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Parting the Green Curtain: Tracing Environmental Inequality in Portland, Oregon

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Analysis

Readers:

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Abstract

This thesis utilizes a lens of environmental justice to analyze the history of Portland, Oregon and the formation of the Albina neighborhood in North Portland to understand how this community became a space of environmental inequality. Portland has been a leader in sustainable development, and yet, even with its successes, the city either been unable or unwilling to address the disproportionate impacts of environmental hazards on low-income and communities of color in Albina. Through an examination of Portland's history of segregation, stigmatization of Albina and its residents, housing policies, and urban renewal as they relate to Albina, this thesis traces the processes of covert institutional racism that have resulted in Albina being targeted by environmental risks. The environmental inequality faced by the Albina community stems from a history rooted in segregation and the stigmatization of people and place, through blatant racism, conscious policy making, as well as more discrete and unacknowledged forms of racism that serves to perpetuate the social and environmental problems that confront the community. Furthermore, the city's attempts to address these issues through urban renewal projects have led to the displacement and gentrification of Albina residents. To address these issues of environmental inequality, there must first be an understanding of the processes and institutions that formed and have perpetuated these inequalities.

Keywords: Albina, Portland, Oregon, Environmental Justice, Racism, Segregation, Vanport, Urban Renewal, Gentrification

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Introduction

Self-congratulation occurs in the region each time our city reaches the “top 10” lists of good places to live in the USA. [However] we are deluding ourselves to think that this is universally an excellent place to live. (Curry-Stevens & Cross-Hemmer, 2010, p. 122)

Portland, Oregon has been lauded by environmentalists for its efforts towards environmental sustainability. Known for its early efforts in promoting environmental awareness and remediation with the pioneering bottle bill (1971), the conservation of Forest Park (1948), and the efforts to clean up the grossly polluted Willamette River by crusading journalist and future Oregon governor Tom McCall (Governor of Oregon 1967-74), the city has maintained an environmentally friendly image (Lansing, 2003). In 1975, a report prepared for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proclaimed Portland as the most livable city in the U.S., with top scores in economic, political, social, environmental, and health/education criteria (Liu, 1975). In 2014, Portland was one of ten global cities recognized by the City Climate Leadership Awards (Theen, 2014). *Travel and Leisure Magazine* ranked Portland as the greenest city in the country in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 (Hunt, 2015). Portland has been recognized for its efforts towards improving infrastructure and incentives for electric vehicles (Edelstein, 2016). The city has succeeded in reducing its carbon emissions by 17 percent from 2006 to 2015 and generates all of the electricity used in City operations with renewable energy (City of Portland, 2016). In an EPA document outlining smart growth and sustainable development, the EPA states that “Portland, Oregon, with its long-standing urban growth boundary, downtown building boom, and well-developed transit system is one of the best known and frequently cited examples of smart growth” (EPA, n.d., p. 1).

The city’s reputation is warranted for many reasons, however, as this thesis will discuss, industrial pollution and environmental hazards do exist in abundance in the port city, especially

in communities of color. The industrial development of the city is concentrated along the Northern stretch of the Willamette River that bisects the city. This concentration of industrial pollution brings us to the arena of environmental justice. Who lives next to and within these areas that are exposed to more environmental hazards? The Albina community, located in North Portland on the east side of the river, bears the brunt of these concentrated environmental hazards. This community, consisting of historically black and immigrant neighborhoods, is the most racially diverse in Portland and is impacted by environmental inequality (Collin, 2008; Folks, 2012, 2012; House, 2015; OPAL, n.d.; Stroud, 1999; Virgili, 2001). Albina faces numerous environmental struggles, but to understand how these issues affect this community of people and the systems in place that perpetuate this inequality, we must examine how these neighborhoods were formed.

Through applying a lens of environmental justice to city planning documents, housing and segregation policies, census data, newspaper clippings, and historical texts, this thesis analyzes the history of settlement, housing policies, segregation, in-city migration, urban renewal, and industrial development in the Albina community of Portland, Oregon. I argue that even with Portland's successes with sustainable development and environmental initiatives, the city has been unable to address the environmental inequalities that plague the city. The institutionalization of segregated housing practices coupled with the association of these areas as degraded due to perceptions of the population and current and past land-uses, perpetuates the environmental inequalities felt by people of color in the Albina community. Furthermore, the environmental injustices faced by the Albina community do not necessarily reflect direct, intentional siting of polluting industrial sites in and next to communities of color and immigrant communities, but rather a more complex system driven by historically racist housing practices,

white flight, urban renewal, and gentrification that have served to institutionalize racism and shape the demographic blueprint of the city. Historically disconnected from political participation through voting restrictions and now distanced by lack of education, language barriers, and physical distance from downtown, the people of color in Albina face a more covert, institutionalized form of racism. Furthermore, Portland's efforts to address these environmental inequalities have only exacerbated these inequalities, resulting in the displacement and gentrification of communities.

The institutions that helped to create the environmental injustices of Albina are the very institutions that are charged with addressing these issues. The institutionalization of racist ideologies or stigmas—a set of negative and unjustified beliefs about a group of people or a place—materialize through systemic practices that maintain the status quo, resulting in the perpetuation of practices such as segregation. These do not manifest as explicit segregation policies, but rather policies or standard practices that result in the perpetuation of segregation. Therefore, it is imperative to gain an understanding of how and why these ideologies arose and became institutionalized in order to be able to address the environmental inequalities justly.

Racism and the manifestation of racism into policy has existed in Portland since its founding. The ideologies that formed Oregon's original exclusionary laws moved on to shape racist housing policies that segregated neighborhoods through practices such as redlining. These policies shaped the demographic blueprint of the city from the beginning, which was then overlain with industrial development and growth policies, further stigmatizing the Albina community. Institutionalized racism and stigma shaped where and how urban renewal projects

were carried out, resulting in the displacement of people of color and gentrification of Albina neighborhoods.

These institutional issues and the perpetuation of environmental inequality plague many communities across the country, however this case study of Albina provides special implications for urban planning and sustainability that are unique to Portland. Portland is a model city for sustainable planning and growth, however, even with these accomplishments, the city has not been able to solve the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards that impact its communities of color. Clearly, even our best models of sustainable development do not address environmental inequalities. Through this thesis, I argue that fully understanding the problem, understanding the history of how and why these inequalities were created and perpetuated, allows us to work towards better, and more just, solutions.

Literature Review

Most scholars consider the events in Warren County, North Carolina in 1982 as the launching of the environmental justice movement. Black and white protestors from the low-income and predominately black town of Afton rose up against the siting of a landfill—by the state with the approval of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)—that was to receive over 30,000 cubic yards of soil contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) that had been illegally dumped along the roadways. Although the protests did not prevent the landfill from being built and the PCBs from being dumped, this represented a key joining of the civil rights movement and the anti-nuclear/toxics (environmental) movement (Bullard, 1994; Geiser & Waneck, 1994; General Accounting Office, 1983). These protests also sparked some of the first studies of issues of environmental justice.

The first publication that came out in the wake of the Warren County events came from the General Accounting Office (GAO). The study reported that three of four EPA permitted toxic waste facilities in the Southern United States were located in areas with majority black populations. All four facilities were located in communities with over a quarter of the population below the poverty level and of that, over 90 percent of the population below the poverty line at all four locations were black. However, the 1983 GAO report did not attempt to produce any statistical conclusions on whether race or class was a more significant factor due, in part, to the small amount of data (Bullard, 1994; Commission for Racial Justice, United Church of Christ, 1987; General Accounting Office, 1983). In 1987, the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice conducted the first national studies that examined the extent to which people of color were exposed to hazardous wastes. The resulting United Church of Christ report, *Toxic Wastes and Race*, found that although socio-economic status was an important determinant, race was *the most significant factor* in association with the location of commercial hazardous waste facilities. The study found that three-fifths of black and Hispanic Americans lived in communities that contained uncontrolled waste sites (Commission for Racial Justice, United Church of Christ, 1987).

Robert D. Bullard, a sociologist and environmental justice scholar, was one of the first to write on environmental justice in the 1990s. He recognized that low-income and, in particular, communities of color bear a disproportionate burden of environmental hazards, reflecting larger social, procedural, and geographic inequities which have been institutionalized. This institutionalization of inequities govern current and dominant environmental protection efforts and agencies which, in turn, reflect and reinforce the stratification of people, place, and work:

Environmental decision makers have failed to address the 'justice' questions of who gets help and who cannot, why some contaminated communities get studies while others are

left off the research agenda, why some communities get cleaned up at a faster rate than others, why some cleanup methods are selected over others, and why industry poisons some communities and not others. (Bullard, 1994)

Additionally, institutional enforcement of environmental inequality puts the burden of proof on the affected communities who may not have the resources to provide proof. Bullard also expands this argument to account for cumulative impacts over time and with multiple exposure from different types of environmental hazards (Bullard, 1994, 2000, 2007).

First generation environmental justice focuses on race and the siting of hazardous sites and sets these with physical spatial relationships with people of color. It argues that environmental hazards are more likely to be placed near communities of color. Later scholars critique this framework as it is limited to having to prove racist intentionality with the citing of hazards. In addition, focusing only on the spatial relationship, ignores other, more covert, racialized social and political processes that assisted in the formation of these spaces such as stigmatization and redlining as well as ignores other spatialities, different types of social, economic and political space that occur outside of Cartesian or physical distance such as distance from the political process (Pellow, 2000; Pulido, 2000; Sarathy, Forthcoming; Walker, 2009). The first generation view of environmental racism is what shaped policies and continues to be the public's general understanding of environmental justice. Laura Pulido—Professor of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California and an environmental justice scholar— argues that by reducing environmental racism to blatant acts of racism, scholars ignore the “structural and hegemonic forms of racism in contributing to such inequalities” (Pulido, 2000, p. 15). Intentionality relies on malicious intent, which 1) is not always present 2) is hard to prove. In addition, this conception of environmental racism as malicious intent and the individual siting of hazardous facilities only allows us to see environmental inequities and not

the broader racism narrative based on social relations. This prevents us from recognizing how racism shapes places and thus our understanding of the process of environmental racism (Pulido, 2000). Additionally, geographer Gordon Walker also critiques the first generation environmental justice scholarship as insufficient as it only addresses distribution of and physical distance of communities from environmental hazards, ignoring how social, political, and economic space can further serve to privilege some and hinder others (Walker, 2009).

The scholarship that has followed, referred to as the second generation of environmental justice, has diversified the scope of environmental justice to include issues of access to environmental benefits and resources, vulnerability to natural disasters, gender, poverty, white privilege, institutional racism, multiple spatialities, and cumulative impacts of exposure to multiple environmental risks (Bullard, 2000, 2007; S. Cutter, 2006; Pellow, 2000, 2002; Pulido, 2000; Sarathy, Forthcoming; Walker, 2009).

Pulido advocates for a broader approach in viewing environmental racism as not only intentional, but structural as part of practices and ideologies that shaped the institutions that govern the development and regulation of environmental hazards and perpetuate environmental racism. Furthermore, she argues that this broader view of environmental racism allows us to examine not just the environmental harms towards people of color, but the environmental, social, and economic benefits of white privilege (Pulido, 2000).

Walker (2009) argues that a more nuanced understanding of space and distance needs to be incorporated to reach a fuller understanding of justice. For example, he notes Environmental justice functions within three intersectional arenas of distribution, recognition and procedure. Distribution speaks to the equal and equitable siting of impacts and responsibilities. Recognition deals with the attention and response given to the issue or lack thereof. This spans the realm of

burden of proof and the devaluation of people or communities based on race or ethnicity, gender, class, and education level. Procedural justice reflects the handling of environmental justice systematically and the level of participation in this process. Who is included or excluded from the decision-making process? Access to spaces of decision-making spread over multiple spatialities including: physical distance from political spaces such as city hall; exclusion from political participation due to language barriers or lack of accessibility to voting; distance created by the lack of access to information; and the time and/or economic ability to participate in the political process. Distribution, recognition, and procedure operate over this complex web of spatialities, and serve to build a more complicated route to justice. Space and distance encompasses more than just Cartesian distance away from harms but also proximity to goods, information, political space and influence, power, and democratic space (Walker, 2009).

The concept of space and the creation of spaces in environmental justice has more recently entered the scholarship in terms of misrepresentation and perceptions of space and how this relates to people. Stigma is defined by Herek (2009) as “the negative regard, inferior status, and relative powerlessness that society collectively accords to people who possess a particular characteristic or belong to a particular group or category (Herek, 2009, p. 441). Social stigmatization has allowed people to be associated with garbage, filth, and disease based on race, class, or ethnicity (Sze, 2007). These social stigmas attached to people also come to be attached to the places where they reside. Similarly, the stigma attached to a place can impact the stigma of the people who inhabit that space. This thesis will later discuss how a community stigmatized by social and physical blight factor and associations with being a ghetto led to the creation and perpetuation of environmental injustices.

Place stigmatization and industries with negative stigmas create an association of danger, threat and degradation with place (Simmons & Walker, 2005; Slovic, Flynn, & Gregory, 1994; Walker, 2009). Dangerous or dirty technologies and industries, such as power plants or chemical manufacturing plants can result in the association with the place itself as dirty, dangerous, and degraded (Slovic, Flynn, & Gregory, 1994). The association with a place as blighted or dirty facilitates an association with the communities that reside in those spaces. These people become stigmatized as the characteristics of the place where they reside are adopted onto them. Pellow (2002) argues that these spaces and communities are subsequently “associated with trash” and thus not only are a product of the placement of stigmatized industries, but also perpetuate additional siting of such industries as these spaces become “natural destination[s]” for undesirable land use (Pellow, 2002). Walker (2009) adds: “Marked people in marked places [then] become expected to live with incivilities and [are] blamed for not looking after their own environment, with such institutionalized assumptions shaping where effort by the state to address problems is and is not deployed” (Walker, 2009).

Pellow also critiques environmental justice literature that argues environmental inequalities emerge when communities of color and low-income communities are exposed to hazards because they hold less power than corporations or the government. Pellow (2000) asserts that this oversimplifies the complexities of how these situations arise and the variability between each situation. Instead, he proposes that environmental inequalities need to be seen as a “sociohistorical process rather than... a discrete event” that involves multiple stakeholders with complex and intertwining relationships over time. To understand how and why problems and injustices occur, we must have a full understanding of how these issues came to be (Pellow, 2000).

The majority of environmental justice scholarship focuses exclusively on race, which is the strongest predictor of the location of environmental hazards (Bullard, 1994, 2007). Environmental justice must engage in the intersectionality between race, class, gender, and geography (S. L. Cutter, 2012; McCall, 2005; Sarathy, Forthcoming; Walker, 2009). Broadening environmental justice to encompass race, class, gender, and geography (rural or unincorporated areas that lack access to political representation and participation) allows us to see the links between different types of oppression. This allows us to examine the intersectionality of marginalization and work collaboratively towards solutions for environmental injustice (Sarathy, Forthcoming). My thesis utilizes this more complex strategy of intersectionality in order to approach the issues environmental justice faced by Albina.

Additionally, gentrification and urban renewal are processes that are intricately interwoven within many efforts to address environmental injustices (Wolch, Byrne, & Newell, 2014). Gentrification “refers to the rehabilitation of working-class and derelict housing and the consequent transformation of an area into a middle-class neighborhood” (Smith & Williams, 1986, p. 2). Furthermore, gentrification scholar Neil Smith, argues that “residential rehabilitation is only one facet... of a more profound economic, social, and spatial restructuring” that manifests visually through the social restructuring of communities (Smith & Williams, 1986, p. 3). Portland, Oregon has experienced numerous episodes of gentrification since the 1950s, with middle and upper middle class white residents displacing people of color and low-income communities (Gibson, 2007; Goodling, Green, & McClintock, 2015; Lubitow & Miller, 2013; Sullivan & Shaw, 2011). Smith argues that urban renewal in cities after the war helped to proliferate gentrification, which has allowed gentrification from the middle and upper-middle class to be institutionalized in governments and public-private partnerships (Smith, 2002).

Goodling, Green, and McClintock (2015) argue that Portland's sustainable development has caused gentrification as these renewed urban green spaces attract white and affluent residents and have thus pushed poorer and more diverse communities out to the margins of the city (Goodling et al., 2015).

Scholarship on the Albina community as an arena of environmental injustice has focused on the identification of the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards. Of the collection of theses and dissertations from local universities that analyze current environmental hazards, many discuss the unequal distribution of environmental hazards as an environmental justice issue in North Portland (Collin, 2008; Folks, 2012; Virgili, 2001). Ellen Stroud (1999), a scholar of environmental history, connects the racialized history of Portland's housing policies and industrial development to the creation of the Columbia Slough as a toxic waterway and one of the most hazardous sites in Portland. Stroud connects this history to environmental justice in her discussion of how the Slough came to be a sacrificial zone for pollutants and how the neighborhoods that bordered the Slough (northern Albina) came to represent the most diverse neighborhoods in Portland. As she traces how the Slough became an environmental justice issue, Stroud analyzes the Slough and Albina from a historical perspective. The author identifies and connects several of the policies that created this environmental injustice. My thesis builds upon Stroud's work, using an environmental justice lens to tease out the social and political processes that have allowed for the creation and continued existence of the multitude of environmental injustices that Albina faces. In order to gain a fuller understanding of the development of environment injustices in the community of Albina, we must look at the interactions between multiple environmental hazards and social issues that afflict the neighborhoods, since it is not just the impacts of one toxic site, but of many, that play into overlapping and cumulative impacts

on the community. By broadening Stroud's historical analysis from the Slough to the entire community of Albina, my thesis shows the connections between how the community has been shaped by institutionalized racism and stigmatization throughout the history of Portland and the environmental justice issues that impact the community. Furthermore, this interdisciplinary scope allows us to analyze how the city's urban renewal efforts have perpetuated the environmental justice issues that Albina faces. This thesis not only examines the policies that have allowed these environmental inequalities to be produced and perpetuated, but how and why these policies were put in place. What was the social and political context in Portland and Albina that facilitated the development of these discriminatory policies and practices? How did Albina become a stigmatized community targeted by environmental hazards?

In this thesis, Chapter I will provide a background on the current area of Albina and the environmental risks that the communities face. First, the location of Albina and its population will be outlined in relation to the rest of Portland as well as the environmental risks that impact the community. Then, this chapter will describe in depth the environmental risks posed to Albina and the associated health risks. Finally, Chapter I will discuss the cumulative impacts of these risks and the documented health issues of Albina specifically.

Chapter II will delve into the history of Portland through World War II to provide background as to the history of segregation, racism, and stigmatization, or the attaching of an unmerited poor reputation, of the community of Albina. The thesis will first recount the founding of Oregon as a white colony and describe the early years of Portland. Next, the history of migration and immigration of people of color will be outlined in order to provide the foundations for the history of housing segregation through WWII. Chapter II will then discuss racialized

housing policies and the Vanport housing project. The chapter will conclude with the destruction of Vanport, which left the city to deal with yet another housing crisis.

In Chapter III, this thesis looks at the creation of Albina as a space of environmental inequality post-WWII. First, this chapter will examine the development and growth of industry in Albina after the war and some of the planning policies that oversaw this process. Next, the creation and perpetuation of stigmatized areas and populations will be analyzed through census data, government documents, and newspaper clippings. Chapter III will also address Albina's key function as a stopover neighborhood. Lastly, this thesis will look at the successes and failures of urban renewal efforts that have resulted in displacement and gentrification.

Key Concepts and Notes on Terminology

This paper will examine the history of Portland, Oregon from World War II through an environmental justice lens to trace the process of formation of environmental inequality in the Albina community of North Portland. For clarity, this thesis will utilize the definitions of various environmental terms as defined here. *Environmental justice* is a goal focused on solving environmental injustices. Bryant (1995) defines environmental justice as “cultural norms and values, rules, regulations, behaviors, policies, and decisions to support sustainable communities where people can interact with confidence that the environment is safe, nurturing, and productive” (Bryant, 1995, p. 6). *Environmental injustice* “occurs when a particular social group—not necessarily a racial/ethnic group—is burdened with environmental hazards” (Pellow, 2000, p. 582). *Environmental racism* “focuses on the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on communities of color” (Pellow, 2000, p. 582). *Environmental inequality* incorporates the intersectionality between environmental quality and social hierarchies. It seeks to explain

“structural questions that focus on social inequality (the unequal distribution of power and resources in society) and environmental burdens” (Pellow, 2000, p. 582). *White racism* as defined in Pulido (2000) is the “practices and ideologies, carried out by structures, institutions, and individuals, that reproduce racial inequality and systematically undermine the wellbeing of racially subordinated populations” (Pulido, 2000, p. 15). *White privilege* describes the hegemonic structures, practices, and ideologies that reproduce and perpetuate the privileged status of whites that are awarded social and economic benefits (Pulido, 2000).

Additionally, this thesis uses specific terminology to discuss different groups of people, and more specifically, marginalized and minority groups. While acknowledging that concepts of race are socially constructed and that racial identity and preferred terminology varies between individuals and even with individuals relative to time and situation, this thesis describes how social ideologies have been institutionalized and serve to create and perpetuate inequality. Thus, general terminology must be used to discuss the creation of spaces that have been formed from a racialized framework. The term people of color will be used to describe non-white groups of people in general. When speaking about specific groups within people of color, black or black American, and Asian American will be used. The thesis uses black American as opposed to African American, as not all black Americans identify with Africa, such as Afro-Cubans. When possible, immigrants will be identified along with the specific country from which they immigrated. White will be used to describe people of European descent. It is important to note that much of the older data from the U.S. census as well as other early government documents, do not always differentiate between white and non-Hispanic whites. In order to maintain consistency with these data, the term white, in reference to statistics from these sources will include white Hispanics, even though some white Hispanics often identify as people of color. For

the most part, the Hispanic population in Albina has been quite low, especially prior to 2000, and thus will not significantly alter the historical data being used. Additionally, much of the literature and primary source documents use different terminology to describe groups of people. When describing these sources, the terminology that is used within each source will be utilized as it reflects the perspectives and biases of the source and time period.

Acronyms

CO = Carbon Monoxide

EPA = Environmental Protection Agency

GAO = General Accounting Office

HAP = Housing Authority of Portland

HUD = U.S. Department of Housing and
Urban Development

NO_x = Nitrogen oxides

LCDC = Land Conservation and
Development Commission

O₃ = Ozone

ODEQ = Oregon Department of
Environmental Quality

PDC = Portland Development Commission

PCB = polychlorinated biphenyl

PCPC = Portland City Planning Commission

PM = Particulate matter

SO_x = Sulfur oxides

UGB = Urban Growth Boundary

WWI = World War I

WWII = World War II

Chapter 1: Background of Environmental Risks

Albina Community

Albina consists of fifteen neighborhoods in North Portland on the east side of the Willamette River (see Figure 1) and is the most racially diverse community in the city. With only 24 percent of the population consisting of non-white residents, Portland is one of the whitest cities in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). As of 2010, Albina was home to approximately 71,500 of Portland's 590,000 total population (Office of Neighborhood Involvement, n.d.). The Albina community encompasses only 17 percent of Portland's total population, but almost 40 percent of the city's non-white community (Collin, 2008). Albina is a historic and current hub for immigrants, and has some of the highest percentages of recent immigrants in the state, many of whom speak little or no English (Stroud, 1999). Bounded to the north by the Columbia Slough, to the west and south by the Willamette River and industrial zones, and transected by the I-5 freeway, Albina is ensnared in environmental risks. Environmental hazards or risks are anything within your environment—where you live, work, and play—that could pose a risk to human health and safety. The environmental risks discussed here, however, are those that pose a risk higher than what most people would typically encounter in their daily lives. Oftentimes these risks are geographically isolated and only impact those within a certain distance of the risk. For example, drinking water contaminated by lead poses a risk to those who receive water from the contaminated source, while those that receive their water from an uncontaminated source are not exposed to this risk. This chapter will outline the environmental risks that impact the Albina community as well as discuss the documented health impacts of the neighborhoods.

Columbia Slough & Willamette River

The Albina community is bounded to the north and west by two highly polluted waterways. Until the 1950s, all of Portland's raw sewage was dumped in the Slough and the Willamette River. However, overflow of sewers whenever it rained would continue to flow into both waterways until 2000, when the Big Pipe project, which directs sewage and other waste to treatment plants rather than the waterways, became operational (Columbia Slough Watershed Council, 2016).

The Slough has long been a dumping ground for slaughterhouse, industrial, and chemical waste. Additionally, it is bordered by the St. John's Landfill which has leached toxins into the waterway since the 1930s. This combined pollution has caused a buildup of lead, PCBs, and cyanide among other pollutants in the Slough's water, sediment, and fish. The Port of Portland has argued that because the Slough is already so polluted, the most sensible use of the Slough is as a drainage ditch (Stroud, 1999).

A quarter of Portland's 37,000 black residents live in the vicinity of the Slough (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2015; Stroud, 1999). Many black Americans, as well as recent immigrants, fish in the Slough. The neighborhoods along the Slough have some of the highest percentages of recent immigrants in the state. The warning sign that advises against fishing along the Slough is printed in English, Spanish, Russian, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Laotian, a reflection of the diversity and concentration of minorities in the area. The language barrier increases the distance of immigrants to the political process as well as information regarding environmental issues (Stroud, 1999).

The EPA listed the Willamette River as a Superfund site in 2000. The site includes eleven miles of the river contaminated by heavy metals, PCBs, and pesticides and over 130 different

entities, including the City of Portland, the Port of Portland, Boeing, Chevron, and Bayer, are being held responsible for the cleanup of the river. The Lower Willamette Group, a collection of twelve responsible parties has been conducting a feasibility study for cleanup that the EPA is currently reviewing. The document outlines plans ranging from doing nothing to dredging the toxic sediment and hauling it off, which is the most encompassing, but also the most expensive option. The largest contamination issue hinges on fishing as the water itself is not toxic, but the sediment and thus the fish are, making communities that fish the Willamette vulnerable (EPA, 2016). Evaluating the cleanup options means evaluating the costs to human health of each option. According to a 2012 exposé in the *Willamette Week*, a handful of the at-fault companies have formed the Portland Harbor Partnership and are running a \$500,000 educational campaign towards ethnic and immigrant groups to deter people from eating fish. The Partnership is targeting minority organizations, giving over \$10,000 each to The Latino Network, The Urban League of Portland, and the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization to set up educational forums about the risks of eating the Willamette fish in Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Chinese, Somali, and Tongan communities. Jeri Williams, the program coordinator for Portland's Office of Neighborhood Involvement, is skeptical that the Partnership is "trying to buy off" ethnic groups. The *Willamette Week* article speculates that the Portland Harbor Partnership believes that if the EPA cannot prove that a significant amount of people are eating the fish, then the companies will not have to implement an expensive cleanup plan (Mesh, 2012). In an official letter from EPA Regional Administrator, Dennis J. McLerren, the EPA responds to four Oregon congressmen about questions concerning the EPA's preliminary remediation goals and the Human Health Risk Assessment. Of the seven questions posed by the congressmen, five of them

concern the toxicity of fish, the consumption of fish, and the methods for ascertaining these risks.

For example, some of the questions ask:

What risk scenario is this preliminary cleanup goal based on? If multiple preliminary cleanup goals are being used, please describe each risk scenario separately, including what type of fish, who is eating them, how often are they eating them, over how many years, and how they are eating them. What studies or information about fish consumption patterns does EPA rely upon for these assumptions?...We have also heard that the EPA's scenario involves an assumption that someone consumes bass and carp from the river and always eats it without any preparation (no cleaning or cooking) and that they eat the whole fish (including the skin and internal organs). Is this correct? (McLerren, 2011, p. 2)

Whether the congressmen's questions came from the Lower Willamette Group or other responsible parties cannot be ascertained. However, Representative Earl Blumenauer told *Willamette Week* that he heard dozens of complaints from businesses and that the "cleanup has already cost Portlanders hundreds of millions of dollars, and we haven't started cleaning yet" (Mesh, 2012, sec. 12).

Freeways

Interstate-5 and Interstate-84 corridors bisect the Albina community. Trucking traffic along the I-5 is notoriously bad especially because of its proximity to the industrial areas surrounding the ports. Diesel trucks emit higher amounts of harmful pollutants than cars, so areas with heavy truck traffic, such as highly industrial areas, are more at risk to dangerous exposure to air pollution (Brunekreef et al., 1997). Localized air pollution is significantly higher along major roadways and contains elevated levels of carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulfur oxides (SO_x), particulate matter (PM), benzene, and ozone (O₃) (Trasande & Thurston, 2005). A growing body of research supports a causal association with these emissions and childhood asthma, cardiovascular mortality, impaired lung function, and overall mortality (Trasande & Thurston, 2005). These health risks most affect children, the elderly, or people with pre-existing

conditions. The health effects of air pollutants on children is outlined in Table 1 and health impacts on Albina specifically will be outlined further later in this chapter.

Ozone is formed from the reaction of NO_x with sunlight. Exposure to O_3 causes respiratory irritation, reduced lung function, shortness of breath, chest pain, wheezing and coughing, and triggers asthma (Trasande & Thurston, 2005; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2002). Particulate matter is composed of a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets from combustion and is categorized on particle size versus chemical composition. PM is deposited in the respiratory track, and smaller PM is able to penetrate deep into the lungs, causing respiratory illnesses such as asthma and chronic bronchitis (Bobak & Leon, 1992; Trasande & Thurston, 2005; Woodruff, Grillo, & Schoendorf, 1997). NO_x are the result of diesel and gasoline engine combustion. Most commonly occurring as nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), this pollutant reduces lung function, triggers asthma and increases risk of lower respiratory tract illnesses (Shima & Adachi, 2000; Trasande & Thurston, 2005). Carbon monoxide is another product of engine combustion and has been connected with increased rates of cardiac ischemia (Bae, Sandlin, Bassok, & Kim, 2007). SO_x most commonly occur as sulfur dioxide (SO_2) and is positively correlated with increases in the prevalence of morning cough and can also exacerbate asthma symptoms. Benzene is an important indicator of air pollution next to major roadways. Prolonged benzene exposure is associated with a significant increase in diagnoses of bronchitis and asthma, especially in children (Hirsch et al., 1999).

Air pollution emissions from cars and trucks are elevated within 150 to 350 meters of major roadways. A growing body of both environmental and epidemiological research has shown that populations living near highly traveled roads are at an increased risk of exposure to air pollutants and experience adverse health impacts (Bae et al., 2007). A 2014 study for the Center

for Disease Control and Prevention found that people living within 150 meters of major highways were most likely to be members of racial or ethnic minorities, immigrants, and non-native English speakers (Boehmer, Foster, Henry, Woghiren-Akinnifesi, & Yip, 2014). This further supports the well-documented correlation between high concentrations of mobile-source air pollutants and the residences of low-income and minority populations (Bae et al., 2007; Chakraborty, Schweitzer, & Forkenbrock, 1999; Delfino, Gong, Linn, Pellizzari, & Hu, 2003; Green, Smorodinsky, Kim, McLaughlin, & Ostro, 2004; Gunier, Hertz, von Behren, & Reynolds, 2003; Kinney, Aggarwal, Northridge, Janssen, & Shepard, 2000; Loh & Sugerman-Brozan, 2002; Wilhelm & Ritz, 2003).

Industry

Albina is bound on three sides by industrial districts including Portland's largest industrial zone, the Swan Island District, just to the west of Albina. To the north lies another large industrial zone, the Columbia Boulevard District and the Portland International Center. To the southwest lies the Albina District, which encompasses the Albina train yard (Portland City Planning Commission., 1967). These industrial districts are major players in the city's goods movement industry that serves as both a regional distribution hub and a port for international trade. The Port of Portland administers five marine terminals along the Willamette that distribute cargo to the Albina train yard, the Portland International Airport, and to over a hundred trucking providers that utilize I-5 and I-84 to haul goods out of the city (Port of Portland, n.d.). The Swan Island and Albina industrial districts boast "one of the region's largest traded sectors in transportation equipment manufacturing" and is "a regional freight hub location with harbor access and Union Pacific's busiest metro area rail yard" (Portland Development Commission &

Portland Bureau of Planning, n.d., p. 1). It holds distribution facilities such as Freightliner Corporation, United Parcel Service, Columbia Distributing Company, and Fedex as well as multiple third party logistics centers that facilitate the transport of goods and manufacturing facilities such as the Streimer Sheet Metal Works (Portland Development Commission & Portland Bureau of Planning, n.d.). Industry not only emits a wide variety of industrial air and water pollutants, a sample of which are outlined above, but also increases the amount of truck traffic and other transportation. In 2014, average weekday traffic counts for the I-5 Interstate Bridge between Oregon and Washington was over 132,000 (Regional Transportation Council, n.d.). Types and forms of industrial pollutants varies widely with different industries, but overall industrial pollutants include numerous carcinogenic and non-carcinogenic toxins that impact cancer risk and can cause toxicity to the immune, neurological, reproductive, developmental, and respiratory systems (Tam & Neumann, 2004).

Documented Health Impacts

The concentration and proximity of industrial development to Albina and high traffic thoroughfares that run through the community form one of the most polluted traffic corridors in the state with asthma rates double the national average and triple the rate in other areas of Portland (OPAL, n.d.). Particulates from diesel emissions increase the risk of cancer and asthma. Areas of high diesel pollution are clustered around Interstate-5 and Interstate-205, reaching levels 100 times higher than levels considered safe by ODEQ (Harris et al., 2009). According to a report compiled by Oregon State University, communities located around the I-5 corridor are disproportionately low-income and communities of color (Harris et al., 2009). Using geospatial analysis, Bae et al. (2007) found that in Portland, low-income and minorities are

disproportionately represented living in areas within zones of increased air pollution along freeways. In addition, the study found that low-income residents are concentrated 1.36 times higher in this zone than the general population within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) of Portland. However, the concentration of black Americans living along freeways was higher than low-income and any other minority with a concentration 2-3 times higher than the general population within the Urban Growth Boundary (Bae et al., 2007). The increased risk of exposure to toxic pollutants for communities of color in Albina is also supported by a 2011 report by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) that found elevated levels of air toxins in census groups with higher densities of black, Asian, and Hispanic families (Folks, 2012).

These environmental issues are reflected in the health disparities affecting Portland's black residents including a three-fold increase in asthma rates and higher rates of diabetes, physical disabilities, stroke, heart disease, and cancer (Harris et al., 2009). Albina is home to thirteen of the fifty-eight largest sources of toxic pollutants in Portland, and an additional twenty-two industrial facilities have permits that allow them to release pollutants into the air (Virgili, 2001). Given that Albina is only about 10 percent of the total land area of the city but contains 22 percent of the largest sources of toxic pollutants located with the community, Albina is disproportionately impacted by these toxic industries (Portland City Planning Commission, 1993; Portland Water Bureau, n.d.). The King neighborhood in the heart of Albina recorded average benzene and arsenic levels in 2013 that exceeded US EPA's and ODEQ's health benchmarks by more than five times (House, 2015). North and Northeast Portland residents concerned with industrial odors and air quality account for nearly one-third of ODEQ's complaints (House, 2015). According to a community survey conducted by the Environmental Justice Action Group and the Oregon Environmental Council in Albina, the highest reported

health concern in the community is asthma caused by diesel pollution (Oregon Environmental Council, 2007). These concerns rise out of disproportionate air pollution affecting the Albina neighborhoods. The Albina community holds only 13 percent of the county's population, yet receives 55 percent of its hazardous air emissions (Oregon Environmental Council, 2007).

This chapter provided a background into the current environmental injustices that the Albina neighborhoods face as well as outlines how this translates into a disproportionate impact of health issues felt by people of color and low-income communities. This chapter will give context to the following chapters as they address how these issues came to be through an analysis of how Albina was shaped throughout Portland's history.

Chapter 2: Legacies of Segregation and Stigma in Portland through WWII

To gain a true understanding of the social, economic, and political makeup of the City of Portland is to understand the dynamics that shaped the settlement patterns of African Americans. (Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993)

The physical structure and social fabric of present-day Albina has been shaped by Portland's history of less than two centuries. Through an exploration of segregation, the stigmatization of Albina and Vanport and their residents, and the resulting housing policies through the 1940s, this chapter explores how their legacies have served to build the demographic blueprint of the city. This chapter begins with the exclusionary clause of Oregon and traces race relations in the first years of Portland. The following section will outline the episodes of social, economic, and housing pressures that resulted in discriminatory policies. Finally, this chapter will close with a discussion of the World War II public housing project of Vanport and its role in shaping the Albina neighborhoods.

Founding of Oregon

Oregon is one of the whitest states in the U.S. with a black population of only 2 percent of the total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). This statistic reflects the residual effects of exclusionary laws in Oregon's early history that prohibited black Americans from residing in the state, owning property, and making contracts. Even before Oregon gained its statehood, the Oregon Country, territory that consisted of present day Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana, was intended as an area for white settlement (Lansing, 2003). In the formation of Oregon's constitution, voters widely approved the exclusionary clause, but also widely opposed slavery. Thus, when Oregon became a state in 1859, it became the only free state in the Union with an exclusionary clause (Coleman, 2014). Although lax in its enforcement, this clause

provided precedent for other exclusionary ordinances that excluded not only black Americans, but Native Americans and Asian immigrants (Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993). Even after these policies were rescinded with the passage of the 14th Amendment in 1868, legacies of exclusionary practices and the institutionalization of these racist ideologies, served to perpetuate practices of segregation.

Early Portland

Portland was founded in 1851, prior to Oregon becoming a state, as a stopover village for traders. The new city grew fast, especially with its location on the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, which supported an economy of fishing, wheat, logging, and trade. By the late 1860s, the largely white male frontier town began to diversify slightly with an influx of foreign immigrants, mostly Chinese, drawn to work building the railroad (Abbott, 1985; Lansing, 2003). The Chinese population jumped from twenty-seven in 1861 to over a thousand in 1872. According to an 1873 advertisement campaigning for city administrators published in the *Oregonian*, this surge in population created intense competition for seasonal labor, putting downward pressure on wages, which fueled anti-Chinese sentiment in the city: “We, in common with our fellow citizens, feel that the influx of Chinese works a great hardship on the laboring classes of the Pacific States, and greatly retards their progress” (Committee of Twenty-Seven, 1873, p. 2). The mayor vetoed a proposed ordinance in 1873 that would have prohibited Chinese workers from holding city contracts, but passed the “Cubic Air Ordinance” that same year. The ordinance required 550 cubic feet of air per person in a residence—as a measure of “public health”—any person exceeding this limit would be arrested and charged a five dollar fine. Back to back sweeps of Chinatown by police resulted in 100 arrests. Although enforcement of the ordinance targeting

Chinese immigrants dropped after these sweeps, anti-Chinese sentiment remained. Portlanders largely favored the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, and residents passed a resolution in favor of the act (Corning, 1956; Lansing, 2003; MacColl & Stein, 1988). The resolution described Chinese residents were described as “alien” and “foes to the interest of our industrial population” (Lansing, 2003, pp. 170–171).

In 1886, Portland’s Anti-Coolie Club announced that all Chinese residents needed to leave Portland in forty days. That year, racial violence erupted towards Chinese residents, with armed white men terrorizing Chinese employees at work and burning down Chinese homes and businesses. An 1886 *New York Times* article depicts some of the acts of violence: “On the evening of Feb. 21 and morning of the 22nd [sic] a delegation of the agitators... made a raid on the Chinamen... They burst in the doors of the Chinese quarters, pulled the Chinamen out, and drove them onto a steamer.” On March 1st, Chinese residents in Albina were roused “when 30 white men came suddenly upon them, presented revolvers, and ordered an immediate exit,” forcing them to board the ferry towards downtown. “An hour or so later about 130 more Chinamen crossed into [downtown] by the same ferry... [They] had been forced across the ferry by some 80 white men, who were disguised by blackened faces and by the use of mask or of sacks drawn over their heads.” Another hundred Chinese were driven from Mount Tabor on March 5th across the Albina Ferry. “On the night of the 11th a well known [Chinese] citizen of East Portland was knocked down, robbed, and shot near his own house... On the same night 30 masked men raided the vegetable gardens and hog ranches of some 40 or 50 Chinamen about two miles north of the city... and went so far as to burn one of the Chinese houses” (F. G. W., 1886, paras. 9–12). The violence culminated in an attempt to blow up a Chinese washhouse with dynamite on March 12th (F. G. W., 1886). Although there are multiple accounts on what finally

halted the violence, one report surmises that Chinese workers were needed to do the work that white laborers did not want to do, such as gutting salmon for the fishing industry (Collins, 1925; Lansing, 2003).

Even with the anti-Chinese sentiment and the violence of 1886, the Chinese population doubled in Multnomah county between 1880 and 1890, as the city was considered “a refuge for persecuted Chinese looking for less hostile environs” in comparison to the greater violence towards Chinese immigrants experienced in other west coast cities (Lansing, 2003, p. 188). The transformation of ideologies of race discrimination and bigotry into government policy came during a period of population growth and job insecurity. As will be shown, this pattern of scapegoating would reemerge multiple times throughout the history of Portland and serve to form policies that shaped the demographic structure of the city.

With the completion of the Albina railyard in N/NE Portland in 1883, the railroad became the only consistent employer of black Americans in the state. This employment persisted, and as late as 1941, 98.6 percent of less than 2,000 black people in the state were employed by the railroad (Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1943). A small black community formed in NW Portland, just across the river from the railyard (Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993). Albina was dominated by largely working class European and Chinese immigrants, which began to build up as an industrial area in lumber, saw mills, steel mills, factories, and shipyards. The unincorporated town of Albina had grown substantially with the influx of railroad workers and could not keep up with the population growth financially or with public services. In 1871, voters in both towns approved a measure to consolidate Albina and East Portland (another town on the east side of the river) with Portland. Although thriving with

industrial development, Albina was saddled with debt at the time of consolidation (Lansing, 2003).

National economic decline in 1893 brought hard times to Portland, forcing many businesses to close, increasing unemployment. Pressure on the job market brought social backlash towards the newest members of Portland—European and Chinese immigrants and black Americans. According to Portland historian, Jewel Beck Lansing, city council documents record Councilman Davis saying, “If the contract were let to a rich corporation, they would employ Scandinavians, Negroes and Chinese. It would be better to leave the matter as it is until spring, and let white men have the benefit of the work” (Lansing, 2003, p. 210).

The collapse of wheat and lumber markets around 1915 brought further economic decline to Portland whose international trade economy was already suffering from the start of World War I. However, the United States’ entry into the war in 1917 jumpstarted Oregon’s economy with the wartime demand for timber, foodstuffs, and manufacturing as well as expanding Portland’s fledging shipbuilding industry into a prominent player in the city’s economy. This boost in the economy brought increased migration of wartime labor to the city from across the country (Abbott, 2011; Lansing, 2003). The thriving economy allowed immigrants and their families to move into more middle-class neighborhoods. Jewish, German, and Scandinavian immigrants gained the economic and social mobility to move from Albina and settle into nicer housing in other parts of the city, opening up affordable housing in Albina to the growing black population (Abbott, 1985).

As migration to Portland increased and WWI came to a close, a spike in population of created pressure on the 1920s and 30s housing markets. Between 1900 and 1920, the total population of Portland jumped from 413,536 to 783,389, an increase of over 350,000 people,

nearly doubling the city's population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1930). The resulting housing shortage coupled with severe economic decline, culminated in a resurgence of racist practices that made it difficult for black and Asian Americans to rent apartments and houses (Lansing, 2003; Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993). The Great Depression strained the Portland economy. In 1934, over 40,000 people in the city were on government relief and years had passed since the city had any emergency funds. Degraded and dirty neighborhoods became even more dilapidated and simultaneously suffered from abandonment as people who could not afford rent were evicted and overcrowding as multiple families crowded into units in order to save money (Abbott, 1983). In the late 1930s, the federal Home Owners Loan Corporation defined mortgage risk districts in Portland. These maps outlined neighborhoods that were seen as too risky to receive housing loans, a practice referred to as redlining (Abbott, 2011). Redlining prevents low-income people from securing loans to buy or improve houses that they could otherwise afford and these policies were used to discriminate against people of color: "red lines drawn on a city map would dictate where people of color could live, buy property, or secure a bank loan, relegating them to a tiny, economically depressed eastside district called Albina" (Portland Housing Bureau, n.d., p. 1). As loans were denied not only to purchase homes, but also to make repairs and improvements, Albina's neighborhoods fell into disrepair because of the lack of investment (Portland Housing Bureau, n.d.). These redlining practices facilitated the actual degradation of the Albina neighborhoods, and since redlining was targeted at people of color and recent immigrants, these populations inevitably became associated with redlined, dilapidated, and disinvested areas. In addition to the redlining practices carried out by lenders, the Portland Realty Board's 1919 "code of ethics" prohibited "its members from selling property in white neighborhoods to blacks or Asians, because they believed that such sales tended to cause a drop in property values"

(Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993). Charles Moore, president of the Realty Board is quoted in 1939 describing this continued practice: “We were discussing at the Realty Board recently the advisability of setting up certain districts for Negroes and Orientals. We talked about the possibility of creating desirable districts which would actually cater to those groups and make life more pleasant for them. After all, they have to live too, the same as youngsters” (quoted in MacColl, 1979, pp. 539–540). Just as children are supposed to be kept in school and parks, out of sight and out of the way of hard-working adults, black Americans were discussed using the same rhetoric, meaning that they too had to be kept apart from the productive members of society. This practice of segregation by the Realty Board and redlining by lenders institutionalized racist housing practices that forced blacks into less desirable areas, shaping the blueprint of demographics within the city. Most black Americans found housing in the southern, more industrial portion of the Albina district, where half of the entire black population in Portland resided within only two census tracts (Abbott, 1983).

The 14th Amendment, which technically made discrimination unconstitutional, repealed the exclusionary clause of the Oregon Constitution. However, housing discrimination and redlining, limited employment opportunities, and anti-black sentiment fueled by the economic hardships of the Great Depression, acted in lieu of the clause to exclude black people from Portland, keeping the population below 0.3 percent (Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993). It would not be until the economic boom of World War II that Portland would start to see a larger influx of black Americans.

World War II labor boom and the birth of Vanport

In 1941, war industry workers flooded into Portland, including recent immigrants, migrants, and black Americans seeking work for the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation led by Henry J. Kaiser. Kaiser acquired eighty acres of land in North Portland along the Willamette and Columbia rivers from the city to build wartime shipyards. The timber industry, which had all but died with the Great Depression, was revitalized by the new wartime economy (Lansing, 2003). According to a special population report issued by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in 1944 of Congested Production Areas, migration to the region doubled in rate from before the war (U.S. Department of Commerce & Bureau of the Census, 1944). Portland's total population grew by over a third in the matter of a few years, rising from 501,000 in 1940 to 661,000 in 1944 (Abbott, 1985). From 1940-1950, Portland's black population soared from 1,800 to over 20,000 (Maben, 1987; Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993). This rapid surge in population was met with ferocious racial backlash as it exacerbated the housing crisis and resulted in widespread discrimination and segregation in neighborhoods, businesses, transportation, and schools. Industrial jobs and the wartime gasoline rations combined to overburden public transportation, creating friction between newcomers and long-time residents. Other public services such as schools and parks also felt a disproportionate impact of the population increase. Many of the families moving in were younger with children which nearly doubled the amount of children under ten within the city that needed to be enrolled in schools. Migrants from the South were openly discriminated against in churches and schools, yet the worst of the contempt was directed towards the black migrants (Abbott, 1983). Hostility was even common from established black communities as they felt that the influx of people would undo much of the delicate progress they had made in establishing themselves in Portland (Abbott, 1985; Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993). One black resident

quoted by historian, Elizabeth McLagen, says that “when the war came along and a lot of blacks came in from different states, that’s when they started discriminating” (McLagan, 1980, p. 145). Even as hundreds of Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans fled the city to escape impending detention, population pressures on housing reached monumental proportions and Portland saw more people of color than the city had ever before seen (Lansing, 2003). Public services and municipal resources were stretched to the absolute thinnest trying to adapt to the rapid influx of people. By the end of 1941, the city was overwhelmed by the impending housing crisis that they formed the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) to address the crisis with short-term, subsidized public housing to meet the immediate need for housing war industry workers that could be torn down after the war (Abbott, 1985; Lansing, 2003; Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993).

HAP authorized the construction of 5,000 public housing units, over 90 percent located on the North Portland Peninsula as public housing could only be built “in those districts where property values will not be hurt by the construction” (Stroud, 1999). This implies that public housing attracted populations that were displeasing to white or middle-upper class neighborhoods. The reputation of a degraded, lesser neighborhood that public housing gave North Portland neighborhoods allowed for the subsequent siting of further industrial facilities in these locations. Additionally, many Portlanders, including a number of more conservative councilman opposed the entire idea of public housing as they accused it of being communistic, further creating a negative association with public housing in the minds of both policy makers and the public (Abbott, 1983). These first public housing units barely put a dent in the housing crisis.

Between 1940 and 1944, overcrowding in the Portland area increased nearly three-fold (U.S. Department of Commerce & Bureau of the Census, 1944). In response, Kaiser, the owner of the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation, bypassed HAP and in 1942 secured funding from the Federal Public Housing Authority to construct a massive public housing project (to be administered by HAP) for his workers on 650 acres in the marshy lowlands between the Columbia River and the Columbia Slough that would become known as Vanport (Lansing, 2003; Maben, 1987; Stroud, 1999). Within the year, Vanport was constructed (see Figure 2) and was soon home to 39,000-42,000 people, including the majority of black laborers, making it Oregon's second largest city and the largest wartime housing project in the U.S. (Maben, 1987; Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993). Although Vanport was diverse in comparison to Portland, it followed off-the-books segregation practices implemented by HAP with the support of the mayor. A June 1945 memo made this point clear:

It has always been our impression that the [HAP] Commissioners' desire in the matter of housing Negroes was to segregate them, and this policy has been followed by the staff from the beginning... It was brought out by the Commission three years ago that the Housing Authority should not set the pattern for the community and house Negroes in areas where there were few, if any, living at the time...and where there was no precedent and no homeowner who might feel that the influx of Negroes had lowered his property value. (quoted in MacColl, 1979, p. 580)

As historian, Carl Abbott has argued, Vanport “contributed toward establishing racial segregation as a fact of Portland life” (Abbott, 1985, p. 121). This segregation policy was unofficial, but HAP authorities admitted to alternating blocks of white and black housing for “integration purposes” and keeping separate rental files and waiting lists for black and white residents (Alexander, 2003; Maben, 1987). In 1942, rumors circulated that HAP was planning an all-black dormitory in Albina to help alleviate housing needs and the resulting racial tensions, although the director of HAP at the time denies this plan was ever in the works (Maben, 1987). Segregation

and discriminatory housing practices were ingrained in the operations of HAP since its formation and the legacies of these ideologies and would be carried out for decades.

HAP, with support of the mayor, maintained that public housing units built for the wartime industrial boom were temporary and they should transition to industrial sites after the war. Over half of the wartime residents of Vanport indicated that they wanted to stay in Portland after the war; 32,000 of which said they would stay with or without a job, according to a 1944 survey of shipyard workers (Alexander, 2003; Lansing, 2003). This could only mean another imminent housing crisis.

During the war, North Portland acquired the reputation of public housing projects and industry as well as having the greatest concentration of black residents. Vanport had early on been tagged as a “Negro Project” as expressed by Chairman Gartell of HAP and officials met to talk about the “Negro problem” in Vanport as a result of indiscriminate hiring of workers for the shipyards (Maben, 1987). Information gathered from meeting minutes of HAP show that “Politicians and planners argued that the kinds of people that public housing attracted demonstrated that public housing was not in the peninsula’s best interest” (Stroud, 1999).

This reputation worsened at the end of the war. White families, with greater mobility, moved out of Vanport, many returning to other states, moving to the suburbs, or settling in different parts of the city (Abbott, 1985; Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993). Half of all black families, however, stayed in Portland, the majority in Vanport; it housed one-third of the entire black population of Oregon. Black families faced segregated housing policies from HAP and the Realtor Board, preventing many from moving away to other neighborhoods (Maben, 1987; Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993). Albina, the only area of Portland where people of color could move was soon struck with overcrowding (Maben, 1987). With half of the population of

Portland employed in industry during the war, the end of the war meant large layoffs with following unemployment. Black workers were the first laid off and often could not afford to move from Vanport or find work elsewhere in the city (Lansing, 2003; Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993). Vanport became associated with public housing and black wartime workers. The housing project itself quickly acquired a poor exterior appearance, due to its high density, pest problems, accumulation of trash, and lack of maintenance (Maben, 1987). Vanport was always intended to be temporary, and due in part to the lack of quality building materials because of the war, the housing projects were built from poor quality materials that deteriorated quickly (Alexander, 2003). Residents of Vanport were new to the city, low-income and unemployed, easy scapegoats for poor sentiment stemming from the recently and rapidly overpopulated city. According to Vanport Historian Manly Maben's analysis of HAP documents, this image was exacerbated after the war ended as "[w]elfare recipients were concentrated there; income-adjusted rents were adopted; large numbers of veterans moved into the area's only available housing (many as college students) and the proportion of black residents rose markedly" (Maben, 1987). Although crime was no higher than in Portland, it developed a reputation for being an area of high crime and poverty. Portland Mayor Earl Riley was quoted in a 1947 *Portland Oregon Journal* article referring to Vanport as a "monstrosity" and a "great headache" (quoted in Abbott, 1983, p. 157). This stigma was attached not only to the place, but to the people who lived there as its creation was informed by stereotypes of both people and place. Thus, as people moved from Vanport into other portions of the city, they, particularly people of color, carried these stigmas on their backs.

HAP need not have worried about taking care of the "problem" area of Vanport, as a historic flood in May 1948 wiped out the housing project (see Figure 3). By this time, Vanport's

population had dwindled to about eighteen thousand residents, a quarter of whom were black (Maben, 1987). The Columbia River and Slough rose fifteen feet before water breached one of the dikes that surrounded Vanport. Residents had been told there was no immediate threat earlier in the day, and the warning to evacuate reached residents somewhere between ten and forty minutes before the onslaught of water. According to papers from the Sheriff's office cited by Maben, the warning siren did not alert residents until after the levee had been breached. Ditches and sloughs absorbed the initial flood of water, allowing time for residents to evacuate. Miraculously, the flood killed only a reported fifteen people, perhaps because of people being out of Vanport for Memorial Day (Lansing, 2003; Maben, 1987; Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993). Although the lack of adequate warning cannot be directly attributed as purposeful by the authorities, it is hard to imagine such negligence occurring in a well-regarded, white neighborhood, as opposed to an area which was plagued with the stigma of blight.

In the aftermath of the flood:

Vanport was never rebuilt, leaving 18,000 people homeless. The resettlement of the displaced population reinforced the structure of segregation that was already institutionalized in the city. Most black flood refugees moved to N/NE Portland where they found housing in the densely built Albina district whose black population had also grown during the war (Abbott, 1985; Stroud, 1999). The migration of the stigmatized Vanport black population to the low-income Albina area was coupled with an equal response of white flight. According to the Portland Bureau of Planning, the Realty Board of Portland maintained the official position that the presence of black residents decreased property values, validating the concerns of white homeowners. By 1950, the two most diverse census tracts of Albina had gained 3,500 nonwhites

residents, replacing 2,700 white residents that moved out with the influx of black residents (Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993).

Meanwhile, the HAP commissioners all firmly opposed public housing projects, making scarce hope of any public housing to replace the lost units of Vanport (Lansing, 2003). In addition, Portland voters repeatedly turned down proposals for emergency public housing in order to house refugees as well as a 1950 nondiscrimination ordinance for public accommodations (Abbott, 2011). The Portland City Planning Commission speculated that Portlanders presumably did want their neighborhood to become a settlement area for the stigmatized Vanport refugees, stating that “everyone was willing to see emergency housing located in somebody else’s neighborhood” (Abbott, 1983, p. 158). With these attitudes backed by redlining and discrimination policies by the lenders and the Realty Board, black Americans were excluded from most of the city, forcing a de facto settlement into Albina. These patterns served to create the demographic blueprint of the city that would shape the post-WWII relationship between Albina and the rest of the city.

Chapter 3: Urban Renewal, Development, and the Perpetuation of Stigma

Growth & Industrial Development

The life blood of Portland lies in her industries. (Portland City Planning Commission., 1967, p. 1)

As development expanded in the 1960s, city planners viewed inner-city neighborhoods as “blighted areas” which shaped how industrial development was laid out through urban renewal projects that changed land-use and rezoned areas. Land in the city was in high demand for industry, warehouses, transportation, and institutions and planners wanted to concentrate high-intensity land use in inner-city neighborhoods in order to preserve the hills and suburbs surrounding the city (Abbott, 1983).

WWII had boosted Portland as a major industrial player, not only with wartime shipbuilding, but also an expansion in the steel, aluminum, timber, and general manufacturing industries. Portland Retailer, Aaron Frank, said of the time that “Portland particularly rose to its task through its conversion into a mass industrialized defense area... It met and surpassed the challenge of highly industrialized cities of the East... New people came... Most of them have remained” (quoted in Abbott, 1983, p. 147).

The 1960s and 1970s also brought a new wave of commerce to Portland as the city expanded its capacity as a port city. The Port of Portland came to dominate the city’s economy with trade along the Pacific Rim, importing steel, oil, and cars and exporting wheat and lumber products resulting in a tripling of the real value of Portland’s trade from 1966 to 1983. The 1970s and ‘80s brought a surge to the technology and electronics industry including Intel (Abbott, 1985). The Port became the most powerful economic development agency in Oregon, controlling the airports, shipping terminals, as well as several large industrial parks (Abbott, 1983).

The southern edge of Albina saw a surge of nonresidential construction in the 1940s and 50s, with much of the land being converted to industrial and heavy commercial use. This expansion in industrial growth in the south of Albina was met with a reduction of housing units in the region, which continued into the 1960s as further development of the new Memorial Coliseum site brought new land uses that were not conducive to residential living (Portland City Planning Commission, 1965). Even with the reduction in residential occupancy, many people still lived in south Albina, although most of the housing was considered substandard, putting Albina residents in close proximity to industry as well as heavy truck traffic: “nonresidential uses form a southern base to the district, and the uses, many of them industrial, have infiltrated the southern section” (Portland City Planning Commission, 1965, p. 59). According to the Portland City Planning Commission (PCPC), this same area is characterized by low home values, overcrowding in homes, a high percentage of renters, and a majority black population. Although the PCPC qualifies in its report that “The Negro did not cause blighted conditions. He merely entered Portland where housing and environmental conditions were already declining” (Portland City Planning Commission, 1965, p. 60), the Commission fails to connect the discriminatory housing policies and practices that prevented black Americans from moving into any other part of the city.

Industrial growth also encroached on Albina from the west from the Albina Industrial District and city planners in the 1960s predicted a continuation in this trend (Portland City Planning Commission, 1967).

As industrial areas grow they expand into and often engulf, areas containing different types of land use. Much of the resultant mixture of land use proves harmful to industry as well as to the residential and commercial uses. The homes and commercial establishments in these areas of mix deteriorate rapidly and the general appearance of the areas become uninviting to prospective industrial developers. (Portland City Planning Commission, 1967, p. 5)

This growth of industry and its intrusion into Albina was happening simultaneously as city planners were trying to rewrite the Portland's zoning code in the 1960s (Abbott, 2011).

Portland's first zoning ordinance was approved in 1924, dividing the city into four simple zones of single-family homes, multi-family zones, mixed commercial and residential, and unrestricted (intended for industry). Even then, the plan was weak and popular among opponents of zoning (Lansing, 2003). According to Abbott,

Portland's first system of zoning sanctioned and encouraged the existing division of land among economic functions and social classes. The use of only two residential zones and the uneven enforcement of the housing code were both intended to reinforce a distinction between newer and more spacious neighborhoods for the affluent and older, low-status neighborhoods with smaller houses and apartments. (Abbott, 1983, p. 90)

Denser, low-income, and working-class neighborhoods, such as Albina, received less protection in their residential areas from unrestricted and mixed-use zoning than upper-middle-class neighborhoods that secured single-family zoning upon request from the PCPC. Not only did this zoning ordinance serve to cement and perpetuate economic segregation, but it also functioned along racial and ethnic lines as well. Then PCPC commissioner, Austin Flegel, commented that the zoning ordinance "did not go far enough in excluding foreigners," indicating a level of intentionality behind the policy to exclude immigrants (quoted in Abbott, 1983, p. 90). The industrial changes in the 1960s were happening within this initial zoning framework as the city transitioned to a new zoning code, simultaneously escaping the stricter zoning that came with the new policy and reforming the city as the code was being written, influencing the decisions that were being made.

The Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) of 1973 intensified industrial growth within the city for the "wise use of urban land and protection of natural resources" outside of the city (Oregon Metro, 2014). This state policy established a boundary around metropolitan areas that had strict

provisions for what could be developed outside of the boundary, preventing the urban sprawl that is characteristic of cities such as Los Angeles and preserving farmland. The UGB forces development to occur in open spaces within the city before it can expand into areas outside the boundary. The purpose of this policy is to promote higher density development in the city, building up rather than out to preserve non-urban spaces (Oregon Metro, 2014). The UGB came out of legislation that created the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC), which was charged with limiting urban growth and controlling land use (Lansing, 2003).

City planners and the state government were concerned about the environmental problem of urban sprawl. In 1972, Oregon Governor Tom McCall, known for his environmental policies, stated that “There is a shameless threat to our environment and to the whole quality of life—the unfettered despoiling of land. Sagebrush subdivisions, coastal condomania, and the ravenous rampage of suburbia in the Willamette Valley all threaten to mock Oregon’s status as the environmental model for the nation” (quoted in Abbott, 2011, p. 149). Environmentalist lauded this policy as it prevented urban sprawl into farm and forest lands. Activist organizations such as 1000 Friends of Oregon advocated for the UGB. Because the UGB promotes compact growth within the boundary, it preserves open spaces outside of the boundary. Additionally, in 1995, voters approved the allocation of an \$135.6 million bond for Metro, which administers the UGB, to purchase open and natural land both inside and outside of the UGB for the protection of wildlife habitat (Abbott, 1983, 2002). However, the compact metropolis that the UGB created, also had the effect of creating a higher density of both housing and industry in the city. Some environmentalists have criticized the compact growth because of the environmental hazards that accompany high density industry (Abbott, 2002).

Perpetuation of Stigma

[Albina] is Portland's bruised heart, a place abandoned to poverty by those who could afford to flee and left to the not-so-tender mercies of government Band-aids. (Barnett & Suo, 1996, p. A01)

Oregon passed the statewide Fair Housing Act in 1957 that made it illegal to discriminate based on race or ethnicity in regards to housing, however redlining was still a common practice and according personal anecdotes told in the documentary *Albina: Portland's Ghetto of the Mind* (1967), many renters would refuse to rent open units to black residents (Ross, Ahsehn, & Cross, 1967). By the 1960s, city planners began to mildly denounce housing segregation. In a PCPC report released in 1965, planners stated:

This report will not debate the pros and cons of integrated living, nor will it address itself to the problems of Negro migration; however, a fact all of Portland must recognize is that the Negro does not want segregated neighborhoods. He wants and should have a free market in which to buy homes. Because Portland's Negro population is not large compared with eastern seaboard cities, the problem of racial integration as it related to housing should be easier to cope with in this community than has been the case elsewhere. (Portland City Planning Commission, 1965, p. 58)

Although this is far from addressing issues of segregation, this represents a shift from blatant support of segregation. Changes in policy, however, do not create immediate change, as not only do the institutionalization of ideologies into housing practices continue, but stigmas of blight and disinvestment still influenced where people lived and how those places and people were viewed as will be discussed in the following sections.

“Urban Blight”

In the 1960s, the PCPC released a series of three reports assessing the state of residential, commercial, and industrial blight in the city. These reports would lead to the creation of the

Community Renewal Program for Portland, which was intended to serve as a guide for the Portland Development Commission (PDC) for urban renewal. Using data from 1960 census tracts, the first report entitled “Portland’s Residential Areas: An Initial Appraisal of Blight and Related Factors” spatially presents population, social, housing, and environment characteristics.

The report opens by discussing population characteristics. Between 1950 and 1960, the “Negro” population in the city of Portland grew from 9,529 residents to 12,637 residents, many of which settled in the Albina area (Portland City Planning Commission, 1965). With the closing of housing projects in the 1950s, other areas where there were distinct concentrations of blacks disappeared, significantly increasing the concentration of blacks in Albina as people moved in both from outside the city and from the closed housing projects (Portland City Planning Commission, 1965). In 1940, 60.4 percent of the black Portlanders resided in Albina, decreasing slightly in 1950 to 53.5 percent presumably due to migrants also settling in the housing projects. By 1960, the black population in Albina had more than doubled and accounted for 77.7 percent of Portland’s black population (Portland City Planning Commission, 1965). Furthermore, black Americans were not only concentrated in certain areas of the city, they were also segregated from other areas of the city. Over a quarter of a million Portland residents lived in areas with less than a 0.2 percent black population (Portland City Planning Commission, 1965).

Albina, whose population was characterized by concentrations of black residents, displayed concentrations of other “blight factors” as determined by the PCPC in 1965: “It should be noted that the greatest concentrations of nonwhite Portlanders... bear considerable correspondence with the concentrations of low income families... high mobility... unsound housing... low-value... and low rent” (Portland City Planning Commission, 1965, p. 14) In 1960, areas of south Albina had non-white populations as high as 50-70 percent and central and

eastern Albina between 10-49 percent, while areas of northwest Albina maintained a largely white population (see Figure 4). These areas with the highest percentage of non-white residents also coincided with the percentage of the population classified as low-income (see Figure 5). Albina also reflected higher than average concentrations of overcrowded homes (see Figure 6). These “blight” factors facilitated the perception of these areas as slums and encouraged city planners to undertake various urban renewal programs in the area, which will be further discussed in a later section.

Meanwhile, Albina’s stigma influenced not only city planners, but also the perceptions of other Portland residents. The 1967 documentary, *Albina: Portland’s Ghetto of the Mind*, discusses how the Albina neighborhoods are known as a black ghetto, which inhibits the local economy, causing commercial areas to hold large swaths of vacant spaces. Furthermore, it argues that Albina’s reputation as a ghetto is simply a perception and that if people were to give black residents a chance, it would boost the economy and reputation of the neighborhoods (Ross et al., 1967). Interestingly, the phrase “Ghetto of the Mind” indicates that the existence of Albina as a ghetto is solely a product of the way Portlanders think of Albina—its stigma—and not of the actual degraded quality of the Albina neighborhoods.

Albina as a Stopover Neighborhood

Albina encompassed much of what is known as Portland’s stopover neighborhoods which have historically been areas that offered cheap housing for seasonal and transient workers, immigrants, and people of color (see Figure 7). Low-rent and low-value homes provided a good landing place for new immigrants or migrants to the city which continues to this day. With a low cost of living, residents were able to save up earnings in order to move to nicer parts of the city,

out into the suburbs, or to other parts of the country following work. Generally, people resided in stopover neighborhoods for a year or two prior to moving. This high rate of mobility created low-investment in homes and the community, as people did not plan to reside there for very long and were not likely to invest in costly repairs. Consequently, non-essential maintenance was less likely to be conducted, adding to a run-down aesthetic of these neighborhoods and facilitating the neighborhood's stigma. Mobile people are less likely to be engaged within community groups or maintain a vested interest in the future of the community and may be less likely to protest industrial developments that may put the community at risk or advocate for community-backed improvement projects (Abbott, 1983, 1987, 2011; MacColl, 1979).

Portland's stopover neighborhoods contain a disproportionate amount of Portland's impoverished households and carry many of the characteristics of "blight" that were outlined by the PCPC in 1965 (see Figures 5 and 6), including low-rent, high-mobility, low-income, high non-white population, overcrowding, and deteriorating houses (Portland City Planning Commission., 1965). Stopover neighborhoods were only areas of high-mobility for those that have access to other communities in and around the Portland area. Given historic spatial segregation practices that excluded people of color from much of Portland, Albina's function as a stopover neighborhood did not extend to all of its residents. While high mobility was maintained by the white privilege of European immigrants and white migrants, people of color were restricted from moving out of the stopover neighborhood, increasing the concentration of people of color in these areas. This spatially concentrated people of color in areas known for other characteristics of stopover neighborhoods such as being run-down, uncared-for, and containing pockets areas of high poverty, further stigmatizing people of color in Albina (Abbott, 1983; MacColl, 1979).

After WWII, many portions of Portland's stopover neighborhoods were demolished for urban renewal projects, the construction of the I-5 freeway, and industrial use. The exception to this policy, according to historians Carl Abbott and Kimbark MacCall, was central and northern Albina, which had continued to function as cheap housing for the war-time influx of black Americans and other immigrant populations (Abbott, 1983; MacColl, 1979). This allowed the stigma of disinvestment and mobility to remain with Albina into the latter half of the twentieth century, shaping how urban renewal projects of the late 1900s were carried out.

Urban Renewal and Gentrification

Efforts to address environmental hazards and revitalize neglected neighborhoods have resulted in the displacement of low-income communities and people of color. Historically, these renewal projects have focused on removing "urban blight" attributed population demographics as seen in Portland's application for federal urban renewal funds in 1966:

There is little doubt that the greatest concentration of Portland's urban blight can be found in the Albina area... This area contains the highest concentration of low-income families and experiences the highest incidence rate of crime in the City of Portland. Approximately 75% to 80% of Portland's Negro population live within the area. The area contains a high percentage of substandard housing and a high rate of unemployment. Conditions will not improve without a concerted effort by urban renewal action. The municipal goals as established by the Community Renewal Program for the City of Portland further stress the urgent need to arrest the advanced stages of blight. (Portland Development Commission, 1966)

Although intentions may have improved since the 1960s, institutionalized approaches to urban renewal projects create a similar effect to earlier renewal projects: a displacement of people of color and low-income families to other portions of Albina. Redevelopment drives up land value and rent, making it unaffordable for the lower-income and underemployed. Often, cleaning up environmental hazards such as brownfields does not occur until such an area has

been designated for urban renewal, leading to gentrification and displacement (Harris et al., 2009). This cycle reinforces the perception that people of color and low-income families do not live in renewed place, as renewal efforts have historically pushed these communities out, instead, people of color and low-income families become indicators for degraded and blighted spaces that necessitate renewal.

Portland's urban renewal projects stem from the PDC which was created in 1958. The PDC's first project took place in southwest Portland, a stopover neighborhood dominated by Jewish and Italian immigrants. According to PDC staff, the area was "blighted and economically isolated," which necessitated the project to go forward (Abbott, 1983; Lansing, 2003, p. 171). The southwest neighborhood was characterized as a slum, with narrow streets, rundown apartments, and abandoned storefronts (Abbott, 1985). Residents contested the need for the project, however, instead citing the lack of city services and the stigma attached to the neighborhood as a depressed area that led to the fulfillment of this reputation (Lansing, 2003). In a guest editorial to the *Oregon Journal*, Miss Elsie R. Perry writes that "[F]or the past five years, [we] have been the victims of rumor, propaganda, indecision, threats and promises... No one could sell, lease or trade property. It was unwise to repair or build. [B]y edict of our city, the area has become the slum that the do-good bunch behind urban renewal so heartily desired" (Perry, 1959). The neighborhood was bulldozed, displacing thousands of residents, and replaced with parks, office buildings, and high-rise apartments (Lansing, 2003). The stigma surrounding the neighborhood manifested itself into reality as the perception of the area by the rest of the city facilitated the decline of the neighborhood. PDC's first urban renewal project that sought to address the urban blight lacked any efforts to include community participation and instead worked to completely replace the "blighted" community with a renewed one. These types of

clearance programs of stopover and blighted neighborhoods for urban renewal were typical of the PDC far into the 1970s as they “tried to concentrate high-intensity uses in inner neighborhoods in order to isolate and protect the everyday city, the highlands, and the automobile suburbs (Abbott, 1983, p. 186). This idea of concentration of high-intensity land-uses would be furthered with the implementation of the Urban Growth Boundary.

The construction of the Memorial Coliseum, I-5, and Emanuel Hospital in the 1950s and 1960s displaced a portion of the Albina community. The 1967 KGW documentary, *Albina: Portland's Ghetto of the Mind*, discusses how these projects displaced Albina residents: “the lower end of Albina, south of Broadway, got hammered by an uncoordinated sequence of events. The result was the disruption of an area that had absorbed a substantial African American population... The Coliseum project razed 476 housing units, 46 percent of them occupied by African-Americans.” These events, however, were not necessarily “uncoordinated”, in fact, these development and urban renewal projects were probably quite coordinated. Albina was a heavily stigmatized area and was classified as an area of extreme urban blight by the PCPC, making it a prime location for urban renewal efforts. Due to an initiative petition that was approved by voters in 1956, the coliseum was required to be built on the east side of the river (Abbott, 1985; Lansing, 2003). City planners finally decided on the location in south Albina and along with the construction of I-5 through Albina, resulted in the “clearing of the southern end of Portland’s black neighborhood” (Abbott, 1983, p. 164, 2011). The controversial redevelopment project of Emanuel Hospital in the early 1970s claimed ten blocks of residential area from the southern reaches of Albina (MacColl, 1979). Albina residents protested the Emanuel project as many felt that the project displaced a large portion of their community, yet they would not be receiving the benefits of the project (see Figure 8). Additionally, residents that were being forced to move were

concerned about being able to find adequate housing ([Editorial], 1971). I-5 was completed in 1966 on the east side of the river, and according to Price, people “welcomed the removal of blight” that the construction brought (Price, 1987). These projects redeveloped the historic heart of Albina and was met with protests of inequality from the black community, who had been displaced by the projects (Abbott, 1987).

In 1967, the City of Portland applied to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Model Cities Program that would provide funding for urban renewal projects. According to *The Oregonian*, the proposed plan area contained 41,000 residents in Albina with the greatest concentration of low income housing, lowest income, and highest incidence of crime and welfare assistance. The plan received criticism from residents for not incorporating residents in the proposal process and the HUD rejected the proposed citizen participation component because it failed to show how residents could meaningfully participate in the project (Sanderson, 1967). The program was approved, however, and the appointed director of the federal program, a professor of Urban Studies at Portland State College, actually prioritized citizen involvement. The resulting proposal, *The Comprehensive City Demonstration Plan*, was presented to the City Council, the PDC, and the PCPC in late 1968. The document expressed what the residents of the nearly 50 percent black program area neighborhoods viewed as issues, highlighting direct racial discrimination and discussing how the community had been seen as ghetto. The proposal was met with much dissatisfaction as well as outspoken criticism by city planners who described it as “irresponsible,” “prejudiced,” “inaccurate,” and “subjective.” Ira Keller, head of the PDC criticized the proposal as “an unworkable, visionary set of plans which cannot help but cause disappointment in the black community and great trouble for those who are trying to help govern the city” (Abbott, 1983, pp. 194–195). It took the city four months

to approve an amended plan, which aimed to increase social services and invest in better public infrastructure such as the installation of streetlights (Abbott, 2011).

Albina residents have resisted—and succeeded in stopping—some urban renewal projects. The emergence of stronger neighborhood associations gave many communities a platform to advocate on (Abbott, 1983). In the late 1970s, the PDC was planning an urban renewal project in northeast Albina that would have cleared four blocks of residential and commercial land. The city was in negotiations to sell the property to Nordstrom for a distribution center, which would have displaced about a hundred residents and several local businesses, and increased truck traffic on neighborhood streets and the highways. According to Ed Leek, an executive board member of the King Neighborhood Association (neighborhood in the northeast portion of Albina), residents were wary of the city's intentions with the urban renewal project given the past handling of the projects surrounding Emanuel Hospital and the Memorial Coliseum. In a March 25, 1978 article in *The Oregonian*, it was reported that Nordstrom had backed out of the deal, citing neighborhood opposition. Director David Hunt of the PDC commented in the news article saying that “We have exhausted our efforts... We spent two years getting to this point, trying to get a development philosophy of someone substantial lending some credibility (to the area)” (quoted in Alesko, 1978).

In 1989, the Portland Bureau of Planning began work on the Albina Community Plan, the latest effort of urban renewal in North Portland. The plan was approved in 1993 and sought to implement ten policies around land-use, transportation, business growth and development, jobs and employment, housing, education, public safety, family services, community image and character, and environmental values. This plan was one of the first urban renewal plans that implemented community outreach efforts in the planning process, holding neighborhood

workshops “to gather information on neighborhood and district problems, assets and opportunities” (Portland City Planning Commission, 1993, p. 5). Three workshops were held for the entire plan area and an additional workshop was held in neighborhoods that requested one. The plan contained numerous initiatives to clean up environmental hazards and improve amenities with objectives such as: improve the water quality of the Columbia Slough; reduce air, toxic, and heavy metal pollutants in residential and open areas; increase recycling participation; improve ten community parks; and address the sewage overflow issue in the Willamette River and Columbia Slough (Portland City Planning Commission, 1993).

These efforts were met with cautious optimism, as *Oregonian* reporter, James Mayer, describes “For the people who live and work in the 20-square-mile area, all this attention from the city is a little like being an abused child. You long for a parent’s attention, but when it comes, it often hurts more than helps” (Mayer, 1993, p. C04). The PCPC responded to some of the criticism of the plan, reducing the creation of new housing units from 10,000 to 3,000 due to protests from residents and business groups (Mayer, 1993; Portland City Planning Commission, 1993). Other concerns, such as the availability of affordable housing, were dismissed by the PCPC:

The affordability issues associated with earlier drafts of the plan have been referred to the newly formed Housing and Community Development Commission for consideration on a city-wide basis. The Planning Commission and City Council felt that further concentration of low income households in the Albina Community should be avoided and the affordability and density issues should be revisited as the area stabilizes. The Commission and Council added an objective to the plan calling for future reexamination of these issues to be a high priority. (Portland City Planning Commission, 1993, p. 9)

Harold Williams, a member of the Coalition of Black Men, questions if the plan will be able to escape gentrification: “Why will be displaced? What will be the backup for that? I don’t say

growth shouldn't come about, but we need to look very carefully. This is one of the few areas where affordable housing is still available. We don't want to lose that" (Mayer, 1993, p. C04).

In the wake of the Albina Community Plan, the real estate market in Albina has soared, as the perception of the several of the neighborhoods has started to change, bringing with it greater investment and a change in demographics.

As home values rise, Albina's poorest residents are finding it harder to rent, much less buy. Wage since 1990 are less than a quarter the rise in home values; The cost of subsidized housing is being forced up with land values, stretching gaps in traditional government safety nets; Barriers to good-paying jobs remain formidable in a community with high unemployment and school dropout rates; And the inner-city's revival is walking hand-in-hand with gentrification. Home loans made are to whites, encouraging a shift in the racial character of Portland's largest African-American community.

As Albina residents celebrate their long-awaited shot at economic redemption, some wonder: As we save our neighborhood, will we lose our neighbors? "People are working two or three jobs, or getting by on less than before," says the Rev. Terry Moe, a community activist and pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church. "They say people can work up the ladder... I am yet to be convinced there is a ladder." (Barnett & Suo, 1996, p. A01)

This has worked to hasten the migration of the core of Albina's black community northward.

This trend has been advancing since the first urban renewal projects of the 1950s.

Between 1940 and 1980, the core of Albina's black community moved more than a mile northward as land clearance programs razed "urban blight" for the construction of the Coliseum, the expansion of Emanuel Hospital, and the construction of I-5 (Abbott, 1983). The city's investment into Albina has resulted in the raising of home values, making more than 7,500 Albina homes unaffordable to residents from 1990 to 1996, according to a study by *The Oregonian*, which also reported that Albina's unemployment remains roughly double the rate of the rest of Portland (Barnett & Suo, 1996). As demonstrated in Figure 9, between 1970 and 1990, the core of Albina's black community drifted north, but between 1990 and 2010, the majority of census tracts in Albina lost black residents. By 2010, there were over 7,000 less black residents in Albina than there was in 1970. This gentrification has further pushed Albina's black

population further northward, towards the Columbia Slough and the Portland International Industrial District, as well as out of the city entirely.

Urban renewal and gentrification has reshaped Albina, growing industry in the southern reaches of the community, displacing residents first to other places in Albina then out of the city itself. This chapter discussed the further creation and perpetuation of stigma that had come with the growth and development process of the city since the 1950s and how that has, in turn, influenced where urban renewal projects were targeted.

Conclusion

The environmental justice issues that Albina neighborhoods face is imprinted upon a story of discrimination, segregation, and stigmatization. This history cannot be separated from the environmental inequalities faced by the people of Albina. Since the founding of Portland, racist policies and ideologies have shaped who lives in which neighborhoods and consequently which neighborhoods and which communities are stigmatized and targeted by environmental hazards. Urban renewal addresses environmental risks and provides environmental amenities that are enjoyed by middle and upper-middle class white residents as gentrification alters the demographics of Albina. Furthermore, urban renewal by the Portland City Planning Commission and Portland Development Commission target stigmatized communities as characterized by “urban blight”, perpetuating the stigma that is attached to these communities by identifying 1) that people of color and low-income communities are associated with “blight” factors because they live in areas that require government renewal and 2) because these communities are displaced by clearance or gentrification that these types communities do not reside in renewed, safe, and prosperous areas.

Environmental injustices occur not only because of direct, purposeful actions, but they are also accompanied or solely driven by more subtle and systemic practices that are influenced by the institutionalization of racist ideologies. These institutions that facilitated, knowingly or unknowingly, the creation of these spaces of environmental injustice—in the case of Portland the State of Oregon, the City of Portland, the Housing Authority of Portland, the Portland City Planning Commission, and the Portland Development Commission, among others—are the same institutions that seek to address these issues today. Hence, it is imperative to recognize and address the process by which the Albina community, as it is today, was formed and acknowledge the role that these institutions have played in creating and perpetuating these injustices in order to be able to begin to identify any meaningful and just way to move forward.

This case study into the complex arena of environmental justice provides a necessary perspective into broader consequences of urban planning and renewal efforts. Albina represents one of thousands of communities that are disproportionately impacted by environmental risks because of the color of their skin and the depth of their pocket book, and any one of these places could be analyzed under the same lens. However, the case study of Albina and Portland is unique. Portland has championed sustainable growth and development and has been referred to as a model city for others trying to achieve a cleaner and greener city. Even with doing so much right, the city has not been able to forge a safe and healthy environment for all of its residents. Minority and low-income populations are still disproportionately affected by environmental risks. Urban renewal efforts that clean up environmental hazards and increase environmental amenities have only resulted in gentrification or the encroachment of additional environmental hazards into the community. Portland, in all its green glory, has not been able to address the institutional issues that perpetuate these systems of injustice. It is essential to acknowledge the

existence of these issues and understand how they are formed when considering how to model sustainable growth, especially because of Portland's role as a leader in sustainable development. Portland's urban renewal and sustainable development policies have a vast impact outside of the 600,000 people who live in the Rose City and the shortcomings of Portland's growth must be recognized in order to work towards facilitating just change. Environmental inequality is not just an issue found in Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York, but it can be found everywhere, even in the heart of the places that we imagine are doing things right.

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Tables

Table 1: *Health Effects of Air Pollution on Children*

Air Pollutant	Effect	References
PM ₁₀	Respiratory Illness Sudden infant death syndrome	(Bobak & Leon, 1992; Loomis, Castillejos, Gold, McDonnell, & Borja-Aburto, 1999; Saldiva et al., 1994; Woodruff et al., 1997)
Diesel Exhaust Particulate	Leukemia Lymphoma Central nervous system tumors	(Feychting, Svensson, & Ahlbom, 1998; Pearson, Wachtel, & Ebi, 2000; Raaschou-Nielsen, Hertel, Thomsen, & Olsen, 2001)
SO _x	Infant deaths	(Bobak & Leon, 1992)
NO _x	Respiratory problems Asthma exacerbations Reduced lung function Lymphoma Enhanced allergen response	(Feychting et al., 1998; Gauderman et al., 2000; Hajat, Haines, Goubet, Atkinson, & Anderson, 1999; Lipsett, Hurley, & Ostro, 1997; Shima & Adachi, 2000; Strand, Svartengren, Rak, Barck, & Bylin, 1998; Tunnicliffe, Burge, & Ayres, 1994)
O ₃	Respiratory problems Asthma exacerbations Asthma development Wheezing Increased allergen reactivity Respiratory Infections Decreased peak lung flow	(Gent, Triche, Holford, & et al, 2003; Just et al., 2002; McConnell et al., 2002; Molfino, Slutsky, & Zamel, 1992; Peden, Setzer, & Devlin, 1995; Petroeschovsky, Simpson, Thalib, & Rutherford, 2001; Thurston, Ito, Hayes, Bates, & Lippmann, 1994; Tolbert et al., 2000; White, Etzel, Wilcox, & Lloyd, 1994)
Benzene	Respiratory problems Asthma development Bronchitis	(Hirsch et al., 1999)

Figures

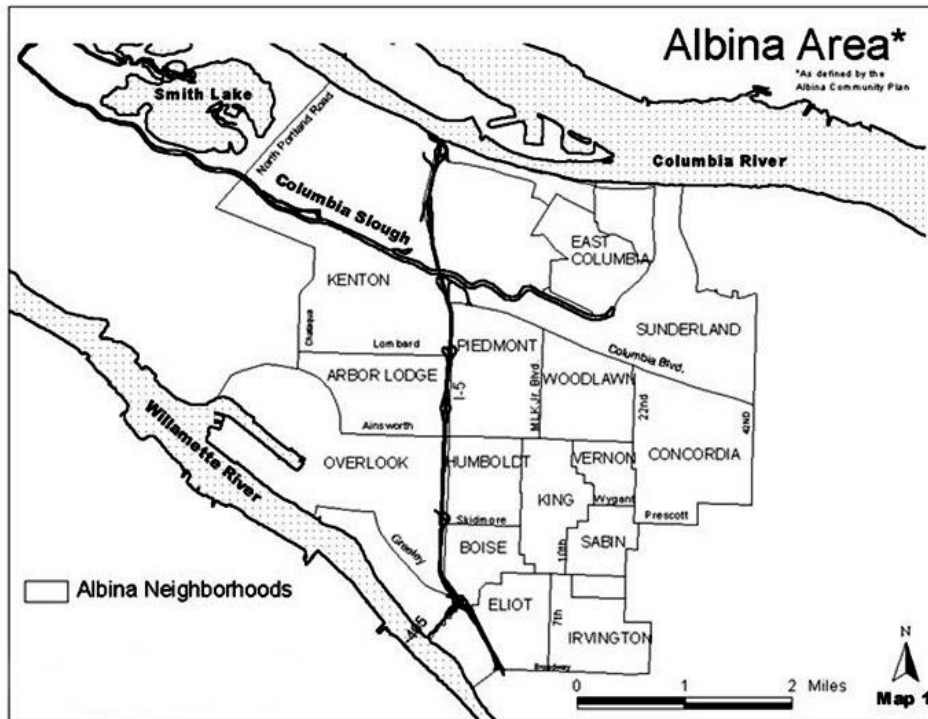


Figure 1. The Albina area as defined by the 1993 Albina Community Plan which will be the defining boundaries of Albina examined in this thesis. Image courtesy of the Portland City Planning Commission. Reprinted (Maben, 1987).



Figure 2: Aerial photo of the Vanport housing project. Image courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society (Unattributed, n.d.).

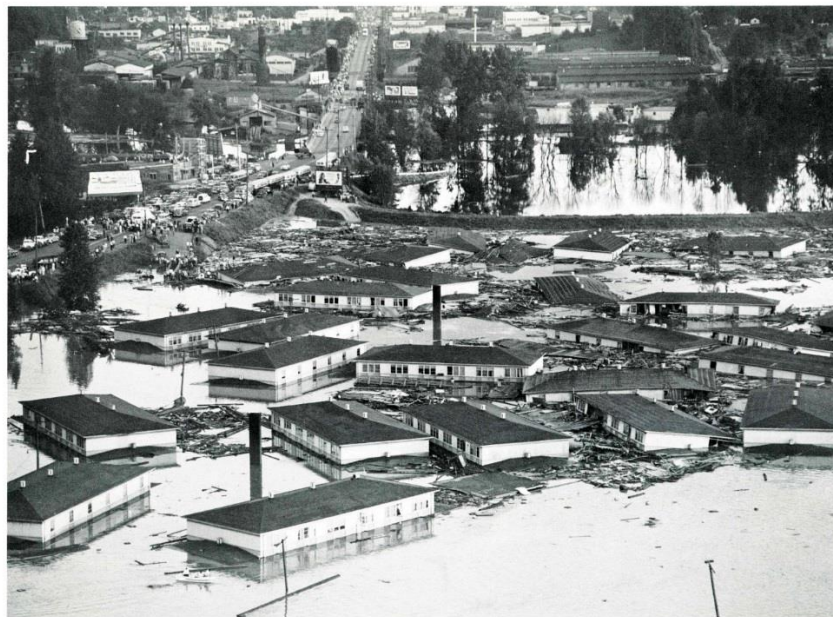


Figure 3: Housing units of Vanport floating in floodwaters. Image courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society (Unattributed, 1948).

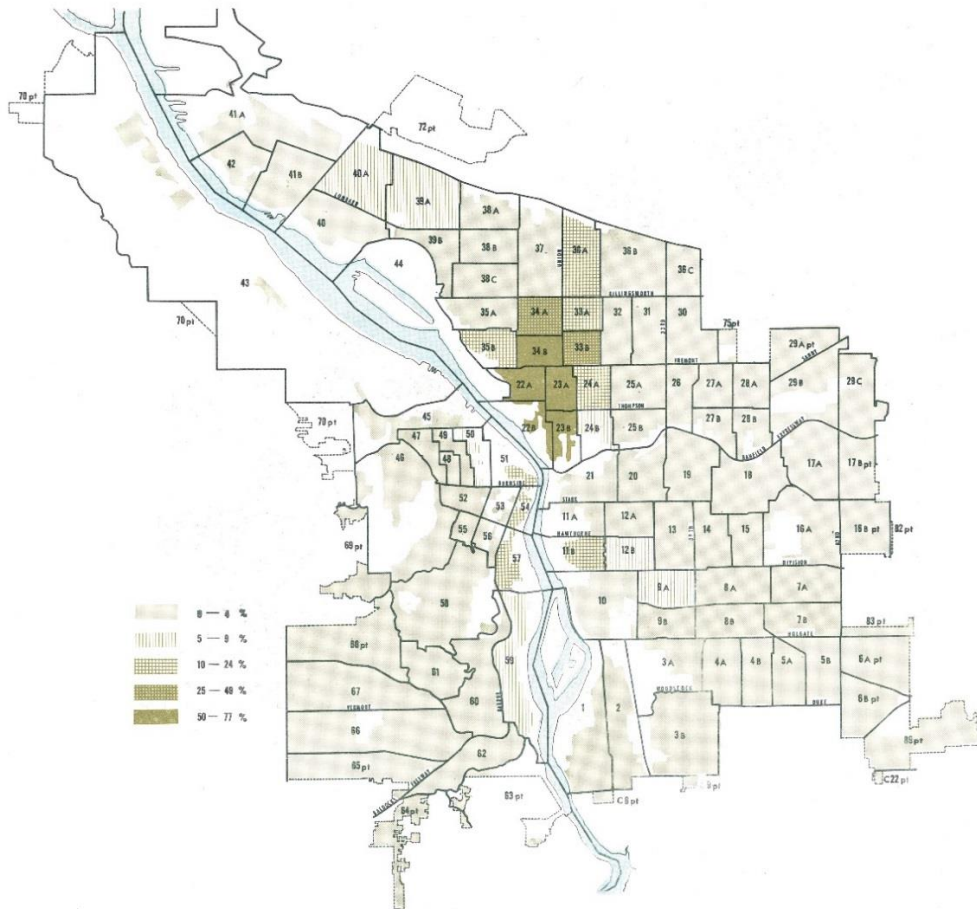


Figure 4: 1960 percent non-white by census tract. Non-white populations are composed predominately of black populations except for census tracts in south-central Portland on both the west and east sides, including census tracts 9A, 11B, 12B, 50, 51, 54, and 57. Data from 1960 U.S. Census. Image courtesy of the Portland City Planning Commission (Portland City Planning Commission., 1965).



Figure 5: 1960 percent of population with an income less than \$3000 annually by census tract. Data from 1960 U.S. Census. Image courtesy of the Portland City Planning Commission (Portland City Planning Commission., 1965).

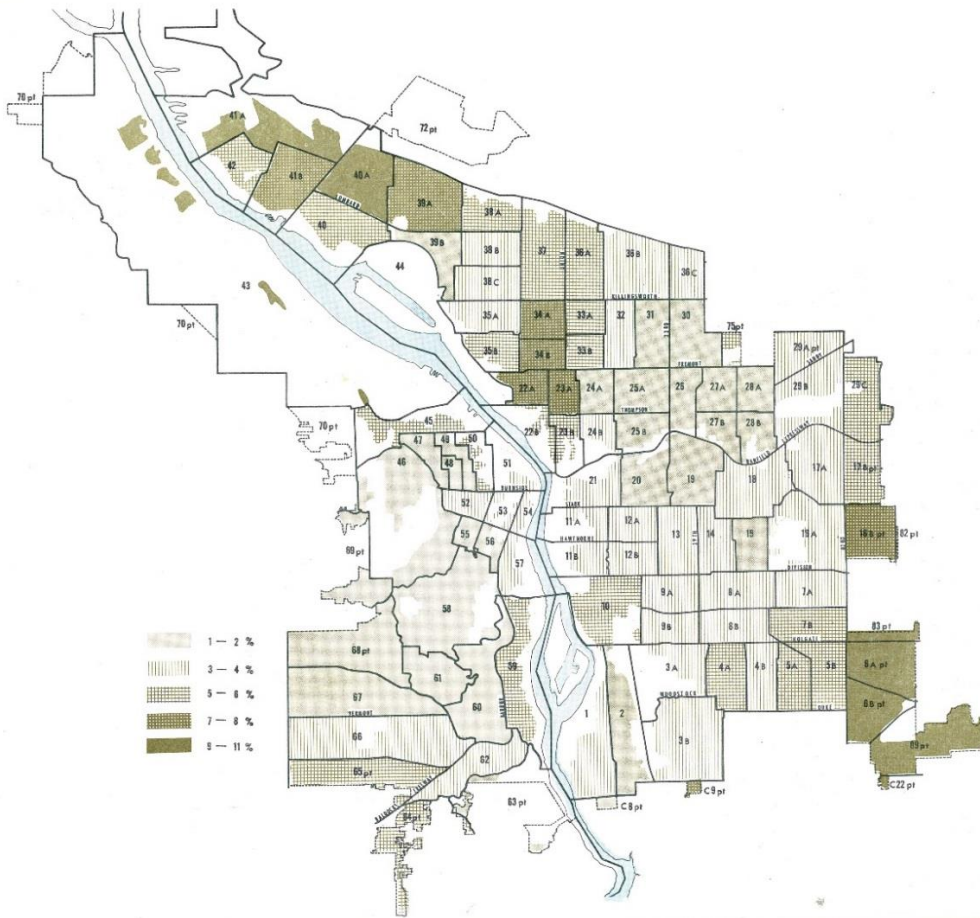


Figure 6: Depicts proxy for overcrowding in 1960 through percent of housing units with more than one person per room by census tract. Data from 1960 U.S. Census. Image courtesy of the Portland City Planning Commission (Portland City Planning Commission., 1965).

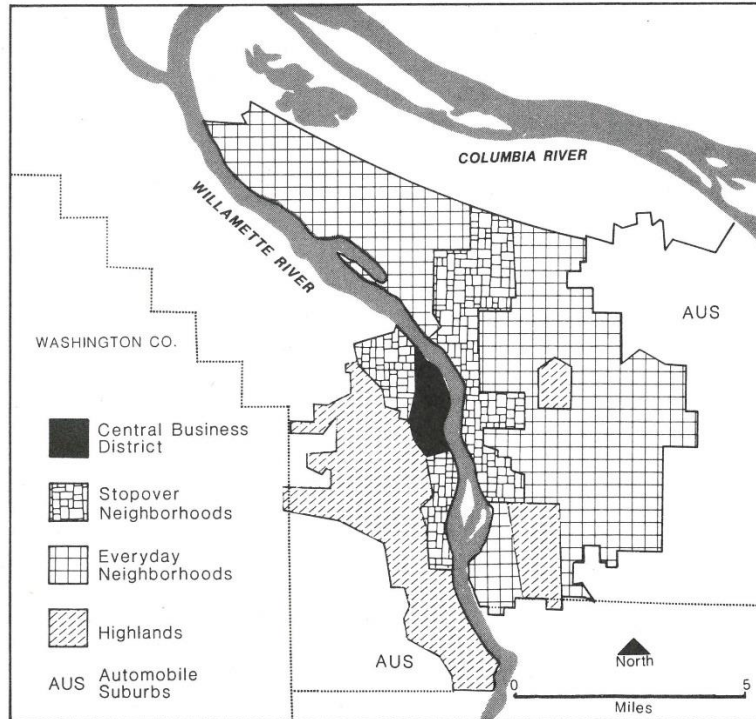


Figure 7: Historic stopover neighborhoods. Image courtesy of Carl Abbott (Abbott, 1983, p. 24).



Figure 8: 1973—Albina residents protest the urban renewal plan of Emanuel Hospital and the City of Portland. Photo courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society (Unattributed, 1973).

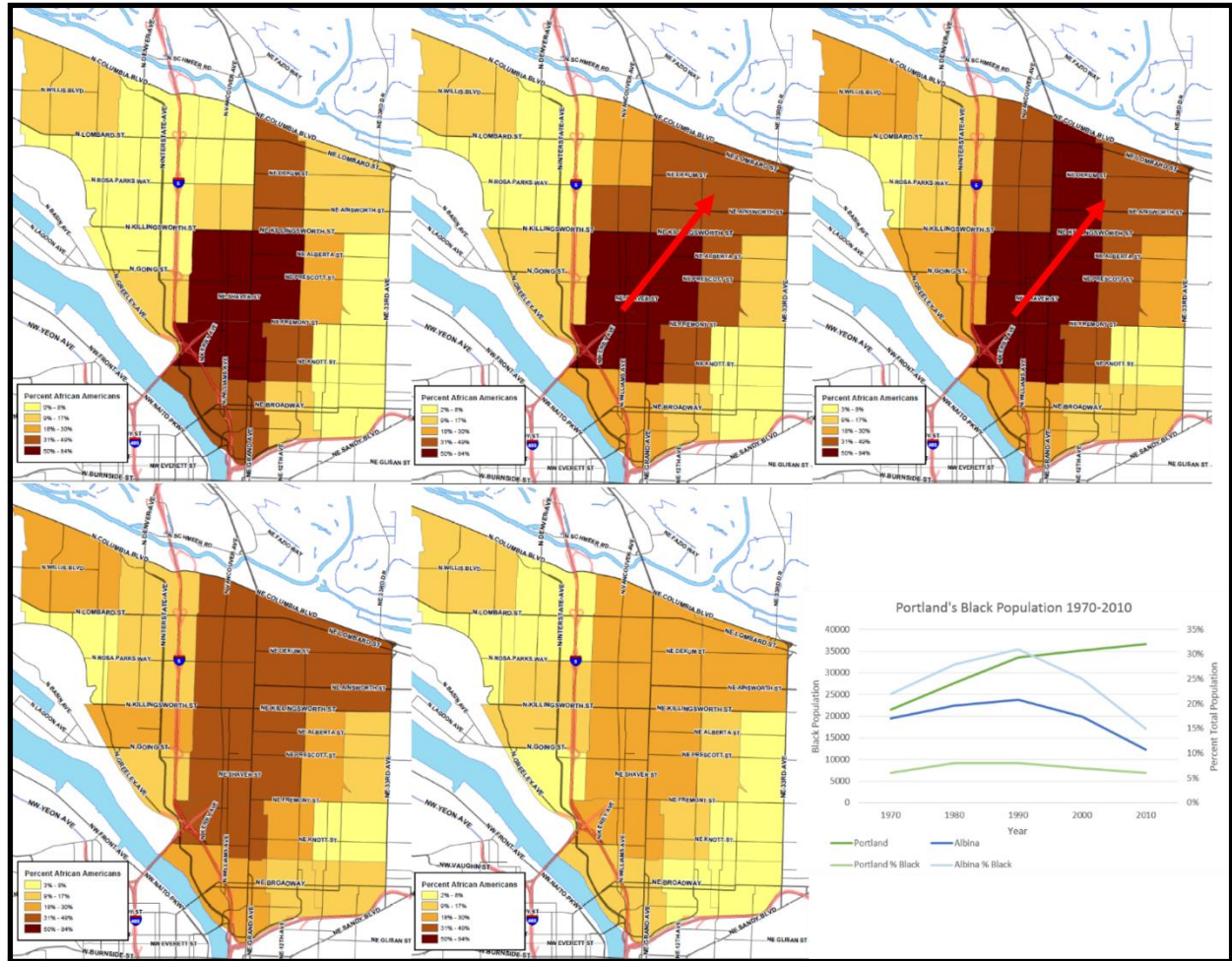


Figure 9: Changes in the black population in Albina per decade from 1970-2010 (top-left to bottom-center). Red arrow indicates shift in center of population. Graph depicts the size of the black population over time in Albina and the City of Portland. Data from the 2010 U.S. Census. Graphic modified from Portland Housing Bureau, (2014), “Change in African American Population in N/NE Neighborhood Housing Strategy Area 1970-2010”