, Vol. 1 Part I, 13, 387, 405, 454; Clark, *Orlando, Florida*, 51; Bacon, *Orlando Vol. 1*, 104; Larsen, "Harmonious Inequality," 165.

from as early as 1888, this continued to be a recurring issue.⁴⁹ Additionally, residents appealed for repaving of streets, improving sanitary conditions and better lighting in West Orlando.⁵⁰

Furthermore, black residents in Parramore and across the South saw their political rights and voting power disenfranchised. Yet, this process differed city by city as whites sought to keep black voters in their place. In Jacksonville, where black residents on average represented half of the city's total population between 1870 and 1920, this process first involved gerrymandered city wards to ensure blacks could never elect a majority on the city council. Eventually, Jacksonville followed the example of cities like Memphis and Nashville in adopting a multiple ballot system and literacy tests which significantly reduced black voting power and necessitated the rise of the black counterpublics by residents in Jacksonville to reinsert themselves in the public discourse.⁵¹

In Orlando, this process of disenfranchisement proved easier as blacks represented a much smaller percentage in Orlando than in Jacksonville. As the single-party system in Florida saw the Democrats establish all-white primaries, whites virtually suppressed black voting power in Orlando as only twenty-five blacks registered to vote in Orlando between 1910 and 1922. Yet, threats to white supremacy such as black voting registration drives by the Republican Party during the 1920 election saw the founding of Orange County's Ku Klux Klan branch, the third after Jacksonville and Tampa. Additionally, Orlando's city leaders formed the White Voters Executive Committee in 1904 which enforced white primaries in the city. Not until 1950 did

⁴⁹ Orlando City Council, "September 28th Minutes," September 28, 1888, 1; Orlando City Council, "February 7th Minutes," February 7, 1895, 1; Orlando City Council, "February 6th Minutes," February 6, 1908, 1; Orlando City Council, "June 8th Minutes," June 8, 1912, 4.

⁵⁰ Orlando City Council, "June 16th Minutes," June 16, 1898, 1; Orlando City Council, "September 15th Minutes," September 15, 1923, 264; Orlando City Council, "June 1st Minutes," June 1, 1927, 76; Orlando City Council, "February 21st Minutes," February 21, 1933.

⁵¹ Cassanello, *To Render Invisible*, 4, 46–58.

Orlando comply with the Supreme Court's 1944 ruling that banned white primaries after a successful threat of a lawsuit by black leadership in Orlando, the last Florida city to do so.⁵²

Additionally, social movements of the early twentieth century like The City Beautiful and park-neighborhood influenced whites across the country with the aesthetics of public and private spaces within the city. As race and class became part of a neighborhood's aesthetics, whites claimed black residents degraded white neighborhoods, threatened white womanhood, and that black housing would become a menace to the neighborhood. For instance, in Atlanta between 1880 and 1920, developers designed neighborhoods for whites such as Inman Park, Druid Hills, and Ansley Park, which utilized minimum lot sizes, consistent landscapes, and a narrow range of residents. In linking these park-neighborhoods to social status in promising "Atlanta's best people" as neighbors, neighborhoods like Ansley Park additionally included restrictive covenants which restricted these areas to 'undesirables' along racial and class lines.⁵³ Other cities like Charlotte used other mechanisms such as white property owners offering blacks opportunities for improved housing in specific sections of the city, building shotgun dwellings for renters, and opening a streetcar suburb for black homeowners.⁵⁴

Like Atlanta, the City Beautiful and park-neighborhood movements influenced whites in Orlando. In 1908, an intense beautification of the city with palms, azaleas, and flowering shrubs

⁵² Carlee Hoffmann and Claire Strom, "A Perfect Storm: The Ocoee Riot of 1920," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 93, no. 1 (2014): 38–41, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43487653>; Clark, *Orlando, Florida*, 56; Porter, "Segregation and Desegregation," 294.

⁵³ The City Beautiful Movement combined with the construction of exclusive park-neighborhoods inspired philosophies of building and improving the aesthetics or beauty of spaces within urban centers through natural landscapes, distinguished architecture, single-family homes, private parks, plazas, and parkways. In Orlando, city officials planted hundreds of oak trees throughout the city and changed the city's nickname in 1908 from The Phenomenal City to The City Beautiful. LeeAnn Lands, *The Culture of Property: Race, Class, and Housing Landscapes in Atlanta, 1880-1950* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 4–6, 202.

⁵⁴ Hanchett, *Sorting out the New South City*, 116.

influenced residents to change the city's nickname from "The Phenomenal City." During a contest, Mrs. W.S. Branch won with her title "The City Beautiful" which sparked an even greater interest in the beautification of the city.⁵⁵ Additionally, while still a small town, whites in Orlando created an exclusive suburb for themselves. A 1912 promotional map of Gatlin near downtown Orlando, outlined the settlement as Orlando's "finest and most attractive suburb" but clearly stated that "no lot is for sale to an undesirable party, and a clause in each deed will perpetually provide that it shall not be sold to a negro, on pain of forfeiture."⁵⁶ Through these restrictive covenants, which legally prevented whites from selling homes to blacks, white officials could organize a city's landscape in assigning both white and black residents to particular areas of the city.⁵⁷ These restrictions limited the ability of current and future black residents to choose where they lived in Orlando.

While Orlando's small population initially limited the need for strategic racial segregation, an explosion of growth beginning in the 1920s saw city officials explore racial zoning. During the 1920s, Orlando along with the state of Florida experienced a land boom with extensive real estate investment, a variety of new industries along with increased mechanization of existing industries such as citrus production. Additionally, new highways connecting Miami to the Midwest and Northeast passed through Orlando in 1915, having a similar effect to railroads

⁵⁵ Bacon, *Orlando Vol. 1*, 1:239; Clark, *Orlando, Florida*, 68.

⁵⁶ J.O. (John Otto) Fries surveyed Gatlin in 1912. Gatlin is located two and one-half miles to the south of downtown Orlando by Lake Gatlin. Mahlon Gore, a former mayor of Orlando from 1894 to 1896, wrote a glowing description of the settlement for white citizens. John Otto Fries, *Gatlin Map* (Orange County, FL, 1912), Orange County Regional History Center; Clark, *Orlando, Florida*, 169.

⁵⁷ Mark Benton, "'Just the Way Things Are Around Here': Racial Segregation, Critical Junctures, and Path Dependence in Saint Louis," *Journal of Urban History*, March 2017, 8–9, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144217696988>; Lands, *The Culture of Property*, 203.

diversifying the area.⁵⁸ Between 1920 and 1930, Orlando's population dramatically increased from 9,282 to 27,330 as Orlando's black population grew from 2,552 to 7,590, representing about twenty-eight percent of the populace by 1930.⁵⁹ In using Memphis as an example, Goings and Smith argue that migration served as an unhidden transcript by blacks because, despite attempts by whites to keep black Memphians in their place, blacks continued to migrate in large numbers to Memphis.⁶⁰ Similarly, while remaining a minority within Orlando's population, this growing black populace of more than a quarter of the city's population became more noticeable to whites in Orlando. Prior to the 1920s, understood social customs kept residential segregation in check, but with new waves of black and white residents, Orlando took the first steps to legally regulate residential segregation within the city.

With increased numbers between the 1920s and 1940s, black residents in Parramore did not act passively concerning decisions that impacted their space. Often in Southern society, black leaders, working within the limits of Jim Crow, accepted a paternalistic relationship of white social and political governance to achieve gains within their communities.⁶¹ As Orlando sought to portray a tolerate image in race relations for outside businesses and tourists, city leaders in June of 1926 established the Inter-Racial Committee, an all-white committee, to coordinate concerns and requests of black leaders to the mayor and Chamber of Commerce. The Negro

⁵⁸ Larsen, "Harmonious Inequality," 165; Gary Ross Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida*, Florida History and Culture Series (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 45, 78.

⁵⁹ Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census: 1920*, Vol. 3, (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1922), 196; Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census: 1930*, Vol. 1, (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1931), 196; See Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census: 1930*, Vol. 3, Part 1, (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1931), 421.

⁶⁰ Goings and Smith, "'Unhidden' Transcripts," 376, 391.

⁶¹ Larsen, "Harmonious Inequality," 168; Lands, *The Culture of Property*, 76.

Inter-Racial Committee, representing Orlando's black leaders, functioned in an advisory role within the Inter-Racial Committee.⁶²

For instance, in 1935, the Negro committee included important professional and religious leaders in the neighborhood such as Dr. Wells who served as the president, Dr. C.L. Eccleston, a leader in the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter, and Rev. S.G. Baker who served as secretary for the committee. At a meeting on April 9, 1935, the committee petitioned regarding the lack of adequate recreation facilities within the neighborhood, tying this to the rise of delinquencies among the black youth and expressing implicit confidence in the city aiding their request at their earliest convenience.⁶³ Yet, despite having the ear of prominent white city officials and businessmen, often on important matters such as racial zoning and the relocation of Jonestown residents to Parramore in the 1940s, the Negro Committee did not take part in the decision-making process. Not until 1957 would the first black members be appointed to the general Interracial Committee.⁶⁴

In December of 1923, Orlando officials established the City Planning and Zoning Commission (CPZC), as they committed to promoting beautification, protecting white residential property, and enforcing racial segregation.⁶⁵ In creating effective racial zoning, Orlando officials studied and learned the successes and failures of other cities, especially in the South. Louisville's attempt to pass a segregation ordinance in 1914 received national attention after the Supreme

⁶² Every month, the Negro Committee would present a report of their concerns to the Inter-Racial Committee who would then decide if, how, and when to relay the black leaders' concerns before the mayor and Chamber of Commerce. Larsen, "Harmonious Inequality," 167–68.

⁶³ Larsen, 167; Colored Interracial Committee, "April 9th Minutes," April 9, 1935, 1, 7.

⁶⁴ Porter, "Segregation and Desegregation," 302; Larsen, "Harmonious Inequality," 168; "Jonestown Negro Section Removal Planned in Project," *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, February 24, 1939.

⁶⁵ Larsen, "Harmonious Inequality," 166.

Court in 1916 ruled the city's ordinance on account of race as unconstitutional.⁶⁶ However, Harland Bartholomew, St. Louis's first full-time city planner, built a national reputation in creating zoning plans, such as his 1920 St. Louis city plan, to circumvent the Supreme Court's ruling. Bartholomew labeled white neighborhoods with restrictive contracts with 'first residential' status while assigning black neighborhoods with 'second residential' status. While zoning protected white neighborhoods in labeling them as residential areas only, planners labeled black neighborhoods for residential, commercial and industrial uses.⁶⁷

In 1926, Bartholomew assisted Orlando and the CPZC in proposing dividing Orlando into five sections and segregating the commercial, industrial and residential sections from white neighborhoods. These plans did not catch black residents unaware as city officials held public meetings with the black community.⁶⁸ Yet, as the ordinance took effect in 1928 and had the desired results for white neighborhoods, blacks in Parramore, with little power to influence and amend the ordinance, experienced significant intrusions. Colored Town received an Industrial "H" designation, despite containing significant residential housing. The Holden neighborhood, despite having the same Residential "B" designation as white downtown neighborhoods, also saw industrial zoning within its boundaries.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Delaney, *Race, Place, and the Law*, 114–15, 145–46.

⁶⁷ Benton, "'Just the Way Things Are Around Here,'" 8–9.

⁶⁸ "Cites Requisites In City Planning," *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, June 16, 1926; "New City Zoning Ordinance Presented at Council Meet," *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, December 16, 1926; "Inter-Racial Body Asks Cooperation of Citizens Here," *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, July 21, 1926; "Inter-Racial Body Plans Big Meeting of Negroes Sunday," *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, July 7, 1926.

⁶⁹ The 1928 Zoning Map established the following designations: "A" residence (single-family), "B" Multi-family (low density), "C" Multi-family (medium density), "D" Multi-family (high density), "E" Commercial (low intensity), "H" Industrial (low intensity), "I" Industrial (medium intensity), and "J" Unrestricted (high intensity). Referencing legend of Figure 8 on page 169. Larsen, "Harmonious Inequality," 168–70.

While custom had dictated the racial boundaries, the legality of defining spaces by race further reduced the availability of areas for blacks to live in Orlando. This problem accelerated in the late 1930s as white Orlando residents complained about Jonestown, the only black settlement east of the railroad tracks. City officials used the area's constant flooding to declare Jonestown a 'slum.' Taking advantage of federal funding for 'slum clearance,' city officials removed black residents from Jonestown and aimed to build public housing for white residents, which became Reeves Terrace.⁷⁰ In the World War II era, public housing remained mostly for working and lower-middle class white families who could afford housing, but faced limited availability.⁷¹ In finding housing for displaced black residents, city officials used government funding along with city funds to facilitate the construction of Griffin Park, the first public housing development for blacks located in the defined black area of town. Despite an injunction by thirty black Gore Street property owners against the city to prevent the destruction of 154 houses to clear land for the development, in 1940, the project, which had a capacity for 174 family units, became the first of many such projects that further solidified Orlando's residential segregation.⁷²

While Orlando officials never officially established Parramore as a 'colored zone' through any city ordinance, a multitude of city maps, city council minutes, and *Orlando Sentinel* articles from the 1920s through the 1950s constantly reference an understood colored section of town. Even as Orlando's black population grew, city officials made minimal expansions to

⁷⁰ Knowles, "Vanishing Communities," 81; "Jonestown Negro Section Removal Planned in Project."

⁷¹ Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017), 17–18.

⁷² Griffin Park is named for Uncle Charlie Griffin, a 102-year-old former slave who had died in March of 1938. Bounded by Gore Avenue, Division Street, and Avondale Avenue, today the housing complex is located underneath the interchange between Interstate 4 and the East-West Expressway (SR 408). Porter, "Segregation and Desegregation," 309; Eve Bacon, *Orlando: A Centennial History*, vol. 2 (Chuluota, Fla: The Mickler House, Publishers, 1977), 93.

designated black sections of town.⁷³ One example in 1935 saw the city add twenty-five acres of additional land to what the *Orlando Sentinel* termed as “The Southern Blackbottom Section” in two directions, shifting the previously established ‘negro line.’⁷⁴ As a black neighborhood within Orlando, the decisions, laws, and ordinances passed by Orlando officials impacted Parramore’s development. Residents faced discriminatory and segregationist policies that affected the daily lives of Parramore residents, some with ramifications that still negatively impact the community today.

Creating the American Dream in Eatonville

Yet, while affected by the same circumstances of Jim Crow, the social creation of Eatonville differed from Parramore in the complete autonomy of black residents to choose the geographic space that became Eatonville. As former slaves migrated to Central Florida after the Civil War, a group of black laborers settled near Fort Maitland, a few miles north of Orlando. While white residents constructed estates along Lake Maitland, black residents lived in hastily built shacks around a lake blacks referred to as St. John’s Hole, which whites later renamed Lake Lily for tourism purposes. As Union veterans, who settled in the area after the Civil War, sought to incorporate Maitland as a town, they appealed to nearby black grove workers to become residents of their town as they lacked the required thirty registered voters for incorporation. Black residents played a key role in the incorporation of Maitland in 1885, yet within two years, these black families formed the new all-black town of Eatonville west of Maitland on land donated by Lewis Lawrence and Josiah Eaton.⁷⁵

⁷³ Larsen, “Harmonious Inequality,” 170.

⁷⁴ “Negroes Get 25 Acres,” *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, May 29, 1935.

⁷⁵ Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road: An Autobiography*, Reprinted (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), xix, 8; Cynthia Cardona Meléndez, “Eatonville,” in *Historic Orange County: The Story of Orlando and*

Differing interpretations are given concerning the motivations for establishing Eatonville so soon after the incorporation of Maitland. One interpretation credits a political rift leading to the creation of Eatonville. As black voters proved crucial to the incorporation of Maitland, blacks soon outnumbered whites with some even being elected to local town positions. According to Eatonville's town historian Frank Otey, records indicate that two black men, Tony Taylor and Joe Clark, served as Maitland's first mayor and town marshal respectively for one year with no explanation of their ouster afterward. Zora Neale Hurston, in her autobiography *Dust Tracks on a Road*, also cites Taylor as the first mayor and Clarke [sic] as the first town marshal of Maitland. Additionally, black families continued to build shanties and wash their clothes in St. John's Hole (Lake Lily), threatening the aesthetic image that white Maitland residents sought in building an upscale town. In this scenario, the proposal to establish Eatonville came from an attempt by whites to give African Americans their own autonomous space and to restore white control in Maitland from a political, social, and aesthetic standpoint.⁷⁶

The other interpretation revolves around Joseph E. Clark, referred to simply as Joe Clark, who is credited as the father of Eatonville. Born a slave in Georgia in 1859, Clark lived in Tennessee and Georgia after the Civil War before settling near Fort Maitland by 1880. Working on the orange groves of Josiah C. Eaton, a retired Navy Paymaster from Maine, Clark dreamed of establishing an autonomous town for blacks and by blacks, but accomplishing this goal proved

Orange County, by Tana Mosier Porter et al. (San Antonio: Historical Publishing Network, 2009), 32; Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 1–3; Olga Fenton Mitchell, Gloria Fenton Magbie, and Marion Civette Elden, *The Life and Times of Joseph E. Clark: From Slavery to Town Father (Eatonville, Florida)* (Jonesboro, AR: Four-G Publishers, 2003), 36–37.

⁷⁶ Mitchell, Magbie, and Elden, *The Life and Times of Joseph E. Clark*, 36–37; Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 2; Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, 9.

difficult at first.⁷⁷ The story is told that between 1875 and 1877, Clark, Allen Rickett, and another unnamed black man sought to purchase land in establishing a colony for blacks. However, “so great was the prejudice then existing against the negro that no one would sell them land for such a purpose.” Yet, Clark’s dream of Eatonville became a reality through the philanthropy of Lewis Lawrence, a native of Utica, New York, who came to Maitland in 1875 and later purchased twenty-two acres of land from Eaton in 1881. Lawrence gave twelve of those acres to Clark and the other ten acres to the trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. By the time of Eatonville’s incorporation in August of 1887, a decision voted on by twenty-seven black men, the town consisted of 112 acres through additional acres purchased from Eaton.⁷⁸ Whether for socio-political or humanitarian reasons, or a combination of both, Eatonville residents displayed their autonomous power in choosing and creating their town under their terms.

The establishment of Eatonville and other all-black towns and settlements served as an attempt by blacks to deal with the failures of American society in turning their social and political hopes after emancipation into the reality of their everyday life.⁷⁹ Many all-black towns took a Washingtonian approach that emphasized economic and moral virtues and advocated personal responsibility by blacks for their own advancement.⁸⁰ Through this strategy of voluntary separation from whites, blacks, isolated from the domination of whites and daily

⁷⁷ Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 2; Mitchell, Magbie, and Elden, *The Life and Times of Joseph E. Clark*, 8, 14, 31, 35–37, 39.

⁷⁸ “Colored People of the United States: Solve the Great Race Problem by Securing a Home in Eatonville, Florida—A Negro City Governed by Negroes,” *Eatonville Speaker*, June 22, 1889, <https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu/omeka/items/show/4199>; Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 2–3.

⁷⁹ Roy L. Brooks, *Integration or Separation? A Strategy for Racial Equality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 169; Russ Rymer, *American Beach: A Saga of Race, Wealth, and Memory* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 289.

⁸⁰ August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1964), 103.

discrimination and racism, hoped to create and thrive in a more secure position. Norman Crockett defines a historic all-black town as a separate community with a populace at least ninety percent black that attempted to determine their own political destiny. Between 1865 and 1915, at least sixty all-black towns formed in the United States, most within the South and West with Oklahoma leading the nation at twenty.⁸¹

Founders and promoters of all-black towns across the country like Nicodemus, Kansas and Mount Bayou, Mississippi, appealed to blacks in the Deep South to experience and celebrate black pride and economic self-help with advertisements and editorials linking racial progress to the success of these independent enclaves.⁸² The establishment of Nicodemus in 1877 came as a result of efforts by two black ministers William Smith and Thomas Harris along with a white land speculator W.R. Hill who went throughout the South to promote the settlement in Tennessee and Kentucky. At the settlement's apex in 1879, the population numbered about 700 people before dwindling to below 200 people by 1910 and unlike Eatonville never became incorporated as a town.⁸³ In Mississippi, Isaiah T. Montgomery along with his cousin Benjamin T. Green founded the all-black settlement of Mound Bayou in 1887 and helped recruit former slaves from Davis Bend along with other black settlers from the South. The town officially incorporated in 1898.⁸⁴ Similarly, Joe Clark and other leaders promoted Eatonville to blacks across the country

⁸¹ Norman L Crockett, *The Black Towns* (Lawrence, KS: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1979), xi–xii.

⁸² Crockett, 156.

⁸³ Crockett, 2, 6, 176.

⁸⁴ The first settlers to Mount Bayou came with Isaiah T. Montgomery as former slaves from Davis Bend, the former plantation of Joseph Davis, the brother of former Confederate president Jefferson Davis. Inspired by Scottish reformer Robert Owen, Davis sought to create a “community of cooperation” on his plantation and while he never freed any of his slaves until the end of the Civil War, he believed blacks could live independently. After the war, Isaiah’s father Benjamin sought to emulate this community of cooperation at Davis Bend while Isaiah revives the dream in moving to Mound Bayou. Crockett, xii, 12–14, 48; Janet Sharp Hermann, *The Pursuit of a Dream*, 2nd ed. (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1999), passim.

in the June 22, 1889 edition of the *Eatonville Speaker*. The promotional titled “Colored People of the United States! Solve the Great Race Problem by Securing a Home in Eatonville, Florida, A Negro City Governed by Negroes” promotes Eatonville as a place with beautiful lakes, fertile soil for growing fruits and vegetables in tropical and temperate zones, and affordable homes and land for sale to blacks only. By 1900, Eatonville had a population of 125 people, decreasing slightly in 1910 to 108 residents before returning to 125 residents by 1920.⁸⁵

Development for Blacks, by Blacks

Just as residents of Parramore constructed and developed their own distinct community, Eatonville residents with greater autonomy built a separate world independent of white control.⁸⁶ Residents of the town, even to the present day, carry pride in generally being recognized as the oldest incorporated all-black town in America, celebrating the concept of black residents having autonomy over their own affairs. Hurston, a prominent twentieth-century novelist, folklorist, and a native of Eatonville, expressed this pride throughout her various writings. In *Dust Tracks on a Road*, she states:

I was born in a Negro town. I do not mean by that the black back-side of an average town. Eatonville, Florida, is, and was at the time of my birth, a pure Negro town—charter, mayor, council, town marshal and all. It was not the first Negro community in America, but it was the first to be incorporated, the first attempt at organized self-government on the part of Negroes in America.⁸⁷

This greater degree of autonomy allowed Eatonville to avoid the discriminatory decisions by whites, such as racial zoning and residential segregation, that plagued other black

⁸⁵ “Colored People of the United States.” *Eatonville Speaker*; Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census: 1920*, Vol.1, (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1921), 190.

⁸⁶ Tiffany Ruby Patterson, *Zora Neale Hurston and a History of Southern Life* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), 65, 77.

⁸⁷ Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, 3.

communities like Parramore. While white philanthropy helped finance many of these developments, black leaders and town residents at Eatonville's foundation dictated the development within their defined space.

Under the leadership of Eatonville's early leaders like Columbus H. Boger and Joe Clark, who served as the first and second mayor respectively, the town developed through the establishment of homes, businesses, churches, and schools. Ownership became a central theme in Eatonville as most early residents owned or aspired to own their own home. Using the more than 100 acres purchased from Eaton, Clark resold parcels of the land (many measuring 40 feet by 100 feet) to black residents who then made small installment payments. Some bought additional acreage to plant gardens, large vegetable plots, and their own orange groves. Eatonville aspired to own and have access to stores within their own community which would serve their personal needs (i.e. food, clothing, barbershops, and beauty parlors).⁸⁸ By 1889, the town constructed the first post office with Clark serving as the first postmaster. The town also established a newspaper, *The Eatonville Speaker*, which lasted for a few years. Clark also established the town's first general store, a store featured prominently in Hurston's novels and folklore.⁸⁹

Churches also proved important to Eatonville's development. Prior to Eatonville's creation, trustees of the AME church established and constructed the St. Lawrence AME Church in 1882, naming the building to honor the philanthropy of Lewis Lawrence. The same year, another group of citizens organized to form the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church. For a time, the two churches shared the same building, worshipping on alternate Sundays before

⁸⁸ Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 7–8, 16, 28.

⁸⁹ Mitchell, Magbie, and Elden, *The Life and Times of Joseph E. Clark*, 43; Patterson, *Zora Neale Hurston*, 77–78; Meléndez, "Eatonville," 33.

Macedonia's members purchased a separate building in 1889. During the 1900s, the St. Lawrence church constructed a larger building across the street from the old church, which transitioned into a library through the philanthropy of the wife of Bishop H.B. Whipple of Winter Park, who donated the first 150 books. Leaders encouraged residents to attend one of the churches as most of the town's leadership became active members of the Methodist or Baptist churches.⁹⁰

Many all-black towns like Eatonville had a connection to Booker T. Washington, the most prominent African American of the time. In advocating for racial separation as the initial first step to integration, Washington preached the importance of building an independent agrarian base and establishing an education system that emphasized vocational training. After establishing Tuskegee Institute, now University, in Alabama in 1881, Washington, along with leaders aligned with him, contributed and promoted this message in other all-black towns.⁹¹ In Mound Bayou, Charles Banks, an economically prosperous new settler who arrived in 1903, helped carry out and promote the Tuskegee Machine of Washington's philosophy of racial and economic uplift and education to recruit settlers to the town.⁹² In Grambling, Louisiana, after residents requested help from Washington in the establishment of an industrial school, Washington sent his former student Charles P. Adams in 1901. Following Tuskegee's model, Adams served as the founding president of what is today Grambling State University.⁹³

⁹⁰ Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 9–11, 19; Mitchell, Magbie, and Elden, *The Life and Times of Joseph E. Clark*, 52–53.

⁹¹ Brooks, *Integration or Separation*, 125–26.

⁹² David H Jackson Jr., *A Chief Lieutenant of the Tuskegee Machine: Charles Banks of Mississippi* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2002), 25, 40–41.

⁹³ Doris Dorcas Carter, "Charles P. Adams and Grambling State University: The Formative Years (1901-1928)," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 17, no. 4 (Autumn 1976): 404–5, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4231632>.

Education proved important from the very start in Eatonville. In their connection to Washington, Eatonville leaders petitioned him to help establish a school to provide vocational and academic training for blacks in Central Florida. By 1888, Washington sent two Tuskegee graduates Russell and Mary Calhoun to Eatonville and the couple worked to execute the vision which came to fruition in 1897. Various individuals across the country financially contributed to the success of the school including Washington, who donated \$400 to the construction of the first building that became the Booker T. Washington Hall. Most importantly in 1898, Edward and Anna Hungerford donated 160 acres of land west of Eatonville in memory of their son Dr. Robert Hungerford. To honor Dr. Hungerford and his impact on the youth of Eatonville during his visits there, residents requested the school be named the Robert Hungerford Normal and Industrial School. Over the next several decades, the Hungerford School became a backbone of the community as parents hoped their children's education would prepare them for an uncertain future with limited economic opportunities.⁹⁴ The fortitude of residents in Eatonville to construct their community on their own terms reveals the greater degrees of autonomy of these residents in the unequal world of Jim Crow.

However, Eatonville did not exist insulated from outside society as many residents still worked as laborers for white employers in neighboring Maitland, Winter Park, and Orlando. Additionally, beyond Eatonville existed the harshest realities of Jim Crow in Florida such as Rosewood in 1923 where whites terrorized and massacred black residents over the alleged rape

⁹⁴ While permanent residents of Connecticut, the Hungerford family owned a summer home in Maitland. Their son Robert Hungerford died after contracting malaria in 1888 while treating black youth in Louisiana. Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 11–13, 19; Mitchell, Magbie, and Elden, *The Life and Times of Joseph E. Clark*, 47–48, 50; Patterson, *Zora Neale Hurston*, 79.

of a white woman.⁹⁵ Even closer in nearby Ocoee in 1920, blacks attempting to vote in local elections resulted in whites rioting and killing various individuals, including July Perry, as blacks abandoned their properties and avoided living in the town for nearly fifty years afterward.⁹⁶ Yet, Eatonville avoided the racial violence with older black residents expressing pride that while groups like the KKK raised “all sorts of ruckus” on the edge of town, they never entered the town itself.⁹⁷

Additionally, as the idea of all-black towns threatened white supremacy, the survival of these communities always remained at risk. For example, several miles north of Eatonville, Goldsboro became an incorporated all-black town in 1891 as black residents developed their own shops, churches, schools, and government. However, by 1911, as the larger neighboring city of Sanford sought to expand, Goldsboro blocked Sanford’s ability to expand westward. As white officials failed to convince Goldsboro residents to voluntarily give up its charter, Forrest Lake, a state representative and future mayor of Sanford, persuaded the Florida Legislature to remove the charters of Sanford and Goldsboro in 1911. The legislature quickly reorganized Sanford’s charter that included annexing Goldsboro as the now defunct town lost its identity as white officials quickly renamed streets throughout Goldsboro.⁹⁸ However, unlike Goldsboro, Eatonville

⁹⁵ Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 25; Patterson, *Zora Neale Hurston*, 80–81, 85.

⁹⁶ See Zora Neale Hurston, *The Ocoee Riot* (Jacksonville, FL: Federal Writers Project, American Guide, Negro Writers Unit, 1937?), 1–3; Rymer, *American Beach*, 289; Clark, *Orlando, Florida*, 54–56.

⁹⁷ Tavernier-Almada, in producing this chapter, interviewed several older residents of Eatonville who expressed these views to her. Linda Tavernier-Almada, “De-Lionizing Zora Neale Hurston?,” in *“The Inside Light”*: *New Critical Essays on Zora Neale Hurston*, ed. Deborah G. Plant (Praeger, 2010), 206.

⁹⁸ The state legislature passed the Sanford Charter Bill on April 26, 1911. While Sanford pledged to pay Goldsboro’s debts within 90 days, William Clark, one of the major players in Goldsboro’s creation, told Zora Neale Hurston in a 1936 interview that he still held “a mass of jumbled yellow papers” representing \$10,375.90 in unpaid debts.” Goldsboro presently exists as a neighborhood on the western side of the city of Sanford. Jim Robison, “Political Sham: The Rise and Fall of Goldsboro,” *Orlando Sentinel*, September 1, 1991; Jim Robison, “2 Communities’ Heritage Rooted in Segregation,” *Orlando Sentinel*, October 5, 2003.

managed to survive threats to its existence as an all-black town in having the support from the neighboring white town of Maitland. Hurston, in reflecting on white and black relations, stated that “White Maitland and Negro Eatonville have lived side by side for fifty-six years without a single instance of enmity.”⁹⁹ While Hurston’s account likely exaggerates the lack of conflict between the two communities, Eatonville’s cordial relationship with Maitland helped the town succeed during Jim Crow as Maitland supported and contributed to the development of the town.

Unlike many other all-black towns established in the nineteenth century, with many often located in rural and remote areas throughout the nation, Eatonville’s creation occurred within an already developed area which has drastically become more urbanized with the growth of the Orlando area. As many all-black towns like Mound Bayou and Boley, Oklahoma, depended on the agriculture industry, the collapse of the American farm economy in the 1920s and the Great Depression in the 1930s devastated nearly all these all-black towns. With white-controlled banks denying credit to blacks during the Depression and with increased agricultural mechanization by the end of World War II limiting labor opportunities for blacks, many all-black towns disappeared or fell into irrelevancy as blacks migrated to cities for better employment opportunities.¹⁰⁰ Yet, while many early Eatonville residents worked in agriculture, the foundation of the town did not depend solely on the agriculture industry. Furthermore, Eatonville’s proximity to Orlando and other neighboring towns allowed a diversity of employment opportunities that did not exist in most rural towns. Therefore, not only did Eatonville residents

⁹⁹ Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, 10–11.

¹⁰⁰ Gordon Morris Bakken and Alexandra Kindell, eds., *Encyclopedia of Immigration and Migration in the American West* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2006), 1, 8; David J. Wishart, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 9–10; Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 259.

survive the fate that led to the demise of similar communities, but the town saw continued growth and development over the next few decades.

Eatonville, especially during Jim Crow, stood as a paradox of blacks successfully governing themselves independent of whites. While blacks across the country experienced the disfranchisement of their voting rights, Eatonville men elected their leaders, held public offices and created their own laws to govern themselves. Using Elsa Barkley's argument of women prior to the Nineteenth Amendment having a political voice through influencing the men in their lives, women in Eatonville certainly influenced the development of the town.¹⁰¹ As blacks controlled every aspect of Eatonville and governed themselves, residents had greater freedom and control over the development of their space in the late nineteenth and twentieth century.

Chapter Conclusion

In taking Rabinowitz's argument concerning the modernity of segregation being progressive in moving from the exclusion of African Americans from spaces to segregating by race, Jim Crow also represented an attempt by whites to control the lives of African Americans. Most significantly, whites sought to dictate where blacks could and could not live, limiting blacks' mobility and freedom in the creation of black communities across the nation like Parramore and Eatonville. Still, despite white efforts, as the scholarship of Cassanello, Connolly and Berrey show, blacks still actively engaged in the development of their own distinct communities and in discourses concerning public spaces. While the foundation of both communities differed—Parramore as one of Orlando's defined black areas and Eatonville as an

¹⁰¹ Patterson, *Zora Neale Hurston*, 80; Elsa Barkley Brown, "Uncle Ned's Children: Negotiating Community and Freedom in Postemancipation Richmond, Virginia" (Ph.D., Kent State University, 1994).

independent all-black town— residents in both communities possessed varying degrees of autonomy in using their ability to construct and develop their own distinct communities.

In Parramore, residents' ability to construct meaning into their defined space remained equally impacted by the decisions of Orlando's white leadership that sought to restrict their power and influence in the city. Yet, Parramore residents used their status as laborers along with their relationships with prominent whites to influence the developments in the early decades of Orlando's history. While never accepting segregation, the institutions and social spaces that residents established within Parramore helped sustain the community during the height of Jim Crow in providing relief from the racism and discrimination blacks experienced daily. In Eatonville, residents took a more direct approach in surviving Jim Crow by establishing their own distinct space. All-black communities like Eatonville sought to create community by blacks, for blacks, and controlled by blacks. While the idea of Eatonville certainly threatened white supremacy, Eatonville maintained cordial relations with local whites who helped support and finance the vision of Joseph Clark. Thus, independent of white control, black residents established their institutions and aspired to own their own houses and land in constructing a model black community.

The ability of residents to control their own geographic space not only helped contribute to each community's creation but influenced and impacted the successes and challenges of each community moving forward. As the political power of African Americans increased during the mid-twentieth century, black communities experienced fruitful accomplishments but also faced new and existing problems that impacted the lives of black residents in Parramore and Eatonville. Additionally, the evolution of government policies on the local, state, and federal

level impacted the development of black communities. With the rise of citizen activism in the mid-twentieth century, future chapters will reveal the impact of Parramore and Eatonville residents' power and control in the further development, the fight for survival, and the preservation of each community.

CHAPTER TWO: INFRASTRUCTURAL BATTLES IN BLACK URBAN SPACES

Historiography of Black Urban History

The past several decades has seen various historians examine the impact of historical developments and government policies on the growth, expansion, and decline of black urban communities. During the 1960s, Allan Spear, focusing on Chicago, and Gilbert Osofsky, focusing on Harlem, provided a greater understanding about the development of the inner-city. While earlier studies concentrated on the impacts of the Great Migration to the creation of the inner-city, Spear and Osofsky stated that the ‘black ghetto’ existed before World War I. Both authors argued that black exclusion from white sections of the city, limited job choices and the development of separate institutions in being barred from public accommodations laid the foundation of the black community in Chicago and Harlem.¹

The 1970s through 1990s saw historians such as Arnold Hirsch, a student of Osofsky, and Raymond Mohl expand the scholarship to focus on the impacts of public policy upon black urban communities, especially after World War II. Hirsch’s theory of the second ghetto described the impacts of neighborhood redevelopment, public housing and urban renewal in Chicago that maintained an era of inner-city maintenance and expansion to meet the needs of whites at the expense of blacks.² Mohl applied the theory in a Southern context by focusing on the transformation of Miami’s metropolitan area beyond the first core black community of

¹ Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto 1890-1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), viii–ix; Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem, the Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890-1930*, Second Edition (1966; repr., Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996), ix, 17.

² Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago 1940-1960* (1983; repr., Chicago, Ill: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), xv–xviii.

Overtown into other areas of northwest Dade County and beyond.³ However, scholars noted that Hirsch downplayed the role of urban blacks in policy battles in the inner-cities. Thomas Sugrue, focusing on Detroit, and Christopher Silver and John Moeser, focusing on Atlanta, Memphis, and Richmond, argue that while having less power than whites, black residents still possessed degrees of power in shaping the social and economic geography of their cities.⁴

The twenty-first century has expanded in further discussing the impacts of metropolitan political battles between blacks and whites in pre and post-integration society causing the rise of suburbia and the decline of many inner cities. Kevin Kruse, in focusing on metropolitan Atlanta, argues that white flight proved more than a physical relocation, but a political revolution over struggles of segregation, especially residential, that reshaped not only Southern conservatism but national politics in general. N.B.D. Connolly, focusing on metropolitan Miami, argues that contests over land should include the neglected importance of black property politics in both the workings of white supremacy and the development of American liberalism. Kyle Shelton, focusing on metropolitan Houston, argues that residents of all races used infrastructural citizenship to shape their communities through using the built environment (i.e. homes, streets) to assert their rights as citizens in struggles over spaces within cities.⁵

This chapter will contribute to this historiography in the further discussion of the political battles in Orlando's Parramore neighborhood between mostly black residents and mostly white public officials, business leaders and private developers in the latter half of the twentieth century.

³ Raymond A. Mohl, "Making the Second Ghetto in Metropolitan Miami, 1940-1960," *Journal of Urban History* 21, no. 3 (March 1995): 397, 402, 420, <https://doi.org/10.1177/009614429502100305>.

⁴ Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 12, 300; Silver and Moeser, *The Separate City*, 2, 6-7; Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, xvi.

⁵ Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 6, 12, 15; Connolly, *A World More Concrete*, 280-81; Shelton, *Power Moves*, 5-7.

Parramore would transition from a period under Jim Crow when the community would largely be neglected by city officials to a period in which the neighborhood became prime real estate for redevelopment in the name of progress, which often came at the expense of residents in the neighborhood. Bruce Schulman defines the term “place over people” to describe how various urban policies sought not so much to uplift poor people as to enrich poor geographic spaces and places.⁶ In dealing with the exodus of the community’s more affluent black residents and the impacts of various intrusions such as expressways, luxury developments, arenas and stadiums, Parramore residents did not remain silent regarding issues that affected their community. Despite many not owning property, residents utilized various methods of infrastructural citizenship such as protesting, attending public meetings, lobbying city officials and court litigation to place themselves as political participants in important debates.⁷ While their efforts did not always end in success, the participation of residents in the public sphere forced city leaders to account for their input into how their community would be shaped.

Post-World War II Developments in Orlando

The rise of black political power coincided with the increase of black populations in urban areas as they sought to exercise their citizenship and demand accountability from government officials towards their concerns. As blacks during Jim Crow formed separate, independent political organizations to petition for needs for their community, this broadened into political participation after the 1940s.⁸ In Birmingham, between 1945 and 1975, black residents formed various civic leagues where residents paid monthly dues, held public meetings in

⁶ Schulman credits the phrase “place over people” to Gavin Wright as a way of understanding the developments through his book. Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt*, xii, xv.

⁷ Shelton, *Power Moves*, 5.

⁸ Silver and Moeser, *The Separate City*, 8.

churches, petitioned local leaders for improvements while advocating personal responsibility by residents.⁹ While Orlando's black leaders had relied on gaining benefits through working with the all-white Interracial Committee, the creation of autonomous black organizations proved even more important moving forward. An informal meeting of black leaders at the home of future city councilman Arthur "Pappy" Kennedy on May 27, 1945, led to the creation of the Orlando Negro Chamber of Commerce. Becoming a permanent organization under Z.L. Riley, the organization advocated civic projects, fundraisers and community clean up drives. Starting in 1949, the organization published a business directory to advertise facilities, businesses, schools, churches, and organizations within the black community.¹⁰

Residents would use court litigation, an important resource of citizen activism, to achieve greater political power. With a lawsuit from four black residents leading to the elimination of the white primary in Orlando by 1950, black leaders sought to address the need for the expansion of areas for black residents.¹¹ While making up one-fourth of the city's population in 1950, black areas consisted of one-fifteenth of the total area of the city, creating crowded and unsanitary conditions.¹² Black homeowners could not build outside of Parramore and white landlords, who

⁹ Charles E Connerly, *The Most Segregated City in America: City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980*. (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2013), 218–19.

¹⁰ The Negro Chamber of Commerce would produce subsequent editions highlighting Parramore and Washington Shores. Pappy Kennedy would serve as the first president of the organization. The Orlando Negro Chamber of Commerce, "Business Directory 1949," 1949; The Orlando Negro Chamber of Commerce, "Business Directory 1960-1961," 1960, 6–7.

¹¹ In the 1944 *Smith v. Allwright* case, the Supreme Court ruled the Texas Democratic Party's white primaries as unconstitutional. Six years later, the Orlando's White Executive Committee would turn over primaries to the city with the first open primary to all races being held on October 3, 1950. In Florida, black voting registration increased from 5.5 percent in 1944 to thirty-two percent in 1950 through concentrated voter registration drives with leaders like Harry T. Moore. Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*, 21; Mark Andrews, "Orlando: A Final Stop in Fight for Black Voting Rights," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 19, 1995; Clark, *Orlando, Florida*, 56.

¹² In 1950, Orlando had a black population of 13,278 out of the total population of 52,367. See Bureau of the Census, *Seventeenth Census: 1950*, Vol. 2. Part 10, (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1952), 58; Orlando City Council, "August 30th Minutes," August 30, 1950, 2.

owned large portions of property throughout Parramore, took advantage of the limited options of their black tenants by overcharging for rent. In the late 1940s, complications by John Graham, a white businessman and member of the local Rotary Club, in assisting his black employee who faced difficulties purchasing a home became the catalyst for Washington Shores, a new black development named for Booker T. Washington. The nonprofit corporation Washington Shores Inc. obtained a tract of 279 acres near Lake Mann that the corporation divided into 1,000 lots and later sold to prospective black homeowners.¹³

Black developments like Washington Shores became part of a national trend of affluent blacks relocating to the suburbs or exterior areas of major cities after World War II. While moving to the suburbs reaffirmed the class status between middle and lower-class black families, many affluent blacks perceived their efforts as acts of racial progress in asserting their equality with middle-class whites relocating to suburbs.¹⁴ In advertising Washington Shores in the 1949 Negro Business Directory, before individuals could buy lots and build their own homes, they had to have their plans inspected to ensure their homes would meet the community standards and eliminate the possibility of creating a ‘slum.’¹⁵ Yet, Washington Shores had adverse effects on Parramore. Alzo J. Reddick, the first black legislator from Orange County in the state legislature, considered the creation of Washington Shores as “the most pivotal event that changed this community [Parramore]” as many affluent residents relocated out of Parramore into Washington Shores.¹⁶ The impacts of integration in making a separate black world less necessary would

¹³ J.N. Stonebraker, “It’s Named for Booker T. Washington,” *The Rotarian*, April 1949, 30–31.

¹⁴ Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 9, 165.

¹⁵ The Orlando Negro Chamber of Commerce, “Business Directory 1949.”

¹⁶ Benjamin D. Brotemarkle, “Crossing Division Street: A History of the African American Community in Orlando, Florida” (Ph.D. diss, Union Institute and University, 2002), 42, <https://search-proquest->

result in the loss of neighborhood schools, the collapse of black businesses and vacated houses from the exodus of affluent residents no longer restricted to living in Parramore. Those left behind consisted of mostly lower-income black residents, primarily renters, who would face the impacts of various infrastructural changes and encroachment by white businesses and government officials.¹⁷

Parramore and Interstate 4

One of the earliest infrastructural changes came through the construction of Interstate 4 through Orlando in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when 551 properties in Parramore would be displaced. Parramore residents, many non-property owners, had little input in discussions about the highway.¹⁸ The major debates about the expressway concerned those who supported the proposed route through downtown versus those who sought to bypass downtown.¹⁹ Leaders of Winter Park successfully shifted the route away from downtown Winter Park, however, efforts by those opposed to the downtown route in Orlando proved less successful. The Citizens Expressway Association, led by LaMonte Graw, helped spearhead a public hearing of those opposed to the downtown route. The association argued that the expressway would destroy the beauty of downtown, raise taxes and depreciate property values.²⁰ Yet, Orlando's movers and shakers led by attorney Billy Dial and *Orlando Sentinel* owner and editor Martin Andersen

com.ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/docview/305481980?accountid=10003; Mark Andrews, "Blacks Faced Hard Times as Settlers," *Orlando Sentinel*, January 26, 1992.

¹⁷ Porter, "Segregation and Desegregation," 290, 308–9.

¹⁸ Yielding & Provost, "Callahan Holden-Parramore Survey," 5; Yuri K. Gama, "Parramore and the Interstate 4: A World Torn Asunder (1880-1980)" (Master's Thesis, Rollins College, 2015), 112, 115, <http://scholarship.rollins.edu/mls/71/>.

¹⁹ Yielding & Provost, "Callahan Holden-Parramore Survey," 5.

²⁰ Bacon, *Orlando Vol. 2*, 2:210; "2,000 Citizens Argue Merits of Expressway," *Orlando Sentinel*, April 26, 1957.

helped generate support for the successful downtown route using their media, business, and political connections.²¹

Joshua Cannon states, “from its earliest conception, freeway promoters envisioned the Interstate Highway Systems as a double-edge sword that could both enhance automobile transportation and, like urban renewal programs, serve as a tool for the redevelopment of blighted and declining downtown areas.”²² Using federal funding, state highway departments and local officials selected the routes to clear ‘blighted’ urban areas through many black communities.²³ The factors for choosing black areas involved areas containing older and more dilapidated housing, the cheaper costs for land acquisition and the perceived weaker organized resistance against expressways.²⁴ While interstates helped serve the needs of an expanding populace in transporting millions of drivers across the country through cities and states, the construction of interstates left a trail of victims behind.

While the rise of citizen activism pressured government officials to include ordinary citizens in the planning process, this did not equate to decision-making power. Often, success in stopping, redirecting or lessening the impact of expressways favored those with more political

²¹ William H. Dial, known as Billy, served as an advisor and confidant to governors, mayors and corporate heads. He served as an attorney for the city of Orlando, the local newspapers, the largest bank (First National), and the largest employer (Glenn Martin Co.). Martin Andersen came to Orlando in 1931 and purchased the *Orlando Morning Sentinel* and the *Evening Reporter-Star*, at the time on the verge of bankruptcy. Under his leadership, the newspapers became very profitable and achieved a readership exceeding the population of Orlando. The two newspapers eventually merged to form the current *Orlando Sentinel*. Richard E. Foglesong, *Married to the Mouse: Walt Disney World and Orlando* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 17–26.

²² The Interstate Highway System, approved by President Dwight Eisenhower and Congress in June of 1956, launched an era of expressway building across the country of over 40,000 miles of interstate highways. Mark H. Rose and Raymond A. Mohl, *Interstate: Express Highway Politics, 1939-2009*. (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2012), ix; Joshua Cannon, “Huntsville, the Highway, and Urban Redevelopment: The Long Road to Connect Downtown Huntsville, Alabama to the Interstate Highway System,” *Journal of Planning History* 11, no. 1 (February 2012): 29, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1538513211425205>.

²³ Rose and Mohl, *Interstate: Express Highway Politics*, 96–97.

²⁴ Rose and Mohl, 103–4.

and economic influence, generally wealthier white residents, at the expense of ethnic minorities and poorer residents.²⁵ For example, in the 1950s and 1960s, white residents in New Orleans, using lawsuits, successfully resisted the proposed Riverfront Expressway project of an elevated eight-lane expressway through the historic French Quarter. Yet, during the same period, black residents along North Claiborne Avenue unsuccessfully resisted an elevated highway through their community. Adding insult to injury, opponents of the Riverfront Expressway stated Claiborne could “be developed to the limit, with at least two upper levels.” By the 1970s, the construction of Interstate 10 devastated the Claiborne community and created a concrete jungle in the shadows of the elevated highway.²⁶

Parramore and Interstate 4 share in this narrative. By 1957, highway planners routed the then known Orlando-Winter Park Expressway, through downtown Orlando, encroaching eastern portions of Parramore between Gore Avenue and Colonial Drive.²⁷ Yet, while cities like New Orleans had been planning expressway routes since the 1950s or even earlier, actual construction began in the late 1960s and early 1970s due to construction delays or organized resistance. However, in Orlando, construction occurred quickly, giving little time for organized resistance such as the Citizens Expressway Association to delay or prevent construction. Despite planning as early as 1953 and public involvement as early as 1957, by July 7, 1961, road engineers established the first connection between Orlando and Haines City with further completion to

²⁵ Shelton, *Power Moves*, 2, 7, 13.

²⁶ The Riverfront Expressway originated from a 1946 plan by New York highway builder Robert Moses. In 1969 with multiple lawsuits, the Department of Transportation terminated the project. The Claiborne Avenue area had been known for its magnificent old oak trees, but highway builders cut down the oaks and constructed Interstate 10 before anyone could even organize or protest. Rose and Mohl, *Interstate: Express Highway Politics*, 105–6.

²⁷ The original stretch of the Orlando-Winter Park Expressway ran from the intersection of Orange Blossom Trail and 33rd Street southwest of downtown north to Lee Road in Winter Park. “Expressway Called Solution to Traffic Tangles,” *Orlando Evening Star*, April 23, 1957.

Tampa by March of 1962.²⁸ Similar to the Claiborne community, Interstate 4 reinforced the racial boundaries that originated with the railroad during the 1880s, dividing black and white Orlando and separating Parramore from downtown.²⁹ Thus, while black voices remained largely silent, even ordinary white property owners saw their concerns fail to sway the rerouting of the highway.

The Battle over Urban Renewal

Yet, the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and citizen activism brought more black voices to the table on important issues. In the early 1960s, Orlando Mayor Robert Carr enlarged The Interracial Committee to twenty-four members with a balance of twelve white and black members to advise the mayor on race relations. While complete integration in Orlando developed slowly and gradually, integration came with persistence from black leaders to hold city leaders accountable. For instance, a planned demonstration in 1962 that threatened to disrupt downtown businesses saw the city's businessmen promise black leaders greater opportunities of employment for blacks.³⁰ While increased power did not guarantee black residents more success in achieving their demands, it did assure they would have a voice and a seat at the table.

One of the early examples of effective infrastructural citizenship in Parramore involved the debate over urban renewal in Orlando in the early 1960s. Various federal legislation between 1949 and 1954 committed at least two-thirds of federal funding to local 'slum clearance' and rebuilding projects. Urban renewal sought to accomplish two objectives: demolish unsightly

²⁸ "Expressway Called Solution to Traffic Tangles"; C. E. Wright, "Florida Crossroad: Express Highway Links Orlando and Tampa," *New York Times*, March 11, 1962; Eve Bacon, *Orlando: A Centennial History*, vol. 2 (Chuluota, Fla: The Mickler House, Publishers, 1977), 237.

²⁹ Porter, "Segregation and Desegregation," 309.

³⁰ Porter, 301-2; "Carr Appoints 24 to Expand Bi-Racial Body," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 12, 1963.

dwellings in the city center and replace them with hotels, civic centers and highways to revitalize the area, which often impacted lower-income black communities. For instance, in Atlanta, urban renewal between 1957 and 1967 saw the demolition of 21,000 housing units mostly occupied by blacks, while only constructing 5,000 public housing units for displaced residents. City officials reserved renewal lands for a stadium, civic center and acres of parking lots.³¹ A constant theme of urban renewal involved demolition occurring swiftly, but being slow to replace housing for the displaced, creating housing crises for thousands of individuals, especially low-income black residents.³²

On May 29, 1961, Florida passed urban renewal legislation granting Orlando officials police power to act for the protection of the health, safety, morals, and welfare of the residents of Orlando. The city defined areas that served as focal centers of disease and juvenile delinquency along with areas that consumed an excessive proportion of the city's revenue (i.e. police, fire) into three separate projects that would be completed in an eleven-year period.³³ Holden-Callahan, considered the most blighted area of Orlando, became the only officially defined project, Project One. However, in the general plan area, nearly ninety percent of those impacted would be black residents as the area contained eighty-four percent of Orlando's total black population.³⁴ Mayor Carr became the chief advocate for urban renewal, receiving endorsements

³¹ David R. Goldfield, "Black Political Power and Public Policy in the Urban South," in *Urban Policy in Twentieth-Century America*, ed. Arnold Richard Hirsch and Raymond A. Mohl (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 166; Kent B. Germany, *New Orleans after the Promises* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2007), 183–84.

³² Connolly, *A World More Concrete*, 261.

³³ The legislation, passed without the governor's signature, is stated as Chapter 61-2603, Florida Statutes, Special Acts of 1961, shortened to Orlando Urban Renewal Law. As Orlando appealed for federal funding, the city planned three separate projects with a total cost estimated at \$21,500,000. Paul Douglass, *Urban Renewal in Orlando: The Political Behavior of a Community* (Winter Park, Fla: Center for Practical Politics, Rollins College, 1965), 2–3.

³⁴ The total project proposed three separate projects, with Holden-Callahan as the first project. Holden-Callahan consisted of the area bounded by Anderson Street to the north, Interstate 4 and Atlanta Avenue to the east, Gore

from Orlando's power structure including the Downtown Orlando Council, Inc., the Greater Orlando Chamber of Commerce, Z.L Riley of the Negro Chamber of Commerce along with the *Orlando Sentinel*.³⁵

Yet, three of the city's four commissioners, led by John B. Newsom, opposed the mayor's agenda. Additionally, A. Henry Hoche, a white property owner and the president of the West Orlando Improvement Association (WOIA), organized opposition among impacted property owners in the renewal area. In mounting a campaign, Newsom and Hoche focused on the spoken word, public meetings, letters to property owners, handbills and the public debate that appealed to both white and black residents, especially property owners.³⁶ They argued against the use of federal funding to solve local problems that could be handled through enforcement of housing codes and property owners taking initiative through the commencement of clean-up and building programs.³⁷ Proponents charged that many leading the charge acted as slumlords who had failed to bring their properties up to code and argued that local code enforcement would not bring about adequate housing, streets, playgrounds and schools to the area.³⁸ Proponents and opponents made their case to the public such as appealing to the Winter Park-Orlando League of Women Voters who gave a platform to urban renewal, toured the Holden-Callahan renewal area and sent representatives to Pittsburgh to view the impacts of urban renewal there.³⁹ While not

Avenue in the south and Short Avenue and Lee Street in the west. Of the 100 acres chosen, sixty would be used for clearance and redevelopment and relocation of displaced residents. Douglass, 3, 7.

³⁵ Orlando City Council, "February 3rd Minutes," February 3, 1964, 183; Douglass, *Urban Renewal in Orlando*, 9–12.

³⁶ Douglass, *Urban Renewal in Orlando*, 20, 55; "Anti-UR Meeting Twisted," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 19, 1964.

³⁷ Sumner Rand, "Property Upgrading Requested," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 4, 1964; Douglass, *Urban Renewal in Orlando*, 22–24; Orlando City Council, "November 2nd Minutes," November 2, 1964, 182.

³⁸ George Liedel, "UR Supporters Strike Back," *Orlando Sentinel*, July 31, 1964; Elvis Lane and Carroll L. Scott, "Carr, Stuart Seek UR Votes," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 8, 1964.

³⁹ The Winter Park-Orlando League of Women Voters sought to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government as they worked to get out the vote. The organization eventually

taking a public position, the Orlando League stated that whether urban renewal occurred through federal funding or locally, community engagement would be important to improving conditions in Parramore.⁴⁰

While decades of neglect by city officials necessitated the need for improvements in Parramore, the proposed solution to use urban renewal divided an ambivalent black community. Black residents on both sides of the issue engaged in civic activism in presenting their cases before the city council during public meetings. Proponents like Dr. Isaac Manning, a local dentist who also served as the vice-chairman of the Civic Improvement Association could not see why any black person would oppose urban renewal. He stated, “if the U.S. Government can place millions of dollars on a dam in Africa, we can surely use some federal funds in our slum areas to provide decent living conditions for our people.”⁴¹ Another proponent Bernard Singleton used his column “Seeking the Truth” in the *Orlando Sentinel* in the mid-1960s to endorse urban renewal. He appealed for the black community to embrace urban renewal to beautify West Orlando and bring low rental housing and spacious recreational playgrounds and shopping areas to the community.⁴² Both men claimed to represent the majority of renters paying extortion prices for rent. Singleton presented a petition representing The Committee of Renters of 1,350

became the Orange County League of Women Voters. Ruth Smith, “LBJ Prime Gatecrasher,” *Orlando Sentinel*, April 28, 1964; “League of Women Voters Spark ‘Get Out the Vote,’” *Orlando Sentinel*, May 3, 1964; Carroll L. Scott, “Most Urban Renewal Area Buildings Rate Substandard,” *Orlando Sentinel*, June 25, 1964; “League Offers Club Speakers,” *Orlando Sentinel*, October 11, 1964.

⁴⁰ Susan Schauble, “League Discusses UR Plan,” *Orlando Evening Star*, October 15, 1964.

⁴¹ Douglass, *Urban Renewal in Orlando*, 16; “Proponents Gather on Urban Renewal,” *Orlando Sentinel*, July 28, 1964.

⁴² Bernard Singleton, “What Urban Renewal Means,” *Orlando Sentinel*, July 29, 1964.

families before the city council and cosigned by 100 families from Washington Shores who supported urban renewal.⁴³

However, other black leaders, many property owners, opposed urban renewal. Historically, the property-owning black middle class used their influence to determine the time and place for public activism and handled negotiations with white leaders for pragmatic solutions.⁴⁴ Two black ministers, Rev. J.D. Washington of the St. Mark African AME Church and Rev. Stephen White of the Mount Olive AME Church both appealed for the black community to vote against urban renewal. Washington, who frequently spoke at various meetings organized by Newsom and Hoche, stated he had been offered additional land and a new church. However, he believed that it would serve him no purpose without parishioners to fill his church in being displaced by urban renewal. He also stated that the city could make the necessary improvements without federal assistance, arguing that “everytime there is a renewal, the arrow points to us [the black community]”⁴⁵

Black property owners also used public meetings to advocate their rights as property owners. Osborne Jenkins, a black member of the WOIA, expressed the sacrifices he and his wife made to purchase their home and their fear of being forced to move, complaining of the lack of effort by city officials to clean up the area.⁴⁶ J.P. Ellis, a black contractor, believed the project

⁴³ Manning stated that the average renter in Parramore earned an average of \$3,000 a year. At an October 1964 council meeting, Newsom challenged the petition in stating individuals signed under the false impression that urban renewal would reduce rent. The council accepted the petition while acknowledging the concern of the validity of signatures. Orlando City Council, “October 5th Minutes,” October 5, 1964, 156; Bruce Dudley, “Renewal Proposal Discussed,” *Orlando Sentinel*, August 26, 1964; Carroll C. Scott, “Council Accepts Negro Petition of UR Project,” *Orlando Sentinel*, October 6, 1964.

⁴⁴ Connolly, *A World More Concrete*, 11.

⁴⁵ Bob Bischof, “Renewal Area Land Owners Get Petition,” *Orlando Sentinel*, September 25, 1964; “Anti-UR Meeting Twisted.”

⁴⁶ Dudley, “Renewal Proposal Discussed.”

continued a cycle since World War II to remove blacks from downtown and argued the relocation funding did not sufficiently help blacks look for property elsewhere in Orlando.⁴⁷

Mabel Richardson, a civic leader, even presented a petition of 175 homeowners and nearly 1,300 signatures of residents opposed to urban renewal arguing the project would not eliminate all dilapidated areas in Parramore and only served the interests of downtown businessmen, rather than the black community.⁴⁸

On election day on November 3, 1964, with over fifty-eight percent of Orlando's registered voters participating, voters overwhelmingly defeated the urban renewal referendum by nearly sixty-seven percent. Of Orlando's thirty-three precincts, only the all-black Precinct 25 composed of Washington Shores residents voted in favor of urban renewal with fifty-seven percent.⁴⁹ In an era when disenfranchised black voters faced discriminatory practices by white local and state officials, black voting turnout remained lower compared to white voters. Within the city's thirty-three precincts, only six precincts contained black registered voters of which blacks formed a majority in four of these six. Precincts 5, 6, 7 and 14 encompassed Parramore and despite lower turnout by black registered voters, those who did vote opposed urban renewal.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ George Liedel, "Renewal Foes Rap Plan," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 9, 1964.

⁴⁸ "New Voter Campaign Launched," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 3, 1962; "Carr Appoints 24 to Expand Bi-Racial Body"; Orlando City Council, "September 14th Minutes," September 14, 1964, 134; "Anti-UR Meeting Twisted."

⁴⁹ Precinct 25 served as the only precinct where black voters represented the total number of voters. Douglass, *Urban Renewal in Orlando*, 51; Carroll L. Scott, "Urban Renewal Beaten 2-To-1 in City Voting," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 4, 1964.

⁵⁰ Precincts 5, 6, 7, 13, 14 and 25 contained black registered voters. Blacks comprised most of the registered voters in Precincts 5, 6, 14 and 25. However, in Precinct 6, the ratio of black-to-white registered voters is closer than the other precincts where blacks had a wider majority. Precinct 25 represented the only majority black precinct where over forty percent of registered voters casted a vote. Sixty-two percent of voters opposed urban renewal in Precinct 5, compared to fifty-seven against in Precinct 6, sixty-five against in Precinct 7 and seventy-four against in Precinct 14. Based on the analysis of the election from Douglass between pages 51 and 52. Douglass, *Urban Renewal in Orlando*, 51.

However, the motivations for voting against urban renewal differed between white and black voters. Efforts by white landlords, who owned much of the property in Parramore, to resist urban renewal mirrored trends in other cities. In Miami, individuals like Luther Brooks, who represented the interests of Overtown (Colored Town) slumlords in the mid-twentieth century, bitterly fought against public housing and urban renewal which threatened the profits of landlords.⁵¹ While white housing reformers saw urban renewal as a way to improve conditions in areas like Parramore, white property owners sought to defend their property rights which involved the exclusion and containment of black residents within black defined areas. Additionally, these reformers saw urban renewal as instruments of civil rights reform which drew backlash by conservative whites who opposed federal intervention in race relations.⁵² Politically, the Orange County Republican Executive Committee adopted a resolution before the election, opposing urban renewal “as unconstitutional, un-American and un-Christian.” In holding a conservative viewpoint that opposed federal intervention in local affairs and believed in personal responsibility by property owners, many white voters supported Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater who also denounced urban renewal. In a majority-white county, Orange County supported Goldwater with fifty-six percent of the vote.⁵³

Yet, black voters had different motivations. For black property owners seeking to exercise their property rights, Connolly points out that white supremacy ironically could offer them a degree of defense against state officials looking to carry out their own racially inflected urban redevelopment projects.⁵⁴ As many viewed urban renewal as ‘negro removal’ black

⁵¹ Mohl, “Making the Second Ghetto in Metropolitan Miami, 1940-1960,” 415.

⁵² Connolly, *A World More Concrete*, 8, 136.

⁵³ Douglass, *Urban Renewal in Orlando*, Foreword, 39, 52-53.

⁵⁴ Connolly, *A World More Concrete*, 10.

residents in Daytona Beach simultaneously had been resisting urban renewal in forming the Citizens Taxpayers Association who took their fight to the local courts. Horace Hill, a black attorney leading the case, appealed to black Orlando residents at a local meeting to resist urban renewal, arguing “if it’s [urban renewal] so good, why not apply it to the white slums also.”⁵⁵ Many black voters in Orlando, property owners and tenants, voted against urban renewal in fearing the impact on their current status and the threat of losing their homes and connection to their community including churches. Homeowners worried about higher mortgages while renters worried about higher rents and their employers cutting their wages due to living in public housing.⁵⁶ While white opponents likely appealed to black voters for their selfish purposes, as the population most impacted by urban renewal, the referendum served as an opportunity for black Parramore residents to participate in the public sphere.

East-West Expressway and Desegregation in Parramore

Still, Parramore would continue to face infrastructural threats in the name of progress for Orlando such as the construction of the East-West Expressway (State Highway 408) during the early 1970s. While both proposed routes impacted Parramore, the chosen route would have devastating effects on the community by doing what many residents feared urban renewal would do in displacing them from their homes and community. Ironically and perhaps purposefully, the route along Anderson Street happened to be the northern boundary of the Holden-Callahan project, considered the most blighted area of Orlando during the failed urban renewal

⁵⁵ Despite some earlier successes in stalling urban renewal in Daytona Beach, the Citizens Taxpayers Association’s efforts proved unsuccessful with various urban renewal projects completed by 1973 and various families relocated from the renewal area. “Newsom, Lawyer Give Renewal Opposition,” *Orlando Sentinel*, September 1, 1964; Norman Wolfe, “Arguments Due This Morning; Deadline Near,” *Orlando Sentinel*, June 6, 1964; Beth Barlow, “Official Revisits Rocky Road to Urban Renewal,” *Orlando Sentinel*, July 11, 1973.

⁵⁶ Liedel, “Renewal Foes Rap Plan.”

referendum. By 1974, the expressway would split the Holden neighborhood in two. Overall, including Parramore, the expressway displaced about 410 homeowners and 700 renters, over 1,250 properties, eighty businesses and six churches, including St. Mark's A.M.E. that Rev. Washington had worried about losing during the urban renewal fight.⁵⁷

The need for additional expressways arose as the Orlando area experienced rapid growth. With no additional federal funding for additional expressways and seeking to address current and future traffic issues, civic leaders turned to toll roads with the creation of the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority (OOCEA) in 1963. Additional developments such as the opening of a Naval Training Center and Florida Technological University in 1968 along with the opening of Disney World in late 1971 helped accelerate this need.⁵⁸ Seeking to alleviate traffic on State Road 50 (Colonial Drive), engineers proposed two routes in the mid-1960s, a northern route estimated at \$82.5 million with more costly right-of-way that remained close to Colonial Drive versus a southern route near the business district that cost \$58.7 million with cheaper right-of-way costs.⁵⁹ While the expressway did face some resistance from conservationists opposed to the

⁵⁷ Porter, "Segregation and Desegregation," 309–10; Jerrell H. Shofner, *Building a Community: The History of the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority* (Orlando, Fla.: Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority, 2001), 25, 31.

⁵⁸ Florida Technological University is now the University of Central Florida. By 1970, the Orlando metropolitan area had grown to over 428,000 people. Within Orlando, the population grew to nearly 100,000 people as black residents made up nearly 30,000 of the city's population. Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census of Population*, Vol. 1, Part 11, (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1973), 74; Shofner, *Building a Community*, 7, 18–19, 24.

⁵⁹ The northern route began near Powers Drive and would parallel SR 50 eastward, intersecting with SR 50 past Magnolia Avenue and again past S.R. 436 before rejoining SR 50 past Goldenrod Road. The total distance consisted of 12.9 miles with estimated right-of-way costs at \$39.1 million. The southern route would start near Powers Drive and turn south near the business district to run along Anderson Street through the Holden neighborhood, crossing over Lake Underhill before rejoining SR 50 west of Union Park. The total distance consisted of 13.3 miles with estimated right-of-way costs at 24.7 million. Shofner, 19, 21–22.

expressway design over Lake Underhill, the major debates centered around anxious property owners worried about their homes along with assisting displaced renters.⁶⁰

Generally excluded from the discussions of Interstate 4 during the late 1950s, black influence played a more significant role during this era. As the expressway would impact Parramore, residents would employ principles of infrastructural citizenship to have their concerns heard. Originally, the OOCEA planned the construction of the expressway to begin in Parramore with demolitions scheduled to occur in the Carter Street, Long Street, and Avondale Avenue area by August of 1971 near the first appraised properties west of Interstate 4.⁶¹ However, John Rushing, the executive director of the OOCEA announced the start of demolition in the Azalea Park area as the agency faced difficulties in buying property in the Carter Street area. One of the key issues in the delay centered on the protests of some black property owners who believed appraisers offered lower prices for their properties compared to white residents.⁶²

Residents utilized public meetings and court litigation to voice their grievances and strategize on how to achieve fairer appraisal rates. At a meeting at Saint Paul's A.M.E. Church in June of 1971, various speakers such as Horace Orr, a former official of the Office of Economic Opportunity and his former assistant Tim Adams urged property owners to band together and

⁶⁰ As the design plans called for a bridge to be built over the entire lake, opponents complained that the silt and future runoff would destroy the lake's water quality and pose a hazard to recreational activities on the lake. The Sierra Club led by Suzanne Buie and Bruce Barnhill filed an injunction preventing the city from selling land near Lake Underhill for the purpose of the expressway, but the courts rejected the suit and the expressway continued as planned. Shofner, 24, 30.

⁶¹ Officials divided the appraisal project into three main sections: Powers Drive to Parramore, Parramore to Sylvia Lane, and Sylvia Lane to S.R. 50. The first initial thirty-five appraised parcels happened in Parramore by August of 1970 in the area bounded by Long Street to the north, Carter Street to the south, Division Street to the east and Parramore Avenue to the west. "Appraisal Work Starts For East-West X-Way," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 30, 1970; "Expressway Demolition Begins in Late August," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 6, 1971.

⁶² Tom Hinkle, "Expressway Demolition to Begin," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 2, 1971; Judy Huggins, "House Moving Project Could Yield \$1 Million," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 20, 1971.

refuse offers from the OOCEA by seeking better rates through condemnation suits. Rev. William Davis Judge, the pastor of the Antioch Primitive Baptist Church, advocated pooling resources and going to court to fight the low offers for black properties. Judge stated, “The value of black homes are [sic] much above what is being offered...The authority will save thousands in the black area and whites will get fair value for their homes.” Rudolph Rountree, a black resident of Winter Park who owned a warehouse, bar and beauty shop in Parramore stated the OOCEA only offered him \$12,000 for property he valued at \$75,000.⁶³

The OOCEA failed to send a representative to the meeting at St. Paul’s, only sending Waddell Suns, a black acquisition agent, to read a letter from Colonel Rushing. Rushing’s letter stated the authority would listen to individual questions or meet with a delegation but refused a mass meeting because of the emotional nature of the issue.⁶⁴ Black residents successfully demanded a meeting with the OOCEA which Mayor Carl Langford arranged as a special hearing on June 30. Athalie Range, the director of the state’s Community Affairs Department and the first black appointee to a governor’s cabinet attended the meeting.⁶⁵ More than 100 citizens including Rountree attended the meeting, denouncing unfair property appraisals, insufficient relocation funds, and racist housing policies. The meeting ended with assurances from Range along with James B. Greene, the chairman of the OOCEA to assist with residents’ demands.⁶⁶

Yet, the most pressing issue involved renters seeking to relocate. Since the East-West Expressway developed as a local project ineligible for federal funding and due to limited funding

⁶³ Newspaper articles mistakenly misspelled Rountree as Roundtree. “East-West Offers Ignored,” *Orlando Sentinel*, June 17, 1971.

⁶⁴ “East-West Offers Ignored”; Roy Scott, “Blacks Want Meeting On X-Way Appraisals,” *Orlando Sentinel*, June 21, 1971.

⁶⁵ Huggins, “House Moving Project Could Yield \$1 Million”; Connolly, *A World More Concrete*, 233.

⁶⁶ James Bacchus, “Expressway Appraisals Hit,” *Orlando Sentinel*, July 1, 1971.

from local entities, the OOCEA initially possessed no relocation funds for displaced residents. However, by September of 1971, the Florida Department of Transportation notified the OOCEA that \$2 million would be made available to aid the displaced.⁶⁷ Still, lower-income residents, many of them black, faced challenges in finding affordable public housing in Orange and Seminole counties due to racism, age restrictions, or facilities that would allow children. In some extreme cases, some landlords after selling their property to the OOCEA continued to rent and even lease to admit new tenants before local newspapers reported the practice. By November 1972, officials had relocated all displaced residents at an estimated cost of a \$1.6 million.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, construction of the expressway shuffled thousands of families in its path, including Parramore residents who left never to return. Opportunities for newer homes, better schools, and more convenient shopping saw former Parramore residents venture into new areas like Pine Hills in western Orange County that allowed them to remain close to their historic roots in Parramore.⁶⁹

The expressway construction coincided with the impact of school desegregation in Orlando. While desegregation created new opportunities and experiences for African Americans educationally, the impacts of desegregation severely compromised the communal bonds that black residents possessed. Jerome Morris states the communal bond that schools had in the black

⁶⁷ Dick Marlowe, "Expressway 'Refugee' Problem Under Study," *Orlando Sentinel*, April 26, 1971; "\$2 Million Set in Expressway Relocation Fund," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 21, 1971.

⁶⁸ Tom Hinkle, "Low Income Family Housing Demand Far Exceeds Supply In Two Counties," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 1, 1971; David Wilkening, "Housing: 100 Families Face Crisis," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 13, 1972; "Most Expressway-Ousted Families Finding Homes," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 7, 1972; Shofner, *Building a Community*, 31–32.

⁶⁹ Pine Hills formed in the 1950s and 1960s as a community that appealed to working-class whites. However, by the 1970s, with Congress outlawing housing discrimination and the effects of desegregated schools, working-class blacks began moving into Pine Hills. By the 1980s, with white flight, Pine Hills shifted from an all-white suburb to a predominately black community. Jeff Kunerth, "Blacks Move In, Move Up," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 2, 2006.

community with members providing financial support and maintaining a physical presence.⁷⁰ In 1960, three schools served the Parramore community, yet by the late 1970s, only one remained in operation.⁷¹ A federal desegregation order enforced in 1972 saw the closure of Parramore's two elementary schools, Callahan and Holden Street as elementary students in Parramore would be bused to outside schools. School officials specifically stated that the East-West Expressway and industrialization in the area made Holden Elementary unsuitable as a school site.⁷² As schools have served as one of the preeminent institutions within the black community, these closures significantly damaged Parramore's identity. This followed national trends of desegregation closing or downgrading many historically black schools in urban areas. For example, in Tampa, a 1971 court-ordered plan to desegregate Hillsborough County's schools resulted in the disproportionate busing of black students and the closing of Blake and Middleton as high schools into a seventh-grade center and junior high respectively.⁷³

Jones High also faced questions over its future. Yet, the mobilization of the community helped to preserve the school. In the early 1950s, after a suit by black leaders, Orange County school officials appropriated \$1 million for a new school as the school relocated west to its

⁷⁰ Jerome E. Morris, "A Pillar of Strength: An African American School's Communal Bonds with Families and Community Since Brown," *Urban Education* 33, no. 5 (January 1999): 587, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085999335003>.

⁷¹ The Orlando Negro Chamber of Commerce, "Business Directory 1960-1961," 66.

⁷² Callahan Elementary, which closed in 1971, served black students from as far as Lake and Osceola counties. Holden Street Elementary closed in 1972. Charlie Jean, "Two Plans 'Radically' Different," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 10, 1971; Randy Ziffer, "Callahan School Given Reprieve from Wrecker," *Orlando Sentinel*, January 27, 1981; Mark Schlueb, "School Can't Shake Critics," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 24, 2001; Sherri M. Owens, "Wanted: A School of Their Own," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 30, 1997.

⁷³ Barbara J. Shircliffe, "Desegregation and the Historically Black High School: The Establishment of Howard W. Blake in Tampa, Florida," *The Urban Review* 34, no. 2 (June 2002): 137, 140, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015362316709>.

current site in 1952 located just outside the confines of Parramore.⁷⁴ Yet, desegregation, white flight, and the impact of the East-West Expressway saw enrollment decline from 1,900 students in 1969 to under 700 by 1974.⁷⁵ In 1970, facing federal pressure to integrate, a random drawing to reassign teachers in Orange County resulted in Jones losing many of its best staff to other schools. While having a predominantly white teaching staff, the student body never truly integrated as white parents found ways to circumvent efforts to send their children to the school.⁷⁶ As rumors of the school's closing caused an uproar within the black community, proposals to convert Jones into a vocational-technical school equally angered parents as they fought to prevent Jones from becoming a 'second-rate' school. Principal Wilbur Gray expressed the need to rezone the school's boundary lines west to incorporate black students displaced by the expressway.⁷⁷ Despite constant rumors over the status of Jones in the 1970s, residents experienced success as Jones remained an academically-focused high school as enrollment began to slowly increase.⁷⁸

Community Mobilization in Black Orlando

As blacks nationally had slowly been influencing the public sphere, the 1970s and integration allowed black residents to expand more openly into the political system. In many metropolitan areas across the country, including the South, the effects of white flight to the

⁷⁴ Located west of Orange Blossom Trail and north of Gore Avenue, the school site had been originally zoned within a white occupied zoned area, but with protests from white property owners, the city rezoned the area for black occupancy. The old site of Jones High became Callahan Elementary and today currently is the Callahan Neighborhood Center. Orlando City Council, "June 8th Minutes," June 8, 1950; Orlando City Council, "August 30th Minutes," August 30, 1950; Argrett, *Black Community of Orlando*, 31–32; Clark, *Orlando, Florida*, 53.

⁷⁵ "Teachers Assured No Jones Closing," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 4, 1973; Sharon Marek, "Jones High Supporters to Fight School Plan," *Orlando Sentinel*, May 7, 1974.

⁷⁶ Nancy Feigenbaum, "A 100-Year History Lesson at Jones," *Orlando Sentinel*, January 22, 1995.

⁷⁷ "Blacks Want Jones High, But Not as Second-Rate," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 10, 1973; Marek, "Jones High Supporters to Fight School Plan."

⁷⁸ Feigenbaum, "A 100-Year History Lesson at Jones."

suburbs saw black political power in cities increase. Yet, this process differed city by city. For instance, in pre-black majority Atlanta, the city relied on a biracial political coalition between upper-class whites and middle-class blacks in handling city affairs. After blacks became the majority in 1970 and elected the first black mayor and majority council in 1973, the alliance continued to be led by the black middle class. On the other hand, in pre-black majority Memphis, the E.H. Crump political machine, with noteworthy support from the black community, dominated Memphis politics in the early twentieth century until 1954. However, by the 1960s, a coalition of conservative whites rejected an alliance with blacks and preyed on racial prejudices of working-class whites. Even as blacks represented just under half the city's population by the 1980s, it took until 1991 to elect a majority black council and the first black mayor after becoming a majority in the city.⁷⁹

In Orlando, blacks never became the majority of the city's population and beyond Ernest Page serving forty days as mayor during the suspension of Buddy Dyer in 2005, no other African American has served or been elected as mayor of Orlando.⁸⁰ Still, black residents in Orlando fought for increased political power and influence by advocating for a fairer system of electing representatives. In the early 1970s, black leaders argued for expanding the number of city commissioners from four to six. Additionally, they argued for single-member districts where commissioners would only be elected by residents who lived within the district versus at-large voting citywide. Leaders like Rev. Jack Mitchell, the leader of the local Congress of Racial

⁷⁹ Silver and Moeser, *The Separate City*, ix, 11, 172, 181–82; Kruse, *White Flight*, 12.

⁸⁰ On March 11, 2005, in facing felony violations of state election laws, Governor Jeb Bush suspended Mayor Dyer. Six weeks later, after being cleared of charges, Dyer returned to office, preventing the need for a special election. Orlando City Council, "April 25th Minutes," April 25, 2005, 2; Orlando City Council, "March 21st Minutes," March 21, 2005, 1–2; Abby Goodnough, "Orlando Mayor Is Cleared of Election Law Violation," *New York Times*, April 21, 2005.

Equality (CORE) argued that “the existing system was devised to disenfranchise minority groups.” While blacks composed nearly thirty percent of the population, blacks had failed to elect a single black commissioner. Yet, the city council in 1971 voted three to two against placing the issue for a referendum.⁸¹ In 1972, Pappy Kennedy became the first black city council member elected to represent the predominantly black District 4 which included Washington Shores; he would be reelected in 1976 by a large margin of 10,000 votes.⁸²

Despite electing one black commissioner, black leaders remained unsatisfied and continued to call for single-member districts. Albert Nelson, a member of the city’s advisory committee on redistricting stated, “Pappy Kennedy won because he was Pappy Kennedy and he got support from blacks and whites...But if he doesn’t run for re-election in 1980, there’s no guarantee that we’ll have a black commissioner.”⁸³ While Kennedy represented a large portion of Orlando’s black populace during the 1970s, this did not include Parramore. As part of District 3, white commissioners still represented Parramore.⁸⁴ During the 1978 election year, Parramore residents expressed their discontent with commissioner Bob Keith, their commissioner since 1974, in failing to work on behalf of blacks within his district. Keith would go on to lose reelection in 1978 to Tom Brownlee, another white commissioner.⁸⁵ By 1977, the issue regained momentum with unanimous support by a special citizens committee who recommended the plan

⁸¹ “Electing City Council Members by Districts a Progressive Idea,” *Orlando Sentinel*, June 25, 1971; James Bacchus, “Racial Overtones Increase in Discussion of Proposals to Redistrict Orlando,” *Orlando Sentinel*, August 1, 1971.

⁸² Mildred A. Williams, “Orlando May Honor 1st Black Official,” *Orlando Sentinel*, October 16, 1985.

⁸³ Larry Lipman, “Blacks Flexing Political Muscles,” *Orlando Sentinel*, November 3, 1977.

⁸⁴ “Group Wants to Hear Commissioner Keith,” *Orlando Sentinel*, March 8, 1978.

⁸⁵ “Group Wants to Hear Commissioner Keith”; Patricia Newton, “Callahan Neighborhood Association Criticizes Incumbent,” *Orlando Sentinel*, September 27, 1978; Craig Dezern, “Ex-Commissioner Bob Keith Dies at 59,” *Orlando Sentinel*, October 28, 1987.

to the city council. With approval for a referendum, in November of 1978, voters soundly voted in favor of expanding to six commissioners, with Districts 5 and 6 designed to ensure a black majority.⁸⁶ Since 1980, as part of District 5, Parramore has been represented by three black commissioners: Napoleon “Nap” Ford (1980-1998), Daisy Lynum (1998-2014), and Regina Hill (2014 to present).⁸⁷

By 1980, most of Orlando’s black population lived in the southwest portions of the city, west of Interstate 4. Yet, while black political power increased in Orlando with various black officials rising to positions of influence, Parramore no longer contained the bulk of the city’s black population. After a peak population of nearly 18,000 in 1960, Parramore’s population dropped to under 10,000 by 1980 and by 2010 had just over 6,000 residents, a decline of nearly two thirds.⁸⁸ While Parramore helped cultivate black leadership, the impacts of desegregation had allowed more affluent blacks to explore the ‘greener pastures’ beyond Parramore such as Washington Shores and Pine Hills. Thus, while many former residents sought to remain connected to Parramore, the remnant of those left behind, many low-income renters, lacked the economic and political power to overcome the challenges that Parramore would face moving forward. With the city, landlords and private investors owning much of the property in the neighborhood, Parramore over time has dealt with significant intrusions.

⁸⁶ The mayor would continue to be elected citywide. Lipman, “Blacks Flexing Political Muscles”; Melanie Bowman, “6-Commissioner Council Urged by Committee,” *Orlando Sentinel*, November 11, 1977; “Landslide Vote OKs 2-Man Council Expansion,” *Orlando Sentinel*, November 11, 1978.

⁸⁷ Sherri M. Owens, “Nap Ford Leaves Legacy of Change,” *Orlando Sentinel*, June 1, 1998; Mark Schlueb, “Lynum Lauded at Final Orlando Council Meeting,” *Orlando Sentinel*, May 13, 2014.

⁸⁸ Porter, “Segregation and Desegregation,” 311; Center for Promise, “Parramore, Orlando: Leveraging Local Strengths” (America’s Promise Alliance, 2015), 3, https://www.americaspromise.org/sites/default/files/d8/APA_PKZ_C1_R2_HR.pdf; Larry Lipman, “Blacks Zoned into Southwest Part of City,” *Orlando Sentinel*, July 23, 1978.

During the late 1970s, in filling the vacuum that existed in Parramore in dealing with common neighborhood problems such as drainage and community rejuvenation, concerned residents such as Georgia Woodley and Mary Alice Drew spearheaded the creation of the Callahan Neighborhood Association (CNA) in September of 1977. The association promoted personal responsibility from homeowners, tenants, and absentee landlords, assigning block captains to motivate residents with members paying annual \$2 membership dues for neighborhood purposes.⁸⁹ Their efforts in 1979 helped the city to allocate over \$1.6 million to install an adequate drainage system, repave streets and build sidewalks over the next few years.⁹⁰ Their impact would in later years inspire other neighborhood associations such as the Holden-Parramore Community Association as well as two associations in Eola Heights.⁹¹

Battles Over Commercialization

The main mission of the CNA involved protecting the residential character of the Callahan neighborhood as the association engaged in principles of infrastructural citizenship through protesting, being active in public meetings, lobbying city officials and occasionally using court litigation. However, their vision of protecting the neighborhood's residential nature conflicted with the vision of city officials and private investors who saw Parramore as prime real estate to expand the downtown area.⁹² Historically, the liberalism of the 1930s New Deal era to the Great Society era of the 1960s saw massive federal investment into urban areas. In cities like Atlanta, federal funding from urban renewal removed lower-class whites and blacks from the

⁸⁹ Larry Lipman, "Callahan's Homes Get 'Boost' Club," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 8, 1977; Sarah Tippit, "Neighborhood Keeps Activist's Memory Alive," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 30, 1989; "Callahan Group Receives Answers, Asks for More," *Orlando Sentinel*, May 3, 1978.

⁹⁰ Patricia Newton, "Dusty Summer Forecast for Callahan Residents," *Orlando Sentinel*, April 4, 1979.

⁹¹ Goldie Blumenstyk, "Callahan Association a Role Model," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 29, 1984.

⁹² Lipman, "Callahan's Homes Get 'Boost' Club."

core of the downtown and redeveloped the area for stadiums, civic centers, university buildings, and middle and upper-class housing which largely remained inaccessible to former residents.⁹³ Yet, with the New Right conservatism beginning with Richard Nixon in the late 1960s which accelerated under Ronald Reagan, the federal government transferred more power to states and local governments and encouraged the use of private investment into low-income areas by providing tax incentives.⁹⁴ In Florida, the Community Redevelopment Act of 1969 allowed cities to use condemnation or eminent domain powers to acquire property in ‘slum or blighted areas’ for rehabilitation to sell to private developers. It became a state law in 1977.⁹⁵ Additionally, in 1980, Florida endorsed ‘enterprise districts’ to provide tax incentives to investors who built businesses in lower-income areas. Orlando classified four state districts, all in black areas: Callahan, Holden, Washington Shores and Carver Shores.⁹⁶

The ‘right to the city’ dominated battles in Parramore as progressive scholars like David Harvey states that these conflicts are often narrowly defined by small political or economic elite seeking control over cities.⁹⁷ In Parramore’s case, while claiming their rights as citizens in protecting the residential nature of their community, most residents did not own their property

⁹³ Larry Keating, *Atlanta: Race, Class, and Urban Expansion* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 3.

⁹⁴ Raymond A. Mohl, “Shifting Patterns of American Urban Policy Since 1900,” in *Urban Policy in Twentieth-Century America*, ed. Arnold Richard Hirsch and Raymond A. Mohl (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 29.

⁹⁵ Goldie Blumenstyk, “Orlando to Look at Redevelopment Questions Today,” *Orlando Sentinel*, January 24, 1983; “Community Redevelopment Act,” 163.335 Fla. Stat. § (1977), 724.

⁹⁶ Jim Nesbitt, “Orlando Wants ‘Enterprise District,’” *Orlando Sentinel*, October 20, 1982.

⁹⁷ French philosopher Henry Lefebvre coined the term ‘right to the city’ in his 1968 book *Le droit à la ville* which became translated into English in 1996. He defines the term as a transformed and renewed right to urban life. David Harvey, “The Right to the City,” *New Left Review*, II, no. 53 (October 2008): 38, <https://newleftreview.org/II/53/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city>; Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 6, 158; Kafui A. Attoh, “What Kind of Right Is the Right to the City?,” *Progress in Human Geography* 35, no. 5 (October 2011): 674, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132510394706>.

with absentee landlords and the city possessed and controlled large portions of the neighborhood. However, despite their status, Callahan and Holden residents did not let this restrict them from being part of the public dialogue as the residents who lived in the community and would face the impacts of decisions by city officials. In seeking to protect their community's interests, residents in Parramore engaged in citizen activism to voice their opinions, advocate for community needs, amend city proposals and in some cases, impede developments that threatened the residential nature of the community.

In June of 1982, the city proposed a tax increment financing plan that sought to use frozen tax rates within the Holden and Callahan neighborhood to raise money for redevelopment projects. However, the controversial part of the plan included the ability of the city to condemn small plots to put together larger parcels for sale or lease to private investors.⁹⁸ Despite residents of Holden and Callahan gaining a three-week delay for the city to fully consider the impact on their community, the city council eventually approved the plan in July. After the city drafted a "trust us" resolution, residents demanded a stronger city ordinance that promised that no mass displacement would occur. Though the city passed an ordinance the next month to that effect, individuals like CNA president Woodley feared a future council could easily overturn the ordinance.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Under the plan, property taxes that would be paid to the city, Orange County, the Downtown Development Board, and the water management district would be frozen at the 1982 level for the 500-acre district of Holden and Callahan. Increased property taxes raised from new developments, additions to existing properties and increases in property values would be placed in a trust fund and used to pay for redevelopment projects which estimated to raised \$20 million over the next decade. Jim Robison, "Don't Force Us to Move, Blacks Say," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 15, 1982; Goldie Blumenstyk, "Downtown Plan Gets Green Light," *Orlando Sentinel*, July 13, 1982.

⁹⁹ Blumenstyk, "Downtown Plan Gets Green Light"; Harry Straight, "Meeting Disappoints Downtown Plan Foes," *Orlando Sentinel*, July 8, 1982; Goldie Blumenstyk, "Redevelopment, and Opposition, Proceeds," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 1, 1982; Orlando City Council, "August 16th Minutes," August 16, 1982.

Additionally, residents utilized the legal system. From 1982 to 1986, Jay Rose, an attorney with the Greater Orlando Area Legal Service (GOALS), provided legal representation to the CNA.¹⁰⁰ Together, the association and Rose engaged in constant battles with city officials and outside entities in making their voices heard. For instance, in the early 1980s, city officials sought to build a luxury downtown hotel in the Callahan area, requesting \$1.5 million from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to write provisions to employ a majority of neighborhood residents and lower-income residents in the Orlando area. Yet, residents argued that the hotel would hurt residents by driving up land prices and displacing Callahan residents. As absentee landlords owned ninety percent of homes in this period of the early 1980s, residents argued that rather than seeking a grant for the hotel, the city should instead focus on fixing homes in the neighborhood. In challenging the city's attempt to apply for the HUD grant, the CNA filed a complaint to HUD in June of 1983. By October, HUD rejected Orlando's request due to the city's booming economy. While Judy Kossy, a HUD staffer, stated that the department would have rejected the request even without the CNA's challenge, HUD took the CNA's challenge seriously.¹⁰¹

While the city moved forward with what became the fourteen-story Orlando Omni International Hotel, the incident demonstrated the clout of the CNA as a force to be reckoned with.¹⁰² For instance in 1985, through assistance from Rose, the association participated with a

¹⁰⁰ GOALS provided legal services to the poor. In late 1986, Rose would leave Orlando to take a post as senior housing attorney with a legal services office in Boston. His wife Melanie Malherbe, who also worked for GOALS, joined him. Robison, "Don't Force Us to Move, Blacks Say"; Blumenstyk, "Redevelopment, and Opposition, Proceeds"; Goldie Blumenstyk, "Orlando's Poor Lose Advocate Jay Rose," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 2, 1986.

¹⁰¹ Goldie Blumenstyk, "Fix Up Houses, Then Build Hotel, Residents Tell City," *Orlando Sentinel*, January 25, 1983; Jim Heaney, "HUD Rules City Economy Too Healthy for Hotel Grant," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 5, 1983.

¹⁰² Goldie Blumenstyk, "City Reserves Hotel Profits for Uses Besides Housing," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 1, 1985.

coalition of area groups in filing complaints against the Landmark Banking Corporation of Florida and Atlantic Bancorporation of Florida. These corporations, that attempted to merge with other interstate banking corporations, faced allegations of underserving various lower-income black communities in Florida. For instance, the Landmark Bank of Orlando in 1984 made \$497,000 worth of home purchase loans, but none came from Parramore; in addition, they approved forty-one home improvement loans of \$994,000 with only one being issued in Callahan. In both cases, lawyers for the coalition dropped the legal challenges after forcing both corporations to make greater commitments to lower-income people.¹⁰³

Yet, while the CNA sought to limit commercialization, property owners sought to protect their interests in Parramore. In February of 1985, through the influence of the CNA, the city council proposed rezoning areas of the Callahan neighborhood from commercial to residential, upsetting property owners who complained about not being involved in the planning, though they had received notices one year earlier.¹⁰⁴ Led by Nancy Patterson, property owners organized the Callahan Business and Property Owners Association (CBPOA) in opposing any down-zoning that would reduce their property values. Patterson believed that renters should not be involved in matters of property issues, though city leaders countered in stating that many landowners did not take their responsibilities seriously in protecting the neighborhood. By June, city officials offered

¹⁰³ Landmark Banking, at the time the sixth-largest banking holding company in Florida, sought to merge with Georgia's largest bank holding company, Citizens and Southern Georgia Corporation. Atlantic Bancorporation sought to merge with First Union Corporation. A coalition of various groups including the CNA along with the Horizons Unlimited Development Corporations Inc., the NAACP in Fort Lauderdale, and low income residents in Brevard and Sarasota counties filed these complaints. Goldie Blumenstyk, "Lawyers Say Bank Won't Lend to Blacks," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 4, 1985; Goldie Blumenstyk, "Lawyers Claims Bias, Fight Bank Merger," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 4, 1985; Goldie Blumenstyk, "Foes End Challenge to Merger," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 8, 1985.

¹⁰⁴ In 1927, the city zoned the Callahan area for industrial development and only in 1959 did the city zone most of the neighborhood as residential. John Wark, "City Plans Rezoning in Callahan Area," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 17, 1985; Goldie Blumenstyk, "Groups Clash on Callahan Growth," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 17, 1985.

a compromise plan that still restricted some commercial land uses, but not as much as the February CNA-approved plan that members had spent two years working bimonthly with city planners on. In the aftermath, CNA leader Jerome Williams stated, “I guess buildings are more important than people.”¹⁰⁵ This feeling of betrayal fed into the perception by many Parramore residents that the interests of the mostly white business and absentee landowners outweighed the opinions of black residents, who lived in the neighborhood.

Nevertheless, the most significant intrusion into Parramore since the East-West Expressway occurred from the late 1970s through the 1980s with the proposal and eventual construction of a downtown arena. Across the country, two factors motivated the construction of arenas and stadiums in central business districts (CBD) of major cities like Orlando’s Parramore neighborhood. First, city leaders sought to reverse the trends of suburbanization that saw widening disparities between central cities and more affluent suburbs regarding income, education, and housing. Cities watched as retail and recreational activities moved to the suburbs at the expense of their downtowns. Secondly, in attracting people downtown and in bringing jobs to downtown areas, CBD’s would be revitalized. For instance, in downtown Cleveland, leaders developed the Gateway Complex that housed the city’s professional baseball and basketball teams along with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame to lure people back downtown.¹⁰⁶ These

¹⁰⁵ The city sponsored meetings between the CNA and the CBPOA which pitted mostly black residents and mostly white landlords and business owners. Local newspapers described the meetings as very contentious as the city granted both sides five representatives as their lawyers could attend, but not speak at these meetings. Goldie Blumenstyk, “Residents Protest Callahan Plan,” *Orlando Sentinel*, June 19, 1985; Blumenstyk, “Groups Clash.”

¹⁰⁶ Mark S. Rosentraub, “Stadiums and Urban Space,” in *Sports, Jobs, and Taxes: The Economic Impact of Sports Teams and Stadiums*, ed. Roger G. Noll and Andrew S. Zimbalist (Washington D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), 178–79; Wilbur C. Rich, ed., *The Economics and Politics of Sports Facilities* (Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 2000), 73–74; Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, 1st edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 8.

factors applied to Orlando, yet unlike major cities like Cleveland, which already had professional teams, Orlando proposed an arena in hopes of attracting a professional team in becoming a “big league city” and for an opportunity to be known for more than just the home of Disney World.¹⁰⁷

In the late 1970s, in the Lake Dot area, Orlando officials proposed building a convention center, which included an arena, at the Exposition Park, later renamed the Orlando Centroplex. While voters in 1978 opposed a downtown location for the convention center, through approving a resort tax referendum, voters supported an idea that an arena could be built together with the convention center away from downtown, or separately in another location.¹⁰⁸ Bill Frederick, who became mayor of Orlando in 1980, championed a downtown arena.¹⁰⁹ In negotiations with the Orange County Commission, the county allocated a two percent resort tax to help fund a \$20 million multipurpose downtown arena in December of 1983 with planned construction in the early 1990s. However, the possibility of becoming a “big league town” in competing against Miami for a National Basketball Association (NBA) expansion team accelerated funding for a 15,000-seat arena.¹¹⁰ Despite competing against each other for one expansion team, the NBA

¹⁰⁷ Garrett Hillyer, “Joining the ‘Big Leagues’: Politics, Race, and the Pursuit of NBA Franchises in Miami and Orlando, 1982-1987” (Master’s Thesis, University of Central Florida, 2016), 77, <http://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd/5129>.

¹⁰⁸ Exposition Park served as the home of the Central Florida Fair for sixty-eight years until 1979 when the city and the fair exchanged property as the fair relocated to acres of land north of Colonial Drive. The Centroplex contained various exhibition buildings such as the Bob Carr Performing Arts Centre, a gymnasium, tennis courts, and a playground. Eventually, the Orange County Convention Center would be built away from downtown in an area along International Drive in 1983. Sumner Rand, “Fair’s Name May Change, But Goal Remains the Same,” *Orlando Sentinel*, February 27, 1980; Jim Nesbitt, “Names Spell City’s New Approach,” *Orlando Sentinel*, July 8, 1981; Robert A. Liff, “Would Arena Compete with Civic Center,” *Orlando Sentinel*, October 29, 1982.

¹⁰⁹ Clark, *Orlando, Florida*, 171.

¹¹⁰ Hillyer, “Joining the ‘Big Leagues,’” 35, 70; Goldie Blumenstyk, “A Tale of 2 Arenas: Similarity,” *Orlando Sentinel*, April 13, 1987, 2.

granted both cities a team, with the Miami Heat joining the league in the 1988-89 season while the Orlando Magic joined in the 1989-90 season due to the timing of their arena constructions.¹¹¹

As with other infrastructure, Parramore residents expressed concern about the arena's impact on their community. CNA leader Woodley stated that as pieces of land become more valuable, people will be displaced. As county leaders prepared to decide whether to fund the arena in December of 1982, the CNA led by Woodley presented their case before the county commission.¹¹² In a later meeting before the city council, Williams personified the feelings of many in stating "we are remorseful for appearing to be thorns in the palm of progress but we are concerned with the impact that arena [in addition to the downtown hotel] would have on the Callahan neighborhood and the city as a whole."¹¹³ Even the city's planning board in 1985 challenged that the arena site proved "fundamentally inconsistent" with the city's pledge to preserve residential areas as the original arena proposal had grown in scale.¹¹⁴ However, Parramore's commissioner Nap Ford, while sympathizing with the concerns of Callahan and Holden residents, believed that the arena, hotel, and convention center would serve as essential building blocks for Orlando's future. Upon his retirement in 1998, Ford expressed his support for the arena as his most difficult vote as the construction of the arena, a parking garage, and school board headquarters would end up displacing 900 residents.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Goldie Blumenstyk, "Corks Pop- City Enters Big Leagues," *Orlando Sentinel*, April 23, 1987.

¹¹² Goldie Blumenstyk, "Arena Likely to Get Commission Approval," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 6, 1983.

¹¹³ Julie Johnson, "Downtown Orlando Arena Wins Council's Support," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 13, 1983.

¹¹⁴ Goldie Blumenstyk, "Opposition to Arena Pops Up Planners Say Location Violates City Promises," *Orlando Sentinel*, April 17, 1985.

¹¹⁵ Goldie Blumenstyk, "City Looks at Lake Dot Arena Site," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 28, 1985; Goldie Blumenstyk, "Growth to Uproot 900 at Lake Dot," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 10, 1986; Owens, "Nap Ford Leaves Legacy of Change."

Residents ultimately knew they could not prevent the construction of the arena and instead sought to mitigate the effects by being involved in the process. City officials sought to ensure residents that the arena would not affect the residential area west of Parramore Avenue as Mayor Frederick stated he remained confident the city could maintain the residential character of the area for the next decade.¹¹⁶ Residents also gained concessions such as barricading certain neighborhood streets during arena events and only allowing cars with decals to park within the neighborhood.¹¹⁷ As arena construction began in 1987, a coalition of Parramore residents, labor unions, and civil rights activists advocated for a program to hire unemployed and underemployed residents in Parramore to assist with the construction. Joe Egan, a labor lawyer and coalition leader stated that while most residents would probably never buy a ticket to see the Magic play, a construction job could be the only benefit residents received from the arena. Still, the city would ultimately reject the plan as they believed the program would delay construction and add to the costs of the arena.¹¹⁸ The city also passed an ordinance stating that eighteen percent of arena contracts should go to minority-owned companies and six percent to women-owned companies, though by late 1987, construction would be delayed as various contractors failed to fully meet these obligations.¹¹⁹

While city officials championed the Orlando Arena to revitalize Parramore, years after its opening in 1989, promises of jobs and economic prosperity did not materialize. Area businesses near the Centroplex never profited from the arena as urban planners stated the monolithic

¹¹⁶ Vicki Vaughan and Goldie Blumenstyk, "Area Impact Likely a Mixed Blessing," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 14, 1986.

¹¹⁷ Mildred Graham, "Callahan Holds Head Proud," *Orlando Sentinel*, January 15, 1989.

¹¹⁸ Goldie Blumenstyk, "1st Shot At Arena Jobs May Go to Neighbors," *Orlando Sentinel*, January 6, 1987; Mark Schlueb, "Parramore Is Wary of Promises," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 27, 2006.

¹¹⁹ Goldie Blumenstyk, "Arena Work Snagged on Minority Rule," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 13, 1987.

building with vast parking lots discouraged fans from spending their time and money in the neighborhood.¹²⁰ Parramore continued to have high unemployment and an average median household income half that of the city of Orlando in general.¹²¹ In believing the city's plans did not have their community's best interests at heart, mistrust continued to grow between Parramore residents and city officials, even sometimes with their black commissioner. Additionally, moving forward, as older leaders passed from the scene and new leadership emerged, the community has faced more difficulty in uniting behind one community vision, making it easier for developers and city officials to remake the neighborhood in their image.¹²²

In future years, the Holden neighborhood would face greater intrusions than the Callahan neighborhood. By the late 2000s, the successor of the Orlando Arena, the Amway Center would be constructed in the Holden area. In the mid-2010s, the city constructed the Orlando City Soccer Stadium for Orlando's major league soccer team. In both cases, various residents and businesses faced further displacement. In the Callahan/Lake Dot area, a partnership between the University of Central Florida and Valencia College would establish a downtown campus on the site of the former Orlando Arena by Fall of 2019.¹²³ Despite experiencing episodes of déjà vu, residents and community leaders have continued to voice their opinions in seeking to hold city officials and developers accountable, reaping the benefits and advocating for these facilities to be good neighbors.¹²⁴ Yet as Parramore's population has continued to decline and as the

¹²⁰ Graham, "Callahan Holds Head Proud"; Schlueb, "Parramore Is Wary of Promises."

¹²¹ Dan Tracy and Sherri M. Owens, "City Fights Decay of Parramore," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 25, 1998.

¹²² Schlueb, "Parramore Is Wary of Promises."

¹²³ Dan Tracy, "Parramore Residents Skeptical of Arena," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 7, 2000; Michael Candelaria, "Poised for Redevelopment," *Orlando Signature*, September 2017.

¹²⁴ Schlueb, "Parramore Is Wary of Promises."

neighborhood continues to face various forms of gentrification, time will reveal what lies ahead for Parramore's future.

Chapter Conclusion

As the scholarship of Hirsch and Mohl show, the increased migration of blacks to urban areas after World War II and the flight of whites to the suburbs created a new dynamic in American urban history. As integration created greater opportunities for African Americans socially, economically, and politically, core black communities like Parramore that served as the center of black life would fall into decline as more affluent residents moved on to greener pastures beyond the neighborhood such as Washington Shores. Government policies on the local, state, and federal level played a key role in these developments. Whether policymakers genuinely sought to address social ills or acted with malicious intentions, these policies played a significant role in the growth, expansion, and decline of various black communities across the country.

Yet, even in the face of government policies that had severe consequences on black life in urban spaces like Parramore, as later scholars since the 1990s have shown, black residents, property-owning or renters, made their voices heard and utilized their power in shaping their communities. In facing the challenges of expressway construction, threats of urban renewal, the weakening of communal ties as well as community redevelopment, Parramore residents expressed their rights as citizens in employing in principles of infrastructural citizenship. In shaping their communities and seeking to influence developments in their community, black residents organized themselves into active participants in the public forum, such as the Callahan Neighborhood Association, in seeking to hold government officials and private investors

accountable for their actions. While battles over urban spaces are often not fair to lower-income black communities with many battles failing or producing mixed results, Parramore residents have continued to remain vocal. In being the ones who live within the community, despite their status as renters, residents must continue to persevere in protecting themselves against anything that threatens the future of their community.

CHAPTER THREE: FIGHT TO PRESERVE A COMMUNITY

Historiography of All-Black Towns

The study of all-black towns in America has evolved from being largely understudied to producing published articles and monographs. For most of the twentieth century, sociologists and social scientists dominated scholarship in producing articles, but published few monographs on all-black towns. Additionally, most of the narratives focused on all-black communities in the American West like Oklahoma and Kansas with fewer studies produced about the South. During the 1940s, sociologist Mozell C. Hill, who focused on all-black towns in Oklahoma, argued that the all-black town movement corresponded to blacks voluntarily isolating themselves from whites in response to racial oppression and a commitment to black empowerment.¹

Since the mid-1970s, historians began expanding scholarship on all-black towns while differing on the purposes and motivations for their creation. Historian Norman Crockett affirms Hill's position in viewing the idea of voluntary self-segregation as a vehicle by African Americans to achieve a secure position in the American system as citizens.² Similarly, Janet Sharp Hermann, in viewing race as paramount, argued that these founders and leaders of all-

*Portions of this chapter are adapted from an essay "Why Not Us? Infrastructural Citizenship in Eatonville, Florida" written for the 2018 ZORA! Festival and published in the 2018 *ZORA! Magazine*. In celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community Inc. (P.E.C.), the essay focused on the first ten years of the organization from 1987 to 1998. I thank Ms. N.Y. Nathiri, the editor of the *ZORA! Magazine* and the P.E.C. for granting permission and allowing for the reproduction of the essay within this chapter. N.Y. Nathiri (P.E.C. Director), email message to author, December 17, 2018; Gramond McPherson, "Why Not Us? Infrastructural Citizenship in Eatonville, Florida," *ZORA! Magazine*, January 2019.

¹ Mozell C. Hill, "A Comparative Study of Race Attitudes in the All-Negro Community in Oklahoma," *Transforming Anthropology; Arlington* 17, no. 1 (April 2009): 39, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-7466.2009.01039.x>; Mozell C. Hill, "The All-Negro Society in Oklahoma" (Ph.D. diss, University of Chicago, 1946); Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town: Brooklyn, Illinois, 1830-1915* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 5, 7-9.

² Crockett studies the all-black towns of Nicodemus, Kansas, Mound Bayou, Mississippi and Langston, Clearview and Boley, Oklahoma as prototypical examples of life in all-black towns. Crockett, *The Black Towns*, xi-xiii, 187.

black towns did not act subservient and submissive to whites, but successfully navigated the hostile white power structure to allow their settlements like Davis Bend and Mound Bayou in Mississippi to function in nineteenth-century society.³ However, Kenneth Hamilton countered Crockett and Hermann in taking an alternative position that economic motives, rather than racism, led to the creation of many all-black communities as speculators sought to profit from these towns in fostering migrant's quest for social equality and financial security.⁴

Moving into the twenty-first century, scholars have expanded on the significance of all-black towns to black history and the American story. While the bulk of scholars have focused on rural western and southern all-black towns, Sundiata Cha-Jua concentrated on Brooklyn, Illinois, a satellite community of St. Louis. In placing Brooklyn in the broader context of black town development, his central argument concerns how the racial and capitalist policies of the St. Louis region compromised residents' ability to shape their own economic and social development within the town.⁵ Additionally, Kendra Taira Field takes a microhistorical approach in placing her family history into the broader context of black migration to the Indian and Oklahoma Territories, the home of several all-black towns. Her book strays from ready-made stories of heroes and villains to emphasize how black migrants, who faced adversity, sought to make freedom real through focusing on the ordinary lives of her ancestors.⁶

³ Hermann, *The Pursuit of a Dream*, vii–viii.

⁴ Hamilton focuses on the same towns as Crockett except for Clearview, Oklahoma which he replaces with Allensworth, California. Kenneth M Hamilton, *Black Towns and Profit: Promotion and Development in the Trans-Appalachian West, 1877-1915* (Urbana, IL: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1991), 1–2, 160.

⁵ Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town*, 4–5, 217.

⁶ Kendra Taira Field, *Growing Up with the Country: Family, Race, and Nation after the Civil War*, The Lamar Series in Western History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 2–3, 12–14.

As the historiography of all-black towns largely focuses on the peak and decline of these black communities in the early twentieth century, this chapter seeks to contribute to scholarship on contemporary Eatonville in showing how residents sought to preserve the history of their all-black town in the midst of the growth and rapid development of the Orlando metropolitan area. As all-black towns faced constant threats to their survival such as the fall of Goldsboro, Eatonville proved fortunate in overcoming challenges in maintaining their charter and remaining autonomous. As many all-black towns declined or disappeared after the 1920s and 1930s, Eatonville remained viable and continued to develop in subsequent decades.⁷ Similar to Cha-Jua's thesis, though occurring well beyond his ending point of 1915, Eatonville's ability to shape the development of their town became significantly impacted by external policies from largely white officials in Orange County.⁸ As Eatonville and Orange County would engage in battles over the further development of the county at the expense of Eatonville's cultural history, these tensions came to a head in the late 1980s over a decision by Orange County to widen the main thoroughfare through town. Yet, Eatonville leaders and residents would make the case to use infrastructural citizenship such as protesting, attending public meetings and using court litigation in seeking to protect the historic character of the town in navigating the arena of metropolitan politics in Orange County.

Post-World War II Developments in Eatonville

As with many black communities across the country, the post-World War II era brought significant impacts to Eatonville. With black suburban development in suburbs and exterior areas

⁷ Wishart, *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*, 10.

⁸ Cha-Jua, *America's First Black Town*, 4–5.

of cities, the black middle class took advantage of new tract-housing developments that consisted of modern amenities of electricity and indoor plumbing as other black families aspired to similar goals of homeownership. During the 1950s and 1960s, the construction of new developments such as Catalina Park, Lake Lovely, and Eaton Estates facilitated the growth of the town's population from 857 residents in the 1960 census to over 2,300 by 1963.⁹ Furthermore, the era saw new commercial establishments like Mack's Auto Repair and Gas in 1946 and Hezekiah-Reed Grocery Store in 1952 that moved beyond the boundaries of residents' homes. Club Eaton, built by Condor Merritt in 1952 and later owned by William "Billy" Bozeman in the 1950s and 1960s brought live music from small local bands and drew high profile musicians like James Brown and Tina Turner to Eatonville.¹⁰

Like Parramore, Eatonville would deal with the impacts of Interstate 4. Yet, as an independent town, Eatonville would have a greater voice in the debates surrounding the expressway. As engineers proposed various routes in the Winter Park and Maitland areas, local officials and leaders in the late 1950s and early 1960s resisted the highway engineers' recommended route that would parallel US Highways 17-92 to the east, preferring a central route west with a bridge over Lake Killarney. Winter Park favored the central route as Mayor Ed Gurney stated that the eastern route would destroy the value of the city's commercial property and create a barrier in Winter Park while the western route would deprive residents of any use. In a 1961 public meeting with highway engineers, area leaders and residents met to discuss the proposed routes. Lester Harris, a white attorney who served as Eatonville's town attorney, spoke

⁹ Wiese, *Places of Their Own*, 149–51; Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 34, 39; Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census*, 11.

¹⁰ Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 34–35; Mike Smith, "Nightclub Has Role in Town's Social History," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 28, 1987.

on behalf of Eatonville in concurring with Winter Park and Maitland's choice for the central route.¹¹ Yet, highway officials later in the year moved forward in deciding on the western route that bypassed Lake Killarney and paralleled Wymore Road on the western fringes of Winter Park and Maitland.¹²

For Eatonville, the chosen route would bisect the town into western and eastern sections. Engaging in citizen activism, Eatonville leaders sought to benefit from the expressway. Yet, while Mayor Nathaniel Vereen sought an interchange within Eatonville, engineers denied the town direct access to the expressway as motorists would have to exit at interchanges in neighboring Maitland and Winter Park to reach the town.¹³ In anticipation of the expressway, Mayor Vereen at a council meeting before the Orange County Commission on February 02, 1964 petitioned for improvements to local infrastructure such as repairing road damage to Wymore, building sidewalks along Kennedy Boulevard and the maintenance of ditches around the Catalina Park area to ensure proper drainage. County officials confirmed the improvements to Wymore and sidewalks along Kennedy upon the conclusion of construction to Interstate 4 while referring the ditch issue back to the council for further discussion.¹⁴ While Eatonville residents worried about the impact of the expressway, Interstate 4 would accelerate the growth and development of the town, particularly west of the highway as new homes and businesses gravitated towards that

¹¹ Dave Howell and Faye Centofanti, "700 Give Views on Interstate Route," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 17, 1961; "Mr. Harris, Attorney, Dies at 72," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 22, 1962.

¹² "Winter Park's Expressway Route," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 3, 1961.

¹³ Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 46; "Orlando, Winter Park Agree on Road Plans," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 29, 1965.

¹⁴ Officials also referenced Kennedy Boulevard at the time as State Highway 438A. Eatonville Town Council, "February 12th Minutes," February 12, 1964, 670.

direction.¹⁵ While being active in the discussions of Interstate 4 did not guarantee Eatonville would have their concerns heard, Eatonville did have a seat at the table.

Early Battles to Preserve Eatonville

Eatonville leaders and residents would attempt to use principles of infrastructural citizenship in early battles with external forces that threatened residents' ability to govern and function as a town. Historically, while Eatonville possessed greater autonomy in governing themselves, they still faced similar issues that confronted black residents in white-controlled cities such as poor county services, the limited ability for the town's expansion and injustices by whites perpetrated against black residents beyond the town's boundaries.¹⁶ Additionally, residents dealt with episodes of paternalism from neighboring whites in Maitland and Winter Park. A common trend of white paternalism in the South that began and continued beyond the Progressive era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries involved whites' interest in social control, moral behavior, and bettering the environment. Yet, the principles of social control and preventing disorder did not advocate improving the well-being of blacks as white paternalism enforced the notion of black inferiority to whites.¹⁷ As long as Eatonville did not disrupt the social order, Eatonville could function normally. Even so, challenges to paternalism by blacks would be met with resistance from whites.

One such challenge involved the controversy over Eatonville's ability to sell alcohol on Sundays in the 1950s. In 1951, through the influence of church parishioners in the county, Orange County commissioners outlawed the sale of beer on Sundays, following the lead of

¹⁵ Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 46.

¹⁶ Kharif, "Black Reaction to Segregation," 172–73.

¹⁷ Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*, 130–31.

Orlando, Winter Park, Apopka and Winter Garden. At the time, Eatonville and Maitland remained the only towns which had not banned the practice and by 1954, only Eatonville continued to sell liquor.¹⁸ Opposition to Eatonville's liquor sales reached a peak by 1955 as neighboring whites complained about the disruptions to the social order such as vehicle accidents and "boisterous beach parties." Sheriff Dave Starr complained that liquor sales had caused significant traffic and the need for additional deputies to patrol the area on Sundays. This opposition also had racial implications as Sheriff Starr emphasized that even young white girls ventured into all-black Eatonville for liquor, a significant taboo regarding fraternization between whites and blacks.¹⁹

Historically, in many cities across the country, public policies sought to shift vices into black neighborhoods. White reformers knew they could not eliminate vice districts but moving vice to black neighborhoods fulfilled their aim to remove it from their neighborhoods. Black areas like Miami's Colored Town and Chicago's Southside housed prostitution and illegal lotteries, in many cases after being intentionally driven by law enforcement and city leaders who devalued black areas.²⁰ While Eatonville did not face extreme vices like prostitution, by 1955, whites seeking alcohol on Sundays frequently visited Eatonville's two bars, the Rainbow Bar and Grill and Club Eaton, managed by black owners Elijah Bing and Billy Bozeman, respectively.²¹

¹⁸ "Orange County Bans Sunday Beer Sales," *Tampa Tribune*, February 21, 1951; Sumner Rand, "Eatonville Called 'Lion Den', Weekend Liquor Ban Asked," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 12, 1954.

¹⁹ These boisterous beach parties are likely referring to lakes within the town. Zora Neale Hurston states five lakes existed within the town. Bill Kettinger, "Town Body Plans Action," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 3, 1955; Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (New York: Perennial Library, 1990), 4.

²⁰ Connolly, *A World More Concrete*, 79–80; Simon Balto, *Occupied Territory: Policing Black Chicago from Red Summer to Black Power*, Justice, Power, and Politics (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 23–24.

²¹ At the time, Bozeman leased the building from Condor Merritt, a wealthy black bolita gambling boss from Altamonte Springs who possessed influential political power in Seminole County as whites believed he controlled the black vote in the county. At the time in 1955, Merritt remained under federal indictment for an income tax

Critics called Eatonville a “lions’ den” on Saturday nights and Sundays. This moniker only solidified with the mysterious shootings of a black Eatonville police officer and two black Air Force personnel from Pinecastle Air Force Base Negro resulting in officials banning military personnel from Eatonville.²²

The liquor issue divided Eatonville leaders and residents. From a moral perspective, residents like A.W. Ward, a citrus dealer, became a spokesperson for a ban against Sunday liquor sales, stating that if Eatonville had been referred to as a lions’ den by outsiders, Eatonville residents experienced worse circumstances as residents complained of clogged roads on their way to church. He also accused beverage interests of seeking to thwart the committee’s proposed ordinance in lobbying the mayor and council members.²³ However, from a financial standpoint, Eatonville’s mayor C.H. Crooms denied that Sunday liquor sales had become a nuisance and accused Ward of giving the town bad publicity. Crooms stated that the town needed these funds to finance a new water system as the town’s water facilities had been condemned by the state board of health. He feared that failing to replace the condemned system would result in the town being annexed by an adjoining town.²⁴ While Crooms believed the town faced restrictions that would hinder economic advancement, the coverage by local newspapers contained strong

violation. Kettinger, “Town Body Plans Action”; Smith, “Nightclub Has Role in Town’s Social History”; J.A. Murray, “Negro Gambling Kingpin Elects Seminole Sheriff as Rackets Run Wide Open,” *Tampa Tribune*, July 30, 1950.

²² The circumstances of the incident are unclear. Local newspapers reported a black man shot policeman Avery Daggins in the stomach outside of Club Eaton in pursuing a man accused of causing a disturbance. Later, enlisted men Samuel Montgomery and Freddie Jarman appeared at the sheriff’s office stating a man who appeared as an Eatonville policeman shot into their car. “Eatonville Scene of Mystery Shooting,” *Orlando Evening Star*, February 21, 1955; “Air Force Slaps Ban on Eatonville,” *Orlando Evening Star*, March 5, 1955.

²³ Rand, “Eatonville Called ‘Lion Den’, Weekend Liquor Ban Asked.”

²⁴ Sid Porter, “Eatonville Mayor Denies Sunday Liquor Nuisance,” *Orlando Sentinel*, September 14, 1954; Tom Dunkin, “Eatonville Wins Fight to Life But Sunday Booze Must Go,” *Orlando Sentinel*, February 17, 1955.

elements of white paternalism. Editors claimed that Eatonville's supporting the current conditions would "certainly bring no credit to the Negro's ability to govern his own affairs."²⁵

Regardless of the ethical stance on liquor sales, the controversy threatened the town's ability to govern and have control over their affairs. At a hearing before Orange County's legislative delegation in February 1955, L.H. Benson, a white Maitland resident who owned property near Eatonville, called for the town's charter to be revoked and for Eatonville to be placed under county regulation of beverage sales and law enforcement, enforcing white perceptions of black inferiority in governing themselves.²⁶ Exercising their rights as citizens, Eatonville officials countered by charging that outside whites, not Eatonville residents, had caused most of the trouble on area roads.²⁷ Eatonville's attorney Harris stated that the "enemies of the town" wanted to use the liquor issue as an excuse to place the town under county jurisdiction. At the meeting, Harris presented a resolution that stated the town would stop liquor sales upon the expiration of liquor licenses in October of that year to avoid possible court litigation from bar owners.²⁸ In preserving the town, Eatonville would submit to passing an immediate ordinance in March of 1955, though the town would renege on the part of their promise by allowing Eatonville's bars to operate on Sundays until four o'clock in the morning.²⁹ The liquor controversy would be one of many future episodes that challenged the stability and future of the town.

²⁵ "A Big Price," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 17, 1954.

²⁶ Dunkin, "Eatonville Wins Fight to Life But Sunday Booze Must Go."

²⁷ Jack Detweiler, "Council Sets Closing Time at 4 A.M.," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 7, 1955.

²⁸ "Sunday Booze Puts Eatonville in Peril As Corporate Town," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 16, 1955; Dunkin, "Eatonville Wins Fight to Life But Sunday Booze Must Go."

²⁹ Kettinger, "Town Body Plans Action"; Detweiler, "Council Sets Closing Time at 4 A.M."

Like Parramore, Eatonville faced the challenge of adjusting to the impacts of desegregation. As the purpose of all-black towns served to endure Jim Crow, the waning of segregation made certain aspects of all-black towns and a separate black world less necessary.³⁰ One of the most important involved the status of the town's community schools as residents engaged in citizen activism to protect these institutions. Historical developments impacted the status of the school, which served as a private school to provide quality education to black children between the ages of ten to eighteen in Central Florida. In 1930, under Mayor Augustus Johnson, school officials established Hungerford Elementary to provide education to younger children in grades one through six. However, World War II brought instability to the schools as students and staff went off to serve in various war efforts with most not returning after the war ended.³¹ School leaders internally sought to improve the conditions by improving deteriorating school facilities and enhancing the curriculum through the addition of more college preparatory courses, yet these measures failed to improve enrollment or the financial condition of the school.³²

In the late 1940s, as state school officials in Florida began to assume the responsibility of providing schools to black children across the state, Eatonville faced pressure to turn Hungerford over to the Orange County Public School System. In a last-ditch effort to protect Hungerford, Mary McLeod Bethune in 1949 sought an alliance for Bethune-Cookman College (now University) in acquiring Hungerford as a preparatory school to provide agricultural training to

³⁰ Porter, "Segregation and Desegregation," 308.

³¹ Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 29–30, 40–41.

³² In 1942, Cluett Hall, one of the largest buildings on school grounds, burned in a fire. To replace the structure, leaders constructed three new buildings, a small boy's dormitory, an academic classroom building, and an auditorium in 1945. Otey, 41.

black youth and additional income to Hungerford. When Bethune could not garner the necessary funds to initiate the partnership, the county school board took control of the 300 acres of school property in 1950 as Hungerford transitioned from a private to public school. In 1951, The Friends of Hungerford, made up of prominent locals, contested the sale. Yet, Orange County Circuit Court judge approved the sale with the restriction that the property must be used for a public school for blacks with an emphasis on vocational training.³³ However, over time, large portions of the 300 acres would be sold, including eighteen for the right-of-way to construct Interstate 4 through Eatonville in 1963. Town officials believed the school board, while working within the law, failed to follow the spirit of the land's original purpose to educate black children in the area.³⁴

Desegregation would have the most significant impact on Eatonville's schools. In 1954, the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education* ruled segregation in public schools as unconstitutional.³⁵ Writing a letter to the editor of the *Orlando Sentinel* in 1955, Zora Neale Hurston criticized the decision, believing the case insinuated that black educational institutions remained inferior to whites and that blacks delighted in having a physical association with whites. Hurston advocated self-association with fellow blacks rather than forced desegregation.³⁶

³³ Otey, 41–42; “Hungerford School Eyes Bethune College Alliance,” *Orlando Sentinel*, February 19, 1950; Christopher Sherman, “Town to Ask Schools to Share, Develop Land,” *Orlando Sentinel*, June 26, 2005.

³⁴ In 1973, the Orange County School Board went to court to lift the property restrictions on all the land except for the elementary school and high schools which the courts granted in January of 1974. In the two decades that followed, the school sold off 136 acres of the property for \$1.38 million with the resources funding children within the county school system. Battles would continue between the school board and town officials as the town sought to share in plans for the property to benefit Eatonville. Sherman, “Town to Ask Schools to Share, Develop Land.”

³⁵ *Brown v. Board of Education* overturned the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case that ruled that separate but equal as constitutional. The Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools violated the 14th Amendment. The case served as a catalyst to the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s and gradually led to the desegregation of public schools throughout the country. “Documents Related to Brown v. Board of Education,” National Archives, August 15, 2016, accessed October 31, 2017, <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/brown-v-board>.

³⁶ Zora Neale Hurston, “Court Order Can’t Make Races Mix,” *Orlando Sentinel*, August 11, 1955.

While an unpopular stance in an age of civil rights, Hurston's background, which included education at Hungerford, helped inspire her tendency to highlight the positive of black schools and minimize the comparative negatives.³⁷ Eventually, forced desegregation played a significant role in the loss of communal values within Eatonville as parents opted to send their children to schools outside Eatonville, as the county school board bused non-Eatonville children in and out of Eatonville daily.³⁸

In the coming years, Eatonville would follow the trends of other black communities such as in Parramore in seeing their historic schools closed or reduced in status. Despite strong protest from town residents, in 1967, as the Orange County School Board sought to desegregate schools, officials converted Hungerford High into a technical school. Engaging in principles of infrastructural citizenship, residents initiated a lawsuit to preserve the name of the school, which held special significance to the town's history. Nonetheless, county officials disregarded the town's wishes in renaming Hungerford to Wymore Technical School.³⁹ Correspondingly, during the 1970s, the school board decided to close Hungerford Elementary, turning it into a school for children with special needs and forcing young Eatonville children to be bused to neighboring schools. Drawing the ire of the town, residents protested the decision and rallied to save their school. Through challenging the county and actions by town attorney Paul Perkins and Mayor

³⁷ Deborah G. Plant, *Zora Neale Hurston: A Biography of the Spirit*, Women Writers of Color (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2007), 166.

³⁸ Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 52–53.

³⁹ In 1999, as Wymore Technical School became notable for low-performing students with behavioral problems, the county school board closed the school. However, pressure from local residents saw officials reopen Hungerford as a magnet school that attracted students throughout the county. In 2007, Hungerford Preparatory High School would gradually be phased away. Otey, 52; "Hungerford New Name Suit Filed," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 26, 1967; Erika Hobbs, "Historic School's Future May Be at Risk," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 8, 2006; Erika Hobbs, "School With History Guides Teens' Future," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 8, 2007.

Vereen, officials preserved Hungerford Elementary.⁴⁰ Vereen credited the success of saving Hungerford as his most rewarding accomplishment in stating the importance of maintaining the environment of schools, churches, and homes for future generations.⁴¹ Despite challenges in their ability to govern themselves and seeing the decline of communal ties and value due to integration, Eatonville leaders and residents did not act passively as they engaged in citizen activism to protect the integrity of their town.

Metropolitan Politics in Orange County

Moving forward, the significance of metropolitan politics affected Eatonville residents' ability to shape their community. Since reaching its peak in the 1960s, Eatonville's population has remained stagnant around 2,000 residents.⁴² However, Orange County's population increased nearly tenfold from 70,000 residents in 1940 to nearly 700,000 by 1990 resulting in the growth of Orlando, growing suburbs and unincorporated areas.⁴³ In perspective, while Orlando represented over half of Orange County's population in 1940, by 1990 that ratio reduced to under a quarter of the overall population.⁴⁴ Nationally, especially after World War II, these changes correlated with the rise of suburbia, increased automobile use, interstate highways and white

⁴⁰ Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 55; Michael Silver, "School Board Officials Consider Transferring Hungerford Students," *Orlando Sentinel*, April 29, 1977; Michael Silver, "Hungerford Plan Draws More Fire From Parents," *Orlando Sentinel*, May 7, 1977.

⁴¹ Donna Eyring, "The Vereen Era," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 6, 1980.

⁴² Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census*, 11; Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Population, Florida*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 4; Bureau of the Census, *2010 Census of Population and Housing: Florida*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2012), 26.

⁴³ Orange County's official population stood at 70,074 in 1940 and 677,491 in 1990. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census: 1940, Vol. 1*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office: 1942), 213; Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census*, 1.

⁴⁴ In 1940, Orlando's population stood at 36,736 compared to the overall population of Orange County at 70,074. Yet in 1990, Orlando's population stood at 164,698 compared to the county's population of 677,491. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census: 1940*, 212-213; Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census*, 1, 7.

flight from urban cities.⁴⁵ As a small town within a growing metropolis, Eatonville stood as a small dot within the grand scheme of Orange County politics.

Politically, these changes became associated with the Sunbelt and the rise of a new conservative coalition of white suburban voters for the Republican Party from the South and West.⁴⁶ Matthew Lassiter argues that the impact of class-stratified politics, economic conservatism and color-blind racial ideology produced within the Sunbelt South, especially Florida, provided the blueprint for the transformation of regional politics in the South after the 1960s and the parallel reconfiguration of national politics in later decades.⁴⁷ In national politics, Orange County fits within this narrative as the county solidly supported Republican presidential candidates from 1948 until Al Gore became the first Democrat since Franklin Roosevelt to win the county in 2000.⁴⁸ Also, between 1963 and 1993, conservative Republican congressmen represented congressional districts that included Eatonville, with the lone exception of centrist Democrat Bill Nelson who served two terms from 1979 to 1983 before redistricting moved Eatonville back into a Republican-represented district.⁴⁹ Only after 1993 would Eatonville be

⁴⁵ Paul A. Jargowsky, "Sprawl, Concentration of Poverty, and Urban Inequality," in *Urban Sprawl: Causes, Consequences, & Policy Responses*, ed. Gregory D. Squires (Washington, D.C: The Urban Institute Press, 2002), 40–42.

⁴⁶ Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority*, 38–39.

⁴⁷ Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*, 6.

⁴⁸ Various factors led to the growth of the Republican Party in Florida. One factor included the migration of retirees from the North who tended to be Republican and hold conservative views. Another factor included the rise of expanding service and technology industries which attracted skilled workers and white-collar workers who also tended to hold conservative views. Lastly, many native white Southerners, disenchanted with the growing liberalism of the national Democratic Party, shifted their support to the national Republican Party which embraced the conservative movement. Michael Griffin, "Presidential Stalemate," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 8, 2000; Lewis Hadley and Lewis Bowman, eds., *Southern State Party Organizations and Activists* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1995), 21.

⁴⁹ The use of the term centrist defines Southern Democrats as more liberal than Republicans, but less liberal than the national Democratic Party. Centrists held more moderate or conservative views on certain issues such as race, abortion, and the scope of the federal government which differed from the liberal Democratic Party nationally. Hadley and Bowman, *Southern State Party Organizations and Activists*, 32; "Eatonville, FL District View," Voteview.com, accessed October 16, 2017, <https://voteview.com/district/Eatonville,%20FL>.

included within a new minority-majority district represented by black congressional members who served the large black populace between Jacksonville and Orlando.⁵⁰

In local politics, which had greater significance for Eatonville, the conservatism of the county reflected the county's demographics. Until the growth and influx of Hispanic residents into the county such as Puerto Ricans during the 1990s, conservative whites maintained a supermajority within the county.⁵¹ Black residents experienced limited and diluted political power as they collectively made up about fifteen percent of the county's population between 1970 and 1990.⁵² During this era, the Orange County Board of Commissioners governed county affairs. While the county commission consisted of five commissioners who lived within their respective districts, the entire county voted for each commissioner. Within the commission, one of the five commissioners would be chosen each year to serve as county chairman, the first-among-equals who ran the commission meetings and acted as the county representative and chief negotiator with other governments. The dominant political party controlled the chairmanship and during the 1980s, this favored the Republican Party as most commissioners identified themselves

⁵⁰ William J. Miller and Jeremy D. Walling, *The Political Battle Over Congressional Redistricting* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 120; "Eatonville, FL District View."

⁵¹ Kevin Archer, "The Limits to the Imagineered City: Sociospatial Polarization in Orlando," *Economic Geography* 73, no. 3 (July 1997): 328–29, <https://doi.org/10.2307/144487>.

⁵² The 1970 Census became the first time the option of Hispanic origin or descent became available, though the results included a small sample size. In subsequent censuses, respondents who identify as Hispanic (Cuban, Puerto Rican) may also identify themselves as white and/or black. In 1970, Orange County had 344,311 residents, with 294,650 white residents and 49,661 black residents. By 1990, the total population grew to 677,491, 539,061 white residents, 103,092 black residents and 64,946 Hispanic residents of any race. Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census*, 155; Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census*, 27; "1970 Overview," United States Census Bureau, accessed May 29, 2019, https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/overview/1970.html.

as Republicans.⁵³ In the late 1980s, Tom Dorman served three terms as chairman.⁵⁴ Dorman represented District 2, a mostly white populace that included Eatonville.⁵⁵

Dilemma: Preventing a Road Widening

This political background created a challenge for Eatonville to protect Kennedy Boulevard, the main thoroughfare through town, in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Through citizen activism, residents of the town made use of principles of infrastructural citizenship which allowed them to be involved in the debates surrounding the county's grand schemes for the roadway. As county governments develop plans, tensions often occur between county and city governments regarding the planning and zoning of land.⁵⁶ During the 1980s, Orange County's vision of alleviating suburban traffic congestion conflicted with the visions of Eatonville and Maitland to dictate conditions within their municipalities. The county proposed widening the two-laned Kennedy Boulevard in Eatonville and the congruent Lake Avenue in Maitland with special emphasis on the portion between Interstate 4 and US Highway 17/92.⁵⁷

⁵³ Michael Griffin, "What Will Orange Chairman Do? Candidates Explain Themselves, Job," *Orlando Sentinel*, July 2, 1990; Michael Griffin, "Picking Chairman Is a Disagreeable Job for Commission," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 6, 1989.

⁵⁴ The commissioners appointed a chairman during this period every November. Dorman served from 1985 to 1986 and then again from 1987 to 1989. "Orange Commissioners Pick Dorman as Chairman," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 19, 1985; Lauren Ritchie, "Treadway Returns to Chairman's Post," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 19, 1986; Michael Griffin, "Republicans Unite to Make Marston Orange Chairman," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 19, 1989.

⁵⁵ Michael Griffin, "Candidate Says Orange Can Halve Property Taxes," *Orlando Sentinel*, May 31, 1990; Griffin, "What Will Orange Chairman Do?"

⁵⁶ Frank P. Sherwood, *County Governments in Florida: First in a Series on Local Government* (New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2008), 11, 13.

⁵⁷ The county estimated that Kennedy/Lake, which had only been designed to handle about 10,000 cars daily, handled over 14,000 cars daily in Eatonville and 11,000 in Maitland. With the widening, the county argued the roadway would provide for over 27,000 daily commuters. The roadway sits between Forest City Road in western Eatonville and U.S. Highway 17/92 in Maitland. Dora Ohemeng, "Meeting to Discuss Proposals to Improve Road in Eatonville," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 26, 1987.

While Eatonville officials and residents had no objections to improvements to Kennedy west of Interstate 4, they strongly opposed the widening east of the expressway, disagreeing with the calculated degree of traffic on the east side of town and fearing the impact of the widening through the heart of town, including historic homes and businesses.⁵⁸ Maitland residents also feared the effects of the widening on their homes.⁵⁹ However, despite opposition by numerous representatives of Eatonville and Maitland at a commission meeting on November 23, 1987, the five commissioners unanimously voted to widen Kennedy/Lake from two lanes to five lanes (four lanes with a center left-turn lane). As officials scheduled construction to begin in April of 1989, the vote seemingly brought closure to the issue.⁶⁰ Ironically, as Eatonville celebrated its centennial throughout the year, the future survival of the town now lay at stake.⁶¹

In many narratives of metropolitan politics, officials bluntly state that some communities may have to suffer or experience inconvenience for the overall benefit of the growing majority.⁶² Explaining the decision to Eatonville's town council in the aftermath of the vote, Chairman Dorman stated, "Sometime[s] [the] government has to do things that are not in the best interest of individuals they think at the time, but they have to move forward...in a few years you [Eatonville] will look back and say it's a good thing."⁶³ Dorman and the commission's refusal to reconsider the widening issue helped mobilize opponents to form The Association to Preserve

⁵⁸ Ines Davis Parrish, "Road Widening Project Idling in Eatonville," *Orlando Sentinel*, May 18, 1990; Eatonville Town Council, "February 3rd Minutes," February 3, 1987, 18–19.

⁵⁹ Parrish, "Road Widening Project Idling in Eatonville"; Maitland City Council, "November 23rd Minutes," November 23, 1987, 122.

⁶⁰ Orange County Board of County Commissioners, "November 23rd Minutes," November 23, 1987, 376–77; Debbie Salamone, "Eatonville Mayor Regrets Okaying Road Plan," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 27, 1987.

⁶¹ Otey, *Eatonville, Florida*, 57–62.

⁶² Shelton, "Building a Better Houston Highways," 8.

⁶³ Eatonville Town Council, "December 15th Minutes," December 15, 1987, 8.

the Eatonville Community Inc. (P.E.C.), dedicated to protecting Eatonville from this threat.⁶⁴ Going against the county looked daunting, but the P.E.C. benefited from an intercommunity alliance between the association, the town of Eatonville, and the city of Maitland. Though the alliance of the three entities faced many challenges and disunity that threatened its effectiveness, their combined use of resources for a common cause played a major role in the eventual cancelation of the Kennedy/Lake project.

The importance of these resources helped set the P.E.C. apart from other narratives of resistance by black communities. African Americans, especially in lower-income communities, often lacked the finances and human manpower to effectively resist infrastructural changes.⁶⁵ Additionally, without sympathizers from outside the community to their cause, black communities had to seek to influence change themselves, limiting their opportunities for success. Yet, successful engagement of infrastructural citizenship requires immediate, consistent, and persistent involvement. For example, in Memphis during the 1960s through early 1980s, The Citizens to Preserve Overton Park resisted plans to construct Interstate 40 through Overton Park, a public park in the city. By building a network of outside supporters, lobbying, and pursuing court litigation, the association helped delay the project until its eventual cancelation in 1981.⁶⁶ While the Citizens to Preserve Overton Park developed as a white-led movement, the P.E.C., as a black-led grassroots movement would follow a similar model as they aspired for similar successes.

⁶⁴ While the P.E.C. formed nearly two months prior to this meeting, this commission meeting served as the official rejection of any future public meetings on the widening issue. Orange County Board of County Commissioners, "January 18th Minutes," January 18, 1988, 83.

⁶⁵ Shelton, "Building a Better Houston Highways," 9.

⁶⁶ Raymond A. Mohl, "Citizen Activism and Freeway Revolts in Memphis and Nashville: The Road to Litigation," *Journal of Urban History* 40, no. 5 (September 2014): 878, 886–87, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144214533296>.

An important principle of infrastructural citizenship for Eatonville involved public meetings. Recent changes within Eatonville's town council led to the rise in civic involvement and participation that facilitated the eventual formation of the P.E.C. Before March of 1987, residents who wished to speak before the town council needed to submit a formal request to the town hall the Thursday before a Tuesday council meeting. However, with the elections of Ada Sims, a former council member, and Merille Glover to open council seats, they advocated for setting aside thirty minutes at the end of council meetings for public comments, giving residents three minutes to speak without a prior request. Despite Eatonville's mayor Abraham Gordon's vehement opposition to the measure, Sims, Glover, and two other council members passed the measure, immediately turning the town council meeting from brief and unentertaining to long, standing-room-only debate platforms by leaders and residents of Eatonville.⁶⁷ In Maitland, the city council's Public Period also allowed for citizens to express their concerns before the city council.⁶⁸ The importance of these measures validates how various residents who attended these meetings became more aware of the key issues and events occurring in their communities and mobilized Eatonville and Maitland residents to form the P.E.C. within a week of the county's vote.

The P.E.C. followed the historical tradition of Eatonville's previous attempts of engaging in citizen activism such as the Sunday liquor sales controversy in the 1950s and efforts to save Hungerford High (unsuccessfully) and Hungerford Elementary in the 1960s and 1970s. The association's name expressed the aims of their protest and their desire to preserve Eatonville

⁶⁷ "Political Season to Open in January for 3 Posts in Eatonville," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 4, 1985; Michael Griffin, "Sims Says Council Needs to Listen Up," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 6, 1987; Michael Griffin, "Diverse Political Views Cause Sparks on Eatonville Council," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 24, 1987.

⁶⁸ Maitland City Council Minutes, November 23, 1987, 122.

against any damaging effects on its community. Unlike Parramore, which saw the core of its population leave beginning in the 1940s, the core of Eatonville's population remained intact with various residents having generational ties to property and land within the town. Additionally, due to the historical significance of the town, various current and former residents had a vested interest in devoting their energies to protect the town. Thus, the P.E.C., organized by N.Y. Nathiri, a native of Eatonville who resided in neighboring Winter Park, sought to recruit sympathetic parties to support their cause. At the first formal meeting on Monday, December 7, 1987, some 175 individuals from both Eatonville and Maitland came to a rally at Saint Lawrence A.M.E Church in Eatonville. As a result of the meeting, the P.E.C. sought to collect fifty thousand signatures by January of 1988 to persuade the county commission to hold another public meeting.⁶⁹

Moving beyond simply protesting the proposed widening, the P.E.C. hired the services of a transportation expert to study the area. The P.E.C. recruited Walter Kulash, a Maitland engineer who lived on Lake Avenue to conduct a traffic study. He completed his study without cost to the organization. He concluded that the widening of Kennedy east of Wymore Road lacked merit, stating that a two to three-lane roadway adequately handled traffic in the area.⁷⁰

Various area residents and activists such as Martha Williams and Eunice Baker of Eatonville and

⁶⁹ Nathiri is the granddaughter of Augustus Johnson who served as mayor of Eatonville during the early 1930s. Debbie Salamone, "Road Plan Opponents Seeking Supporters," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 29, 1987; "Group Seeks Help to Stop Work on Road," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 8, 1987; Will Wellons, "Group: Keep Road Narrow Eatonville Residents Want Study Before County Widens Kennedy," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 11, 1987; Rosemary Banks Harris, "Her Eatonville Pride Led to Hurston Festival," *Orlando Sentinel*, January 7, 1990.

⁷⁰ Kulash, in a report more detailed than the county's traffic engineer, stated that most traffic going eastbound on Kennedy west of Interstate 4 would turn on Wymore Road rather than continue traveling on Kennedy through Eatonville. However, widening the road to five lanes would increase the traffic count to over 26,000 vehicles through Eatonville daily by 2010. Debbie Salamone, "Road-Widening Analysis Shifts Foes into Overdrive," *Orlando Sentinel*, January 15, 1988.

Germaine Marvel and Margaret Schellang of Maitland embodied the passion of the alliance in supporting the P.E.C.'s agenda and using their voices and influence to oppose the widening. Together the alliance would raise money for legal expenses with potluck dinners and a golf tournament. Additionally, merchants donated services to the P.E.C., including the creation of P.E.C. bumper stickers and collection of signatures for petitions.⁷¹

Yet, the alliance faced various challenges in practicing infrastructural citizenship that threatened to stall their success. One challenge involved disunity between the three entities over the scale of the widening. In the months before the final vote in late 1987, Eatonville and Maitland officials both demanded a three-lane road option instead of the proposed five lanes. Yet at the infamous November 23 meeting, Eatonville's mayor Gordon inadvertently accepted a concession from the county that narrowed the widening of Kennedy from eighty-seven feet to eighty feet to protect Eatonville homes and businesses, unaware that this served as the commission's final vote. This compromised Maitland's position of three-lanes as Maitland councilman Bill Donegan stated, "When Eatonville said five lanes were okay, we were all dead in the water." Gordon, along with Maitland's mayor E.X. Blaschka sought in vain to reverse the county's decision.⁷²

Furthermore, the varying ideologies of Eatonville's leadership also complicated the alliance. Despite the P.E.C. initially having the unanimous support of the town council in December of 1987, a month later, Mayor Gordon reversed his position and supported the five-lane widening of Kennedy which he claimed would economically benefit the town. Gordon's

⁷¹ N.Y. Nathiri (P.E.C. Director), email message to author and Dr. Scot French, January 2, 2018; Lee, "Road Plan Bypasses"; "Neighborhood Notebook: Eatonville," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 21, 1988.

⁷² Orange County Board of County Commissioners, "November 23rd Minutes," 377-78; Salamone, "Eatonville Mayor Regrets."

pro-business ideology of attracting businesses along Kennedy drew opposition from councilmembers like Sims, who advocated for controlled development within Eatonville. The varying ideologies created factions within Eatonville's leadership between those who supported the mayor's agenda and those who held countering views.⁷³ With mayoral and council elections held every two years, between 1987 and 1993, five different mayors served the town: Gordon, former mayor Vereen, James Williams, Sims, and Harry Bing, each with varying ideologies on the widening and other issues impacting the town.⁷⁴ While these divisions would prove problematic at the moment, in the long-term, they kept Eatonville from compromising or settling on any proposal independent of the alliance.

Another principle of infrastructural citizenship for the alliance involved lobbying or using political influence to prevent the widening. As the county still refused to debate the widening issue, Donegan, who had served as a Maitland councilman and who opposed the widening, sought to influence change from within the county commission itself. With support from Eatonville and Maitland residents in promising to bring the widening issue for further debate, Donegan became a county commissioner in November of 1988 giving the alliance an ally on the commission. Immediately after taking office, Donegan, at a December commission meeting, sought to fulfill his promise by delaying a public meeting for the right-of-way resolution for the

⁷³ Debbie Salamone, "Gordon Favors Road Widening-- Again," *Orlando Sentinel*, January 8, 1988; Griffin, "Sims Says Council Needs to Listen Up"; Debbie Salamone, "Eatonville Looks For Positive Change," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 28, 1988.

⁷⁴ Abraham Gordon (1980-1988), Nathaniel Vereen (1988-1989, died in office), James Williams (1989-1990, served the rest of Vereen's term), Ada Sims (1990-1992, suspended for five months in 1991 over fraud charges, later acquitted), Harry Bing (1992-1994, also served as interim mayor during Sims's suspension). Terms began and ended in March. Debbie Salamone, "Ex-Mayor Vereen Beats King to Recapture Eatonville Post," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 6, 1988; Ines Davis Parrish, "Eatonville Voters Put Sims in Mayor's Seat," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 4, 1990; Mary Brooks, "Bing Defeats Sims, 275-236, to Become Eatonville Mayor," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 8, 1992; Ines Davis Parrish, "Grant Ousts Bing as Mayor in Election in Eatonville," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 6, 1994.

widening until January 3, 1989. By then, Donegan planned to present an official three-lane road resolution from Eatonville along with a formal presentation offering new evidence in support of the three-laned option before the council.⁷⁵ In referencing the insensitivity of the commission, Donegan stated that for Eatonville “We are not dealing with just a road widening...Eatonville has some intrinsic value that you and I don’t understand.”⁷⁶ Yet, his appeal fell on deaf ears as the other county commissioners dismissed the motion before it could gain momentum. Despite the setback, the alliance vowed to continue pressing on with Nathiri stating that the P.E.C. remained committed to the cause for the long haul as Mayor Vereen of Eatonville and Mayor Darcy Bone of Maitland vowed the same.⁷⁷

The People v. Orange County

The epitome of this long-haul resistance came through the pursuit of legal action against Orange County. While often used as a last resort, court litigation is one of the most effective actions of infrastructural citizenship because it brings a neutral third party to help settle disputes between two opposing sides. The P.E.C., Eatonville, and Maitland pursued legal action independent of one another as the P.E.C. set the standard in being the first to sue Orange County. Yet their efforts in using court litigation against the county would fall short of canceling the project in their own right. Still, unlike other narratives of resistance by black communities, the P.E.C. had the benefit of the intercommunity alliance and while their individual failures served as an obstacle to the fight against the widening, it did not mean the defeat of the alliance.

⁷⁵ Orange County Board of County Commissioners, “December 5th Minutes,” December 5, 1988, 431.

⁷⁶ Debbie Salamone, “Eatonville’s Road Battle Gets Nowhere,” *Orlando Sentinel*, December 6, 1988.

⁷⁷ Orange County Board of County Commissioners, “December 5th Minutes,” 431; Salamone, “Eatonville’s Road Battle.”

Ultimately, if the alliance remained united, the success of one entity meant the success of the entire alliance.

In early February of 1988, the P.E.C. threatened to sue the county and appealed for the support of Eatonville officials. Yet, while supported by some officials like James Williams, who co-wrote and presented the P.E.C.'s resolution before the town council, others such as Mayor Gordon and town attorney Joe Morrell cautioned against involving the town in the suit. At the time, Eatonville remained in negotiations with the county over providing fire and police services for the town, and Gordon and Morrell believed the P.E.C.'s lawsuit would damage those efforts. Morrell and Gordon also objected to the P.E.C. representing the interest of the town in putting the town's future in jeopardy. Nathiri, the P.E.C.'s representative, resented this notion and defended the organization's purpose in seeking to preserve the integrity of the town, pointing out that the organization did not need any money from the town to sue the county.⁷⁸

As a result, the P.E.C. pursued the suit against the without the assistance of Eatonville officials, though both the name and makeup of the organization essentially linked the two entities by circumstance. The organization's attorney Al Frith argued for the inconsistency of the county's growth management plan and stated that widening Kennedy would destroy the integrity of Eatonville.⁷⁹ Yet, after suing the county in March of 1988, two months later on May 26, Orange County Circuit Judge Cecil Brown dismissed the case as lacking merit. Despite appealing to the 5th District Court of Appeals in Daytona Beach, on December 20, 1988, a three-judge panel defined the widening of a road as a political issue versus a legal issue, upholding the

⁷⁸ Debbie Salamone, "Road Plan Sparks Furor Eatonville Group Wants Council's Support to Sue County," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 19, 1988.

⁷⁹ Debbie Salamone, "Eatonville Group Loses Bid To Halt Road Widening Project," *Orlando Sentinel*, May 27, 1988.

decision of Judge Brown. Ultimately the full six-judge panel of the appeals court came to the same conclusions on February 7, 1989, and despite having the option to appeal to the Florida Supreme Court, the P.E.C. chose not to pursue further appeals.⁸⁰

However, while Eatonville had been hesitant under the Gordon administration, with the return of former Mayor Vereen to office in March of 1988, the town began to explore legal action independently rather than join the lawsuit of the P.E.C.'s pending case, or Maitland, who would sue later in the month. By early May, Eatonville's council unanimously agreed to threaten a lawsuit to force another public meeting with the county.⁸¹ According to state law, a county or municipality who intends to sue another county or municipality must file a notice which must be given to the accused party no later than forty-five days prior to filing the suit. In response, the county or municipality that receives such notice must hold a public hearing within thirty days to discuss the proposed litigation and seek to settle the controversy outside of court.⁸² In a victory for Eatonville, the county scheduled a public hearing on June 13th, though the meeting would be postponed until July 11 as Eatonville requested time for arguments.⁸³

As various residents, activists, and transportation experts spoke on behalf of Eatonville at the July 11th meeting, the town presented a resolution asking the county to rescind the vote taken on November 23 and to aid Eatonville in obtaining a historical designation. Although the county supported the resolution to support Eatonville's efforts for historical preservation, after

⁸⁰ "Eatonville Loses Appeal Over Road," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 8, 1989; Ines Davis Parrish, "Maitland Gets to Take Road Widening To Court," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 16, 1989.

⁸¹ Debbie Salamone, "Eatonville to Threaten Lawsuit," *Orlando Sentinel*, May 6, 1988.

⁸² "Governmental Disputes," 164.103 Fla. Stat. § (1988); Salamone, "Eatonville to Threaten Lawsuit."

⁸³ Debbie Salamone, "Eatonville To Get Say in Road War," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 9, 1988; "Neighborhood Notebook: Eatonville," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 12, 1988.

discussion, they refused to reconsider the widening vote.⁸⁴ In seeking to prevent another lawsuit, the county offered a compromise to Eatonville in widening Kennedy to four lanes with a grass median and amenities such as traffic lights. However, in August of 1988, the county gave Eatonville an ultimatum that unless the P.E.C. dropped their lawsuit, the town could not accept the compromise. County attorney Harry Stewart viewed Eatonville and the P.E.C. as the same entity, in stating that Nathiri had often acted as the town's representative during the road debate. While Nathiri stated that she did not know whether the association would consider dropping their suit currently in appeal, she stated the association would only settle for a three-laned widening option.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, as the division among Eatonville's councilmembers whether to accept the compromise or fight for three lanes delayed their decision, the county by September would proceed without their input in going with the four-lane option.⁸⁶

Maitland's suit carried the biggest impacts to the alliance. In February of 1988, Marilynne Davis, Maitland's city manager advised the city to pursue legal action in arguing the city could present a viable case against the county.⁸⁷ Eventually hiring the services of the law firm of Foley & Lardner, van den Berg, Gay, Burke, Wilson & Arkin and allocating \$50,000 to the suit, Maitland sued the county a few months later on June 2. Maitland argued that the widening remained inconsistent with the county and city's growth plans in placing heavy

⁸⁴ Maitland City Council, "July 11th Minutes," July 11, 1988, 283-84.

⁸⁵ Debbie Salamone, "Eatonville Residents Rally Against Road-Widening," *Orlando Sentinel*, July 31, 1988; Debbie Salamone, "Road to Compromise," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 5, 1988.

⁸⁶ Councilmembers Merrile Glover, Ada Sims and James Williams firmly supported no more than three lanes. Mayor Vereen and councilmembers Harry Bing and Leroy Filmore believed in negotiating and did not want to fight the county any further. Debbie Salamone, "Orange Settles on 4 Lanes for Eatonville Road," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 7, 1988; Debbie Salamone, "Eatonville Trying To Unite," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 9, 1988.

⁸⁷ Debbie Salamone, "Maitland To Sue Orange Over Road-Widening Plan," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 26, 1988.

development in a residential area.⁸⁸ However, while Judge Brown dismissed the case in the circuit court on September 1, 1988, upon appeal, a three-judge panel on June 13, 1989, overturned the ruling, deeming Maitland's case worthy of further trial.⁸⁹ Yet, the biggest break for the alliance came as Orange County failed to hold a public meeting with Maitland after being notified of their suit in February of 1988. On December 1, 1988, Judge Brown ruled that due to the county's negligence, the county would be responsible for paying Maitland's legal fees related to the lawsuit. While Maitland would still pay for other expenses indirectly related to the lawsuit, like staff time for research, if the alliance sought to continue fighting, Maitland could resist for the long haul.⁹⁰

Stalling, Delaying, and Canceling

The importance of Maitland's case involved delaying the scheduled construction of Kennedy/Lake which had been set to begin in 1989. As the delay extended into July of 1990, the alliance faced a test of its resolve as Orange County offered Maitland a similar compromise to Eatonville of a four-laned landscaped road with amenities to soften the impact on surrounding neighborhoods in exchange for settling the suit.⁹¹ At the July 9 council meeting, Maitland's new city manager Phyllis Holvey recommended settling with the county, but Nathiri and the P.E.C. urged Maitland to table its decision concerning the settlement to allow the association and Eatonville to work together with the city. In their eyes, accepting the settlement would compromise Eatonville and the P.E.C.'s efforts to receive inclusion into the National Register of

⁸⁸ Maitland City Council, "March 2nd Minutes," March 2, 1988, 143; Debbie Salamone, "Judge Puts Brakes On Suit Over Road Widening Plan," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 2, 1988.

⁸⁹ Salamone, "Judge Puts Brakes"; Parrish, "Maitland Gets To Take Road Widening To Court."

⁹⁰ Governmental Disputes; Debbie Salamone, "County Must Pay Costs For Road Fight," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 4, 1988; Ines Davis Parrish, "Maitland May Settle with County on Road," *Orlando Sentinel*, July 8, 1990.

⁹¹ Parrish, "Maitland May Settle with County on Road."

Historic Places.⁹² With pressure from the P.E.C., Eatonville officials and Maitland residents, who objected to a premature settlement with the county, Maitland on July 23 formed an Ad Hoc Committee of seven Maitland residents to discuss the settlement and to present their recommendations to the city council. The committee also included Ada Sims, now mayor of Eatonville, and Paul Lilling, the city representative for the Orlando Urban Metropolitan Planning Organization as two non-voting members on the committee.⁹³ As a result, Maitland did not settle its lawsuit with the county until after the county canceled the widening project.

Furthermore, developments in the late 1980s and early 1990s would impact politics in Orange County moving forward which would also affect the widening controversy for the benefit of the P.E.C., Eatonville, and Maitland. While black residents in Orlando successfully gained single-member districts in 1978, which took effect in 1980, it would be another decade before single-member districts took effect across Orange County. Yet, during the 1980s, the Orange County Political Coalition led the charge for single-member districts in the county along with encouraging blacks in the county to vote. The Orange County NAACP chapter also encouraged its members to only support candidates who supported single-member districts.⁹⁴ Similar to Orlando, the tenacious efforts of black activists would prove successful in bringing about this change.

⁹² Maitland City Council, "July 9th Minutes," July 9, 1990, 70–71; Ines Davis Parrish, "Maitland Wary of County Deal on Road Project," *Orlando Sentinel*, July 13, 1990.

⁹³ The original seven members of the Ad Hoc Committee consisted of Gene Amyx, Michael Dabby, Jeff Farley, Ken Oyler, Margaret Schellang, Oscar Willis and Donna Zoppi. Maitland City Council, "July 23rd Minutes," July 23, 1990, 77–78; Parrish, "Maitland Wary of County Deal on Road Project."

⁹⁴ Tom Scherberger, "Single-Member Districts Win Weak Praise from Candidates," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 10, 1982; Michael Blumfield, "Activists Sue Over Orange Mayor Idea," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 29, 1988.

As voters approved a county charter in 1986 and an amendment in 1988, the commission restructured to include six single-member districts and the creation of a county mayor elected countywide to serve as the county's chief executive.⁹⁵ In anticipation of the November 1990 election for the new mayor, Eatonville's commissioner Dorman had been an early favorite for the position, but in the Republican primary in September, Tom Drage, a state representative from Maitland defeated him. Yet, in a Republican-dominated county, Linda Chapin, a moderate Democrat who had served as a county commissioner since 1986, won fifty-three percent of the vote in the general election becoming the first county mayor.⁹⁶ Additionally, Mable Butler would be elected as the first black county commissioner in the heavily black District 6.⁹⁷ By 1992, while Eatonville remained in District 2, with population increases in the 1990 Census, officials redrew county districts that strengthened the political clout of black and Hispanic voters, providing them with greater chances of minority representation in the commission.⁹⁸

While stating the need for improvements to Kennedy/Lake, Chapin's reconciliatory stance to the intercommunity alliance differed from the hardline position maintained by previous commission administrations. Before becoming mayor, Chapin led efforts in the commission to tighten the county budget such as repurposing \$3 million out of the Kennedy/Lake project during the 1990-1991 fiscal year. While some believed Chapin's had political intentions in running for

⁹⁵ Michael Blumfield, "Court Victory Puts Charter a Step Away," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 16, 1989.

⁹⁶ Griffin, "What Will Orange Chairman Do?"; Michael Griffin, "Chapin Beats Drage, Wins New County Chairman Job," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 7, 1990.

⁹⁷ Andrews, "Blacks Faced Hard Times as Settlers"; Blumfield, "Court Victory Puts Charter a Step Away"; Michael Griffin, "Orange OKs New Districts," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 19, 1991.

⁹⁸ Michael Griffin, "Black, Hispanic Voters May Gain Clout," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 19, 1991; Supervisor of Elections Mapping Department, "1992 County Commission Districts: Orange County, Florida" (Orange County Supervisor of Elections, April 26, 2000), accessed May 31, 2019, <https://www.ocfelections.com/Districts%20Precincts%20Polling%20Places/Districts/countycommission/1992/bcc11x17.pdf>.

county mayor, the results saw the project delayed another fiscal year.⁹⁹ Concerning Maitland's lawsuit against the county, Chapin wrote to Eatonville and Maitland officials that "I no longer believe it is in anyone's best interests for the county to impose our judgment over yours, generating ill will and expensive litigation, when there are many pressing needs to be met."¹⁰⁰

Between the delays caused by the pending lawsuits of Maitland and the budget cuts, in May of 1993, after nearly six years of controversy, the county canceled its plans to widen Kennedy/Lake east of Interstate 4.¹⁰¹ In the aftermath, Chapin stated that "there is little point in forcing improvement on the community when they do not want them." In leading the P.E.C. to their ultimate objective, Nathiri expressed satisfaction with the outcome. Eatonville mayor Harry Bing stated, "you need sensitivity when dealing with Eatonville because of the historical significance."¹⁰² While fighting alone, the P.E.C., Eatonville, and Maitland stood little chance against the more powerful entity of Orange County, yet the benefit of the intercommunity alliance, despite various challenges, helped to defuse the threat of the widening to homes and businesses. By engaging in principles of infrastructural citizenship such as attending public meetings, lobbying, and court litigation, the intercommunity alliance found success as Eatonville prevented the widening of the historic roadway.

Promoting Eatonville Through Cultural Awareness

As important a role as the P.E.C. played in stopping the widening of Kennedy Boulevard, the association also contributed to the revival of Eatonville's cultural awareness. Through

⁹⁹ Mary Brooks, "2 Cities Get a Break on Road Project," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 29, 1991; Ines Davis Parrish, "Eatonville, Maitland Hail Roadblock," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 2, 1990.

¹⁰⁰ Parrish, "Eatonville, Maitland Hail Roadblock."

¹⁰¹ Orange County Board of County Commissioners and Maitland City Council, "May 25th Joint Minutes," May 25, 1993, 60; Will Wellons, "County Ditches Plans for 'I-5,'" *Orlando Sentinel*, May 2, 1993.

¹⁰² Will Wellons, "County Won't Widen Kennedy Boulevard," *Orlando Sentinel*, May 30, 1993.

engagements with principles infrastructural citizenship in protecting the history of Eatonville, the P.E.C. helped to boost and promote the image of the town to national prominence. As Dolores Hayden contributes to the concept of the power of place, she argues that ordinary landscapes can be used to nurture citizens' public memories that form a community's identity.¹⁰³ For the P.E.C., opposing the widening of Kennedy involved more than just resisting road improvements, it meant protecting and preserving their special town. As P.E.C. member Germaine Marvel stated, "This is Eatonville's main street—this is where the schools, the grocery stores, the churches in this little town are located."¹⁰⁴

One method of promoting the town's cultural history came through the establishment of the Zora Neale Hurston Festival of the Arts. Despite Hurston's prominence as a writer, the controversies surrounding her work and her conservative stances on issues like the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, she faded into oblivion by the time of her death in 1960. However, various artists and scholars influenced by her work since the late 1970s, such as Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple*, resurrected her works. Some works like *Their Eyes Were Watching God* have even become fixtures in literature and women's studies.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the P.E.C. sought a way to both celebrate Hurston while also celebrating the history of Eatonville. Various individuals helped organize the festival including Nathiri, along with P.E.C. board members

¹⁰³ Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscape*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 9.

¹⁰⁴ Lee, "Road Plan Bypasses."

¹⁰⁵ Critics like Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison would criticize Hurston for her literary works that they believed pandered to white fantasies in her use of black minstrel characters. Admirers like Alice Walker, Mary Ellen Washington, and Barbara Christian viewed her as a controversial, but brilliant feminist. "Fast Facts about the ZORA! Festival," Zora! Festival, accessed November 29, 2017, <https://zorafestival.org/about/>; Geneva Cobb-Moore, "Zora Neale Hurston as Local Colorist," *The Southern Literary Journal* 26, no. 2 (1994): 26–28, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20078094>; Andrew Delbanco, "The Political Incorrectness of Zora Neale Hurston," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 18 (1997): 105–6, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2998779>.

Eddis T. Dexter and Rev. James A. Shortess, local academics and folklorists from Valencia and Rollins Colleges and the University of Central Florida, local politicians and leaders, and a host of community volunteers.¹⁰⁶

In seeking to bring attention to the town during the widening controversy, the P.E.C. received over \$27,000 from the Florida Endowment for the Humanities in putting together a cultural festival. The first festival held from January 25-28, 1990 drew famous artists, actors, and writers such as Alice Walker, who served as the keynote speaker, actress Ruby Dee and storyteller Augusta Baker to Eatonville. Overall the first festival saw about 10,000 people descend on the town during the four-day event.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, the festival hosted a conference where academics, both local and across the country, focused on the overall theme of “Zora Neale Hurston: The Woman, Her Work, the Community She Championed: An Introduction.” The academic committee narrowed this theme to cover the next five festivals from 1990 to 1994, showing a long-term commitment to the event.¹⁰⁸ What began as simply a means of promoting the heritage of the town soon grew to become a staple for Eatonville and Central Florida featuring various celebrities and academics like Maya Angelou, Cicely Tyson, Danny Glover, and Henry Louis Gates Jr. over the years.¹⁰⁹ With local and national support, drawing tens of thousands of people, and serving as one of the region’s largest annual cultural events, the ZORA!

¹⁰⁶ Harris, “Her Eatonville Pride Led to Hurston Festival”; Alice Morgan Grant, ed., *All About Zora: Views and Reviews by Colleagues and Scholars, at the Academic Conference of the First Annual Zora Neale Hurston Festival of Arts* (Winter Park, Fla: Four-G Publishers, 1991), ix.

¹⁰⁷ Harris, “Her Eatonville Pride Led to Hurston Festival”; Ines Davis Parrish, “Eatonville Group Holds to Preservation Goal,” *Orlando Sentinel*, September 28, 1989; Ines Davis Parrish, “Sponsors Praise 4-Day Hurston Fest,” *Orlando Sentinel*, February 1, 1990.

¹⁰⁸ Grant, *All About Zora*, ix.

¹⁰⁹ “Fast Facts about the ZORA! Festival.”

Festival by 2014 generated over \$450,000 of revenue for Central Florida.¹¹⁰ The festival has helped build the prestige of the town in using its historical significance to stand out amid the continued growth of the Orlando area.

With the prominence of the festival, more individuals began to associate the P.E.C. solely with the festival rather than its work in preventing the widening of Kennedy. Critics claimed that over the years, the association lost its core values as the festival's commercialization no longer appealed to residents, who could not afford its fees.¹¹¹ Despite the criticism, the P.E.C. sought to remain focused on its goal to bring national prominence to Eatonville through historic preservation. Historic preservation, focused in part on cultural diversity, came about due to the federal government in 1966 passing the National Historic Preservation Act which greatly expanded the criteria for places of state and local significance for registration into the National Register of Historic Places. As social histories that included minorities and women became part of the mainstream narratives of American history, more culturally diverse sites benefited from historic preservation.¹¹²

For the oldest incorporated black town in America, places of historical significance certainly existed, so the P.E.C. sought inclusion into the registry. Yet, while historic preservation can be an effective tool in making their case through infrastructural citizenship, it often requires significant financial and human resources to pursue. As the pursuit of historic preservation

¹¹⁰ Adrienne Noel, "The ZORA! Festival Celebrates a Quarter of a Century in 2014," PRWeb, January 9, 2014, accessed May 29, 2019, <https://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/11/prweb11346363.htm>.

¹¹¹ Ines Davis Parrish, "Eatonville Preservationists Broaden Scope, Face Critics," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 24, 1995.

¹¹² Antoinette J. Lee, "From Historic Architecture to Cultural Heritage: A Journey Through Diversity, Identity, and Community," *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 1, no. 2 (2004): 16–17, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25834943>.

requires money for lawyers and infrastructural experts along with a large commitment from residents, many efforts by black communities fall short due to residents' lower incomes compared to more affluent communities and their job demands that leave less time for community activism.¹¹³ Yet, Eatonville experienced success in their fight in receiving outside support in their endeavors.

Everett L. Fly, a Texas landscape architect who specialized in studying black communities, stood as one of the earliest proponents for Eatonville pursuing this listing. After receiving a \$6,000 state grant to study Eatonville, his 1990 survey of the town listed twenty-one buildings and sites within the town's 1919 boundaries along Kennedy, formerly known as Old Apopka Road, which included the St. Lawrence A.M.E. Church and the Hungerford School. With the origins of the Old Apopka Road going back to around 1846, Fly stated that any altering to Kennedy, such as the road's proposed widening, would negatively impact Eatonville's efforts for historic preservation.¹¹⁴ While opponents of the widening stated that the historic designation could not necessarily stop the widening of Kennedy/Lake, the designation could serve to bring awareness to the town. As the driving force for the listing, the P.E.C. asked the state of Florida to allocate staff and funding in their efforts to submit a credible application for the National Register of Historic Places.¹¹⁵

As the P.E.C. and Eatonville sought a listing into the registry during the mid-1990s, the town dealt with an internal battle to prevent the establishment of a topless bar at the corner of Kennedy and Lake Destiny Road by the Double Eagle Management agency, within proximity of

¹¹³ Shelton, "Building a Better Houston Highways," 9.

¹¹⁴ Ines Davis Parrish, "Consultant: Go After Historic Status," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 22, 1990.

¹¹⁵ N.Y. Nathiri, email message to author and Dr. Scot French, January 2, 2018; Ines Davis Parrish, "Historic Designation May Not Halt Road Widening," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 3, 1991.

the proposed historic district of Eatonville. However, with the help of Orange County and a long legal battle, the P.E.C. and Eatonville succeeded in neutralizing the threat of the bar.¹¹⁶ Thus, after a nearly ten-year process and after submitting a fifty-one page application to the Department of the Interior in 1997, the P.E.C. and Eatonville saw their hard work come to fruition on February 3, 1998, as the town received inclusion into the registry. Eatonville's historic district consisted of about twenty-three acres of historic buildings constructed between 1882 and 1946. Additionally, inclusion into the registry brought greater opportunities for federal income tax credits, government grants, and federal and state oversight on subsequent projects that could harm the historic character of the community.¹¹⁷ Thus, unlike many black communities, the P.E.C. and Eatonville's employment of infrastructural citizenship proved fortunate in not only stopping infrastructural changes and defending their community, but also preserving their town's history for the future.

Chapter Conclusion

As the historiography of all-black communities shows a commitment to black empowerment amid the racial oppression of Jim Crow, early founders constructed Eatonville on the institution of black residents governing themselves and resisting any negative impacts from the outside. While Orange County and the Orlando metropolitan area would see significant

¹¹⁶ Kenneth A. Harris, "Eatonville Wins Court Fight Over Proposed Topless Bar," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 19, 1998.

¹¹⁷ The historic district of Eatonville comprises twenty-three acres of the town, containing eighty-six buildings, with fifty-one qualifying in contributing to the historic character while twenty-six are noncontributing. Contributing are classified as buildings built between 1882 and 1946 while the noncontributing are classified as buildings built from the 1960s to later. "Eatonville Historic District," National Register of Historic Places: Digital Archive on NPGallery, 1, accessed October 30, 2017, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/e5fa60c5-551d-41d3-bbef-2a52ff3a7b0b>.; Kenneth A. Harris, "With Listing, Eatonville's Place in History Is Secured," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 4, 1998.

increases in population, Eatonville would largely remain the same. Concerning Cha-Jua's central question, Eatonville would have to adjust to the impacts of policies within metropolitan politics of Orange County. As the world around Eatonville changed, with increased political power for African Americans and the impacts of integration and desegregation on society, the mission of Eatonville shifted to protecting the integrity of their town. The battles between Eatonville residents and mostly white Orange County officials over the question of progress versus history would dominate the narrative in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Through various examples, Eatonville residents engaged in principles of infrastructural citizenship to express their rights as citizens to affect change within their town. In enduring threats to the town's existence, Eatonville could have been part of the many narratives of passionate attempts by black communities in resisting infrastructural changes ultimately falling short of achieving their goals and dealing with the consequences of their failure. With the controversy of the widening of Kennedy/Lake, the differing visions between the community, culture, and heritage of Eatonville against the suburban expansion of Orange County saw the county have the advantage to have their vision fulfilled. However, the benefits of an intercommunity alliance between the P.E.C., Eatonville, and Maitland would provide an exception to the narrative in seeing the eventual cancelation of the project as the town would take control of their heritage through promoting their history to the world. Thus, the example of Eatonville demonstrates the power of ordinary residents in having success against more powerful institutional powers in providing a narrative of black success that can provide hope for other marginalized communities who faced similar threats to their existence.

CONCLUSION

Since their creation in the 1880s, Parramore and Eatonville have faced challenges in their ability to have control and dictate what occurs within their communities. Continuing into the twenty-first century, residents in both communities still face questions regarding their future. As the city of Orlando seeks to revive Parramore, residents continue to face threats of commercialization and gentrification and the fear of future displacement.¹ Eatonville, as a small town amid a growing metropolis, also seeks to balance the town's historic past with its potential future of further development and creating a more robust tax base.² In the concept of the 'right to the city,' power is often found in the hands of a small political or economic elite whose decisions have significant impacts for those within defined spaces.³ As many of these challenges resulted from historical developments over a long period, an understanding of the historical context of Central Florida and each community is paramount to finding appropriate solutions to these contemporary dilemmas.

However, as important as the historical developments are in understanding Parramore and Eatonville, it is equally important to recognize the impacts of citizen activism and community mobilization by residents. Over time, black residents exercised their rights as citizens in turning defined black spaces into personal black places. While faced with limitations along racial and class lines, residents played an active role in shaping their spaces and creating a community. When faced with challenges that threatened their community's existence, residents in both

¹ Kelly Brewington and Melissa Harris, "A Place Called Parramore," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 14, 2003.

² Daphne Sashin, "Will 115 Acres Grow into a 'Lifeline' for Eatonville," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 11, 2009.

³ Harvey, "The Right to the City," 38.

communities engaged in principles of infrastructural citizenship such as protesting, attending public meetings, utilizing historic preservation and legal action.⁴ While their endeavors did not always bring success, it did make ordinary residents a force that decision makers had to account for in proposing infrastructural changes. As these circumstances occurred across the country, this thesis uses Parramore and Eatonville as case studies to reveal these narratives of demonstrating black political power and citizen activism.

The structure of this thesis sought to examine the history of Parramore and Eatonville residents engaging in citizen activism from their foundations in the 1880s to the end of the twentieth century. During the era of Jim Crow, each community possessed differing degrees of autonomy that impacted their ability to influence and impact their communities. As a neighborhood within white-dominated Orlando, Parramore faced the decisions of city officials that limited their ability to expand and participate in the public sphere. Additionally, while Eatonville residents functioned within an autonomous all-black town, they still faced constant risk to their survival as Eatonville proved fortunate in avoiding the challenges that led to the decline of other all-black communities. Yet, despite the constraints that impacted residents' ability to shape their communities, residents in both communities established institutions that helped them navigate a period of segregation and social isolation.

Like many black communities in the post-World War II era, Parramore had to adjust to the impacts of integration. While integration and desegregation open new opportunities for black progress and mobility, it also weakened the communal bonds that helped black communities endure racial segregation. As many affluent black residents relocated to other areas beyond

⁴ Shelton, *Power Moves*, 5.

Parramore and with the decline of important community institutions like schools, Parramore experienced a drastic decline. As Orlando officials took significant interest in the community's strategic location for future development, the city's progress often came at the expense of Parramore lower-income residents. Yet, while dealing with the consequences of various infrastructural changes, the remnant of Parramore residents did not accept these changes passively as they actively employed principles of infrastructural citizenship to make their voices heard. Though they often achieved mixed results, residents engaged with city officials and private investors in seeking to dictate what occurred within their community.

Similarly, as Eatonville faced further intrusions from outside entities such as Orange County, Eatonville residents engaged in battles to protect the historic character of their town. The town dealt with the impacts of metropolitan politics as Eatonville became a small piece in the larger puzzle of Orange County's expansion. In various infrastructural conflicts, residents fought to maintain their integrity to govern themselves and control development near and within the town. In the case of the proposed widening of the town's thoroughfare, Eatonville provides a successful example of a marginalized black community having success in achieving their goals through forming alliances for a common cause. In engaging in principles of infrastructural citizenship, Eatonville residents parlayed their success into promoting the town's cultural awareness.

Through the intersection of segregation, classism, racism, and poverty, historians have often debated the roots of urban crises and who deserves the most blame. Historical scholarship on urban cities has evolved from broadly focusing on the city itself to dealing with the impacts of public policies upon ordinary citizens within the cities. While the names and faces of residents

and public officials differed from place to place, the impact of government policies on the local, state, and federal level played a significant role in the growth, expansion, and decline of various black communities across the country. Whether leaders developed these policies for altruistic or selfish intentions, or a combination of both, residents of these communities would deal with the consequences of these decisions by government officials either to the improvement or detriment of the community. This thesis seeks to contribute to the historiography of black urban history and the study of black communities in the United States through the examples of Parramore and Eatonville.

While this thesis does not provide resolutions to the issues that plague both communities, it is important for decision makers and policy experts to understand the significance of the past. Solving the contemporary issues that Parramore and Eatonville face is more complex than simply passing legislation or pouring resources into these communities. As many black communities have their foundations at the height of Jim Crow, many of these issues can be traced to historical developments in decades and even centuries past. In examining the aftermath of integration upon historic black communities, this thesis seeks to contribute to further discussions on the social consequences of desegregation upon black communities across the country.

Yet, while scholarship on urban black communities often focuses on the problems and dilemmas that currently exist, this thesis also seeks to contribute to the stories of ordinary residents in urban black communities making their voices heard in promoting and protecting the integrity of the places they call home. While African Americans historically have faced various challenges in exercising their power and citizenship, they have never been powerless and have,

in their own way, made contributions to broader society both within and outside their communities. Through viewing this power and citizenship through the lenses of Parramore and Eatonville, it demonstrates both the similarities that both communities faced along with the differences that distinguished their stories. Through examining their histories, this thesis seeks to contribute to a better and more extensive understanding of black life in Central Florida.

In moving this project forward in the future, this research can be enhanced through featuring community artifacts and photographs that present the history of both communities. Interactions with residents of both communities will provide greater opportunities to reflect the oral history of Parramore and Eatonville from former and current residents. In experiencing firsthand, the causes and effects of public policies, the incorporation of oral histories would help place faces and names to those impacted by these public policies. Additionally, the use of geographic information systems (GIS) through data such as the United States Census and the American Community Survey would visualize the impacts of these policies upon black communities like Parramore and Eatonville. Visualizing statistics such as race, income and property ownership within Parramore and Eatonville would inspire additional questions that could move this research in a new direction.

While living in an imperfect world, it is increasingly important for black communities, who face infrastructural changes, to use every resource available to protect their history, heritage, and culture. While all attempts by black communities may not always bring success, it is still important for citizens to make their voices heard. Infrastructural changes impact humanity, so it is increasingly important for citizens to take ownership of their spaces and use their rights to protest anything that jeopardizes their community values. Communities across America have

historical relevance and value, and the examples within this thesis can serve as an example not only in resisting infrastructural changes but promoting community mobilization in giving ordinary residents a voice to have their voices heard.⁵

⁵ McPherson, “Why Not Us? Infrastructural Citizenship in Eatonville, Florida.”

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