

On The Line: How Schooling, Housing,  
and Civil Rights Shaped Hartford and its  
Suburbs

*Jack Dougherty  
and contributors*



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# Preface

## On The Line



### How Schooling, Housing, and Civil Rights Shaped Hartford and its Suburbs



This **book-in-progress** was last updated on 2019-08-13

*On The Line*, an open-access digital and print history book, makes visible the hidden schooling and housing boundaries that divide metropolitan Hartford, Connecticut, and tells the stories of civil rights activists and everyday families who sought to cross over, redraw, or erase these lines.

### About the Book

*On The Line* tells the story of schooling and housing boundaries that shaped American metropolitan life over the past century, and also the civil rights struggles of families and activists to cross over, redraw, or erase these powerful lines. Set in the city of Hartford, Connecticut, and its emerging suburbs, the book explains how this metropolitan area became one of the most racially and economically polarized regions in the northeastern United States. The story highlights how government, business, and white middle-class families drew lines to distance themselves from others, and the evolving coalitions that have sought to reform the relationship between private housing and public education.

This **digital-first book** was designed for the open web. The narrative is

wrapped around digital evidence—including interactive maps, videos, and documents—to make hidden boundaries more visible, and to amplify the voices of people who challenged these lines. *On The Line* is best read in your web browser, where readers may fully explore the evidence, follow links to related sources, and connect with the author and other readers through comments. In addition to the web edition, the same text (with static images and links) also appears in the downloadable e-book versions, and an inexpensive print edition to come.

In an **open-access book**, history becomes more widely available to the public, without barriers of price or permissions. As educators, we believe that knowledge becomes more valuable when it is easily discoverable and accessible, not hidden behind password-protected paywalls. Moreover, the liberating power of history—and civil rights history in particular—should be freely available, especially for the communities of people who lived these stories. Anyone may freely read this book online or download it from the web, and after it is completed, purchase or borrow a low-cost paperback edition.

Written **for the liberal arts**, the book blends interdisciplinary scholarship with highly-engaged student learning. It draws on the fields of history, social sciences, and policy analysis in urban America, and more than a decade of collaborative research with undergraduate students, faculty, staff, and community partners at Trinity College. Rather than simply report our results, we describe our discovery process, so that others may expand upon, or even challenge our findings, in future works. We also strived to explain new concepts and make the text accessible for younger students and residents of the Hartford region.

In sum, *On The Line* blends the best aspects of conventional publishing and web innovation. The main narrative still looks and feels like a scholarly book, divided into chapters and backed up by endnotes. But the web platform allows us to embed digital evidence on the page, and to link directly to external resources located elsewhere. As a result, this book delivers a more comprehensive, coherent, and connected work of scholarship than what was previously possible in print-only publications, or scattered online journal articles and blog posts, at no cost to the reader. Flip the page—in whatever format you prefer—and find out for yourself.

## Authors and Contributors



Jack Dougherty, the lead author of *On The Line*, is Professor of Educational Studies and Director of the Center for Hartford Engagement and Research (CHER) at Trinity College. He collaborates with students, colleagues, and community partners to explore cities, suburbs, and schools in metropolitan Hartford, Connecticut, using data visualization, digital history, and web writing tools. Contact him on his faculty profile page, or follow him on Twitter or on his blog <http://jackdougherty.org>.

### Co-Authors



Jasmin Agosto (Trinity College Class of 2010 with bachelor's degree in American Studies and Educational Studies) co-authored Mobilizing Against Racial Steering and Redlining, and also researched 18th-19th century school documents, and decades of school residency cases. Photo by Seth Markle.



Ilya Ilyankou (Trinity College Class of 2018 with bachelor's degree in Computer Science and Studio Arts) developed several interactive maps in this book. His open-source code and map links are available at our GitHub public repository: <http://github.com/OnTheLine/>.



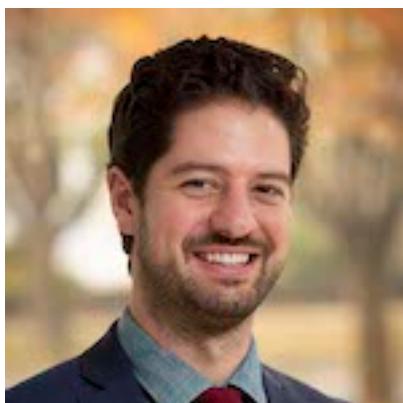
Vianna Iorio (Trinity College Class of 2019 with double major in Educational Studies and English) co-authored Restricting with Property Covenants, Mobilizing Against Racial Steering and Redlining, Jumping the School District Line, and more chapters to come.



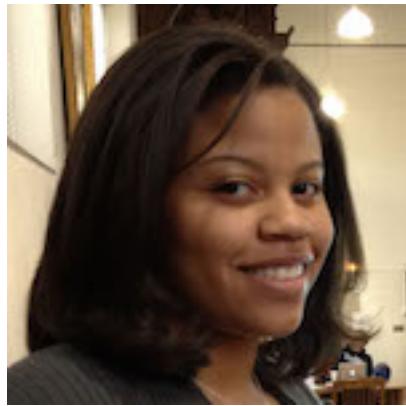
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Tracey M. Wilson (Trinity College Class of 1976) co-authored Restricting with Property Covenants. See related chapters in her 2018 open-access book, *Life in West Hartford*, (<http://lifeinwesthartford.org>).

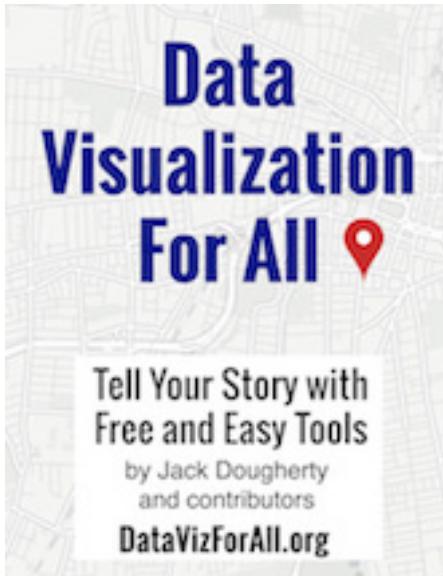
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### Contributors

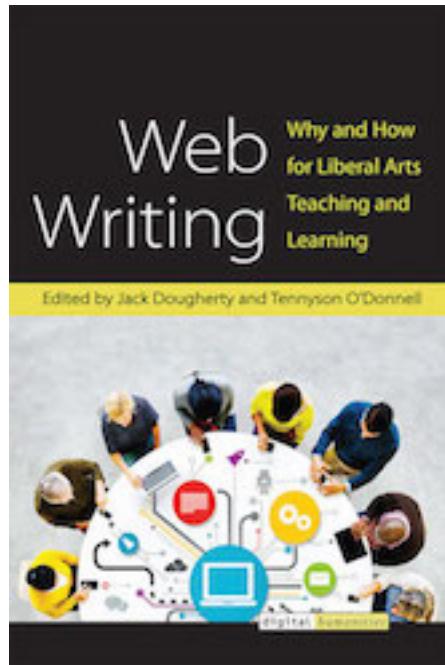
Staff and students at MAGIC, the Map and Geographic Information Center at the University of Connecticut Libraries, co-created the Google interactive maps for this book, with support from a National Endowment for the Humanities grant in 2010-11.

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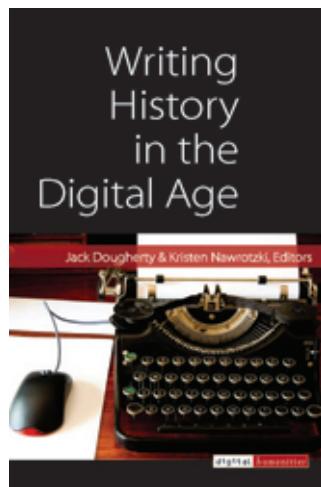
**Other books by Jack Dougherty**



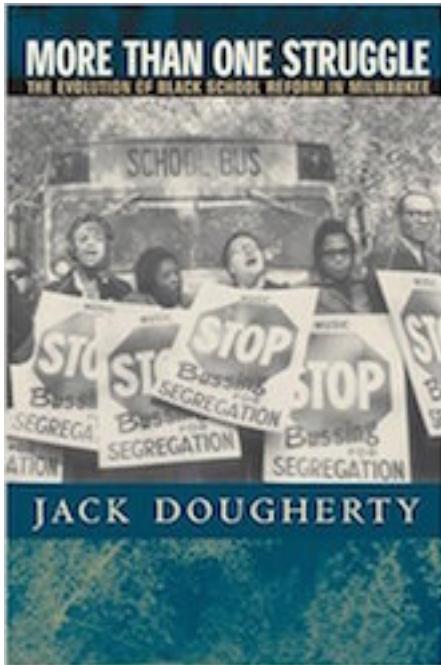
*Data Visualization for All*, with Ilya Ilyankou, book-in-progress, <http://DataVizForAll.org>.



*Web Writing: Why and How for Liberal Arts Teaching and Learning*, co-edited with Tennyson O'Donnell. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015, <http://WebWriting.trincoll.edu>.



*Writing History in the Digital Age*, co-edited with Kristen Nawrotzki. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013, <http://WritingHistory.trincoll.edu>.



*More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee.*  
Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004, <https://www.uncpress.org/book/9780807855249/more-than-one-struggle/>

## Acknowledgements

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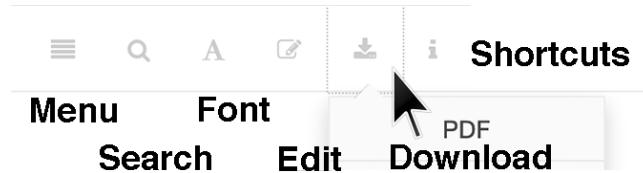
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- Search
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Also, readers may freely download the PDF edition and print it out on paper for off-line reading. Static images will appear in place of interactive maps and videos, with links to the online versions. After this book-in-progress is completed, a cleaner PDF file will be available to download, and an inexpensive paperback edition will be sold by the publisher.

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**Chicago-style bibliography entry:**

Dougherty, Jack, and contributors. *On the Line: How Schooling, Housing, and Civil Rights Shaped Hartford and Its Suburbs*. Trinity College, book-in-progress, 2019. <http://ontheline.trincoll.edu>.

**MLA bibliography entry (with web address):**

Dougherty, Jack, and contributors. *On the Line: How Schooling, Housing, and Civil Rights Shaped Hartford and Its Suburbs*. Trinity College, book-in-progress, 2019. Web. <http://ontheline.trincoll.edu/>.

**APA reference entry:**

Dougherty, J., & contributors. (2019). *On the Line: How Schooling, Housing, and Civil Rights Shaped Hartford and Its Suburbs*. Trinity College, book-in-progress. Retrieved from <http://ontheline.trincoll.edu>

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Sample Chicago-style note for a specific chapter:

Elaina Rollins, Clarissa Ceglio, and Jack Dougherty, “Writing Greater Hartford’s Civil Rights Past with ConnecticutHistory.org,” in *On The Line: How Schooling, Housing, and Civil Rights Shaped Hartford and its Suburbs* (Trinity College, book-in-progress, 2019), <https://ontheline.trincoll.edu/writing>.

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The web edition of the book also includes internal links to different pages within the book (e.g. selected chapters, bibliography, etc.) If any internal links break, this platform has been set up to automatically redirect readers to the book’s home page.

The book also contains external links (such as endnotes that refer to other articles, books, or websites). If any external links break, each endnote contains a full citation and external web address, which readers may search in the “Way Back Machine” at (<http://archive.org>) to see the most recent version of this site. Donate to the Internet Archive, the non-profit organization that maintains this valuable collection of our digital history as a free public service.

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Our GitHub open-source repository (<https://github.com/ontheline>) contains all of the source code for the book (including images, data, and interactive charts and maps), and is freely shared under an MIT license. Learn how to work with GitHub and create your own charts and maps in Data Visualization for All (<http://datavizforall.org>) by Jack Dougherty and contributors.

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## Chapter 1

# My Introduction to the Lines

“Are you looking to buy a home?” came a voice from behind me. I turned around and faced a white man wearing a big smile. Somehow, he knew exactly what I was doing.

“Just looking,” I replied. “Got a job interview tomorrow and I’m just looking around.” It was a warm Sunday afternoon in May 1999, on my first visit to the City of Hartford. I was standing on the sidewalk in front of a three-story house with a for-sale sign, on a street somewhere near the West End neighborhood, based on my limited knowledge of the city at that time. There was no open house, nor did I have an appointment to meet a real estate agent. I simply wanted to get out of my rental car and walk around to get a feel for this neighborhood. My hands held the real estate section of the Sunday newspaper and a city street map, which I had purchased at a nearby gas station about fifteen minutes earlier.

“Hold on a second. My wife’s a Realtor. She’s right next door and I’ll bring her over.” The man walked back across the street, and returned a minute later with a woman. She introduced herself, mentioned that she happened to be visiting a client on this block, and asked what brought me to Hartford.

I explained that I had a job interview the next day at Trinity College, located about two miles from where we stood, but was just looking around. What I also knew—but didn’t tell her—was that the search committee seemed interested in my application, it was very late in the academic hiring season, and if all went well and they offered me a job, they would expect a speedy reply. Time and money were tight for my partner Beth and me. She worked full-time, we had two young children, and I didn’t have a steady job. Leaving home to do another multi-day job interview was a major strain on our family life. That Sunday afternoon probably would be my only opportunity to scope out local

housing opportunities in case we needed to make a quick decision about moving to Hartford.

The real estate agent rattled off names of people we might know in common. But none of them were familiar to me, since I had not yet met anyone at the college or the city. She turned the conversation to ask what kind of home I was looking to buy. All of this was premature, I explained. The interview was not until Monday, and I didn't know whether or not they would offer me the job.

"Do you have children?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied. "Two kids, ages five and two."

"You might want to look on the other side of Farmington Avenue," she suggested, pointing to a major street a couple of blocks north. The agent handed me her card, we exchanged goodbyes, and she departed in a car with her husband.

I stood there on the sidewalk, dumbfounded, trying to make sense of what had just happened during my first half-hour in Hartford. This agent had gently steered my housing search based on what she had quickly learned about me as a white middle-class professional, and more importantly, as a parent of two school-age children. Somewhere down the street there was a line—not yet visible to me—but one that clearly stood out in this agent's mind, and most likely in the minds of families living on opposite sides of it.

Memories of that sidewalk encounter rolled around in my head over the next few days, weeks, and years. The job interview at Trinity was successful, but that opportunity forced my spouse and me to face several difficult decisions about moving our family to the Hartford region, a theme that we will return to later. While living and learning about the city and its suburbs, my eyes now sharply focused on the lines that differentiate where families reside and send their children to school. Boundaries that were once invisible to me now vibrantly stand out in my mind, while crossing over them on foot, bike, or car. At work I teach my students about the lines, and together we map them on computer screens, measure their influence, record their meaning in people's lives, and write about what we learn to share with the public. Three types of questions—on the history, pedagogy, and policy of these lines—have captured my attention over the past fifteen years:

- Why did schooling and housing boundary lines become so influential in shaping US metropolitan life over the past century?
- How can we make these hidden lines more visible, and amplify the voices of people who challenged them, to educate future generations?
- What does the evolution of these boundaries, and different activists' strategies to challenge them, tell us about our present-day policies?

This book seeks to answer these questions in a format designed to invite readers like you into the story, to explore the evidence, pose your own questions, and perhaps share comments about the influence of these lines on each of our lives.



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## 1.1 Bridging the History Gap

*On The Line* is written for students and residents of the Hartford region, as well as for scholars of metropolitan history. On the local level, this work of public history weaves together two vitally important stories: the rise of increasingly rigid schooling and housing boundaries that shaped metropolitan Hartford over the past century, and the civil rights struggles of families and activists to cross over, redraw, or erase these powerful lines. To learn how the city of Hartford and its surrounding suburbs became one of the most racially and economically divided regions in the northeastern United States, the book traces how government, business, and white upper-class families drew boundary lines to distance themselves from others who they perceived as a threat to their position. Moreover, to make us wiser about future prospects for change, it explores how civil rights coalitions crafted different strategies over the decades to challenge and reshape boundary lines, with mixed success, in both the education and housing sectors. More people need to learn these stories about the partitioning of the Hartford region into different towns, school districts, attendance areas, and housing zones, which created disparate social worlds with dramatic differently odds for life outcomes. Whether people grew up or went to school on one side or the other, these divisive boundaries are part of our shared history. Living and learning on the lines have profoundly shaped all of us.

For scholars, *On The Line* argues that we cannot understand the broader narrative of twentieth-century US history without the explanatory power of housing and schooling. Indeed, suburbanization was caused by multiple factors: job migration, interstate highways, tax policies, urban rebellions, and white flight. But this book argues that the dynamic relationship between housing and schooling played a central role in shaping places like Connecticut, which we have not fully understood because a prior generation of historians split these topics into separate bodies of literature, and essentially drew boundaries around these disciplinary subfields. On one side of this scholarly divide, urban and suburban historians (such as Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, and Ken Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*) described how housing policies and racial discrimination fueled the post-World War II decline of cities and expansion of outlying suburbs, but schools did not play a meaningful role in their equation. On one side, educational historians who followed the lead of David Tyack (*The One Best*

*System)* focused on the rise and fall of big-city school districts, yet paid little attention to their relationship with suburbs. Whereas most educational historians halted at the city line, urban and suburban historians generally stopped at the schoolhouse door.<sup>1</sup>



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## 1.2 Outline of the Book

*On The Line* seeks to bridge this disciplinary divide by showing how the dynamic relationship between schooling and housing reshaped our cities and suburbs. During the immediate post-war years of mass suburban housing, public schools in many of these formerly rural towns were seen as inferior to the big-city districts, and a deterrent to outward migration. But in the late 1950s and '60s, a convergence of three groups-real estate industry, pro-suburban government, and white middle-class homebuyers-invested in suburban public schools, marketed them to private homes, and defended their attendance boundary lines. This schooling-housing convergence became more powerful in US families' lives in the human capital market of the 1960s to today, when education credentials have become the most reliable means to transfer middle-class privilege to one's children. Americans seeking upward mobility began to embrace what we recognize today as a familiar formula: buy a home in the right neighborhood, in order to send your children to a good school, to increase their odds of being accepted into a top-ranked college, to help them to land the perfect job. Moreover, wealth-based schooling and housing boundaries became a more legitimate way for upper-class white families to defend and pass on their privileges, without resorting to overtly racial boundaries of the past, while still distancing their children from other students perceived to be less desirable peers. America's story of urban decline and suburban ascent, and civil rights struggles to challenge these inequalities, cannot be told without the interaction between two

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<sup>1</sup>Arnold R Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Kenneth T Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974). For an extended version of this historiographical argument, see Jack Dougherty, "Bridging the Gap Between Urban, Suburban, and Educational History," in *Rethinking the History of American Education*, ed. William Reese and John Rury (New York: Palgrave MacMillan Press, 2007), 245–59, [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/5/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/5/).

key ingredients-housing and schooling-and the boundary lines that bind them together.

This book concentrates on the metropolitan Hartford story, and is divided into multiple chapters of narrative and evidence, organized thematically and chronologically to advance key elements of the broader historical argument.

Chapter 2: Defining City and Suburban Lines begins by challenging us to reconsider the familiar poor cities and rich suburbs narrative that is so ingrained in our present-day thinking. But a century ago, these roles were reversed. Connecticut's capital city was the center of financial wealth, adorned by its crown jewel of public education, Hartford Public High School. Urban schools earned such a strong reputation through the early 1900s that they attracted families from outlying towns to send their children into the city's borders. By contrast, public schools in areas that we consider today to be elite suburbs, were relatively weak rural districts at this time. This part of the book begins to explain the reversal of fortunes between Hartford's city and its suburbs over time. Larger colonial-era tracts of land were carved up into smaller town boundaries, state laws formed more rigid school district lines, and suburban voters blocked urban annexation. Today's Connecticut is highly fragmented into 169 municipal governments, and most manage their own public school districts and land-use decisions, with weak regional governance. Even the phrase "metropolitan Hartford," which appears in this book, has no official nor consistent definition. As a result, self-interested suburban policies with state governmental support have generated some of the nation's highest levels of inequality between the central city and its suburbs, and also across suburbs of different socioeconomic standings.

Chapter 3: Separating with Color and Class Lines explains how the boundaries of white middle-class privilege have shifted over time, from explicit racial barriers to more sophisticated hurdles, and from the schooling to the housing sector. The Connecticut legislature banned schooling for out-of-state black students during the 1830s, and Hartford leaders voted to officially segregate public schools for a brief period in 1868, and proposed it again in 1917. After civil rights activists overturned these policies, Hartford officials quietly continued to separate many black and white students into the 1970s, through its decisions on locating new schools and redrawing attendance lines. In the housing sector, the color line gained more governmental support in the 1930s and '40s, with federal and local policies that openly prohibited home mortgages and public housing for blacks, and legally protected white-only property deeds. After activists overturned these governmental restrictions, the Connecticut real estate industry continued the color line through discriminatory steering and lending, even after the federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 outlawed these practices. Eventually, as overt racism became harder to defend, Connecticut's white suburbs relied more on exclusionary zoning policies, with "color-blind" rules that required higher-price single-family home construction, effectively blocking lower-wealth families, and by extension, most people of color. As a result, Connecticut's city-suburban

barriers trace their legacy to color lines that have faded over time, but remain in force today primarily due to class lines, supported by local and state government.

Chapter 4: Selling and Shopping the Lines explores the pivotal relationship between public schooling and private housing, which fundamentally reshaped metropolitan life and upward mobility strategies in Connecticut in the latter half of the twentieth century. By contrast, in the early 1900s, when a smaller proportion of youth pursued secondary education and beyond, most families did not choose their homes based on the boundary lines of desirable public schools. Prior to the 1950s, schools were relatively weak in attracting middle-class families to the suburbs, but in post-war human capital markets, education became a powerful magnet. Pro-suburban government, real estate interests and prospective homebuyers converged to create the practice commonly known today as “shopping for schools.” Agents began to advertise private homes by their location in higher status public school areas. Local school leaders competed for upper-class families by offering curricular extras. State legislators invested in suburban schools, and legitimized school-by-school rankings by publishing standardized test results. Upwardly mobile families with children sought more desirable school attendance areas, and paid higher prices for private homes that included access to this public good. Overall, the rise of shopping for schools unites the twin narratives of credentialism and consumerism in American metropolitan history.

Part 5: Challenging the Power Lines tells the stories of everyday families and civil rights activists who sought to cross over, redraw, or erase schooling and housing boundaries in metropolitan Hartford, focusing primarily on the past five decades. When comparing these stories, we learn that the tools of privilege do not stand still, but evolve when confronted by civil rights challenges. In turn, this requires newer generations of activists to continually rethink and revise strategies to address the limited successes of prior years. After Connecticut civil rights advocates won legislative bans against overt racial discrimination in public housing in the late 1940s, and most private housing in the 1960s, they needed to create more sophisticated strategies to combat racial steering and redlining practices, since these were more difficult to prove without direct testing and quantitative studies. Similarly, although activists won a 1965 state constitutional amendment for equal public schools, initial efforts to implement this law were equally challenged in moving students or dollars across city-suburban district lines. This portion concludes with the 1996 courtroom victory of the *Sheff v O'Neill* school integration plaintiffs, where Connecticut’s highest court outlawed the segregation of Hartford minority students, but left the specifics of the remedy to be determined by a suburban-dominated political process.

Chapter 6: Choosing to Cross the Lines describes the present-day political compromises that have emerged from battles over schooling and housing boundaries. When civil rights activists finally pressured Connecticut leaders to deliver on the

promise of integration with the Sheff remedies, beginning in 2003, the agreement hinged on voluntary public school choice that did not require participation by any individual, or initially, any suburban district. Instead, state leaders agreed to expand interdistrict magnet schools, with highly-desirable curricular offerings in the arts, sciences, and other specialties to attract white suburban families to voluntarily enroll their children in the same school as urban students of color. The Sheff remedy signals a tangible civil rights victory. As of 2015, state funding for 48 interdistrict magnet schools and the Open Choice city-suburban transfer program enrolls about 12,000 Hartford minority students (or 45 percent of the total) in racially integrated settings. But compromises come at a cost. Interdistrict schools merely blur the boundary lines, rather than erase the root causes of inequality. Furthermore, this voluntary integration plan protects suburban white privilege, and our data analysis shows how it favors more privileged Hartford families. The Sheff remedy has attracted critics from all sides, but the suburban-dominated state government has resisted change and threatened to unilaterally drop all support, despite the judge's order. At present, the Sheff schooling compromise-and related housing voucher policies that promise greater choice-are caught in a standoff, with suburban interests holding the upper hand.

Conclusion: Where Do We Draw the Line? offers historical reflections on present-day policy decisions *to come*.

Two additional chapters offer readers a behind-the-scenes look into the process of creating this book:

Teaching and Researching *On The Line* describes how the book emerged through working with liberal arts undergraduates and Hartford-area community partners in the Cities Suburbs and Schools seminar at Trinity College. For educators, this chapter offers lesson ideas to help students of all ages explore key questions about past and present topics raised in the book. For historical researchers, this chapter describes some of the methods and source materials consulted in creating this book, and some questions that remain unresolved. By making our work process more transparent, we hope to inspire people to educate others and engage in further research on topics in this book.

Mapping and Publishing *On The Line* details our design process and web technologies we used to create this open-access digital book. Our interactive web maps, built with open-source Leaflet code, help broader audiences to visualize spatial and historical change over time. The chapter also describes our publishing workflow, based on the open-source Bookdown package for RStudio, which produces both HTML web pages and PDF print pages. We share our knowledge about these tools so that others may innovate and build more digital books to tell their own stories.



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## **Chapter 2**

# **Defining City and Suburban Lines**

This chapter begins by challenging us to reconsider the familiar poor cities and rich suburbs narrative that is so ingrained in our present-day thinking. But a century ago, these roles were reversed. Connecticut's capital city was the center of financial wealth, adorned by its crown jewel of public education, Hartford Public High School. Urban schools earned such a strong reputation through the early 1900s that they attracted families from outlying towns to send their children into the city's borders. By contrast, public schools in areas that we consider today to be elite suburbs, were relatively weak rural districts at this time. This part of the book begins to explain the reversal of fortunes between Hartford's city and its suburbs over time. Larger colonial-era tracts of land were carved up into smaller town boundaries, state laws formed more rigid school district lines, and suburban voters blocked urban annexation. Today's Connecticut is highly fragmented into 169 municipal governments, and most manage their own public school districts and land-use decisions, with weak regional governance. Even the phrase "metropolitan Hartford," which appears in this book, has no official nor consistent definition. As a result, self-interested suburban policies with state governmental support have generated some of the nation's highest levels of inequality between the central city and its suburbs, and also across suburbs of different socioeconomic standings.

### **2.1 The Richest City in the Nation**

Over a century ago, the press declared Hartford as "the richest city in the United States" per capita, a label from the past that seems strange to anyone familiar with its extreme poverty in the present day. That tagline came from journalist

Charles Clark, who wrote a cover story on Connecticut's capital city in 1876 for *Scribner's Monthly*, one of the most popular illustrated literary magazines of its time. While Clark may not have invented this slogan, he certainly popularized it, based on some loose arithmetic of the city's accumulated wealth, relative to the size of its population, approximately 40,000 people. His essay opened by surveying the value of vast financial and industrial corporations based in the downtown area. The city's well-known insurance companies, including The Hartford and Aetna, held more than \$113 million in assets, which rebuilt Chicago after its disastrous 1871 fire. Added together, the city's numerous banks amassed over \$50 million in deposits and capital. Five railroad lines fed Hartford's extensive factories, including Colt's Arms Manufacturing Company, "perhaps the most famous in the country" for its rifles and revolvers during the Civil War. Summed together, these businesses pushed the city's taxable property value to more than \$200 million.

In addition to its financial assets, Clark also praised Hartford's abundant cultural riches. The nation's best-known authors, Samuel Clemens (more commonly known as Mark Twain) and Harriet Beecher Stowe (whose best-seller, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, influenced the Civil War), both took up residence in the city, alongside many of their literary companions, editors, and publishers. In addition to serving as the state capital, Hartford prized its extensive libraries, museum, and hospital. "The Hartford school buildings are said to be the finest in the State," Clark added, and called special attention to his alma mater, Hartford Public High School, the second oldest in the nation, which also enjoyed "a reputation with all the leading colleges as one of the best of all the preparatory schools."<sup>1</sup> In fact, the education that young people received in the city's public school system far surpassed what was available in the outlying rural towns, known today as the suburbs.

Today we recognize Clark's "richest city" slogan as boosterism. The twenty-eight-year-old son of a local congressman was a rising reporter at the *Hartford Courant*, the nation's oldest continuously published newspaper, and would later become its editor and owner. Clark "had an investment in the city," observes historian Steven Courtney, and later served on the boards of corporations and philanthropies his essay praised.<sup>4</sup> He did not offer a definitive statement

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<sup>1</sup> Charles H. Clark, "The Charter Oak City," *Scribner's Monthly* 13, no. 1 (November 1876): 1–21, [https://books.google.com/books?id=2q\\_PAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=2q_PAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA1#v=onepage&q&f=false).

<sup>4</sup> Steve Courtney, "Commentary: Was Hartford 'the Richest City in the United States?'" *Hartford Courant*, October 10, 2014, <http://www.courant.com/opinion/op-ed/hc-op-courtney-was-hartford-richest-city-in-america-20141010-story.html>. On Clark, see Norris Galpin Osborn, "Charles Hopkins Clark," in *Men of Mark in Connecticut: Ideals of American Life Told in Biographies and Autobiographies of Eminent Living Americans* (W.R. Goodspeed, 1906), 230–34, [https://books.google.com/books?id=ARFh\\_Sbpg84C&pg=PA230](https://books.google.com/books?id=ARFh_Sbpg84C&pg=PA230); Joseph F. Nunes, "The Lasting Legacy of Charles Hopkins Clark," *Hartford Courant*, October 18, 2014, <http://www.courant.com/courant-250/your-moments/hc-courant-clark-profile-20141018-story.html>; Joseph F. Nunes, "Chapter Four: 'Fighting Joe' and Mark Twain," *Hartford Courant*, October 18, 2014, <http://www.courant.com/courant-250/your-moments/hc-courant-chapter-four-20141018-story.html>.

# SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY.

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VOL. XIII.

NOVEMBER, 1876.

No. 1.

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THE CHARTER OAK CITY.



Figure 2.1: Scroll the full-screen document from *Scribner's Monthly* in 1876, which declared Hartford as “the richest city in the United States,” relative to its population. Digitized by Google Books.<sup>3</sup>

on Hartford's total wealth per capita, nor any direct comparison to financial statistics for other cities, to the extent they were available. Today, the idea of measuring a city by the wealth of its total corporate wealth, rather than the assets actually owned by individual residents, makes little sense. In 1903, nearly four decades after Clark's essay, skeptics questioned some of its claims. One critic was Alexander Merriam, a Hartford Theological Seminary professor in the brand-new field of sociology. Although Hartford was still "computed as one of the richest cities of its size in the country," he observed, "local wealth is not so large and available as the statistical aggregate might seem to indicate." Residents included both "wealthier citizens... scattered in different parts of the city" and also "a slum of almost the first magnitude" of the poorest citizens along the banks of the Connecticut River. While Hartford still had significant pockets of wealth, they were not uniformly distributed. In fact, while Samuel Clemens lived in Hartford, he and his co-author satirically named this era the Gilded Age, referring to a thin gold layer that symbolizes wealth, but masks underlying social problems.<sup>5</sup>

But none of this skepticism mattered, as long as Hartford's slogan as the "nation's richest city" stuck in the public mind. It contained an element of truth that ordinary people could see with their own eyes, whenever they caught sight of a wealthy resident or passed by one of their prestigious homes in the city's neighborhoods. In fact, the "richest city" label predicated Clark's 1876 article. Five years earlier, advocates for an art museum announced their fundraising appeal by declaring that "Hartford is the richest city of its size in the United States, we believe," but must construct an institution "if she is to keep her pre-eminence, or is to be a city worthy of her wealth and acknowledged culture." A similar 1878 appeal argued that while "Hartford is said to be the richest city in the country... so far, however, it fails to sustain adequately a public library."<sup>6</sup> Variations on the "richest" theme appeared in Hartford church sermons, commencement addresses, and local news and feature stories, sometimes

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<sup>5</sup> Alexander R. Merriam, *The Social Significance of the Smaller City* (Hartford, Conn.: Hartford Seminary Press, 1903), <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/64385345>, reprinted as Alexander R. Merriam, "The Social Conditions of the Smaller City," *The Hartford Courant*, July 21, 1903, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/555173471?accountid=14405>. See also skepticism about the corporate assets underlying the "richest city" claim in "The Richest City," *The Hartford Courant (1887-1922)*, October 23, 1903, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/555173471?accountid=14405>. On satirical name, see Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, *The Gilded Age: A Tale of to-Day* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1873), <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000664544>.

<sup>6</sup> Although the Wadsworth Atheneum opened in Hartford in 1844 and currently is described as one of the oldest art museums in the nation, the original buildings included an art gallery, the Connecticut Historical Society, and the Young Men's Institute (which later became the Hartford Public Library). Advocates sought funding for a separate dedicated art museum and public library. See "An Art Museum," *Hartford Daily Courant*, April 29, 1871, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/553680505?accountid=14405>; "A Suggestive Contrast," *Hartford Daily Courant*, October 15, 1878, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/554105478?accountid=14405>; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, "History," accessed July 28, 2015, <https://thewadsworth.org/about/history/>.

accompanied by tax or bank records, into the early 1920s. Whether or not this claim was based in fact, enough people believed it to publicly repeat it.<sup>7</sup>

By the end of the twentieth century, the “richest city” slogan had turned upside down. Census 2000 ranked Hartford as one of the poorest major cities, with a population over 100,000, in the United States. When measured by the percentage of families living in poverty, Hartford was the second poorest, with 28 percent of its residents earning less than \$17,600 for a family of four. Only the border city of Brownsville, Texas had a higher family poverty rate. When measured by median household income, Hartford was the fourth poorest city with a typical household earning only \$24,820, just behind Miami, Brownsville, and Buffalo. Connecticut’s capital city first appeared among the ten most impoverished major cities in the 1980 Census. As of this writing in 2015, the city has not risen out of this dismal category. Although Hartford has inched upward from the near-bottom of the list in recent years, the token change in its rating has been caused by the sharper decline of cities such as Detroit and Flint, Michigan, rather than substantive improvements on its own.<sup>8</sup>

After the 2000 Census became public, the *New York Times* ran a front-page story on the depths of Hartford’s poverty. Reminding readers of the city’s former wealthy status, the article pointed to the powerless mayor, internal racial divisions, and public schools that were “among the worst performing in the nation” as markers of urban decline. “The *NY Times* piece was a teeth-kicker,” recalled Stan Simpson, a *Hartford Courant* columnist. “It rehashed the well-documented problems in the capital city—poverty, education, crime, race relations—and gave scant attention to any progress.” It was a riches-to-rags story, with no hope of redemption. Tom Condon, another *Courant* columnist, complained that the *New York Times* story “described Hartford as a decaying hulk of a once-grand

<sup>7</sup>For a selection of “richest city” claims, see Conn.) First Church of Christ (Hartford, “Address of Edward Everett Hale,” in *Commemorative Exercises of the First Church of Christ in Hartford, at Its Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary, October 11 and 12, 1883* (Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company, 1883), <https://books.google.com/books?id=1ncsAAAAYAAJ>; “Girl Graduates: Closing Exercises of Mt. St. Joseph Seminary Cluster of Historical Essays on Hartford,” *Hartford Courant*, June 19, 1903, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/555144638?accountid=14405>; “Hartford as the ‘Richest City’: A Great Financial Center,” *Hartford Courant: Financial Section*, October 6, 1908, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/555586930?accountid=14405>; Otis Skinner, “Save Twain Home, Urges Otis Skinner: Should Be Easy for Richest City Per Capita in This Country,” *Hartford Courant*, April 23, 1920, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/556799530?accountid=14405>; “Hartford Holds Lead as Wealthiest City: Over 21,000 Local People Pay Federal Income Tax –Stamford Second and New Haven Third 10 Per Cent. In State Assessed,” *Hartford Courant*, November 26, 1921, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/556971490?accountid=14405>; “Wealth of Hartford Clearly Shown by Bank Statements: Per Capita Wealth, \$600, Equalled by No Other City in U. S.—1921 Bank Discounts Total \$455,975,029 Insurance in Lead as Chief Industry City Known for Its Manufacturing for over 150 Years—Center for Traders and Buyers for Radius of 50 Miles,” *Hartford Courant*, September 3, 1922, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/557107212?accountid=14405>.

<sup>8</sup>See census data sources in “Calculating Wealth and Poverty in Past and Present” chapter, TO COME in this book.

city” and “left the impression that we’re all on skid row.” In response, the *Courant* published its editorial, “In Defense of Hartford,” which did not question the facts, but criticized the pessimistic portrayal of their city. “It hurts when outsiders point out the ailments that afflict Connecticut’s capital,” the editorial began, describing how this intensely negative national news coverage “felt like an insult.” The spin on Hartford had made a full circle back to the city’s oldest newspaper, where Charles Clark originally crafted the slogan of wealth more than a century ago.<sup>9</sup>

Where did the money go? What became of the wealth that once made Hartford “the richest city” in the nation into the early 1900s? During the twentieth century, the fortunes of the central city and its suburbs were reversed. According to Census 2000, when Hartford was rated as the second-poorest city by family poverty, its metropolitan statistical area (the city and suburbs combined) rose to the sixth-richest in the nation, as measured by median household income. Consider the size of this gap. Inside Hartford’s city boundaries, the median family earned \$24,820 in 2000, but the median family in the metropolitan area earned \$52,188, more than twice that amount. If we could exclude the city data from the surrounding metropolitan area, that gap would increase even further. The Gilded Age did not magically disappear from Hartford; most of it moved to selected suburbs.<sup>10</sup>

One way to visualize the spatial redistribution of wealth from the City of Hartford to its suburbs is to track home values by town during the twentieth century. For each decade in the map below, the average dwelling or single-family home value is indexed to the region to correct for historical price inflation, with higher values represented by darker shades of green. While not a precise measure, the rough differences over time are striking. In 1910, the region’s highest home values were located in the City of Hartford and its neighboring suburb of West Hartford. In second place were inner-ring suburbs with manufacturing jobs (such as East Hartford, Manchester, Windsor, and New Britain), followed by outlying farming towns to the west and southeast. In 1910, the average home value in Hartford was nearly \$5,000, four times more than the average \$1,200 home value in the agricultural community of Avon.

A century later, that relationship had reversed, as home values in the city fell

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<sup>9</sup>Paul Zielbauer, “Poverty in a Land of Plenty: Can Hartford Ever Recover?” *The New York Times: N.Y. / Region*, August 26, 2002, <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/08/26/nyregion/poverty-in-a-land-of-plenty-can-hartford-ever-recover.html>. Contrast the *NY Times* portrayal with a later story by the *LA Times*, which Simpson noted had a more positive spin: David Lamb, “Once-Gilded City Buffing Itself Up,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 15, 2003, <http://articles.latimes.com/2003/jun/15/nation/na-hartford15>. See reactions by Stan Simpson, “Capital Progress: Read All About It,” *Hartford Courant*, June 28, 2003, <http://articles.courant.com/2003-06-28/news/0306281788>; Tom Condon, “‘Troubled City’ a Victim of Geography,” *Hartford Courant*, September 12, 2002, <http://articles.courant.com/2002-09-12/news/0209120303>; “Editorial: In Defense of Hartford,” *Hartford Courant*, August 27, 2002, <http://articles.courant.com/2002-08-27/news/0208270795>.

<sup>10</sup>See census data sources in “Calculating Wealth and Poverty in Past and Present” chapter, TO COME in this book.

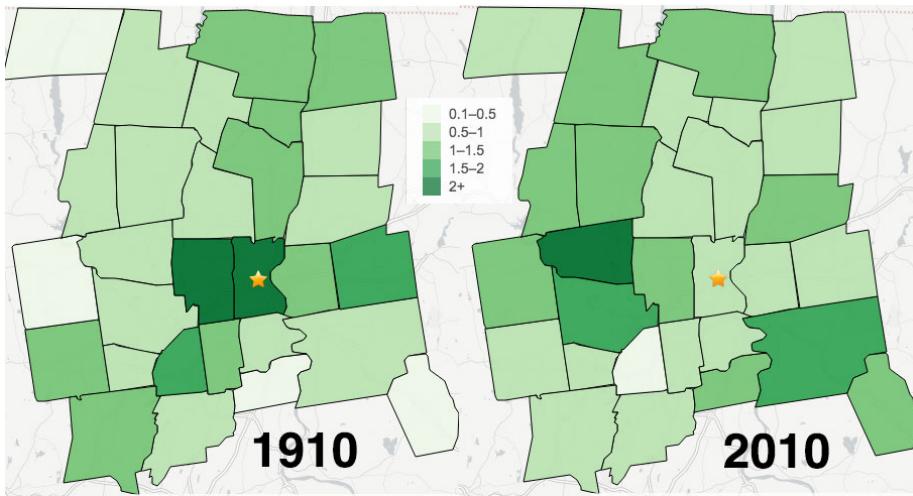


Figure 2.2: Explore the full-screen interactive map of home values in Hartford County, 1910-2010. The most valuable single-family homes (in dark green) shifted from the capital city to selected suburbs over time. Click the tabs or use arrow keys to advance years. Hover over towns for details. Home values have been indexed (where county average = 1.0) to adjust for rising prices over time. Missing values appear in gray. Sources: 1910-1980 from Connecticut Tax Commissioner, author's calculation of average dwelling value from equalized assessments; 1990 from Capital Region Council of Governments, median single-family home sales price; 2000-10 from State of Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management, average single-family home sales price (2000-2010). Learn more in "Calculating Wealth and Poverty in Past and Present" chapter, TO COME in this book. View historical sources and code for this map, developed by Ilya Ilyankou and Jack Dougherty, based on an earlier version with UConn MAGIC.<sup>13</sup>

to nearly the lowest in the region, while some outlying farm towns—known today as elite suburbs—climbed to the top. In 2010, the average sales price for a single-family home in Avon climbed to \$536,000, more than three times the average \$178,000 sales price in Hartford. In some eyes, the once-powerful city-based economic powerhouse had become a doughnut—a fiscally depressed center surrounded by an affluent suburban ring—though with wide variation in the middle.<sup>11</sup>

How do we explain this reversal of fortunes between Hartford's city and its suburbs? Histories of twentieth-century suburbanization point to multiple factors, including white flight, urban rebellions, interstate highways, and job migration. But this book argues that the pivotal relationship between private housing and

<sup>11</sup>See home value data sources in "Calculating Wealth and Poverty in Past and Present" chapter, TO COME in this book.

public schooling reshaped central Connecticut. During the first half of the twentieth century, the city's public school system—and its crown jewel, Hartford Public High School—earned the highest reputation in the region, while most small-town and rural school districts were viewed as woefully behind. When the first generations of city dwellers moved to outlying suburbs, they were attracted by housing opportunities, not substandard schools. Yet this relationship quickly changed during the latter half of the century, when rising suburbs actively competed for upper-class white families and created elite public schools that acted as powerful magnets, while state policies kept most low-income black students at a distance. As the most privileged families fled Hartford, the concentration of poverty and limited resources led the city's most prized high school to nearly lose its accreditation in the 1990s, while elite suburban public schools rose to the top of new ranking systems.

To tell this story about the changing relationship between housing and schooling, this book begins by retracing the lines that were drawn to separate the city and suburban towns, and later its school districts. During the 1800s, town boundaries were still a work-in-progress, and public school districts were relatively porous until the early twentieth century. Connecticut legislators sharpened these divisions under a 1909 school consolidation law, with deep consequences for a school desegregation lawsuit that arose eight decades later. Yet while mass suburbanization prompted more metropolitan governance for water, sewer, and transit between towns in the region, public schooling became more restricted to only families that resided inside local district boundaries. In today's politically fragmented Connecticut, most policies about housing and education are made either at the State Capitol or in 169 individual town halls and school boards. Even the phrase “metropolitan Hartford” has no officially consistent meaning here. As a result, local self-interested policy decisions have generated some of the nation’s highest levels of inequality between the city and its suburbs, and also between suburbs of different social standing. This chapter visually describes *what* happened in the Hartford region, as a prelude to later chapters that explain in more detail *why* it happened, and *how* civil rights activists have challenged the status quo in different ways.



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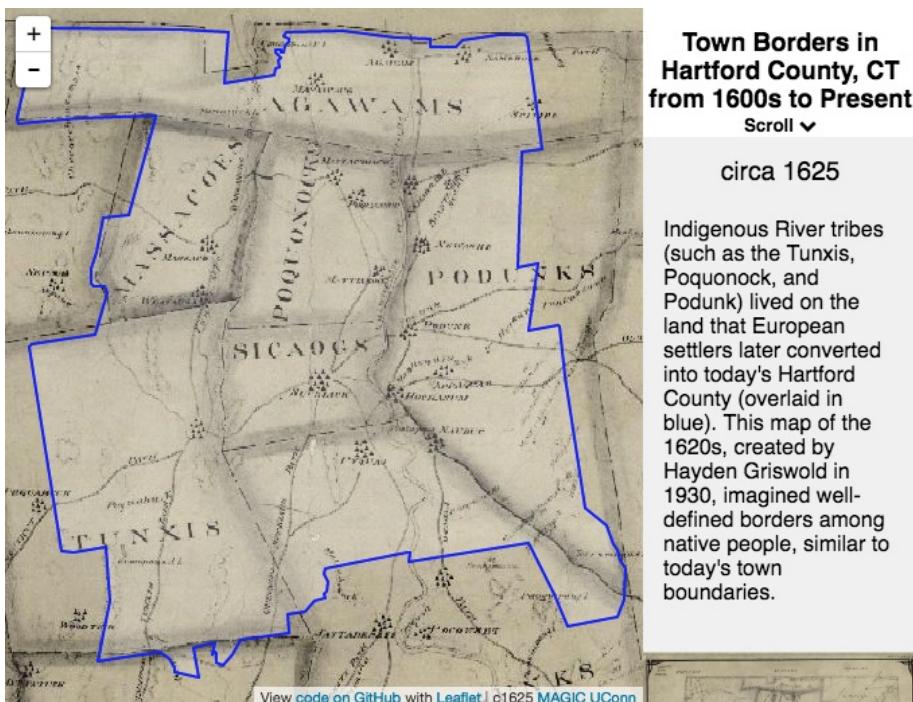


Figure 2.3: Scroll the narrative (or click and use arrow keys) in this interactive map of town borders in Hartford County, Connecticut. From the early 1600s to the late 1880s, local and state government divided the region into 29 separate towns as the European settler population grew. Boundaries shown here are not exact, but approximated from the best available digital sources: UConn Libraries MAGIC historical maps, Atlas of Historical County Boundaries at Newberry Library, and the Connecticut State Register and Manual. View historical sources, known issues, and the code for this map, developed by Ilya Ilyankou and Jack Dougherty.<sup>15</sup>

## 2.2 Carving Up Town Boundaries

TODO: TEXT TO COME

## 2.3 A Golden Age for City Schools

TODO: TEXT TO COME

## 2.4 Challenges for Rural and Early Suburban Schools

PREVIEW: In contrast to the golden age of urban schools, most rural and suburban schools faced deep challenges to educational quality during the early 1900s. Several had no high schools and relied on regional arrangements with neighboring towns—funded by state subsidies—to educate their teenage students. Decades ago, Connecticut students routinely and legally crossed school district boundaries to receive a public education, and the entire system was arguably more regionalized than it is today, with rigidly divided districts.

According to a 1925 study by the Connecticut State Board of Education, about 137 out of 169 towns (81 percent) still operated a one-room school, for a total of 558. State officials praised a modest decrease in one-room schools from 1921, but noted that the rural school grants program served as a disincentive. “The town which receives a percentage of teachers’ salaries grants is not inclined to close a school, transport the pupils, and lose this grant when no compensating grant to help meet the costs of conveyance is provided,” stated the report authors. “The present scheme of grants is all too evidently hindering rather than aiding the small towns to improve their schools.”<sup>16</sup>

TODO - expand chapter

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<sup>16</sup> Connecticut State Board of Education, “One-Room Schools in Connecticut,” *Connecticut Schools* 7, no. 7 (March 1926): 6–7, <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/20683509>

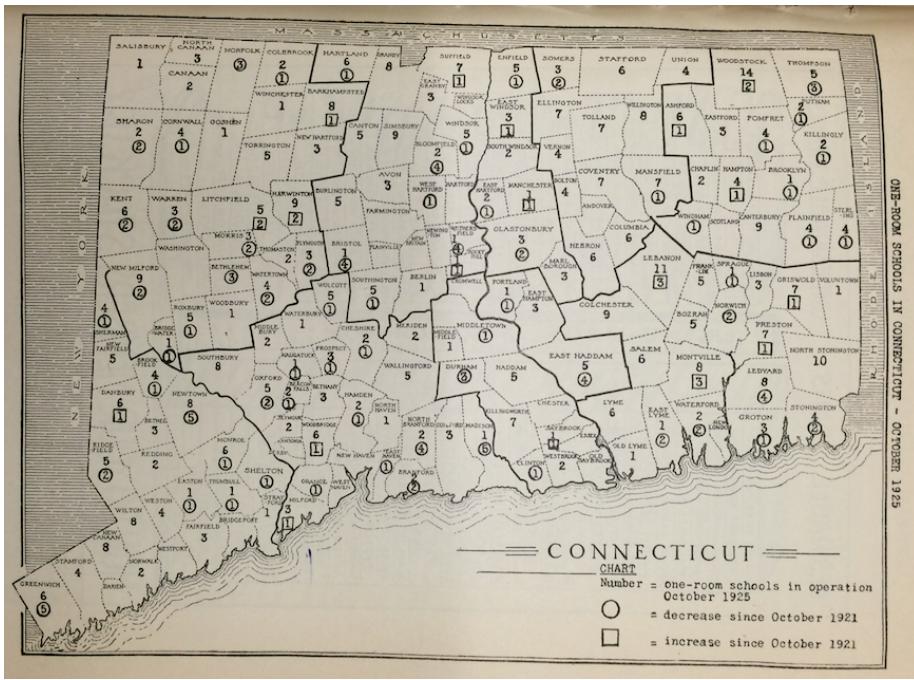


Figure 2.4: This map illustrated the gradual decline of one-room schools across Connecticut from 1921 to 1925, according to the State Board of Education.<sup>18</sup>

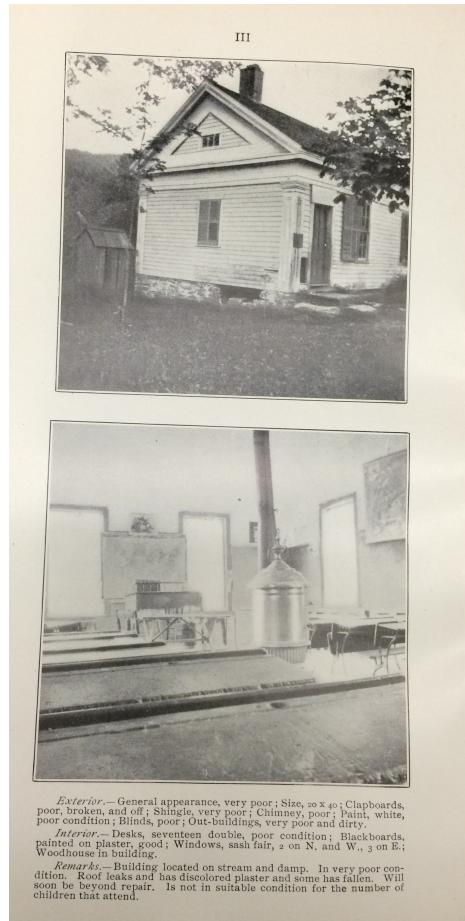


Figure 2.5: In 1901, the Connecticut State Board of Education attempted to shame towns by printing photos of low-quality one-room schools, without the name of the town. <sup>20</sup>

## **Chapter 3**

# **Separating with Color and Class Lines**

This chapter explains how the boundaries of white middle-class privilege have shifted over time, from explicit racial barriers to more sophisticated hurdles, and from the schooling to the housing sector. The Connecticut legislature banned schooling for out-of-state black students during the 1830s, and Hartford leaders voted to officially segregate public schools for a brief period in 1868, and proposed it again in 1917. After civil rights activists overturned these policies, Hartford officials quietly continued to separate many black and white students into the 1970s, through its decisions on locating new schools and redrawing attendance lines. In the housing sector, the color line gained more governmental support in the 1930s and '40s, with federal and local policies that openly prohibited home mortgages and public housing for blacks, and legally protected white-only property deeds. After activists overturned these governmental restrictions, the Connecticut real estate industry continued the color line through discriminatory steering and lending, even after the federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 outlawed these practices. Eventually, as overt racism became harder to defend, Connecticut's white suburbs relied more on exclusionary zoning policies, with "color-blind" rules that required higher-price single-family home construction, effectively blocking lower-wealth families, and by extension, most people of color. As a result, Connecticut's city-suburban barriers trace their legacy to color lines that have faded over time, but remain in force today primarily due to class lines, supported by local and state government.

### **3.1 Federal Lending and Redlining**

*by Shaun McGann and Jack Dougherty*

Racial and class discrimination in American housing was not simply caused by the prejudice of individual property owners. During the 1930s Depression, when federal agencies entered into the home mortgage market to bolster the economy, the U.S. government systematically instituted segregation into housing policies in ways that went far beyond the actions of individuals. This section compares how two federal lending programs—the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA)—carried out their respective missions, and their long-term consequences for city and suburban neighborhoods. Both agencies institutionalized discrimination by creating color-coded maps and ratings systems that downgraded neighborhoods based on the racial and class demographics of their residents, rather than objective assessments of their market value alone. While their lending practices differed, both programs contributed to what we today call “redlining”: discrimination by refusing to provide (or charging higher rates) for financial services such as mortgages or insurance, due primarily to the location of a property. Although this term was not coined until the late 1960s, the story of its origins—and the federal government’s active role in shaping these racial and class boundaries—dates back to the 1930s. Looking back at the evolution of mortgage lending policies and vivid evidence of discrimination captures the story behind these segregated housing lines, and the thinking of both public and private officials as they drew them.<sup>1</sup>

When the nation sank into the Great Depression of the 1930s, the economic collapse threatened both lenders and borrowers in the housing market. Millions of Americans who already owned a home were in danger of defaulting on their mortgages, and potentially losing their homes to bank foreclosures. Many more could not afford to buy a home through a privately-owned bank or other lender, based on conventional mortgage terms at that time:

- High interest rate (around 7 percent).
- Large down payment (typically 50 percent, due to a 50 percent limit on the amount of the loan relative to the market value of the home, or loan-to-value ratio).
- Short-term loans (only 3 to 5 years to repay).
- Interest-only loan repayment, with very large “balloon payment” of principal at the end, or refinancing a new loan.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>TODO: check definition and “coined” source, whether made illegal under 1968 FH Act, and more recent definitions.

<sup>2</sup>TODO: Check sources; history of amortization in Snowden and Rose paper, <http://realestateresearch.frbatlanta.org/rer/2012/04/debunking-popular-myth-about-mortgage-lending.html>; compare with typical HUD history <http://homeguides.sfgate.com/amortization-mortgage-2809.html> and <http://answers.google.com/answers/threadview/id/533059.html> and [http://archives.huduser.org/about/hud\\_timeline/tl/hudtimeline\\_1930.html](http://archives.huduser.org/about/hud_timeline/tl/hudtimeline_1930.html)

In response to this lending crisis, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed legislation in 1933 to create the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), and subsequent programs to subsidize the cost of mortgages. The HOLC purchased and refinanced loans for homeowners who were in danger of bank foreclosure, due to their failure to keep up with existing mortgage payments or balloon payments. In addition to lower interest rates, these federally-backed mortgages offered much more favorable terms for middle-class homeowners:

- Lower interest rate (5 percent or lower).
- Smaller down payment (typically 20 percent, by raising the loan-to-value ratio to 80 percent).
- Longer-term loans (for 15 years, and then 30 years).
- Amortization of loans, which calculates a gradual repayment of both interest and principal, shifting largely from one to the other over time.

Government involvement in the private lending market prevented millions of Americans from being forced out of their homes, and subsequent programs expanded ownership to millions more, but only for those who qualified. Eligibility was not neutral on the racial and class composition of homeowners' neighborhoods, and tied federal funds into supporting and spreading segregation.<sup>3</sup>

In order for the HOLC to measure the risk of mortgage investments in different neighborhoods across the nation, the agency launched its City Survey Program in 1935. Field agents were sent to interview local banks and other lenders in 239 cities, and record their findings in confidential reports. In recent years, historians such as Robert K. Nelson and colleagues have compiled a growing collection of these maps for their nationwide Mapping Inequality Project.<sup>4</sup>

Foster Milliken Jr., the HOLC field agent assigned to Hartford, was no stranger to the world of finance. Decades earlier, his father presided over Milliken Brothers, Inc., a multi-million dollar structural steel manufacturer in New York City that built the world's tallest buildings at that time. Prior to the Depression, Foster Milliken Jr. worked as a stockbroker in Manhattan and was familiar with its social circles. When HOLC sent him to evaluate the Hartford area in 1937, he consulted key figures in the city's home lending market—real estate board leaders, bank executives, and local administrators of federal housing loan programs—who he described as “a fair and composite opinion of the best qualified local people.” But in Milliken’s eyes, Hartford was a “typical New England city” with “ultra-conservative” fiscal policies, preferring to avoid federal assistance whenever possible. “It is not surprising,” Milliken wrote, that

<sup>3</sup>David Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in the Modern American Suburb* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

<sup>4</sup>Robert K. Nelson et al., “Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America,” American Panorama, Digital Scholarship Lab, University of Richmond, 2016, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/>.

most of Hartford's conservative banking circle refused to accept HOLC funding (which required only a 20 percent down payment from lenders, far lower than their conventional terms) and "generally frowned upon" federal home lending programs. Nevertheless, several bank executives and real estate board members agreed to speak confidentially with Milliken and offer their assessment of city and suburban neighborhoods, revealing which areas they believed to be safest or riskiest investments, and why.<sup>5</sup>

Milliken submitted his confidential report to the HOLC central office, where staff created a four-color Residential Security Map to visually represent the "trend of desirability" he reported for neighborhoods in Hartford and two adjacent suburbs, West Hartford and East Hartford. Green, the highest rating, marked the best opportunities for mortgage investment, what Milliken described as "hot spots" of new and well-planned home construction where "lenders with available funds are willing to make their maximum loans" at up to 80 percent of the appraised property value (thereby requiring only a 20 percent down payment from homeowners). Blue, the second-grade level, represented completely developed neighborhoods of good quality, but not the best, where lenders offered mortgages at no more than 70 percent of the home value (or a 30 percent down payment). Yellow, the third-grade ranking, indicated areas in "transition" due to obsolescent housing or the "infiltration of a lower grade population," and where mortgage lenders were even more conservative than above. Red, the fourth-grade areas, designated areas "broader than the so-called slum districts" where negative transitions had already occurred, and now were characterized by an "undesirable population" with "unstable incomes." While some lenders avoided the third- and fourth-grade areas, Milliken's report was cautious to avoid implying that good mortgage investments could not be made there. Rather, "we do think [mortgages] should be made and serviced [but] on a different basis than in the First and Second grade areas." In this way, the HOLC did not refuse to offer loans in the "redlined" areas, but acknowledged that this practice existed among some lenders, and justified doing business differently in these areas.<sup>8</sup>

Looking outward from the downtown Hartford business district, Milliken observed that "the entire trend is to the west." In general, the lowest-grade red areas were located along the flood-prone banks of the Connecticut River, the location of the oldest colonial-era settlements that now contained the least desirable housing. Milliken perceived that the quality of neighborhoods improved—from yellow to blue to green—as the "better-class" residents moved from the central city to suburban West Hartford, and rising classes successively migrated

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<sup>5</sup>TODO: Milliken bio from 19070611NYT Milliken Brothers; 1930 Ancestry on zotero; 19350120NYT Foster Milliken. TWO REPORTS: Foster Milliken, Jr., "Confidential Report of a Survey in Hartford, Connecticut" (5 May 1936) and "Residential Security Map and Area Descriptions" (20 November 1937), for the Division of Research and Statistics, Home Owners' Loan Corporation, Folder "Hartford CT #2", Box 64, City Survey Files, Record Group 195: Records of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, National Archives II, College Park, MD; "best qualified" quote and acknowledgments in page 4-5 of 1937 report; ultraconverv and FHA quotes in 1936 report p3, 20

<sup>8</sup>TODO: quotes from 1937 report, p. 1; pp. 3-4

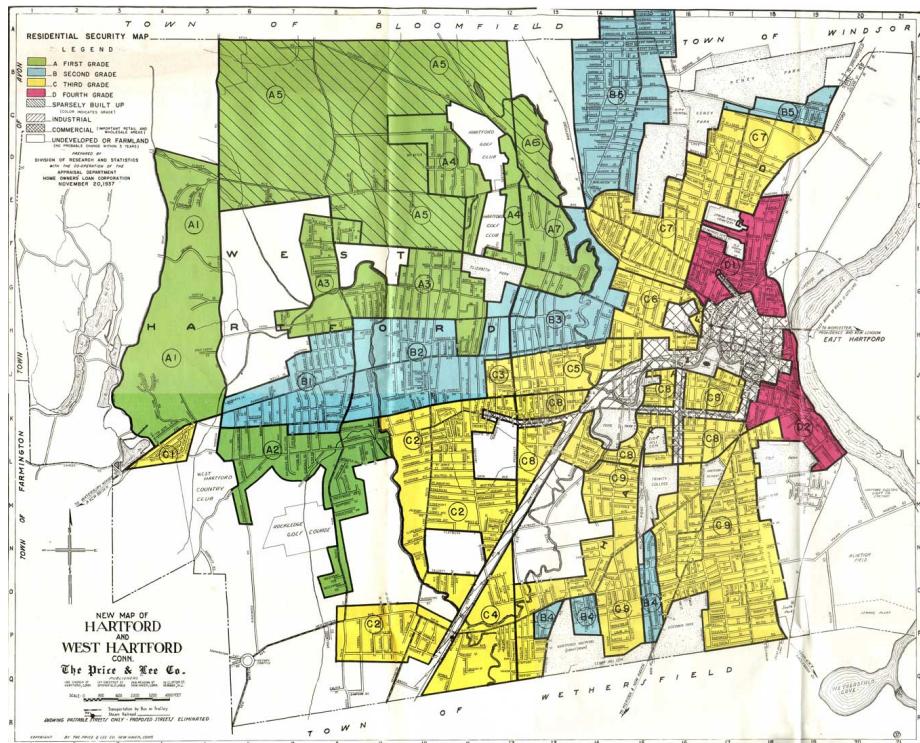


Figure 3.1: View the Residential Security Map for Hartford and West Hartford, 1937, from the Home Owners' Loan Corporation records at the National Archives. HOLC staff transformed neighborhood appraisals for over 200 cities into color-coded maps. Green indicated the best neighborhoods for mortgage investment, followed by blue and yellow, and then red to mark the riskiest areas, hence the name “redlining.”<sup>7</sup>

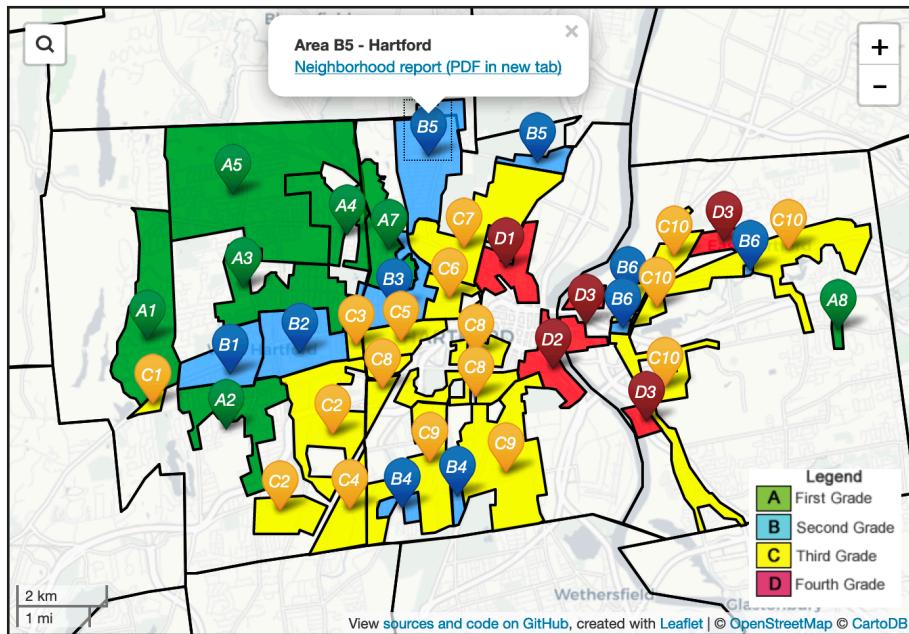


Figure 3.2: Click on color-coded areas in the full-screen interactive map to view neighborhood appraisals by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) in the Hartford area, 1937. HOLC prioritized neighborhoods to receive mortgage lending from the highest level (A, in green) to the lowest (D, in red). This federal agency worked with local banks and lenders to evaluate Hartford and over 200 other cities during the Great Depression. They measured not only physical conditions, but also the “social status of the population,” and downgraded neighborhoods with non-white, immigrant, and poor residents. In later decades, activists labeled these discriminatory lending practices as “redlining.” View historical sources and code for this map, developed by Ilya Ilyankou and Jack Dougherty, based on an earlier version with UConn MAGIC and the Kirwin Institute.<sup>10</sup>

2. INHABITANTS:
- a. Occupation Laborers & domestics; b. Estimated annual family income \$ 1,000
  - c. Foreign-born families 34 %; Italians predominating; d. Negro Yes; 66 %
  - e. Infiltration of Same; f. Relief families Many

Figure 3.3: Explore the HOLC area descriptions, with forms that required appraisers to report the social composition of the neighborhood as a factor to measure mortgage risk. Source: Hartford area C-10, 1937, from the National Archives.<sup>14</sup>

into their old neighborhoods. A similar movement, though less pronounced in his view, also occurred on the opposite side of the river in suburban East Hartford. Despite this general trend, a closer look at the HOLC map reveals that not all suburban neighborhoods received high ratings, and not all city neighborhoods received low ratings. For example, yellow (the third grade) dominated the southern half of West Hartford and most of East Hartford. Likewise, green (the first grade) prevailed in the northwest quadrant of the City of Hartford.<sup>11</sup>

Which factors influenced Milliken's mortgage risk ratings? Although his report considered the physical condition and market price of the housing stock, it also gave strong weight to the "social status of the population" in each neighborhood. The report was comprised of one-page standardized appraisal forms for each of the 27 neighborhoods studied. Near the top, HOLC instructed its appraisers to insert details about current inhabitants based on the prevailing standards of racial superiority and economic privilege of the time. Milliken dutifully reported the percentage of "Foreign-born" and "Negro" families, as well as "Relief families" who received Depression-era federal income assistance. In the section asking about the "Infiltration" of outside groups, he occasionally listed "Italians" or "Mixed foreign" residents for selected city and suburban neighborhoods.<sup>12</sup>

At the bottom of each appraisal form, Milliken added racial and social class commentary about several neighborhoods, which he most likely heard from his local banking and real estate consultants, capturing their dominant cultural desires to maintain boundaries drawn by race, ethnicity, and social class. In a newer housing development occupied by "minor executives and businessmen" in suburban West Hartford (labeled A-2), he noted approvingly that, "a stream separates this section from its less desirable neighbor," referring to an adjacent area of West Hartford with an "infiltration of mixed foreign" families in "workingmen's homes" (C-2). In the North End of Hartford, Milliken described the Blue Hills neighborhood (B-5) as "largely given over to the Hebrew race although the better class Italians are now also moving there." In the predominantly white South End of the city (C-9), Milliken noted that a small percentage of "Negro families are confined to Roosevelt Street," and added that, "Lenders

<sup>11</sup>TODO: recheck if "better-class" phrase appears, and if so, quote it; 1936 report page 10

<sup>12</sup>TO DO: social status quote from 1937 page 1; see forms on pages A1-D3

Rating of Mortgage Pattern							
Feature	REJECT	1	2	3	4	5	RATING
Ratio of Loan to Value ..... 80%	6	9	12	16	20		6
Ratio of Debt Service to Rental Value ..... 185%	2	4	6	8	10		2
Ratio of Life of Mortgage to Economic Life of Building ..... 100%	1	2	3	4	5		1
Lowest Category Rating (Location) Reject%	X	10	15	20	25	30	Reject
Intermediate Category Rating (Property) ..... 59%	4	8	X	12	16	20	8
Highest Category Rating (Borrower) ..... 70%	3	6	9	12	X	18	12
TOTAL RATING OF MORTGAGE PATTERN							Reject%

Figure 3.4: Explore the 1936 Federal Housing Administration Underwriting Manual, which illustrated how a poor location rating would result in a rejected mortgage application. Digitized by HathiTrust.<sup>16</sup>

suggest caution in the selection of loans.” But all of these neighborhoods were rated above the area immediately north of downtown, “the city’s oldest residential section, which has gradually drifted into a slum area now mainly occupied by Negroes” (D-1). The HOLC map revealed not only the visible housing stock in the Hartford area, but also the “invisible” color and class lines drawn by mortgage lenders and real estate agents.

### Restricting with FHA

Around the same time that HOLC created these color-coded maps, a second agency, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), began publishing guidelines for its staff to uniformly evaluate mortgage applications. Whereas the HOLC focused on foreclosures, the FHA devoted its attention to new loans, by subsidizing affordable terms for homebuyers and guaranteeing repayment to commercial lenders. To decide who qualified for FHA loans, the agency published its first *Underwriting Manual* in 1936. These detailed instructions specified exactly how evaluators should inspect the property, its location, and the applicant’s credit worthiness. The FHA *Manual* provided uniform scoring charts, with examples of accepted and rejected applications.

In the Location category, the FHA *Underwriting Manual* instructed evaluators to rate mortgage risk based on potential changes in the racial and class demographics of the neighborhood. This policy placed the federal government’s financial interest *in favor of segregation*, and sought to protect property values *against integration*. The most direct language appeared in the “Protection from Adverse Influences” section, the factor carrying most of the weight in the Location category of the *Manual*. Overall, the FHA risk-rating system valued newly developed neighborhoods with homogenous upper-class stability. Evaluators were instructed to “investigate areas surrounding the location to determine whether or not incompatible racial and social groups are present.” Any intru-

Federal Housing Administration, Underwriting Manual (1936), excerpts.

**BATING OF LOCATION**      **Part II**  
**226-228**

**PROTECTION FROM ADVERSE INFLUENCES**

**226.** This feature has a total weight of 20, making it one of the most important features in the Rating of Location. Protection from adverse influences is not concerned merely with zoning and deed restrictions. These are of great importance, but they do not represent all of the protection which is or may be afforded a location. Where little or no protection is provided against adverse influences the Valuator must not hesitate to make a reject rating of this feature.

Figure 3.5: Scroll through the 1936 FHA Underwriting Manual, which required lower scores for mortgage applications located in neighborhoods or near schools that might experience changes in the racial or social class composition of residents. Digitized by HathiTrust.<sup>19</sup>

sions would provoke “instability and a reduction in values,” the *Manual* warned. If the “character of a neighborhood” declines, “it is usually impossible to induce a higher social class than those already in the neighborhood to purchase and occupy properties.” Neighborhoods received higher scores if they were protected by “natural or artificially established barriers,” such as public parks or college campuses, that prevented the “infiltration of business and industrial uses, lower-class occupancy, and inharmonious racial groups.” Similarly, the guidelines cautioned that neighborhood schools “should not be attended in large numbers by inharmonious racial groups.” The rating system also approved of restrictive deeds that prohibited “the occupancy of properties except by the race for which they are intended” for at least twenty years. In fact, when restrictive property covenants covered an entire housing development or neighborhood, the *Manual* judged them to be more effective than zoning ordinances, which municipalities may have adopted “with little or no real understanding of its purpose.”<sup>17</sup>

When the FHA expanded its *Manual* in 1938, it added a four-level neighborhood ranking, on a scale from A to D, when rating the location. The new evaluation forms included specific codes to designate the predominant racial composition of the neighborhood: White, Mixed, Foreign, and Negro.<sup>20</sup>

The 1930s HOLC maps were marked “confidential” for several decades, until community organizers and academics discovered and renamed them as “redlining” maps in the late 1960s and ‘70s. The frequency of this phrase jumped upward in full-text databases of published books after the 1970s. Ken Jackson’s popular history of suburbanization, *Crabgrass Frontier*, called public attention to the discriminatory language of field agents’ reports. He and others pointed to what they saw as a clear pattern of assigning the lowest “red” rating to

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<sup>17</sup>Administration, part II, sections 233, 229, 289, 284, 227-28.

<sup>20</sup>TO DO: expand from Rothstein book

**b. Racial Occupancy Designation.** This will be a letter indicating predominating racial characteristics, as follows:

**W—White**  
**M—Mixed**  
**F—Foreign**  
**N—Negro**

Figure 3.6: The FHA introduced racial codes in its 1938 Underwriting Manual. Digitized by HathiTrust.<sup>22</sup>

neighborhoods with high concentrations of African-American residents.<sup>23</sup>

But the story may not be as simple as Jackson suggests. Clearly, the fact that the HOLC forms required social demographics of residents, and that appraisers inserted their own racial, ethnic, and class comments in the ratings, shows that discrimination influenced the ratings process. Yet we also know that dominant whites forced black, immigrant, and lower-class residents into segregated sub-standard housing. Could lower ratings simply reflect lower property values? Or can we test whether HOLC agents downgraded specific neighborhoods solely due to the presence of unwanted groups, while holding constant their market price? That question is difficult to answer by looking solely at the Hartford-area report and maps, because of the small sample of neighborhoods (27), their limited variation (only 3 had black residents), and the multitude of variables on the forms. Try comparing two areas that shared relatively similar physical housing characteristics, but received different ratings, such as B-5 (the Blue Hills neighborhood in Hartford's North End) and C-9 (the South End neighborhood). In 1937, both consisted primarily of two-family wooden frame homes, built within the previous two decades, which sold and rented at comparable prices. So why did the appraiser give B-5 a second-grade blue rating, but assigned C-9 a lower third-grade yellow rating? Was it because the C-9 South End neighborhood had more factory workers, or more foreign-born families, or a noticeable number of African-American residents? This direct comparison between two neighborhoods is strongly suggestive, but the sample of neighborhoods is too small to make statistically meaningful claims with Hartford data alone. A better answer requires a richer analysis of a larger city, or pooling together ratings from multiple cities.

### 3.1.0.0.1 Compare the columns: HOLC Appraisals in Areas B5 vs. C9, Hartford 1937

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<sup>23</sup>TODO: Check “confidential” marking; check Jackson notes on discovery; insert quote from Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*; decide about adding Google Books Ngram, [https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=redlining&year\\_start=1940&year\\_end=2000](https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=redlining&year_start=1940&year_end=2000)

Area	B5	C9
Security Grade	Second	Third
Location	Hartford	Hartford
Trend Next Decade	Stable	Stable
Occupation	Shopkeepers & white collar	Factory workers & clerks
Estimated Family Income	\$1,800	\$1,500
<b>Foreign-born families</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>20%</b>
Predominant foreign group	Italians	Italians
<b>Negro Y/N</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Negroes</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Relief Families</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Quite a few</b>
Primary Building: Type	2-Family	2-Family
Construction	Frame	Frame
Average Age (yrs)	15	20
Repair	Good	Fair
Occupancy	98%	97%
Home ownership rate	85%	85%
Price Range (1937)	\$7,500 to 12,000	\$7,500 to 11,000
Sales Activity	Poor	Almost None
Rental Range (1937)	\$40 to 50/month	\$32.5 to 55/month
Rental Activity	Good	Good
Mortgage Availability	Ample	Limited

*In the table above, although areas B5 and C9 had similar housing stock and financials, HOLC assigned them different ratings (blue versus yellow), most likely due to the social class and racial composition of neighborhood residents (noted in bold type). Source: HOLC appraisal data, Hartford CT, 1937.<sup>24</sup>*

Some of the most insightful research on the federal government's role in the lending market comes from Amy Hillier's spatial analysis of Philadelphia sources, and her key distinction between the HOLC and FHA programs. The Philadelphia HOLC map covered a large number of neighborhood appraisals, which Hillier plotted on a digital map of census data. Through spatial regression modeling, she found that the racial composition of neighborhoods was a significant predictor for HOLC ratings in Philadelphia, while controlling for differences in housing characteristics. On the surface, this confirms that HOLC maps systematically downgraded Philadelphia neighborhoods due to race, which we could not prove in the smaller Hartford region.<sup>25</sup>

But Hillier conducts a second, more direct test of the historical evidence, to find out which neighborhoods actually received HOLC or FHA loans, since actual

<sup>24</sup>Ilyankou and Dougherty, "Leaflet Map of HOLC "Redlining" Security Map for Hartford CT Area, 1937."

<sup>25</sup>Amy Hillier, "Redlining and the Home Owners' Loan Corporation," *Journal of Urban History* 29, no. 4 (2003): 394–420, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0096144203029004002>

lending patterns matter more than stated intentions. For a sample of Philadelphia mortgage documents from 1940 to 1960, she matched the home address to her digital map and recorded the type and interest rate. Surprisingly, HOLC actually made a large proportion of its loans to lower-grade areas. This finding challenges the conventional “redlining” thesis by pointing out that HOLC has two stories, which are somewhat contradictory. On one hand, Hillier observes, “HOLC created security maps in which race was used to signify race levels.” But on the other hand, “HOLC provided assistance to a million homeowners, across race and ethnicity, who were desperate to save their homes,” including many to African-Americans and immigrants in the lowest-rated red areas.<sup>26</sup>

By contrast, FHA loans were less common in Philadelphia’s lower-rated neighborhoods, though limitations in the evidence prevents Hillier from making a more definitive claim. Overall, when considering both direct and indirect evidence, Hillier concludes that the FHA “reflected an anti-urban and racial bias deeper than the HOLC’s,” because its *Underwriting Manual* and other materials directed evaluators not to lend to low-rated areas, while HOLC reports consistently stated that loans could be profitable there. Although the HOLC “redlining” maps were not as influential as previous historians may have believed, the FHA is the primary culprit responsible for federal divestment and segregation that led to post-war urban decline.<sup>27</sup>

We do not know whether Hillier’s claims about HOLC and FHA lending patterns also hold true for the Hartford region, because no one has yet uncovered and examined the evidence. In any case, both the FHA Manual in general, and the HOLC report and map on Hartford in particular, reveal the upper-class white supremacy state-of-mind by federal agent Foster Milliken Jr. and the city’s banking and real estate elite of the 1930s.

*About the authors and contributors:* Shaun McGann (Trinity 2014) wrote the first draft of this essay in the Cities Suburbs and Schools seminar, and published it in ConnecticutHistory.org.<sup>28</sup> Jack Dougherty expanded the essay for publication in this book. Ilya Ilyankou (Trinity 2018) and Jack Dougherty developed the interactive map, based on an earlier version created with contributors from UConn MAGIC and the Kirwin Institute.<sup>29</sup>



*On The Line* is an open-access, born-digital, book-in-progress by Jack Dougherty and contributors at Trinity College, Hartford CT,

<sup>26</sup>Amy Hillier, “Searching for Red Lines: Spatial Analysis of Lending Patterns in Philadelphia, 1940-1960,” *Pennsylvania History* 72, no. 1 (2005): 25–47; TODO: CHECK (Hillier JUH 2003, 394; Hillier Soc Sci Hist 2005, p227; Hillier SSH 2005 p209, see Hillier 2003b)

<sup>27</sup>TODO: check “prevents” in Hillier PA History 2003; Hillier p414 JUH 2003

<sup>28</sup>Shaun McGann, “The Effects of ‘Redlining’ on the Hartford Metropolitan Region,” ConnecticutHistory.org, March 2014, <http://connecticuthistory.org/the-effects-of-redlining-on-the-hartford-metropolitan-region/>.

<sup>29</sup>Ilyankou and Dougherty, “Leaflet Map of HOLC “Redlining” Security Map for Hartford CT Area, 1937.”; University of Connecticut Libraries Map and Geographic Information Center, “Federal HOLC “Redlining” Map, Hartford Area, 1937.”

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## 3.2 Restricting with Property Covenants

*by Tracey Wilson, Vianna Iorio, and Jack Dougherty*

No persons of any race except the white race shall use or occupy any building on any lot except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race employed by an owner or tenant.

– High Ledge Homes, West Hartford, Connecticut, 1940.<sup>30</sup>

To many readers, the shockingly blatant racism of the above sentence seems as though it could have been pulled from some long-ago segregation policy of the Deep South. Instead, it came from the Deep North, and represents a forgotten chapter of White suburban history. This race restrictive covenant appears in a government-sanctioned property deed from 1940, inserted by a real estate property developer for High Ledge Homes, a tract of about 70 single-family houses located along South Main Street in West Hartford, Connecticut. Across the nation from the 1920's to 1948, individual property owners, homeowners' associations, and real estate developers employed racially restrictive covenants to prohibit anyone not considered to be part of the "white race" from sale or residency. The only non-white exceptions allowed by most racial covenants were for domestic servants. Furthermore, racially restrictive covenants were backed by the court system up until 1948. If a Black renter or homebuyer attempted to move into a house with a restrictive covenant, any White resident in that suburban development could sue to remove them from the neighborhood. While it may be difficult for present-day residents to imagine this kind of explicit racism in the heart of New England, this chapter uncovers the missing history of state-supported discrimination in multiple housing developments in suburban West Hartford, and most likely many other towns across Connecticut.

On the whole, race restrictive covenants were more pervasive in other Northern and Western cities, such as Chicago and Los Angeles, than the metropolitan Hartford region. Based on our search of property records to date in West Hartford, the largest suburb of Hartford, we found only 5 race restrictive covenants, all created during the early 1940s. These covered about 200 parcels of land, or

<sup>30</sup>High Ledge Homes Inc., "Agreement Concerning Building Restrictions: High Ledge Homes Development" (Volume 152, pages 224-5, maps #218, 222, 247, Property Records, Town Clerk, Town of West Hartford, Connecticut, June 10, 1940), <https://github.com/ontheline/otl-covenants>.

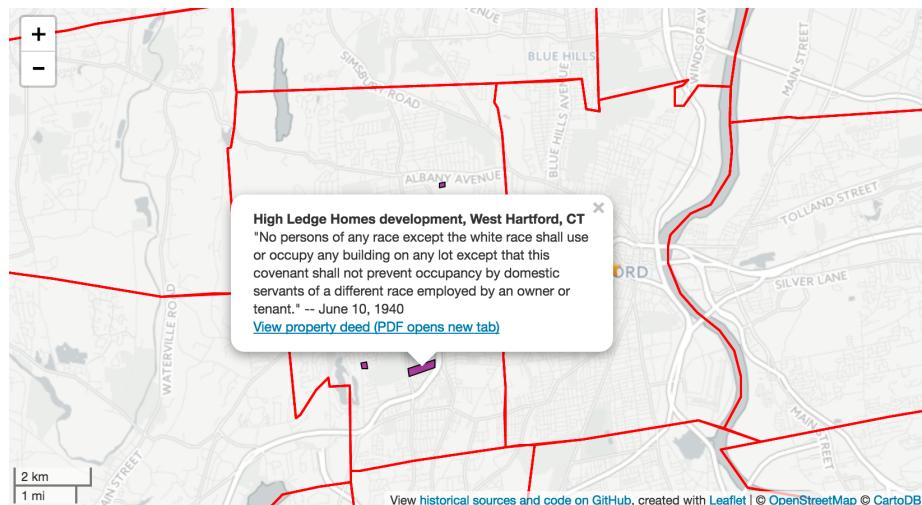


Figure 3.7: Click on colored rectangles in the full-screen interactive map of restrictive covenants in the Hartford area in the 1940s. Real estate developers wrote restrictions into property deeds that prohibited occupants “other than the Caucasian race.” The U.S. Supreme Court approved these restrictions in the 1926 Corrigan v. Buckley ruling, but later declared them unenforceable in the 1948 Shelley v. Kraemer decision. Yet these restrictions still exist in official property records. To date, we have found 5 race restrictive covenants in West Hartford. If you know of similar restrictions, by race or religion, anywhere in Connecticut, contact the author. View historical sources and the code for this map, developed by Ilya Ilyankou and Jack Dougherty, based on an earlier version created with UConn MAGIC.<sup>32</sup>

around 3 percent of the 6,000 single-family homes that had been constructed in the town around that time. Learn more about How We Found Restrictive Covenants in this book. In this suburb, race restrictive covenants did not appear in all neighborhoods that were developed during this time period, and where they did exist, they did not necessarily apply to every house in that neighborhood. Instead, West Hartford relied more on racial barriers in public housing, by real estate agents, and exclusionary zoning ordinances to restrict non-White and low-income residents. Eventually, race restrictive covenants faded away after the US Supreme Court ruled in 1948 that governments could not enforce these individual agreements.

But their legacy continues to shock and influence us decades later. On a tangible level, homeowners who purchased covenant-protected property gained White privilege and passed along its financial benefits to their future generations. On a historical level, the shocking story of racial covenants in the Deep North serve as an important reminder of the state-sanctioned White supremacy that came to shape Connecticut suburbs.

The story of restrictive covenants begins with the U.S Supreme Court case *Corrigan v. Buckley* in 1921. White property owners in the Dupont Circle neighborhood of Washington D.C. formed a property owners' association which utilized racially restrictive covenants to keep out Black homebuyers. The dispute arose when White owner John Corrigan attempted to sell his house to an African-American buyer, Irene Curtis, which violated the property's racial covenant. Learning of this violation, White neighbor Irene Buckley brought suit to enforce the race restrictive covenant and stop the property sale.

As the case worked its way through the nation's legal system, the courts upheld the racial covenant. First, the District of Columbia Supreme Court approved the racial prohibition and cited existing legal segregation in schools and public recreational facilities as precedent. Next, upon appeal, the District of Columbia Court of Appeals also ruled in favor of the covenant and cited that African Americans were free to include the same kind of racially exclusive language against Whites in their own property deeds. When the U.S. Supreme Court made their ruling in 1926 the justices unanimously affirmed the lower court decisions by refusing to hear the case on the grounds that they lacked jurisdiction. When Justice Edward Sanford delivered the Court's opinion, he narrowly defined the Constitution's guarantee that no person should "be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law" as it applied to *Corrigan v. Buckley*. Sanford asserted that while the Fifth Amendment limited the actions of the federal government, it did not apply to individuals entering a private contact, such as a restrictive covenant. Moreover, he argued that the Thirteenth Amendment did not protect individual rights of blacks, and the Fourteenth Amendment again referred to actions of the state, not of private individuals. Therefore, the 1926 *Corrigan v. Buckley* decision reaffirmed the right of property owners to legally enforce race restrictive covenants, while ignoring that the court system itself acted as governmental support for segregation. Their interpretation of the

Constitution would prevail for over twenty years.<sup>33</sup>

In emerging suburban communities like West Hartford, Connecticut during this period, property owners inserted different types of deed restrictions to increase their desirability. Beginning in the 1910s, individual homeowners began to add value restrictions, which required that future homes constructed on the land must be above a minimum dollar amount. Real estate developers also began to insert home-value restrictions to cover entire subdivisions. Some also added other types of value restrictions, such as requiring homes to be built above a minimum square footage or sold above a minimum dollar amount, which also raised the overall cost. While these value restrictions effectively limited neighborhoods to wealthier White families, they did not yet contain explicitly racial prohibitions.

Race restrictive covenants came to West Hartford in the early 1940s. During the Depression, rural farmland became more valuable as prospective housing, if the developer could attract city dwellers to the emerging suburbs. Local builder Rupert G. Bent purchased the 47-acre Wooley estate on South Main Street, across from the Rockledge Golf Course, for \$30,000 in 1937, and subdivided the land into 100 building lots. Over the next two years, Bent heavily publicized and sold 34 homes during these tough economic times, including several to incoming executives at Hartford's major insurance companies. But Bent eventually sold the remaining land to another developer, Edward Hammel, president of High Ledge Homes, Inc. Described as a "builder of fine homes" in wealthy areas of Westchester County, New York, and Fairfield County, Connecticut, Hammel introduced new methods to make unsold property more marketable. His "uniform plan of development" added several restrictions to property deed that prohibited multi-family homes, small building plots, and occupants "of any race except the white race." This restrictive covenant guaranteed that homebuyers would belong to an exclusively White, upper-class neighborhood, and represented a growing trend among real estate interests across the nation since the 1920s. Hammel's racial covenant appears to have been the first of its kind in West Hartford, and then at least four other developers added the same restriction over the next year.<sup>34</sup>

Advertising for High Ledge Homes did not mention its racial barrier, but emphasized its exclusivity. A 1940 ad listed the development for "anyone interested in a low or medium home price of the better class," located in the "A" region of town's zoning ordinance, which required single-family building lots to be at least 9,000 square feet, and kept out lower-class families. "You'll like your neigh-

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<sup>33</sup>Corrigan v. Buckley, (271 US Supreme Court 323, May 24, 1926), [https://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_case?case=11135903580197116691](https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=11135903580197116691); Prologue DC, "Mapping Segregation in Washington DC," 2015, <http://prologuedc.com/blog/mapping-segregation>

<sup>34</sup>"100 New Homes to Be Built on High Ledge Tract: E. F. Hammel, New York Builder, Buys Tract from the R. G. Bent Co." *The Hartford Courant*, March 31, 1940, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/559299850?accountid=14405>. See race restrictive covenants in West Hartford property deeds in Ilyankou and Dougherty, "Map," 2017.

bors" in this growing community, the pitch continued. It also mentioned "West Hartford's famous schools," one of the earliest real estate advertising references to this young suburb's public education system, and perhaps a premature one, given the better reputation of Hartford's city schools into the 1950s.<sup>35</sup>

While the High Ledge Homes race restrictive covenant stated that any violator could be brought to court by another property owner within the development, winning this lawsuit would be more difficult in practice. The reason was two different types of restrictive covenants. A deed covenant, like the one in High Ledge Homes, was legally considered to be a contract between the original property owner and the buyer. This made it more difficult for a neighbor, who technically was not part of the contract between owner and buyer, to establish a stake in its violation. By contrast, a petition covenant, like the one described in the *Corrigan v. Buckley* case in Washington DC, was easier to enforce in court, because neighborhood associations gathered the signatures of all homeowners, meaning that all were legal parties to this group contract.<sup>38</sup> Even though race restrictive covenants appeared in West Hartford in 1940, they had a longer legacy and more powerful influence in other cities.

Race restrictive covenants were more pervasive in many Northern and Western cities beyond the metropolitan Hartford region. In Chicago and Los Angeles, estimates of properties covered by racial covenants in the 1940s ranged from 50 to 80 percent. In Seattle, developers attached restrictive covenants to tens of thousands of homes in the city and its surrounding suburbs, which created a ring outside the central city of White-only neighborhoods. As a result, large numbers of African American, Asian, and Jewish residents were forced into the only housing available to them, and became highly concentrated into the Central Area and International Districts of the city. In Detroit, researcher Richard Rothstein estimates that white homeowners, real estate agents, and developers organized 192 associations to promote racial exclusion" from 1943 to 1965. And in St. Louis, where the landmark *Shelley v. Kraemer* case eventually made racial covenants unenforceable, the widespread prevalence of white-only covenants meant that only 2.5 percent of new housing construction was devoted to Black homeseekers in 1948.<sup>39</sup>

While most restrictive covenants were racial, some also prohibited property

<sup>35</sup>"Ad: Modern Homes in High Ledge," *The Hartford Courant*, March 31, 1940, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/559295803?accountid=14405>.

<sup>38</sup>Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2017), <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/959808903>, p. 79; DC, "Mapping Segregation in Washington DC."

<sup>39</sup>On the 50 percent estimate in Chicago, see Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic*, June 2014, <http://www.theatlantic.com/galleries/reparations/1/>. For higher estimates in Chicago and Los Angeles, see United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Understanding Fair Housing* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1973), <http://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/usccr/documents/cr11042.pdf>, p. 3; James Gregory, "Segregated Seattle," Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project, 2010, <https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/segregated.htm>; Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, p. 80; Jeffrey D Gonda, *Unjust Deeds: The Restrictive Covenant Cases and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/906234529>, p. 31.

## BIGGEST REAL ESTATE NEWS OF THE YEAR!

# Modern Homes in High Ledge

**"A" ZONE Minimum of 9000 Sq. Ft.**

**65' average width 150' average depth**

for a minimum down payment and as little as

**\$40<sup>80</sup> Per Month**

**built by HIGH LEDGE HOMES, Inc.**

Here is BIG NEWS for anyone interested in a low or medium price home of the better class. HIGH LEDGE is that lovely development opposite Rockledge Country Club. There are 35 splendid homes now occupied and High Ledge Homes, Inc., will start 25 more within the next 10 days. Imagine! A brand new modern home in "A" Zone in West Hartford with 9,000 square feet of grounds . . . for as little as \$40.80 per month which includes taxes, insurance, interest and reduction of the mortgage.

See This Ideal Location



LOCAL ARCHITECTS will design these clever, roomy, efficient houses fully in keeping with the present high standard. They will have insulation, automatic heat, modern kitchens, etc.

5 TO 7 ROOMS . . . selected from an interesting variety of plans. Attached garages are required.

SEWERS . . . of course and all of the other necessary utilities.

PAVED STREETS . . . the streets in High Ledge are all paved. It is a growing, thriving community, and you'll like your neighbors.

IDEAL LOCATION . . . near West Hartford center, near West Hartford's famous schools, on a bus line, across the street from a fine 18-hole golf course . . . what more could you want? High Ledge slopes downward, assuring excellent drainage.

## INSPECTION TODAY

Our representatives will be at High Ledge all day. Drive out and around High Ledge's paved streets. See how ideal it is. Let us tell you more about this complete service, which includes land, architectural service, financing and building in one operation.



Figure 3.8: Although High Ledge Homes did not openly publicize their Whites-only property covenant, their 1940 advertising promised homebuyers that "you'll like your neighbors." Copyrighted by the *Hartford Courant*, reprinted under fair-use copyright guidelines.<sup>37</sup>

ownership based on religion, specifically against Jews. Simon Bernstein, an attorney and Democratic member of the Hartford City Council, pressed the Judiciary Committee in Connecticut's General Assembly to outlaw restrictive covenants "pertaining to nationality, color and religious belief" in 1947. He described his interest in a local case where the property deed limited the sale to "non Semitic persons of the Caucasian race." Bernstein called for a bill to invalidate all restrictive covenants on the grounds that this "un-American practice... is contrary to public policy." Without governmental action, Bernstein declared that "our town clerks are unwitting tools in transcribing prejudices on record, and are thus proclaiming by such governmental publication not only the evil deed, but also immunity against the world for such prejudices." But Connecticut legislators waited for action from the federal government.<sup>40</sup>

By the late 1940's across the nation, civil rights activists successfully began to turn the tide against racial covenants, both in the courts and the realm of public opinion. The US Supreme Court heard *Shelley v. Kraemer*, a compilation of race restrictive covenant cases that NAACP attorneys advanced from St. Louis, Detroit, and Washington, DC. President Truman's Committee on Civil Rights came out against racial covenants, and the U.S. Department of Justice filed a brief also condemning this discriminatory policy. In its 1948 ruling, the Supreme Court agreed that private parties could voluntarily agree to race restrictive covenants, but for the judicial system to enforce these agreements qualified as a discriminatory state action, and therefore violated the Equal Protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Therefore, the *Shelley v. Kraemer* ruling overturned the logic of the 1926 *Buckley v. Corrigan decision*, which refused to acknowledge legal enforcement of contracts as an act of government. But race restrictive covenants did not disappear overnight. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) continued to require racial covenants for properties it insured until 1950, and continued to back mortgages for some white-only properties until 1962. Also, several state courts resisted the *Shelley* decision until a subsequent US Supreme Court decision in 1953. Finally, some local governments continued to accept unenforceable race covenants as legal property documents until this practice was overruled by the federal courts in 1972.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>"Bernstein Seeks End of Restrictive Clauses," *The Hartford Courant*, March 28, 1947, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/560759017?accountid=14405>; "State Law Sought Against Racial Ban in Realty Deals," *The Hartford Courant*, April 2, 1947, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/560760502?accountid=14405>. In our oral history interview with Simon Bernstein at age 98, he recalled details about a race restrictive case in West Hartford which was settled out of court, but not the religion and race case briefly mentioned in this 1947 press account. See Simon Bernstein, "Oral History Interview on Connecticut Civil Rights" (Cities, Suburbs, Schools Project, Trinity College Digital Repository, August 1, 2011), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_ohistory/19](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_ohistory/19). Tracey Wilson described anecdotal accounts of anti-Jewish and anti-Catholic covenants in West Hartford, but we have not yet found documentary evidence. See Tracey M. Wilson, "High Ledge Homes and Restrictive Covenants," in *Life in West Hartford* (West Hartford Historical Society and Noah Webster House, 2018), <https://lifeinwesthartford.org/world-war-ii-era.html#high-ledge-homes-and-restrictive-covenants>.

<sup>41</sup>*Shelley v. Kraemer* (334 US Supreme Court 1, May 3, 1948), [https://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_case?case=12732018998507979172](https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=12732018998507979172); Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, 85–91; Mayers v.

Although race-restrictive covenants were no longer legally enforceable after 1948, their legacy continued to influence later generations. Whites who bought into restricted West Hartford neighborhoods during the 1940s benefitted financially from government-sanctioned segregation that boosted property values. Decades later, their descendants also benefitted from this inherited wealth. Even after restrictive covenants no longer had judicial backing, the fact of their existence—and the all-White neighborhoods they created—sent a signal to potential buyers about the racial preferences of their neighbors. Years after the Shelley decision, some West Hartford homebuyers were told by their lawyers that a non-enforceable racial covenant still existed on their property deeds. And Black homebuyers had to decide whether or not to live in a neighborhood with a documented past of being openly hostile to their presence.<sup>42</sup>

Most present-day residents of West Hartford's High Ledge Homes development were shocked to learn that their neighborhood had been protected by a 1940s White-only covenant, and sought to make sense of its meaning on their lives. Debra Walsh, an educator and actor, reflected on the White privilege that was attached to her decision to buy her home in 2010. Although she had believed that the North had not exhibited such explicit racist policies, the direct evidence of race restrictive covenants convinced her that "West Hartford made a concerted effort to stay White and WASPy and that contributes to the feel of the neighborhood." Walsh acknowledged how the explicit racism of the covenants in her own neighborhood made her feel uncomfortable with the White privilege she experiences. "It's really hard to look really deep within and answer those questions," she explained, "... when you live in the dominant class. Like you don't know how to answer it." Even though she knew the covenants are no longer enforceable, Walsh could see how "the legacy of the piece of land gets passed on to a feeling of a neighborhood," a sense of White exclusivity that pervades even today, when barriers take on less overtly racial language.

Yet while racial covenants make White West Hartford residents uncomfortable about the past, they remain an important piece of history, a hidden chapter that deserves more attention. Susan Hansen, a librarian and White resident who bought her home in the High Ledge Homes neighborhood in the 1990s, reflected on this theme during a present-day oral history interview. "I think this is something that people should know," Hansen observed, "because there are people still living on my street who were here then, who must have been fully aware." Hansen also emphasized the importance of knowing that racial covenants were not something that happened only in the Deep South long ago, but are a very recent part of Northern suburban history that should not be whitewashed out of memory. As Hansen concluded, "We need to know that we

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Ridley (465 F.2d US Court of Appeals, DC Circuit, 630, March 1, 1972), [https://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_case?case=15478926121065691421](https://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=15478926121065691421).

<sup>42</sup>Mary Everett, "Oral History Interview on West Hartford" (Cities, Suburbs, Schools Project, Trinity College Digital Repository, July 21, 2011), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_ohistory/23](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_ohistory/23); Richard R. W. Brooks and Carol M. Rose, *Saving the Neighborhood: Racially Restrictive Covenants, Law, and Social Norms* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/836206008>.



Figure 3.9: Watch the oral history video or read the transcript of the interview with Debra Walsh to hear how she learned about a race restrictive covenant in her West Hartford neighborhood.<sup>44</sup>

were being idiots up here, too, and it wasn't somewhere else. It was here. It's still here."

*About the authors and contributors:* Tracey Wilson (Trinity 1976) wrote the first draft of this essay for a monthly newspaper, and also published it in her book, *Life in West Hartford*.<sup>47</sup> Vianna Iorio (Trinity 2019) and Jack Dougherty expanded this essay for publication in this book, in collaboration with Wilson. Ilya Ilyankou (Trinity 2018) and Jack Dougherty developed the interactive map, based on an earlier version created with UConn MAGIC.<sup>48</sup> Also, Katie Campbell Levasseur (Trinity 2011) researched restrictive property covenants, and both she and Candace Simpson (Trinity 2012) conducted oral history interviews.



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<sup>47</sup>Tracey Wilson, "Taking Stock of High Ledge Homes and Restricted Covenants," *West Hartford Life* 13, no. 2 (June 2010): 36–37, <https://history.westhartfordlibrary.org/items/show/257>; Wilson, "High Ledge Homes and Restrictive Covenants."

<sup>48</sup>Ilyankou and Dougherty, "Map," 2017; University of Connecticut Libraries Map and Geographic Information Center, "Race Restrictive Covenants in Property Deeds, Hartford Area, 1940s."



Figure 3.10: Watch the oral history video or read the transcript of the interview with Susan Hansen to hear her reflections about a race restrictive covenant in her West Hartford neighborhood.<sup>46</sup>

### 3.3 Racial Barriers to Public Housing

*by Emily Meehan and Jack Dougherty*

As we saw in the previous section, housing discrimination did not occur solely due to private individuals, but often as a result of deliberate actions by public policymakers. Yet in some cases, different levels of government came into direct conflict over this issue. During World War II, the Roosevelt administration clashed with West Hartford political leaders over the right of African-American workers to reside in federal wartime housing. To manufacture weapons to defeat Germany and Japan, the United States Housing Authority (USHA) created shelter for thousands of wartime workers who migrated to work in factories in the city and suburbs of metropolitan Hartford. In comparison to the Federal Housing Administration, the USHA took a racially progressive stance in favor of housing black workers wherever need and space existed, even if that meant government-funded housing in virtually all-white neighborhoods. But in West Hartford, racism trumped patriotism. Suburban political leaders mobilized against federal authority to block African-American workers from moving into their community. Even when Washington DC pushed back, local leaders prevailed by finding a legal loophole to block non-whites from moving in.

The Oakwood Acres dispute arose in West Hartford in 1943. Federal housing officials and West Hartford leaders clashed on whether or not African Americans should be allowed to live in the World War II public housing development, located in a virtually all-white town. During this period, public housing tracts

were created to shelter the many war workers and their families drawn to the Hartford area by the availability of defense-related jobs. The United States government funded these developments; therefore, local housing officials needed to abide by federal laws regarding occupancy. Federal Housing authorities eventually did require West Hartford to admit African Americans; however, town residents and leaders prevailed by specifying residency criteria in such a way as to maintain the racial homogeneity of their community. Racist actions such as these, even when they occurred decades ago, have been factors in shaping the present-day demographics of West Hartford and other towns in the state.



**Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library**

The advent of World War II brought significant changes to a country that had been in the grip of a deep financial depression. Across the nation, as people moved into cities looking for jobs in wartime defense industries, demand for housing soared. Often, that demand far exceeded the availability of properties to purchase or even rent. In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the United States Congress established the United States Housing Authority (USHA) and authorized it to build public housing units with the goal of providing adequate living quarters for war workers.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup>Kristin M Szylvian, "The Federal Housing Program during World War II," in *From Tenements to the Taylor Homes: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth-Century America*, ed. John F Bauman, Roger Biles, and Kristin M. Szylvian (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 121–38, <https://books.google.com/books?>



Figure 3.11: Headline from 1943 *Metropolitan News* stated that “Negroes may not move into Oakwood” wartime public housing in West Hartford. Digitized by West Hartford Public Library.<sup>53</sup>

An influx of war laborers, both white and African American, and their families came to the greater Hartford area in the 1940s. They worked in defense factories, such as the Pratt & Whitney Machine Tool plant and the newer Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Company. As a result, housing options were limited in the Hartford area. By August of 1943, 8,000 new housing units had been developed in Hartford and New Britain to accommodate the growing population. These apartment-style homes were built under the Hartford Housing Association (HHA) and paid for with federal funding from the USHA.<sup>50</sup>

According to a 1943 Hartford Courant report, “Connecticut has about half of all the government war housing constructed in New England. Half of the government housing in this state has been put up in the Hartford-New Britain area....” With these statistics, one might think that workers’ need for housing in Greater Hartford had been met. However, families and single African American war workers found it more difficult to procure homes. The Courant noted that “400 housing units for white in-migrant families” were being constructed and, in “the case of Negroes,” it was thought that “temporary dormitories” might be built if additional government grants could be obtained. Berkley Cox, chairman of the HHA called this situation “satisfactory.”<sup>51</sup>

One unit developed under the HHA was the Oakwood Acres Housing Tract. Located on Oakwood Avenue in West Hartford, it spanned the area between St. Charles Street and Seymour Avenue. Contemporary descriptions present the Oakwood Acres’ living spaces as new, simplistic, and affordable. In 1943, only 14 out of the 300 apartments in the building were occupied at a time when many African Americans either had no place to live or could only find substandard accommodations. The federal government planned to use the complex to provide housing for these workers and their families.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> id=YZ9mO3NLP90C&pg=PA121#v=onepage&q=f=false.

<sup>51</sup> “1877 Worker Visits New Tool Plant,” The Hartford Courant, October 29, 1941; “Housing Reaches 8000 Mark in City and New Britain,” The Hartford Courant, August 14, 1943.

<sup>52</sup> “Housing Reaches 8000 Mark in City and New Britain,” The Hartford Courant, August 14, 1943.

<sup>54</sup> “Negroes May Occupy Oakwood Acres to Solve Rental Lag,” The Metropolitan News, September 30, 1943.



Figure 3.12: Aerial images of Oakwood Acres Housing Tract, in 1951 and today, on the West Hartford border with Hartford, from MAGIC UConn Libraries.

Because the government funded Oakwood Acres, the unit needed to abide by federal law, which stated that officials could not legally reject African Americans applying for housing. West Hartford homeowners, living near Oakwood Acres, were quoted in a September 1943 issue of the Metropolitan News as being “alarmed” and “horrified” at the idea of “Negroes” living in their neighborhood. One woman said she and her family would move out the day after any African Americans moved in. The paper itself described the situation in harsh, racist language, calling it an “infiltration,” and reported the prevailing sentiment among community homeowners as being: “We don’t want them here.” The consensus among West Hartford realtors and homeowners, the newspaper reported, was that real estate values would show “an immediate and sharp” drop if “Negroes in any considerable number moved into town.”<sup>55</sup>

Furiously, homeowners wrote to the HHA and West Hartford Housing Authority (WHHA) asking if African Americans would indeed be admitted to Oakwood Acres. When the Hartford Courant posed the question to WHHA chairman Richard F. Jones, he equivocated, saying, “I won’t say we are and I won’t say we’re not going to admit Negroes...At the present time that is a topic we’d rather not publicize too much.” This prompted West Hartford residents to send petitions to their senators, Francis Maloney and John A Danaher, and congressman, William Miller. Miller responded that he would look into the issue.<sup>56</sup>

The United States Housing Authority responded with an ultimatum. They stated that it was unlawful to exclude occupants from Oakwood Acres based on race. Local housing officials were advised that unless the race restrictions were lifted, the federal government would step in. Under this decision, African Americans would be admitted if they applied for a unit. This angered many West Hartford homeowners, prompting the town’s housing officials to find a loophole. They decided to accept applications only from “Negroes with essential West Hartford industry jobs.” Officials made this ruling knowing that, at the time, only six African American families fit this criterion—and they had not expressed interest in living in Oakwood Acres. Ultimately, with this restrictive technicality in place, no African American war workers moved into the housing tract. The white West Hartford housing officials and their supporters had trumped the federal government. They found a way to circumvent federal guidelines and discourage African Americans from living in publicly funded housing within the town’s borders.<sup>57</sup>

In 1956, Oakwood Acres was demolished. It had become dilapidated and the

<sup>55</sup>“Negroes May Occupy Oakwood Acres to Solve Rental Lag.”

<sup>56</sup>“Housing Official Noncommittal on Racial Question,” The Hartford Courant, October 21, 1943; “Residents Ask Congressmen’s Aid on Negro Housing Threat,” The Metropolitan News, November 4, 1943.

<sup>57</sup>“Negroes May Not Move into Oakwood War Housing Tract”; Katherine Ellen Winterbottom, “Beneath the Veneer,” *The Spectator [West Hartford Historical Society Newsletter]* Autumn (1998): 1, 10–14.

people of West Hartford feared it made their neighborhood look like a “slum.”<sup>58</sup> By destroying the unit, West Hartford also erased the physical remnants of this racist chapter in the town’s housing history. Today, West Hartford remains a predominately white community. One can argue that its demographics have been shaped, in part, by discriminatory housing practices of which the standoff over Oakwood Acres is but one example.

*About the authors and contributors: Emily Meehan (Trinity 2016) wrote the first draft of this essay in the Cities Suburbs and Schools seminar, and published it in ConnecticutHistory.org.<sup>59</sup> Jack Dougherty expanded the essay for publication in this book.*



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### 3.4 Origins of Exclusionary Zoning

During the 1920s, several states granted local governments a new policy tool—known as municipal zoning—to exert greater control over land development. But tools can be used to achieve different goals. We can use them to help people or cause harm. Evaluating the history of zoning requires a closer look at how local governments implemented this policy, and to what ends.

Progressive advocates saw zoning as a necessary tool for government to regulate the free market and to protect the health and safety of its citizens. For example, zoning gave municipalities the power to draw lines on the land and create separate spaces for residential, commercial, and industrial development. Family homes could be legally separated from potentially harmful businesses or factories. When the Connecticut General Assembly approved zoning enabling law in 1923, it stated that local regulations should be designed for this purpose: “... to prevent a close arrangement or constructions of buildings upon the streets, to secure safety from fire and other dangers, to avoid undue concentration of population and to provide health, comfort and general welfare in living and

<sup>58</sup>Tracey M. Wilson, “Resistance to Public Housing and Integration During World War II,” in *Life in West Hartford* (West Hartford, CT: West Hartford Historical Society and Noah Webster House, 2018), <http://lifeinwesthartford.org/world-war-ii-era.html#resistance-to-public-housing-and-integration-during-world-war-ii>.

<sup>59</sup>Emily Meehan, “The Debate over Who Could Occupy World War II Public Housing in West Hartford,” ConnecticutHistory.org, January 2014, <http://connecticuthistory.org/the-debate-over-who-could-occupy-world-war-ii-public-housing-in-west-hartford/>.

working conditions.”<sup>60</sup>

But local governments often crafted zoning ordinances to achieve other, less innocent goals. Some wrote local ordinances that made housing construction in selected neighborhoods affordable only for upper-class families, thereby blocking out lower-income families. Today we call this “exclusionary zoning” and its roots can be traced back nearly a century ago.

West Hartford became the first Connecticut town to enact municipal zoning in 1924, immediately after the state granted this power. Town leaders hired Robert Whitten, a consultant from Cleveland, Ohio, to guide this process. He drafted West Hartford’s first zoning guidelines, which emphasized how these land-use laws would bring “orderliness” and “efficiency” to real estate development in this rapidly growing suburb, “and an increase of health, comfort and happiness for all people.”<sup>61</sup>

Whitten also recommended a system of dividing residential areas by minimum home construction sizes, to effectively segregate citizens by social class. In the most exclusive A district, constructing a single-family home required the largest size property lot (at least 9,000 square feet, or 1/5 of an acre), and building a two-family home required twice as much land. Similar rules mandated the minimum width of the property facing the street. The 1924 zoning plan clearly stated that these rules “will under most conditions, make it uneconomic to build two-family houses” in the A district. Exclusionary zoning required more land per family, which increased home prices to levels that only wealthier residents could afford. While zoning did not explicitly ban lower-class citizens, it effectively pushed them downward to the D-level districts (which permitted two-family duplexes with lower minimum property sizes), or out of the suburb entirely. Under the new zoning law, Hartford’s tenement houses and apartment buildings, crowded with working-class families, would be “effectively prevented in West Hartford.”<sup>62</sup> West Hartford town leaders voted to adopt most of their consultant’s recommendations.

#### **Explore interactive West Hartford zoning maps, 1924 and present**

[http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/otl/dualcontrol\\_zoning\\_westhartford.html](http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/otl/dualcontrol_zoning_westhartford.html)

*TODO: rebuild map in Leaflet*

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<sup>60</sup>TODO: check original source, cited in Robert Harvey Whitten, *West Hartford Zoning: Report to the Zoning Commission on the Zoning of West Hartford* (West Hartford, Conn: Zoning Commission, 1924), [http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/magic\\_2/raster/37840/hdimg\\_37840\\_155\\_1924\\_unkn CSL\\_1\\_p.pdf](http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/magic_2/raster/37840/hdimg_37840_155_1924_unkn CSL_1_p.pdf), p. 8; “Plans to Apportion Population of Cities: Legislative Committee to Recommend Bill Today Giving Wide Powers for Aesthetic and Welfare Effect in Seven Municipalities,” *Hartford Courant*, May 29, 1923, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/553403648?accountid=14405>

<sup>61</sup>Whitten, *West Hartford Zoning*, preface

<sup>62</sup>Whitten, p. 10.

The residence districts are further sub-divided into what for practical purposes might be called single family dwelling districts, two family dwelling districts and apartment house districts. This is accomplished by the area district regulations. In both the A and B area districts the lot widths and areas required for a two family house will under most conditions, make it uneconomic to build two family houses. In the A area district for a single family house a minimum lot width of 60 feet and a lot area of 9000 square feet is required; and for a two family house a width of 100 feet and an area of 18000 square feet. In the B area district for a single family house a lot width of 50 feet and an area of 6000 square feet is required; and for a two family house a width of 80 feet and an area of 12000 square feet.

ment is 1000 square feet. The A area regulations are applied where the larger apartment houses are an appropriate development and the D area regulations are applied where it is believed the three family house and the smaller apartments should be provided for.

The state enabling act provides that zoning regulations shall be designed "to avoid undue concentration of population." This injunction is carried out in the lot area per family requirement as applied to apartment house and tenement house construction. The development of crowded tenement house conditions such as exist in many larger communities will be effectively prevented in West Hartford.

**Business Districts.** In business districts all retail business uses including retail stores, small shops for custom work, offices, theatres, restaur-

Figure 3.13: Whitten report excerpt, 1924

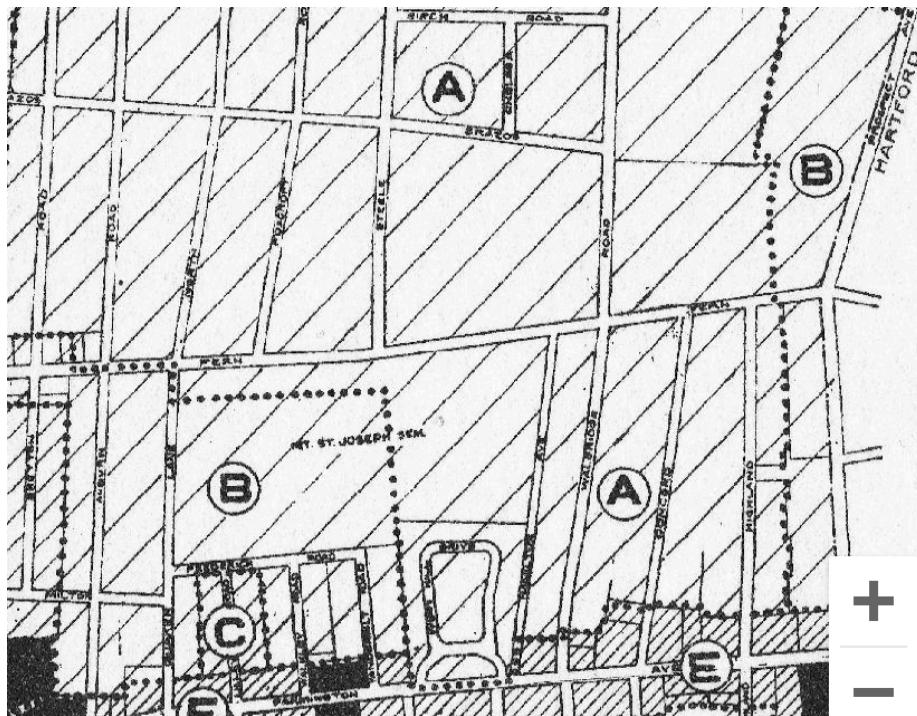


Figure 3.14: West Hartford zoning map excerpt, 1924

Drafting local ordinances this way made zoning an exclusionary tool to restrict neighborhoods by wealth, and most likely to pump up high-end real estate sales. Unlike other tools developed around the same time (such as racially restrictive property covenants that prohibited non-white residents, and have since been outlawed by civil rights legislation), class-based zoning remains perfectly legal today. But it does nothing to promote the health and safety of the citizenry, as promised by the original intent of the state law.

Drafting local ordinances this way made zoning an exclusionary tool to restrict neighborhoods by wealth, and most likely to pump up high-end real estate sales. Unlike other tools developed around the same time (such as racially restrictive property covenants that prohibited non-white residents, and have since been outlawed by civil rights legislation), wealth-based zoning remains perfectly legal today. But it does nothing to promote the health and safety of the citizenry, as promised by the original intent of the state law.

Today in Connecticut, we continue to struggle with this legacy of our restrictive land-use laws. Exclusionary zoning has been criticized in multiple reports as a barrier to fair housing and equal opportunity.<sup>63</sup> In 2013, the Connecticut Fair Housing Center and Trinity College student researcher Fionnuala Darby-Hudgens and I compiled all of the local zoning ordinances for towns across Connecticut and evaluated them on their degree of restrictions against affordable housing for the Connecticut Zoning Initiative.<sup>64</sup>

#### **3.4.0.0.1 Explore Connecticut Zoning Initiative maps and data, 2013**

TODO: Waiting for CFHC to give me permission to show new Leaflet maps, based on old Google Fusion Tables maps <http://commons.trincoll.edu/cssp/zoning>

Exclusionary zoning across 169 Connecticut towns, 2012:

- 23 prohibit new construction of multi-family housing (red)
- 122 require special permit for multi-family housing (yellow)

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<sup>63</sup>Suburban Action Institute, *A Study of Zoning in Connecticut: A Preliminary Report Prepared Under Contract with the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights & Opportunities* (New York: The Institute, 1978), [https://www.dropbox.com/s/35wbd180t5rjv0k/CHRO\\_ZoninginCT\\_1978April.pdf](https://www.dropbox.com/s/35wbd180t5rjv0k/CHRO_ZoninginCT_1978April.pdf); Jason Reece et al., *People, Place, and Opportunity: Mapping Communities of Opportunity in Connecticut: A Report Commissioned by the Connecticut Fair Housing Center* (Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, The Ohio State University, 2009), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/44/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/44/).

<sup>64</sup>Connecticut Fair Housing Center and Cities Suburbs and Schools Project at Trinity College, “Connecticut Zoning Initiative,” 2013, <http://commons.trincoll.edu/cssp/zoning/>; Connecticut Fair Housing Center, “A Guide to Zoning for Fair and Open Communities” (Hartford CT, June 2013), [http://ctfairhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/CFHC\\_Zoning\\_Guide.pdf](http://ctfairhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/CFHC_Zoning_Guide.pdf); Connecticut Fair Housing Center, *Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice 2015* (Hartford: Connecticut Department of Housing, 2015), [http://www.ct.gov/doh/lib/doh/analysis\\_of\\_impediments\\_2015.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/doh/lib/doh/analysis_of_impediments_2015.pdf).

- 13 require > 2 acre lot size for single-family homes
- 18 require > 5 acre lot size for multi-family homes

TO DO: review slides and transform into text [https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1yYDQTzNoUBzCW6tCSH21beUrwsYQVwVTQO3Ctqf2BPM/edit#slide=id.g299a37f04f\\_0\\_0](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1yYDQTzNoUBzCW6tCSH21beUrwsYQVwVTQO3Ctqf2BPM/edit#slide=id.g299a37f04f_0_0)

But these zoning analysis maps are incomplete because there is no uniform reporting requirements for local zoning ordinances, and no state entity charged with collecting this data in meaningful ways. Despite these obstacles, the question remains the same. If we wish to keep zoning as a governmental policy to regulate market forces in real estate, what kind of tool do we want it to be? Should we consider rewriting exclusionary zoning laws to make them more helpful for the health of our communities?



## **Chapter 4**

# **Selling and Shopping the Lines**

This chapter explores the pivotal relationship between public schooling and private housing, which fundamentally reshaped metropolitan life and upward mobility strategies in Connecticut in the latter half of the twentieth century. By contrast, in the early 1900s, when a smaller proportion of youth pursued secondary education and beyond, most families did not choose their homes based on the boundary lines of desirable public schools. Prior to the 1950s, schools were relatively weak in attracting middle-class families to the suburbs, but in post-war human capital markets, education became a powerful magnet. Pro-suburban government, real estate interests and prospective homebuyers converged to create the practice commonly known today as “shopping for schools.” Agents began to advertise private homes by their location in higher status public school areas. Local school leaders competed for upper-class families by offering curricular extras. State legislators invested in suburban schools, and legitimized school-by-school rankings by publishing standardized test results. Upwardly mobile families with children sought more desirable school attendance areas, and paid higher prices for private homes that included access to this public good. Overall, the rise of shopping for schools unites the twin narratives of credentialism and consumerism in American metropolitan history.

TO COME



## **Chapter 5**

# **Challenging the Power Lines**

This chapter tells the stories of everyday families and civil rights activists who sought to cross over, redraw, or erase schooling and housing boundaries in metropolitan Hartford, focusing primarily on the past five decades. When comparing these stories, we learn that the tools of privilege do not stand still, but evolve when confronted by civil rights challenges. In turn, this requires newer generations of activists to continually rethink and revise strategies to address the limited successes of prior years. After Connecticut civil rights advocates won legislative bans against overt racial discrimination in public housing in the late 1940s, and most private housing in the 1960s, they needed to create more sophisticated strategies to combat racial steering and redlining practices, since these were more difficult to prove without direct testing and quantitative studies. Similarly, although activists won a 1965 state constitutional amendment for equal public schools, initial efforts to implement this law were equally challenged in moving students or dollars across city-suburban district lines. This portion concludes with the 1996 courtroom victory of the *Sheff v O'Neill* school integration plaintiffs, where Connecticut's highest court outlawed the segregation of Hartford minority students, but left the specifics of the remedy to be determined by a suburban-dominated political process.

### **5.1 Mobilizing Against Racial Steering and Redlining**

*by Jasmin Agosto, Vianna Iorio, and Jack Dougherty*

In the early 1970's, Julia Ramos, Ben Dixon, and Boyd Hinds gathered in a small storefront office at 1170 Albany Avenue, located in a predominantly Black

neighborhood in the North End of Hartford. Armed with scissors, glue, and string, they cut, pasted, and connected the names of board members from leading corporations and government: the big banks, insurance companies, real estate firms, and regulatory agencies. On their office wall, the trio mapped out the interconnected lines of power between a handful of wealthy White men who “sat on each other’s boards, who knew each other, and who were comfortable with each other.” This “spider web” visually depicted a concept that was difficult for many people to grasp: institutional racism. Collectively, these power brokers drew the lines that racially and economically segregated metropolitan Hartford, by deciding which neighborhoods received home mortgages and insurance, where different groups of people would be allowed to buy or rent property, and how everyone played the rules of the game. This was the beginning of Education/Instrucción, and its mission was to mobilize people to “eliminate racism wherever it existed.”<sup>1</sup>

Ramos, Dixon, and Hinds co-founded Education/Instrucción, an innovative team with an intentionally bilingual name, designed to teach Hartford communities and organizations to use their power to challenge institutional racism. Originally, this multicultural trio met as teachers at Westledge, a private school in suburban Simsbury, Connecticut. Although the school promoted racial equality, none were fully satisfied in this isolated setting, as they dreamed about tackling broader political and economic issues beyond the classroom. Hinds asked Ramos and Dixon to join him, on equal footing as co-directors, to start a new Hartford-based organization to take on larger challenges of institutional racism in housing, education, and employment.<sup>2</sup> The trio came from starkly different backgrounds but shared a common moral compass that drove their activism. Julia Ramos, a Puerto Rican woman and recent graduate of the University of Hartford, had learned to speak Spanish, English, German, and French by living in various bases with her father, who served in the US military. She worked as a translator at Travelers Insurance, one of Hartford’s largest corporations, then later became the assistant director for an anti-poverty organization, the Poor People’s Federation. Ben Dixon, who grew up in Hartford’s North End, learned about inequality and power as a Black student during the 1950s at Hartford Public High School. When he was assigned to the vocational track, his mother marched into the superintendent’s office and insisted that he be moved up to the college preparatory track. He later earned his degree from Howard University and returned to Hartford to become a music teacher. Boyd Hinds, a White man who graduated from Amherst College, developed his organizational skills in the telecommunications business world and also as an educator. Later, he and his wife Wendy moved their family from an all-White suburb to live in Blue Hills, a racially-mixed neighborhood in Hartford’s North End. People called their trio the “Mod Squad,” referring to the late-1960s television show starring three

<sup>1</sup> Julia Ramos Grenier, “Oral History Interview on Education/Instrucción, Part 1” (Cities, Suburbs, Schools Project, Trinity College Digital Repository, November 14, 2009), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_ohistory/10](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_ohistory/10).

<sup>2</sup> Grenier

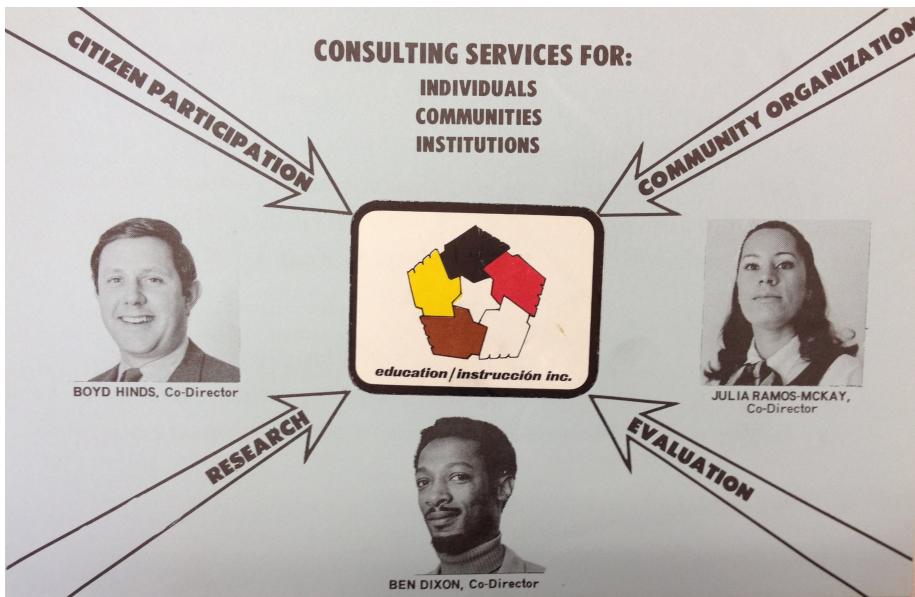


Figure 5.1: Education/Instrucción Co-Directors Boyd Hinds, Julia Ramos McKay, Ben Dixon, circa 1974.<sup>5</sup>

multicultural undercover crime fighters, because as Ramos recalls, “when they saw us coming, they always expected some kind of problem or issue to arise.”<sup>3</sup>

When Hinds, Ramos, and Dixon initially launched Education/Instrucción (EI) as a non-profit organization in July 1971, they pitched their “consulting services” to advance “cultural pluralism” in educational, governmental, and business organizations across the Hartford region. EI conducted training sessions and anti-racism workshops, and offered Spanish/English translation and program evaluation, to help their clients identify and eliminate institutional bias within their organizations.<sup>6</sup> Hartford’s demographics were rapidly changing, with the city’s combined Black and Puerto Rican population reaching 30 percent in 1970. “You need to get ready for it,” Julia Ramos recalled telling business leaders, because “you are not going to have that many White people to turn to... [If] you want to continue to make money as an organization, you need to pay attention to that. Not only... to get employees, but to sell products.” Yet even when EI emphasized profits, Hartford’s business leaders were not receptive. So the trio found more creative and assertive approaches to push their agenda. For

<sup>3</sup>Grenier; Benjamin Dixon, “Oral History Interview on Education/Instrucción” (Cities, Suburbs, Schools Project, Trinity College Digital Repository, August 12, 2010), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_ohistory/3](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_ohistory/3); Lisa Hinds Humphreys, Ben Hinds, and Bo Hinds, “In Memory: A. Boyd Hinds Jr. ‘61,” Amherst College, 2011, [https://www.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/magazine/in\\_memory/1961/aboydhinds](https://www.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/magazine/in_memory/1961/aboydhinds)

<sup>6</sup>Education/Instrucción, Inc., “[Bilingual Pamphlet]” (Ben Dixon Papers, Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library, n.d.)

example, they bought one share of stock in several of Hartford's largest corporate employers—such as Aetna, Travelers, and United Technologies—in order to attend the annual meeting of shareholders. “We would stand up and talk about the institutional racist practices of the company,” Julia Ramos recalled, and “people started coming out of the woodwork. We would get calls from some of the employees from some of these companies to give us information about what was going on.”<sup>7</sup>

Overall, Education/Instrucción mobilized both city and suburban residents to document and directly challenge the discriminatory lines that divided metropolitan Hartford, with two major successes. First, their “!Ya Basta!” (Spanish for “Enough already!”) campaign organized the area’s first mass-participant investigation of racial steering by the real estate industry, by sending pairs of White, Black, and Puerto Rican testers to local offices, to compare differences in the properties shown and how they were treated. When EI publicized the damning evidence of discrimination that they had collected, the US Justice Department prosecuted Hartford’s leading real estate firms for violating the 1968 Fair Housing Act. Second, EI creatively publicized deeper levels of discrimination in the home mortgage and insurance industries, and lack of enforcement by Connecticut state regulators. Its series of “Fair Housing at its Worst” reports translated these complex issues into easier-to-understand text and graphics for everyday readers. But EI’s successes were tempered by limitations. Working with the US Justice Department, their out-of court settlement against Hartford’s leading real estate agencies yielded no financial penalties for decades of damages to Black and Puerto Rican families. Furthermore, although the “Mod Squad” was innovative, their work was not part of a sustainable institution, and EI eventually folded as its founders went their separate ways.

### **!Ya Basta!: Taking Real Estate Racism to Court**

In 1973, the EI trio launched its ambitious campaign against racial steering in the Hartford-area real estate industry. They titled the project “!Ya Basta! Sue the Bastards,” and defined their goal: “to bring statewide attention to the dual housing market problem and to strike deep at the institutionally racist and elitist causes.” This investigative study was motivated by local residents’ experiences with real estate agents who “steered” Black and Hispanic home buyers into predominantly minority or racially-mixed neighborhoods in Hartford and Bloomfield, but guided White homebuyers to nearly all-White suburbs such as Avon or West Hartford. Past attempts by Hartford-area activists to challenge housing discrimination from the 1940s through the 1960s were relatively isolated and short-lived. By contrast, EI and its ally, the Open Housing Coalition, systematically documented bias at Hartford’s largest real estate firms, using methods

<sup>7</sup>Grenier, “Oral History Interview on Education/Instrucción, Part 1.”; Education/Instrucción, Inc., “[History of the Organization]” (Ben Dixon Papers, Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library, [1975?])

DECEMBER, 1973

PROJECT Y

(YA BASTA! SUE THE BASTARD )

YABASTA MEANS "ENOUGH NOW" IN SPANISH.

Figure 5.2: Scroll the full-screen document to read instructions for housing discrimination testers in the Ya Basta: Sue the Bastards project, 1973.<sup>10</sup>

adopted from organizations such as National Neighbors. They trained dozens of White, Black, and Puerto Rican couples to become “testers,” who posed as clients during visits to real estate agencies, where they used the same script: “Tell us about what kinds of homes and communities are available through the \$40,000 range.” Testers carefully listened to how real estate agents spoke about different areas, especially racially-coded phrases such as “bad neighborhoods” or “poor schools” or “those people.” The testers wrote detailed accounts of what agents told them. In total, EI mobilized over 100 volunteers from activist and religious networks to conduct 600 hours of testing, and produce 150 pages of testimonial evidence on racial steering.<sup>8</sup>

To demonstrate persistent racial steering by real estate firms, volunteer testers wrote testimonials that provided damning evidence. For example, when Barbara and Richard Benson, a White couple, phoned the Hartford office of the Barrows & Wallace Company in August 1973, the receptionist directed them to the suburban Wethersfield branch. The Bensons arrived for their appointment, met real estate agent Tom Ryan, and told him that they had no preference about the location of homes, as long as it was within their price range. The agent explained

<sup>8</sup>Education/Instrucción, Inc., “Project Ya Basta” (Box 5, Boyd Hinds Papers, Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library, 1973), [http://hhc2.hplct.org/boyd\\_hinds.html](http://hhc2.hplct.org/boyd_hinds.html); Musa Bish, Jean Bullock, and Jean Milgram, *Racial Steering: The Dual Housing Market and Multiracial Neighborhoods* (Philadelphia, Pa.: National Neighbors, 1973), <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/974253>

that “there were three problems with living in Hartford:... high taxes... the poor school system... and integration.” If they wanted to live in Hartford’s West End neighborhood, the agent warned that “we would want our children out of the city by the time they were ready for middle school,” and that people already living there “sent their children to private school.” He also warned the Bensons against the Blue Hills neighborhood in Hartford’s North End, which he said “used to be all Jewish, and now it was all Black...” and “he said flatly that we did not want to live there.” Hartford’s South End also should be avoided, the agent told them, because “as the Puerto Ricans moved in, Italians moved out.” As the agent continued talking about the city, he shared his personal theory of “ethnic blocks that reacted like molecules bumping into one another.” Finally, he recommended to the Bensons that “West Hartford was obviously the kind of place where we wanted to be, but that we could not afford it” within their current budget “because he could not get us out of the city for that price.” Using a combination of overtly racial scare tactics and more subtle coded warnings, the agent clearly steered this White couple out of racially-mixed city neighborhoods to a White suburb.<sup>11</sup>

To compare discriminatory treatment by race, organizers also arranged for Charles and Shirley Gray, a Black couple, to visit the same real estate office in August 1973, and offer the same price range. Real estate agent Larry Poulin sat them down and thumbed through a book of listings. First, he suggested “a broken down house” in Hartford’s South End, which he described as “a good neighborhood... [with] good schools... and a good buy.” Next, he pointed out a house in Hartford’s West End that “needed a little work” but “he said the schools were good,” the opposite of what his co-worker told the White couple. Even though their meeting took place in the suburban Wethersfield office, the agent solely recommended listings inside the city of Hartford. Only after persistent questioning about his occupation did Charles Gray reveal that he was a deputy commissioner for child and youth services, a state government agency. But even with new information about the client’s status and income, the agent did not offer to show homes in White suburbs. Instead, he referred the Grays to the Windsor branch of their firm, located to the north of Hartford, near the increasingly Black suburb of Bloomfield. After the Grays left the agent’s office, they looked through the newspaper and found several real estate listings that matched their desired home description and price range, which were located in White suburbs such as Newington and Simsbury. Most likely, the agent knew about these homes through the Multiple Listings Service, a clearinghouse for sharing information between real estate firms. But he never mentioned them to the Grays, to avoid violating the real estate industry’s prevailing but unwritten rule to steer Black homebuyers away from White neighborhoods and suburbs.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>US v. Barrows and Wallace Company et al., “Documents Pertaining to Defendants (Discriminatory Evidence)” (US District Court, Connecticut, Civil Action H74-173, 1974), PDF pp. 12-13; US v. Barrows and Wallace Company et al., “Plaintiff’s Combined Answers to Interrogatories of Defendants” (US District Court, Connecticut, Civil Action H74-173, June 14, 1974), attachment I, paragraph 1a.

<sup>12</sup>US v. Barrows and Wallace Company et al., “Documents Pertaining to Defendants (Dis-

Organizers also invited residents of the Hartford region to share personal accounts of racial discrimination they encountered in the real estate industry, and these individual stories became more powerful when compiled into a comparative document. For example, real estate agents steered White and Black faculty from Trinity College in opposite directions. When Andrew and Toni Gold, a White couple, visited the J.W. Beach real estate office in West Hartford in December 1973, they told agent Gloria Winans that they wished to buy a home and mentioned that Andy would be teaching economics at Trinity College in Hartford. The agent recommended that they look in suburban Wethersfield or Newington, or perhaps the Foster Heights area of Hartford because “it was up on a hill and isolated from the rest of the city.” She warned that the rest of that area “was not safe and was changing,” and told two stories about friends who had been attacked or robbed by “a colored man” in other parts of Hartford.<sup>13</sup>

By contrast, Ed Johnetta and James Miller, a Black couple, came to Hartford in 1972 when Jim accepted a position in the English Department at Trinity College. His wife called the Hurwit and Simons real estate firm to inquire about their ad for a home for sale in the Blue Hills neighborhood in the North End of Hartford. On the phone, a female agent responded, “Do you know anything about that neighborhood?... That it’s slowly turning into a Black ghetto?” The agent recommended homes outside of this area. In her account, Ed Johnetta stated that “It was clear to me that the Hurwit and Simons agent did not realized that I was Black. She assumed that because my husband was being hired by Trinity College, we were white buyers.”<sup>14</sup>

In fact, EI collected so much damning evidence on racist real estate practices from testers’ reports that they devised creative strategies to publicize their findings. In early 1974, they compiled pages and pages of handouts that summarized the most glaring examples of racial steering, and mimeographed these for broader audiences. Later that year, EI organizers produced an audiotape with extended excerpts from rental apartment testers who carried recording devices. At one apartment building in West Hartford, near the Hartford border, a White male tester had this exchange with a White building superintendent, captured on a recorder:

Tester: Tell me, what kind of neighborhood is it around here?

Building superintendent: Oh, this is a really good section here.

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criminating Evidence).”, PDF pp. 7-8; US v. Barrows and Wallace Company et al., “Plaintiff’s Combined Answers to Interrogatories of Defendants.”, attachment I, paragraph 1b.

<sup>13</sup>US v. Barrows and Wallace Company et al., “Documents Pertaining to Defendants (Discriminatory Evidence).”, PDF pp. 110-11; US v. Barrows and Wallace Company et al., “Plaintiff’s Combined Answers to Interrogatories of Defendants.”, attachment I, paragraphs 6b, 4h. See also testimony by the Golds about their initial visit to find a home in Hartford in 1971, US v. Barrows and Wallace Company et al., “Documents Pertaining to Defendants (Discriminatory Evidence).”, PDF p. 86.

<sup>14</sup>US v. Barrows and Wallace Company et al., PDF p. 94; US v. Barrows and Wallace Company et al., “Plaintiff’s Combined Answers to Interrogatories of Defendants.”, attachment I, paragraph 5b.

You can't beat nothing here. There's no Puerto Ricans, no niggers around here.

When the tester asked how building remained all-White amid the growing minority population nearby, the superintendent explained techniques that he and the White owner developed to avoid Fair Housing laws. When prospective tenants phoned to ask about rentals advertised in the local newspaper, the superintendent explained that “we don’t put up the price over the phone unless we’re really talking to somebody that, you know, we’re sure that they are white.” In cases when Blacks show up to look at the rental, the superintendent described how “I just jack up [the price]... We’re sure they won’t take it because they can’t afford it.” If necessary, the superintendent required Blacks to fill out a “long form” with “all kinds of questions” about their occupation, to discourage them from renting.

About 45 minutes after the White tester left, a Black female tester approached the same superintendent to ask if any apartments are available. “Not in this building here,” the superintendent replied. “You missed by a couple of hours.” He falsely claimed that the White tester already paid a deposit for the last unit. Then 5 minutes after the Black tester left, the White tester returned to ask if the unit is still available. “We had more people come in right after you,” the superintendent explained, “and I told... because she was a colored girl, I told her the place was already taken.” After capturing this blatant evidence of racial discrimination on audiotape, EI organizers played an edited recording, with narration, for audiences that included newspaper editors, churches, the metropolitan board of realtors, state lending regulators, and federal housing officials.<sup>15</sup>

EI organizers and their allies shared their evidence with sympathetic lawyers at the US Department of Justice in early 1974, who requested that FBI agents launch an investigation. Front-page news on racial discrimination rattled the metro Hartford real estate industry. It also troubled Connecticut’s real estate commission, which publicly questioned EI’s tester evidence and complained that they should have brought the case to their state agency, rather than the federal government, despite their past inaction. Shortly afterwards, federal attorneys filed a lawsuit, *US v Barrows and Wallace Company et al.*, which charged 7 of the 8 largest real estate brokerage firms in metropolitan Hartford with violating the Fair Housing Act of 1968. These real estate firms were:

<sup>15</sup>Education/Instruccion, Inc., “Hartford Area Housing Horrors: Samples from a Cross Section of Real Estate Monitoring Tests Conducted 12/73 - 3/74” (Box 5, Boyd Hinds Papers, Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library, 1974), [http://hhc2.hplct.org/boyd\\_hinds.html](http://hhc2.hplct.org/boyd_hinds.html); Education/Instruccion, Inc., “More Fair Housing at Its Worst, Project Ya Basta, Excerpts from Recent Real Estate Testing Patterns” (Box 5, Boyd Hinds Papers, Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library, December 1974), [http://hhc2.hplct.org/boyd\\_hinds.html](http://hhc2.hplct.org/boyd_hinds.html); Education/Instruccion, Inc., “He’s Got A Secret: Excerpts from Recent Real Estate Testing Patterns” (Box 5, Boyd Hinds Papers, Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library, December 1974), [http://hhc2.hplct.org/boyd\\_hinds.html](http://hhc2.hplct.org/boyd_hinds.html)

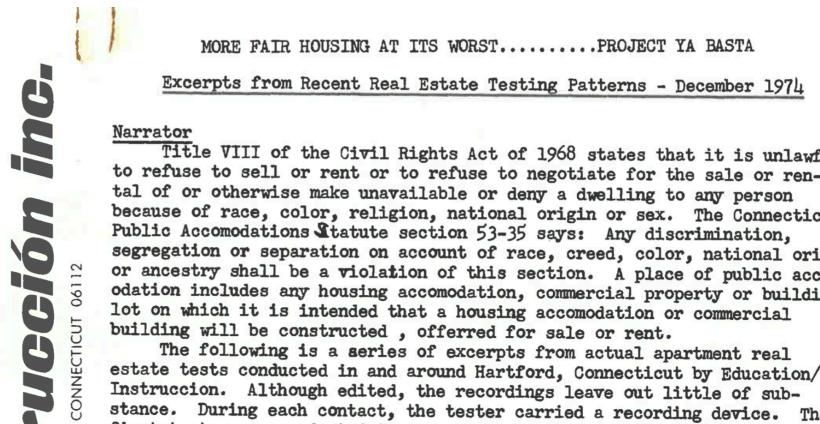


Figure 5.3: Scroll the full-screen document to read the transcript of housing tester secret tape-recordings in the Ya Basta: Sue the Bastards project, 1974.<sup>17</sup>

- The Barrows and Wallace Co., Hartford
- The T.R. Preston Co., West Hartford
- The Heritage Group, Inc., West Hartford
- Bulkeley Realtors South, Inc. & Bulkeley Realtors West, Inc., Wethersfield
- Hurwit & Simons Realtors, a Partnership, West Hartford
- J. Watson Beach Real Estate Co., Hartford
- Colli-Wagner Realty Co., Hartford

According to lawsuit, real estate firms “steered” White buyers away from racially mixed neighborhoods in Hartford and Bloomfield, and instead funneled in Black and Puerto Rican buyers. Together, these seven firms employed about 170 sales agents, who sold about 1500 homes annually in the region. Based on over 30 documented cases by housing testers, the government argued that discrimination did not arise merely by the actions of individual agents, but was caused systemically by these major real estate firms. In addition, activists from the region’s only racially-mixed suburb, Bloomfield, joined with the plaintiffs in *US v Barrows and Wallace* to challenge blockbusting, another real estate tactic that played on White racial fears to turn a quick profit.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup>US v. Barrows and Wallace Company et al., “Plaintiff’s Memorandum in Support of Motion for Preliminary Injunction” (US District Court, Connecticut, Civil Action H74-173, May 2, 1974); “FBI Probes Charges of Racial Bias: Complaints Filed Against Realtors,” *Hartford Courant*, February 21, 1974, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/552094538?accountid=14405>; Michael Regan, “Real Estate Unit’s Head Questions Bias Charges,” *Hartford Courant*, February 22, 1974, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/552111580?accountid=14405>; Thomas D. Williams, “U.S. Sues 7 Area Realty Firms,” *Hartford Courant*, May 3, 1974, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/552284751?accountid=14405>; US Congress, *Public Law 90-284 (Civil Rights Act of 1968: Fair Housing Act)* (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1968),

Although EI activists and their allies won an out-of-court settlement in *US v Barrows and Wallace*, the remedy focused on educational programs for real estate agents, with no financial penalties. All seven firms signed a consent decree in July 1974, which contained no admission of “unlawful conduct,” but instead a promise to obey the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and take affirmative measures to comply with the law. Specifically, the firms agreed to refrain from “refusing or failing to show” or “providing or volunteering different information about homes” or “influencing the residential choice of any person” on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin. The decree expressly prohibited sales tactics such as “discouraging white prospective buyers from inspecting or purchasing homes in racially transitional areas” (one type of racial steering) and “‘cold canvassing’ in areas of racial transition” (also known as blockbusting). The real estate firms agreed to educate all employees about these rules, prominently display “Equal Housing Opportunity” slogans in their offices and advertisements, and to reach out to prospective minority home buyers in the future. Over the next few months, they submitted compliance reports and real estate sales activity data by race to the court, as required by the consent decree, until the US Justice Department moved to dissolve the order in 1977. But these real estate firms never admitted wrongdoing, nor did they pay any financial compensation to Black and Puerto Rican families who were blocked from moving to higher-opportunity suburbs. EI had won a victory, but only a partial one. They turned their attention to the next phase of the struggle.<sup>19</sup>

### **Exposing Institutional Racism through *Fair Housing At Its Worst***

Education/Instrucción did not cease with its limited legal victory against racial steering by real estate firms. Instead, as Boyd Hinds led the expansion of EI’s scope in the mid-1970s, the organization challenged racial discrimination across what it described as an “overlapping, interlocking, and powerful” political and economic network. Segregation was caused not only by *individual racism* of one real estate broker toward a prospective buyer, but rather by a broader network of *institutional racism* where real estate firms collaborated with insurance companies, influential banks, and the state regulatory agencies that were supposed to serve as government “watchdogs” for the public interest. Together, EI charged this network with taking actions that favored the interests of White suburbanites

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<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-82/pdf/STATUTE-82-Pg73.pdf>. Also, Education/Instrucción filed a state-level employment discrimination complaint against the Greater Hartford Board of Realtors and the seven firms, which counted only 3 minority workers among its 330 employees, in “Realtors Charged with Unfair Hiring,” *Hartford Courant*, June 29, 1974, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/552254027?accountid=14405>.

<sup>19</sup>US v. Barrows and Wallace Company et al., “Consent Decree” (US District Court, Connecticut, Civil Action H74-173, July 25, 1974); Bruce Kauffman, “7 Firms Sign Antibias Decree,” *Hartford Courant*, July 26, 1974, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/552259961?accountid=14405>; Richard Lowenstein, “Real Estate Firms Settle Bias Suit, Ban Racial Steering,” *The Hartford Times*, July 26, 1974; Richard Goodman, “Letter to US District Court Judge T. Emmet Clarie on Motion to Dissolve Consent Decree” (US v Barrows court exhibit, case 741143, US District Court in Hartford, July 28, 1977)



Figure 5.4: (ref:1974-fairhousingreports-ctda)

over Black and Puerto Rican city residents, and thereby intensified the boundaries between them. To expand both their analysis and audience, Hinds and his EI colleagues published an innovative series of ten reports from 1974 to 1978, titled *Fair Housing At Its Worst*. This series of reports revealed how this powerful network intentionally maintained segregation in the metropolitan Hartford region by violating the federal Fair Housing Act (reports 1-8) and promoting mortgage and insurance redlining (reports 9-10). To help audiences make the conceptual leap from individual to institutional racism, Education/Instrucción creatively used 70s-style graphic design, data, and maps.<sup>20</sup>

(ref:1974-fairhousingreports-ctda.png) Explore the “Fair Housing At Its Worst” series of ten reports, based on originals in the Boyd Hinds Papers at the Hartford History Center, and shared online through the Connecticut Digital Archive.<sup>21</sup>

EI’s expanding analysis of the institutional networks that housing discrimination appears in the progression of topics in the *Fair Housing At Its Worst* reports. In the first set of reports (number 1-4, published in February 1974), EI outlined its investigation of racial steering by real estate firms. Complicit in this discrimination, EI claimed, were industry associations (such as the Greater Hartford Board of Realtors, which tolerated racist actions by many of its members) and state regulators (such as the Connecticut Real Estate Commission, which refused to enforce existing laws against racist sales practices). But after 1974 *Barrows* case brought weak penalties against the real estate industry, EI activists pivoted their campaign to demonstrate complicity by larger corporations and the federal government. The second set of reports (numbers 5-8, published May 1974) criticized Hartford’s leading businesses (such as Travelers Insurance) for promoting employee relocation services that steered new hires out of the city, and encouraged them to buy homes in the suburbs. Also, EI charged the US

<sup>20</sup>Education/Instrucción, *Fair Housing at Its Worst [Series of Reports 1-8 on Title VIII, 1974; Report 9 on Redlining, 1977, Report 10 on Insurance Redlining, Circa 1978]* (Hartford, CT, 1974-78AD), <http://hdl.handle.net/11134/120002:otl-ei-fairhousingworst>. In Report 2, EI’s preliminary statement credited national networks of housing activists, such as Rose Helper, *Racial Policies and Practices of Real Estate Brokers* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/897001828>.

<sup>21</sup>Education/Instrucción, *Fair Housing at Its Worst [Series of Reports 1-8 on Title VIII, 1974; Report 9 on Redlining, 1977, Report 10 on Insurance Redlining, Circa 1978]*

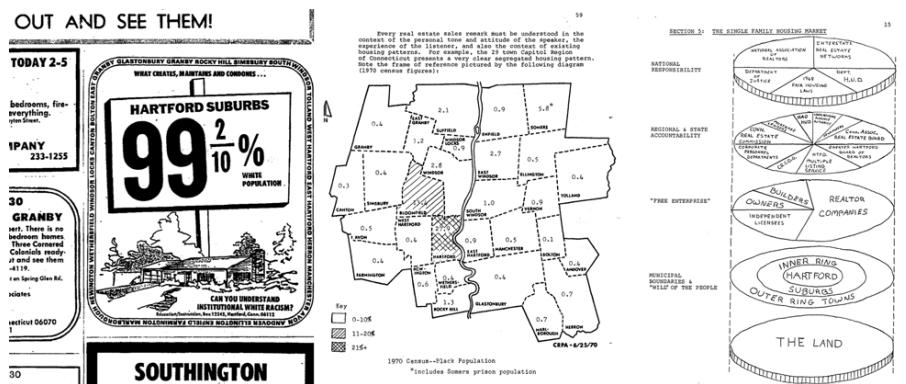


Figure 5.5: Education/Instrucción creatively communicated its message by placing ads in the 1972 Hartford Courant Sunday real estate section to ask “What Creates, Maintains, and Condones over 99% White Population in the Hartford Suburbs?” and “Can You Understand Institutional White Racism?” (left). Its 1974 *Fair Housing At Its Worst* report 4 placed 1970s racial census data on a map to illustrate segregated housing (center), and report 2 showed layers of corporate and governmental control over the housing market (right).<sup>23</sup>

Department of Housing and Urban Development with failing to reverse federal mortgage programs that favored all-White suburbs, such as Federal Housing Administration loans from the 1930s through the 1950s described in the Federal Lending and Redlining section in this book, as well as the Section 235 program of the 1970s. Furthermore, pointed out how Connecticut’s weak regional government failed to act against powerful White suburban interests. During the early 1960s, Hartford’s federally-certified development authority, the Capitol Region Planning Agency, warned how local land-use policies caused racial and economic segregation. But in 1971, this same agency opposed state legislation to halt exclusionary zoning practices, and thereby blocked affordable housing programs in favor of more expensive (and racially exclusive) single-family home construction.<sup>24</sup>

In their third and final set of reports (numbers 9-10, which began in 1974 but were not published until 1977-78), Boyd Hinds and EI confronted Hartford banking and insurance corporations over “redlining.” Generally defined as denying mortgage loans or homeowner insurance due to an area’s racial composition—and depicted with red ink on a map—this discriminatory practice can be traced back to the infamous Home Owners’ Loan Corporation residential security maps of the 1930s, as described in the Federal Lending and Redlining section in this book. But since these Depression-era maps were hidden from the public, the phrase “redlining (sometimes spelled “red-lining”) did not become popularized

<sup>24</sup>Education/Instrucción, *Fair Housing at Its Worst [Series of Reports 1-8 on Title VIII, 1974; Report 9 on Redlining, 1977, Report 10 on Insurance Redlining, Circa 1978]*, report 5, p. 89; report 6, pp. 99-105; report 7, pp. 108-118.

until the late 1960s, when civil rights activists began using the term, which then appeared in press reports and publications.<sup>25</sup>

Boyd Hinds most likely encouraged staff members of the US Commission on Civil Rights to investigate discriminatory home lending practices by Hartford-area banks in its 1974 report, *Mortgage Money: Who Gets It?*. This case study focused national attention on Hartford, a leading financial center, and revealed unfair treatment of racial minorities and women who applied for home loans. Although the federal report did not name specific lenders, local journalists soon revealed that the study was based on nine large banks that provided most of the conventional home loans in the Hartford region at that time:

- Hartford Home Savings & Loan Association
- Hartford National Bank & Trust Co.
- Windsor Federal Savings & Loan Association
- Mechanics Savings Bank
- State-Dime Savings Bank
- Hartford Federal Savings and Loan Association
- Connecticut Savings and Loan Association
- Connecticut Bank & Trust Co.
- Society for Savings

Prior to its report, the US Commission on Civil Rights held public hearings, where Hartford residents described the redlining practices they witnessed. For example, real estate agent Mark Lawrence explained how banks simply refused to fund mortgages in racially “transitional” areas, such as the Asylum Hill neighborhood near downtown Hartford. Boyd Hinds charged that Connecticut’s regulatory agencies failed in their responsibility to prevent racial discrimination by the banking, insurance, and real estate industries. Sally Knack, who authored the report for the US Commission on Civil Rights, told local reporters that the Commission’s findings had been forwarded to Congress and the White House, and that “we expect some action on it.” The report contributed to the passage of a new federal law, the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act of 1975 (HMDA), which improved monitoring of discrimination by requiring lenders to publicly share data on mortgage applications and approvals.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>See early instances of “red-lining” in the national press by New Jersey Governor Richard Hughes and National Urban League Executive Director Whitney Young in Robert B. Semple Jr., “U.S. Panel Prods Ghetto Insurers,” *New York Times*, September 16, 1967, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/117652693?accountid=14405> and “Insurers Are Warned on Slums: ‘Red-Lining’ Cited,” *New York Times: Business & Finance*, December 13, 1967, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/118088780?accountid=14405>.

<sup>26</sup>U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Mortgage Money: Who Gets It?: A Case Study in Mortgage Lending Discrimination in Hartford, Connecticut* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1974), <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/944502594>; Michael Regan, “Leaders’ Policy Biased, HUD Panel Told,” *Hartford Courant*, May 21, 1974, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/552196476?accountid=14405>; Michael Re-

Armed with newly-available public HMDA data, Hinds and his colleagues published a 1977 report that challenged Hartford-area banks with “disinvestment” in urban areas. According to EI, the City of Hartford invested its employee pension funds in local banks, which in turn reinvested this money in home mortgages in predominantly White suburbs, thereby funneling funds away from urban neighborhoods. But others argued that HDMA data was insufficient to prove that the banks were guilty of redlining. Trinity College professor Andrew Gold, who had participated as a housing discrimination tester for EI in the early 1970s, wrote a report for the State Banking Commissioner in 1977 that challenged the civil rights organization’s analysis. Given that HDMA data for 11 Hartford-area banks only revealed the number of loans and their dollar amounts, Gold concluded that due to “the absence of information on the demand for loans, it is impossible to know if redlining (or disinvestment) occurred. Of those loans that were made, we do not know if, how or why the terms may have differed between the city and suburb.” In other words, although banks made more loans to suburbs than the city, that fact could be explained by other factors, and by itself did not prove discrimination.<sup>27</sup>

But even if federal HDMA data did not prove the existence of redlining, EI’s final report made a strong case against Hartford’s insurance industry by using testers. In order to qualify for a home loan, mortgage lenders typically required that applicants also obtain a homeowner’s insurance policy to cover any damages to the property in order to protect the bank’s investment. But EI charged that homeowners’ insurance policies were subject to discriminatory redlining by racial composition of the neighborhood. EI staff conducted homeowner’s insurance testing by phone. Testers contacted insurance agents about coverage for identical types of homes (by size, construction, and age) in different areas of the city: a predominantly Black neighborhood in the North End of Hartford, a White neighborhood in the South End, and a White neighborhood in West Hartford. Overall, the influence of location was unmistakable. In the Black neighborhood, 9 out of 13 agents denied home insurance coverage, but they approved it for an identical home in a White neighborhood. On the phone, agents affiliated with major insurance corporations typically offered these reasons for denial of coverage:

“It’s simply because of the location... You have a problem being up  
in the North End...”

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gan, “9 Area Banks Named Targets of U.S. Discrimination Study,” *Hartford Courant*, July 18, 1974, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/552263901?accountid=14405>; US Congress, “Public Law 94-200: Home Mortgage Disclosure Act” (Government Printing Office, December 31, 1975), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-89/pdf/STATUTE-89-Pg1124.pdf>

<sup>27</sup>Education/Instrucción, *Fair Housing at Its Worst: Redlining in Hartford Connecticut, Report 9* (Hartford, CT, 1977), <http://hdl.handle.net/11134/120002:251>, pp. 185-192; Andrew J Gold, “A Report to the State Banking Commissioner Regarding ‘Redlining’ and Home Mortgage Disclosure” (Unpublished report, 1977), <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/3251054>, p. 37

—agent affiliated with Travelers Insurance Company

“Well, I will be honest with you. We have very little available that our companies will let us write anywhere in the City of Hartford.”

—agent affiliated with The Hartford insurance company

Without homeowner’s insurance, mortgage lenders typically rejected buyers’ applications in Hartford neighborhoods, citing risks about the general location without considering the individual applicant or property. In the view of Boyd Hinds and EI, this evidence proved to them that the “spider web” network of real estate firms, leading banks, and insurance companies, with the approval of state regulators, favored investment in White suburbs, to the detriment of Black and Puerto Rican city neighborhoods.<sup>28</sup>

### **Successes and Limitations**

Looking back, the Education/Instrucción leadership trio of Hinds, Dixon, and Ramos and their supporters deserve credit for their accomplishments in civil rights activism during the 1970s. First, EI mobilized large numbers of city and suburban residents to serve as testers to challenge racial discrimination by Hartford’s largest real estate firms, and collaborated with the US Justice Department to win a court-approved settlement. Second, EI expanded the Hartford region’s understanding of discrimination from individual actions by real estate agents to broader patterns of institutional racism. Through their creative public information campaigns, EI explained how real estate, banking, and insurance corporations—with the complicity of government agencies—intensified racial and economic divisions between the city and its suburbs.

But the Education/Instrucción story also reveals the limitations of activism during this era. Fighting an ambitious civil rights struggle on multiple fronts, with few victories that delivered tangible results, would be difficult for any organization to sustain, especially a small one such as EI. By the mid-1970s, the trio began to move in different directions. Julia Ramos decided to focus her work in the field of psychology, and she eventually left Hartford to obtain her doctoral degree. Ben Dixon saw education as a lever for social change, and he moved his way up through educational administration posts in city and suburban school districts, the Capital Region Education Council, and later as Connecticut’s deputy commissioner of education. Boyd Hinds identified government inaction as the root cause of the problem, so he entered politics and won election to the 8th District of the Connecticut General Assembly to represent Hartford’s North End from 1976-80. While he soon became known as the most left-leaning representative in state government, his positions on issues limited his ability to form coalitions with moderate Democrats, and it diverted energy and funding away from the organization. While EI continued to exist on paper, it ceased

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<sup>28</sup>Education/Instrucción, *Fair Housing at Its Worst: Insurance Redlining, Report 10* (Hartford, CT, [1978?]), <http://hdl.handle.net/11134/120002:253>, pp. 202-209

operations in Hartford in 1979. “I am exhausted and overextended,” Boyd Hinds wrote to Julia Ramos and Ben Dixon, and explained that all staff positions had been terminated due to lack of grant funds. “I intend to let EI remain dormant for awhile until I get my political involvement completed and my brother’s business straightened out.” He had already moved to spend half his time in Greenfield, Massachusetts, and he and his spouse Wendy tragically died in a car accident Vermont in 1988.<sup>29</sup>

Did the work of Education/Instrucción produce lasting reforms against racism? One answer appeared in 1989, when the *Hartford Courant* newspaper sent a team of Black and White investigative reporters to pose as homebuyers at Hartford-area real estate agencies. Back in 1974 when EI conducted similar testing, 7 out of 8 of Hartford’s largest real estate agencies racially steered buyers. In this 1989 *Courant* study, only 6 out of 15 agencies racially steered buyers, a noticeable improvement. But the *Courant* also found that 14 out of 15 agencies treated White testers more favorably than Black testers. In half of these cases, real estate agents subjected Black testers to significantly more scrutiny of their personal finances before showing them homes. Judging from this 1974 to 1989 comparison, the frequency of racial steering declined but persisted, despite being expressly prohibited by the 1968 Fair Housing Act and the 1974 *U.S. v Barrows* settlement that mandated equal opportunity training for real estate firms and their employees. Moreover, the 1989 study revealed how White buyers continued to enjoy hidden privileges in over 90 percent of their encounters with real estate agents. The lesson is clear: Education/Instrucción definitely made a difference, but institutional racism did not disappear. Rather, racism continued to evolve and express itself in ways that still favored White suburban interests. Civil rights victories had been won, but the larger struggle remained unfinished, with new challenges to be taken up by the next generation of activists.<sup>30</sup>

*About the authors and contributors:* Jasmin Agosto (Trinity 2010) wrote the first draft as her senior thesis, researched additional sources, and conducted oral history interviews.<sup>31</sup> Vianna Iorio (Trinity 2019) and Jack Dougherty expanded

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<sup>29</sup>Boyd Hinds, “[Letter to Ben Dixon and Julia Ramos]” (Ben Dixon Papers, Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library, September 18, 1979); Dixon, “Oral History Interview on Education/Instrucción.”; Grenier, “Oral History Interview on Education/Instrucción, Part 1.”; Julia Ramos Grenier, “Oral History Interview on Education/Instrucción, Part 2” (Cities, Suburbs, Schools Project, Trinity College Digital Repository, July 1, 2010), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_ohistory/11](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_ohistory/11); Humphreys, Hinds, and Hinds, “In Memory.”

<sup>30</sup>The 1989 *Courant* study also found that Black and White testers received equal treatment in only 1 of the 15 real estate firms, Armstrong Realty in Bloomfield, which also employed the only Black agent that testers encountered in all of their visits. Lyn Bixby et al., “Some Real Estate Agents Discriminate Against Black Home Buyers: Two Connecticuts Series,” *Hartford Courant*, May 21, 1989, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/1637840117/accountid=14405>

<sup>31</sup>Jasmin Agosto, “Fighting Segregation, Teaching Multiculturalism: The Beginning of the Education/Instrucción Narrative of the 1970s Hartford Civil Rights Movement” (Educational Studies Senior Research Project, Trinity College, 2010), <http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/>

*on her work for the final draft. Special thanks to Ben Dixon and Lisa Hinds Humphreys (daughter of Boyd Hinds), who contributed their archives to the Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library.*



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## 5.2 Jumping the School District Line

*by Vianna Iorio, JiYun Lee, and Jack Dougherty*

In 1984, Saundra Foster, a Black single mother living in Hartford, was searching for a better school for her teenage son, Trevor. She described him as “a good kid” who liked to go to school and learned some topics faster than other students, but ran into problems at Hartford Public High School, which in her view was “geared for special education.” Saundra explained that it was “almost impossible” to get Trevor into more rigorous classes, and he was turned down when he tried to raise the issue with his teacher. Trevor was then referred to the district’s alternative education center for students it deemed not suited for regular classrooms. Faced with this bleak prospect, Trevor considered dropping out of high school altogether. This was the breaking point for the Foster family, and Saundra knew she had to take immediate action. “For a child like that to say that he is contemplating dropping out of school, it’s time to start thinking about alternatives,” she later told a reporter.<sup>32</sup>

Saundra Foster decided to “jump the line” by enrolling Trevor, a resident of the city of Hartford, in the suburban school district of Bloomfield, located immediately to the north. Registering her son to attend a public school outside of her legal residence, without permission, was a serious step; although many parents had done it before, her decision could interrupt his education if they were caught. Saundra decided on Bloomfield because he could live with his aunt, who legally resided in the district. Trevor transitioned well into Bloomfield High School by fall 1984 and even became a starting player in the boy’s varsity basketball team. There was no record of him getting in conflict with peers or teachers and Saundra believed “he was much better off in Bloomfield.” Although she had to live apart from her son, “jumping the line” was the right

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cssp\_papers/10.

<sup>32</sup>William Mendoza, “Jumping the Line” (The Public File, WVIT Channel 30 television broadcast video, August 31, 1985), <http://www.criticalcommons.org/Members/jackdougherty/clips/jumping-the-line/>.

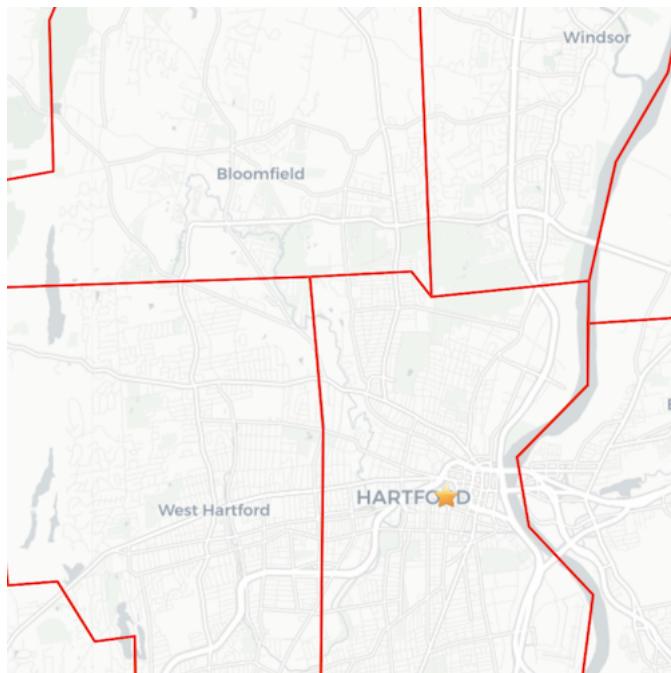


Figure 5.6: City-suburban school district boundaries between Hartford and Bloomfield

decision in her mind, because city-suburban school district boundaries were unjust. “I didn’t deal this deck of cards,” she later explained, “I just have to play them,” and her son Trevor “should be able to go where he can to get the best education.”<sup>33</sup>

Suburban districts referred to non-resident students like Trevor Foster as “line jumpers,” and school officials usually took administrative action to “disenroll” them from the district. But this case was different. In April 1985, Bloomfield police arrested Saundra Foster and three other parents, and charged them with a first-degree felony for larceny, for “stealing an education” worth \$4,000, the average expenditure per pupil. This highly-publicized action was unprecedented in Connecticut, and perhaps the nation, as no one in recent memory had been charged as a criminal for enrolling their child in a public school outside of their home district. The arrests highlighted race and city-suburban boundaries. Of the four, three were Black parents from Hartford (Saundra Foster, Elizabeth Brown, and Claude Johnson), and the fourth was a White parent, Norma

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<sup>33</sup>Dave Drury, “Bloomfield Cracking down on Non-Residents in Schools,” *Hartford Courant*, March 21, 1985, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/758745359?accountid=14405>; Paul Bass, “Case on Residency and Schools Halted,” *New York Times: Connecticut Weekly*, June 9, 1985, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/111144867?accountid=14405>.



Figure 5.7: Watch this 1985 television excerpt about how Saundra Foster, a Hartford resident, and three other Black parents were arrested by the suburban Bloomfield public school district for “stealing” a public education for their children. Although this video reveals her discomfort in discussing her case, local and national activists publicized her arrest to draw attention to broader issues of city-suburban inequity. Source: Mendoza and Saunders, *The Public File*, copyrighted by WVIT 1985, and included here under fair-use guidelines.<sup>35</sup>

Wright, who had previously lived in Bloomfield but moved to the adjacent suburb of Windsor due to a divorce. The timing was intentional. Bloomfield town leaders had authorized the arrest warrants in the early spring, just before town residents were asked to approve the next year's school budget. Furthermore, White Bloomfield residents became increasingly anxious as the town's high school tipped from majority-White to majority-Black in the early 1980s. Bloomfield leaders' decision to introduce a felony charge clearly was designed as a scare tactic to discourage Black Hartford families from "jumping the line" into their racially transitional suburban school district. Town leaders played on then-President Ronald Reagan's racist "welfare queen" stereotype to portray Black Hartford parents like Saundra Foster as "stealing an education," but looked the other way when White parents had done the same thing a generation earlier.<sup>36</sup>

While the arrests drew the public eye and may have intimidated some parents, they also sparked a civil rights debate on the growing disparity between city and suburban schools in metropolitan Hartford. Saundra Foster's advocates and civil rights activists capitalized on her arrest to raise pivotal questions on one's right to an education. Is it possible to "steal" a public education that the state is required to provide to all students? Did the growing inequality between Hartford and its suburbs prove that Connecticut was not meeting its constitutional obligations for equal educational opportunity for all students? These questions were not just important in the abstract. The arrests forced a closer public examination of education inequity across the Hartford region. During the 1980s, city-suburban school district boundaries became increasingly contested due to a combination of the rising disparities between urban and suburban schools, increasing costs of public education, and rising White suburban barriers against non-resident students of color, in contrast to more relaxed policies towards non-resident White students a generation ago. Although Saundra Foster's case was eventually dismissed in court, public criticism against these arrests helped set the context for the landmark *Sheff v O'Neill* school integration lawsuit four years later, in 1989, where plaintiffs directly challenged the legality of the public school boundaries that divided Hartford and suburban students.

### Line Jumping Over Time

"Jumping the line" was a familiar issue in Bloomfield. When police arrested Saundra Foster in 1985, school leaders estimated that perhaps 100 other non-resident students also attended the Bloomfield School District (about 4 percent

<sup>36</sup>Drury, "Bloomfield Cracking down on Non-Residents in Schools"; Dave Drury, "2 City Parents Are Charged in Residence Case," *Hartford Courant*, April 2, 1985, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/755821077?accountid=14405>; Dirk Johnson, "Quality of City Schools Tested in Trial on Residency: Equity of Schools Tested in Arrests," *New York Times: Connecticut Weekly*, May 12, 1985, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/111304566?accountid=14405>; Mendoza, "Jumping the Line."

of the total enrollment), while others disputed that figure. Beginning in the early 1970s, Bloomfield school officials began to investigate suspected non-residency cases, and Bloomfield police officers photographed students as they stepped off city transit buses that rolled down Blue Hills Avenue from Hartford to the suburban high school. In the 1975-76 school year, Bloomfield school administrators held 58 non-residency hearings, and about half of those students were removed from the district. “Parents want a better education and they’re concerned about the discipline problem in city schools,” assistant superintendent Joseph O’Donnell told the Bloomfield Board of Education in 1976. “A few come from Windsor [a neighboring suburb], but most [come from] Hartford...We don’t get them from lily-white suburbs like Avon or Simsbury.”<sup>37</sup>

In prior decades, most line-crossers moved in the opposite direction, from poorly-resourced rural and early suburban schools to better-resourced city schools. As previously described in *A Golden Age for City Schools* in this book, Hartford Public High School acted as a magnet that drew 20 percent of its class from outside the city lines, with families paying tuition of about \$3 per week, in 1882. Around the same time, Bloomfield town leaders lamented that so many families from their rural community sent their children by railroad each day to attend Hartford’s public schools. “The practice of sending scholars out of town to school—though entirely justifiable and desirable in many cases—has the effect to diminish the interest in our own schools,” Bloomfield leaders observed in 1888. “While it is admitted that the Hartford schools are, in every respect, excellent, there is a tendency among our people to undervalue our own schools.” In the town of Wethersfield, on Hartford’s southern border, a residency scandal arose at a school meeting in 1917. “It was brought out at the meeting that four members of the school board are sending their children to Hartford schools and have no real interest in Wethersfield schools ‘other than to lower the taxes as much as possible,’ ” the press reported. Decades later, in 1952, the Hartford school district enrolled at least 18 “out-of-town” students whose families paid \$240 per year for them to attend the city’s public high schools, even though this tuition was about half of the actual cost per pupil. A family from the White rural town of Marlborough argued in 1959 that their daughter had the right to attend Hartford public schools, at no tuition, by claiming that they kept a residence above the father’s place of business in the city. Overall, Hartford’s widely-acclaimed city school district retained its desirable status among line-crossers through the middle of the twentieth century, and for the most part these non-resident students were allowed to attend Hartford schools, with the

<sup>37</sup>“Residency Rule Called Good, If Done by Book: Bloomfield,” *Hartford Courant*, July 18, 1976, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/544588627/1D33A73396B64DADPQ/1?accountid=14405>; Chauncey Bailey, “Non-Resident Students Again Attending Bloomfield Schools,” *Hartford Courant: City/Town*, September 16, 1976, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/544716872?accountid=14405>. Dorothy Billington, the only Black member of the Bloomfield Board of Education in 1985, disputed the estimate of 100 non-resident students, in Drury, “Bloomfield Cracking down on Non-Residents in Schools.”

caveat that they had to pay tuition.<sup>38</sup>

But Bloomfield began to attract significant numbers of non-resident students in the 1960s, and as the racial and economic context shifted in the 1970s and 80s, town leaders began treating “line jumpers” very differently. Wayne Porter, the Bloomfield High School principal from 1962 to 1968, recalled in his 1985 letter to the editor that “the problem of non-resident students has existed for many years.” During the “racial unrest” of the 1960s, many White families pulled their children out public schools in Hartford’s North End, and enrolled them in nearby Bloomfield schools, long before they bought or rented property there. “The [Bloomfield] school administration elected to look the other way in order to avoid controversy,” Porter confided. “What seemed like a reasonable policy 15 years ago was definitely faulty. It made it appear there was no policy and that non-resident student enrollment was sanctioned by the Bloomfield public schools.”<sup>39</sup>

When Bloomfield’s non-resident students shifted from White to Black in the 1970s and 80s, town leaders took a more aggressive stance against “line jumpers,” by launching police investigations and pressing charges against parents like Saundra Foster. Although former principal Porter preferred to frame the events of 1985 primarily as an “economic matter” due to the rising costs of schooling, rather than a “racial issue,” looking back we cannot ignore this racial reality: the suburb criminally prosecuted Black Hartford parents in the 1980s for taking the same actions that they condoned by White Hartford parents in the 1960s.

White racial anxiety at Bloomfield High was driven by the dramatic shift in racial demographics during this period. The school enrolled only 13 percent Black students in 1967, which rose to 37 percent by 1977, then climbed to 62 percent by 1984. But the primary driver of this racial change was plummeting White enrollments. Between 1967 and 1984, the number of Black high school students gradually rose from 160 to 421, while the number of White students sharply dropped from 1073 to 267. Furthermore, Bloomfield High had recently tipped from a White-majority to a Black-majority school in the early 1980s,

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<sup>38</sup>Bloomfield, *Town of Bloomfield Annual Report*. (Bloomfield, Conn.: Bloomfield Town Clerk, 1888–89AD), [https://cscu-csl-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/148en6t/01CSCU\\_NETWORK\\_ALMA991001105679703452](https://cscu-csl-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/148en6t/01CSCU_NETWORK_ALMA991001105679703452), p. 20, Connecticut State Library; “Kicks on Schools in Wethersfield: Dissatisfaction Expressed at Parents’ Meeting: City Gets Sons of Board Members,” *Hartford Courant*, April 11, 1917, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/556458859?accountid=14405>; “Schools Jump Tuition Fees for Out-of-Town Residents,” *Hartford Courant*, January 4, 1952, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/561696118/6D35FCF5D55B4EACPQ/1?accountid=14405>; “Couple Ask Tuition-Free Schooling for Girl but Residency Is Disputed,” *Hartford Courant*, February 6, 1959, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/553011819/18F2091DEB304451PQ/1?accountid=14405>.

<sup>39</sup>Wayne Porter, “Non-Resident Students Long a Problem,” *Hartford Courant*: B, May 21, 1985, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/758689031/fulltextPDF/2FA3B34AF5BD4A2EPQ/1?accountid=14405>.

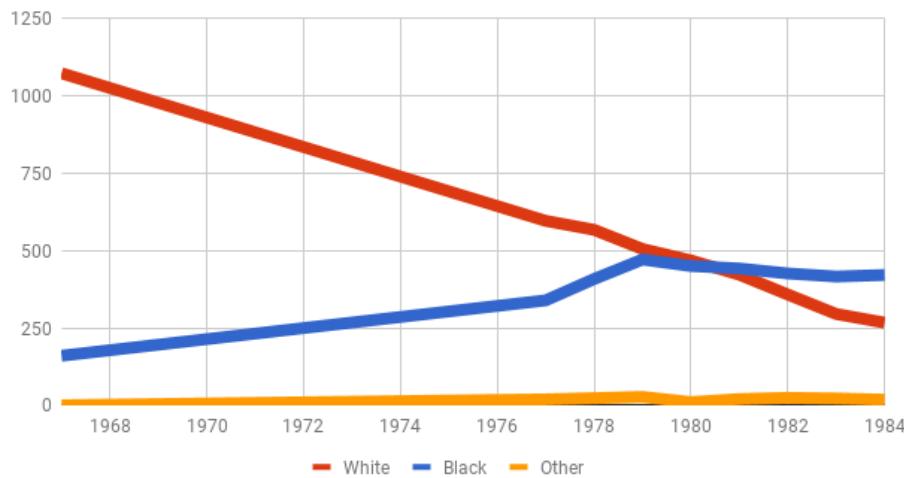


Figure 5.8: This chart of racial change at Bloomfield High School, 1967-84, shows how it tipped from a White-majority to a Black-majority student population in the early 1980s, just before Bloomfield town leaders authorized the arrest of Saundra Foster and other parents.<sup>42</sup>

setting into motion broader conflicts around the case of Saundra Foster.<sup>40</sup>

Just as White parents left the city school district for the suburbs in the 1960s and '70s, many Black parents sought to follow similar paths, using whatever means were possible. The Project Concern city-to-suburb desegregation program opened new doors in 1966, and enabled nearly 1200 Black Hartford students to attend predominantly White suburban schools at its peak in 1980. But suburban district participation was voluntary, and the total number of lotteried seats available declined to below 800 by 1984, making this strategy more difficult.<sup>43</sup> Other Black Hartford parents who earned sufficient incomes sought to rent apartments or buy homes in suburban towns to purchase access into suburban public schools, as many Whites had done a generation earlier. But racial steering by real estate agents, and other forms of housing discrimination, continued to block many Black families from entering White towns or neighborhoods during the 1980s and beyond.<sup>44</sup>

Given these constraints, Saundra Foster and others registered their children un-

<sup>40</sup> Connecticut State Department of Education, *The Distribution of Negroes in the Public Schools of Connecticut, 1967-68* (Hartford, 1967); Connecticut State Department of Education, "School and Grade Enrollment by Race, 1977-1984," n.d.

<sup>43</sup> Jack Dougherty, Jesse Wanzer, and Christina Ramsay, "Missing the Goal: A Visual Guide to Sheff V. O'Neill School Desegregation: June 2007" (Hartford, Connecticut and Storrs, Connecticut: The Cities, Suburbs and Schools research project at Trinity College and the University of Connecticut Center for Education Policy Analysis, 2007), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/6/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/6/).

<sup>44</sup> Bixby et al., "Some Real Estate Agents Discriminate Against Black Home Buyers."

der relatives' addresses in affordable suburbs such as Bloomfield and Windsor, located on Hartford's northern border, with growing numbers of Black residents. Both of these districts reported around 20-30 non-residency cases annually in the mid-1980s, though Windsor school administrators handled these through registration checks. By contrast, West Hartford, a wealthier suburb that historically kept out most Black renters and homebuyers, reported only 6 non-residency cases each year, despite having much larger student enrollments.<sup>45</sup> Black Hartford parents had fewer familial ties in West Hartford, and their children would have clearly stood out in West Hartford high schools in 1984, each of which enrolled between 10 to 40 Black students.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, Bloomfield dramatically shifted its stance on non-resident students when town leaders decided that the police department, rather than school administrators, should investigate and arrest violators. Police charged Saundra Foster and three other parents with first-degree larceny, a class B felony offense that could bring up to 20 years in prison and a fine up to \$10,000 in Connecticut at that time. Initially, police planned to charge the parents with third-degree larceny for defrauding Bloomfield taxpayers of \$4,001, the average expenditure per pupil in Bloomfield public schools. (If students had remained in Hartford schools, the average would have been around \$3,700, or 8 percent less.) But Bloomfield police increased the charge to first-degree larceny on the grounds that the crime included an element of "extortion" by parents. When the story broke in March 1985, attorneys at the Connecticut Department of Education told reporters that they had never before heard of a case where local law enforcement pressed criminal charges in a school residency case.<sup>47</sup>

Through their highly-publicized scare tactics, the Bloomfield police adopted President Reagan's racial and gendered stereotype of "welfare queens" who "stole" funds from more-deserving taxpayers. But Saundra Foster did not fit this description. She was a Black single mother who also held a white-collar job at Travelers' Insurance in Hartford.<sup>48</sup> Yet even if Saundra Foster had received government assistance, her son would still be entitled to a free, quality, public education. But suburban law enforcement did not care about the state's constitutional rights to equal educational opportunity. Instead, by appealing to White suburban distrust of Black urban mothers, the police exploited racist and sexist images to uphold exclusionary school district lines.

<sup>45</sup>Dave Drury, "'Line Jumping' Is Issue Statewide, Officials Say," *Hartford Courant: B*, April 7, 1985, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/758695451?accountid=14405>.

<sup>46</sup>Education, "School and Grade Enrollment by Race, 1977-1984." for Hall and Conard High Schools, respectively, October 1984

<sup>47</sup>Drury, "Bloomfield Cracking down on Non-Residents in Schools.;" Drury, "2 City Parents Are Charged in Residence Case.". Dollar amounts were reported by the press in spring 1985. A year later, educational cost reports for the 1984-85 academic year became available and were higher. Net current expenses per pupil were \$4,522 in Bloomfield, and \$4,216 in Hartford. Connecticut Public Expenditure Council, *Local Public School Expenses and State Aid in Connecticut* (Hartford: CPEC, n.d.), <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/3498569>, 1986.

<sup>48</sup>Drury, "2 City Parents Are Charged in Residence Case."

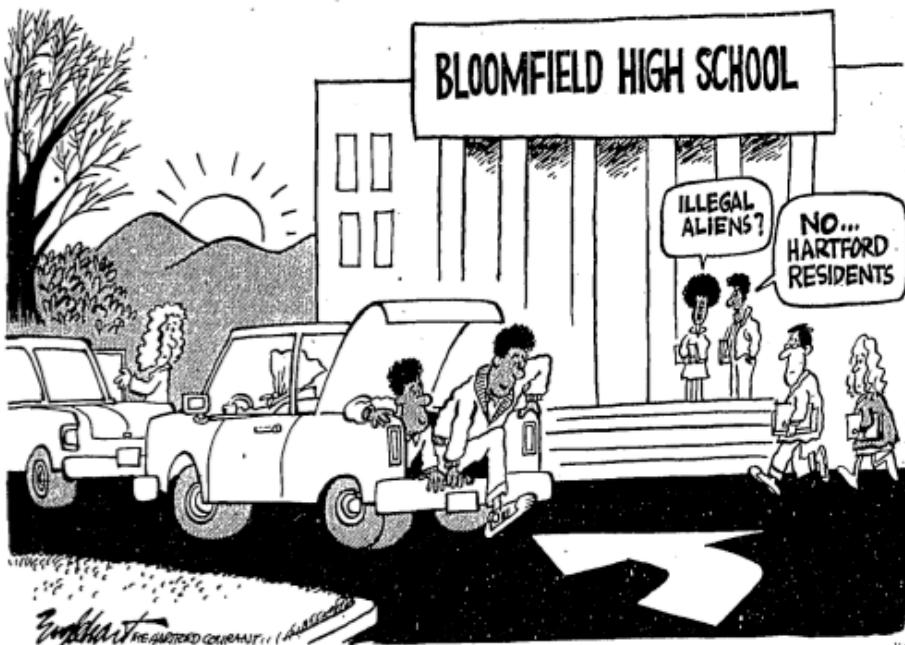


Figure 5.9: Amid the controversial arrest of Saundra Foster, *Hartford Courant* political cartoonist Bob Englehart portrayed Black Hartford students arriving at Bloomfield High School hidden in the trunks of cars, conjuring imagery of “illegal aliens” crossing the US-Mexico border. Source: *Hartford Courant*, copyrighted 1985, included here under fair-use guidelines.<sup>52</sup>

Some news reporters also played into suburban readers’ anxieties over non-resident students. In the *Hartford Courant* daily paper, journalists occasionally referred to Hartford residents in Bloomfield public school as “illegal students,” which conjured up popular images of “illegal aliens” on the US-Mexican border.<sup>49</sup> The *Courant’s* political cartoonist highlighted this “illegal” theme by drawing Black Hartford students being smuggled into Bloomfield High School in the trunk of a car, as if they were crossing the US border, with Black suburban students posing questions about the identity of the intruders.<sup>50</sup> By labeling Hartford students as “illegals,” the media implied that Hartford students should be denied their state constitutional right to equal educational opportunity, and distanced suburban readers from the growing problem of city-suburban inequity.

<sup>49</sup>Drury, “Bloomfield Cracking down on Non-Residents in Schools.”

<sup>50</sup>Bob Englehart, “Editorial Cartoon: Bloomfield High School,” *Hartford Courant: C*, April 5, 1985, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/755822125?accountid=14405>.

### Criticizing the Arrests

When police arrested Saundra Foster and three other parents, local and national activists seized this opportunity to call attention to the broader issues of city-suburban inequity and the state's constitutional rights to equal education. State Senator Frank Barrows, who represented Hartford's predominantly Black North End and Bloomfield, accompanied Foster when she turned herself in at the Bloomfield police station. Barrows publicly criticized Hartford's "deplorable" educational system. "It's a shame that someone has to be arrested while trying to educate their children," he told reporters, and praised Foster as "the next Rosa Parks." Reverend Jesse Jackson, the nation's most prominent civil rights activist, publicly denounced the arrests while speaking in Hartford at the National Association of Black Mayors. "These parents have exposed. . . a two-tier educational system," Jackson declared. "Other parents should be encouraged to take their children to Bloomfield or wherever good education exists." Local television publicized the arrests and national newspaper headlines announced that the quality of city schools was on trial in Connecticut. Even Gerald Tirozzi, the State Commissioner of Education, acknowledged his growing concern over the "two Connecticuts" and the widening disparity between urban and suburban public schools.<sup>53</sup>

Foster's attorney, M. Donald Cardwell, raised the most provocative question: "How does one steal a free public education?" The underlying issue was not larceny across school district lines, but the growing socioeconomic disparities between districts. The median household income in 1980 ranged from under \$12,000 in the impoverished city of Hartford to over \$24,000 in middle-class suburbs such as Bloomfield and West Hartford, to nearly \$32,000 in upper-class suburbs such as Avon.<sup>54</sup> "When you educate the poor people in one group, the middle class people in another group, and the upper-class people in the other third group, something unfair is happening," Cardwell observed.<sup>55</sup>

When Saundra Foster's case moved from Bloomfield into state criminal court in May 1985—and public scrutiny of the arrests intensified—the charges against her and the other parents were dropped. State's Attorney John M. Baily recommended dismissal after he researched Bloomfield's recent shift on school residency cases from administrative action to police enforcement. Singling out Foster and the other parents, he warned, would appear to be highly selective and "could be looked upon as malicious prosecution." Furthermore, the Foster case spoke "to the core of the issue of the constitutional right to a free education," Baily cautioned. "These questions should be litigated. But this is not the right forum." Judge Joseph Purtill agreed with the State's Attorney and dismissed the case.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Drury, "2 City Parents Are Charged in Residence Case"; Johnson, "Quality of City Schools Tested in Trial on Residency"; Mendoza, "Jumping the Line."

<sup>54</sup>US Census, Table 57a: Summary of Economic Characteristics for Towns, 1980.

<sup>55</sup>Mendoza, "Jumping the Line."

<sup>56</sup>Bass, "Case on Residency and Schools Halted."

After the court dropped the charges against Foster and other parents, Bloomfield leaders recognized their mistake in authorizing the arrests, but devised a more acceptable means to heighten enforcement of residency requirements. The Bloomfield Town Council and the Board of Education jointly adopted a resolution to allot more funds to check residency status and enforce policies through school administrative action before resorting to criminal proceedings.<sup>57</sup> Also, the Bloomfield Board of Education began charging tuition to non-resident students, which gave the district a legal basis to pursue civil suits to recover costs.<sup>58</sup> As educational costs continued to rise during the 1980s, Bloomfield and other suburban districts began to routinely hire residency officers – and private investigators in some cases – to actively police their boundaries. “The student expulsion business is booming,” read the news story that tracked the number of cases identified by school residency officers in towns bordering Hartford, such as Bloomfield, East Hartford, West Hartford, and Wethersfield. “It’s very cost efficient,” noted one suburban school superintendent, who explained that identifying and removing nearly 30 non-resident students saved the district over \$130,000, well worth the \$30,000 annual salary of the school residency officer, who previously was a town police officer. Local journalists wrote stories about accompanying residency officers on “stakeouts” to catch lime-jumpers. Suburban districts created tougher requirements for new students during school registration, such as showing a property deed, lease, or utility bill as proof-of-residency. Heightened enforcement of rigid city-suburban school boundaries – with administrative enforcement rather than criminal prosecution – became the new norm.<sup>59</sup>

Saundra Foster gladly stepped away from the spotlight when her case was dismissed in 1985. But the activists who came to her defense continued to raise public awareness of city-suburban inequity, and questioned whether it is possible to “steal” an education that Connecticut is constitutionally obligated to provide to all students. Four years later in 1989, a coalition of Black, White, and Puerto Rican parents from city and suburban schools, along with a creative team of civil rights attorneys, filed their lawsuit to challenge racial and economic segregation in metropolitan Hartford, which came to be known as the Sheff v. O’Neill case.

<sup>57</sup>Dave Drury, “Bloomfield Alters Its Policy for School Residence Cases,” *Hartford Courant*, August 16, 1985, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/758752577?accountid=14405>.

<sup>58</sup>Jane Latus Jones, “Schools Will Accept Tuition Non-Residents,” *The Bloomfield Journal*, August 16, 1985.

<sup>59</sup>“Residency Officer’s Job Is in Full Swing,” *The Bloomfield Journal*, November 1, 1985; Jon Elsen, “Bloomfield Officials Laud School Officer’s Work,” *The Hartford Courant (1923-1991): SECTION B*, April 12, 1986, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/899845262?accountid=14405>; Rick Green, “Not in His Town: If You Don’t Live in Bloomfield, William Mahoney’s Job Is to Make Sure You Don’t Go to School There,” *Hartford Courant*, February 23, 1992, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/1976803002?accountid=14405>; Linda B Hirsh, “Schools to Use New Policies to Exclude Out-of-Town Residents,” *Hartford Courant*, July 9, 1992, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/1984955026?accountid=14405>.

*About the authors and contributors:* Vianna Iorio (Trinity 2019) and JiYun Lee (Trinity 2017) both wrote essays on this topic for the Cities Suburbs and Schools seminar, which Vianna later merged and revised for this book, in collaboration with Jack Dougherty. Also, Jasmin Agosto (Trinity 2010) and Richelle Benjamin (Trinity 2015) researched school residency sources.



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## **Chapter 6**

# **Choosing to Cross the Lines**

This chapter describes the present-day political compromises that have emerged from battles over schooling and housing boundaries. When civil rights activists finally pressured Connecticut leaders to deliver on the promise of integration with the Sheff remedies, beginning in 2003, the agreement hinged on voluntary public school choice that did not require participation by any individual, or initially, any suburban district. Instead, state leaders agreed to expand interdistrict magnet schools, with highly-desirable curricular offerings in the arts, sciences, and other specialties to attract white suburban families to voluntarily enroll their children in the same school as urban students of color. The Sheff remedy signals a tangible civil rights victory. As of 2015, state funding for 48 interdistrict magnet schools and the Open Choice city-suburban transfer program enrolls about 12,000 Hartford minority students (or 45 percent of the total) in racially integrated settings. But compromises come at a cost. Interdistrict schools merely blur the boundary lines, rather than erase the root causes of inequality. Furthermore, this voluntary integration plan protects suburban white privilege, and our data analysis shows how it favors more privileged Hartford families. The Sheff remedy has attracted critics from all sides, but the suburban-dominated state government has resisted change and threatened to unilaterally drop all support, despite the judge's order. At present, the Sheff schooling compromise-and related housing voucher policies that promise greater choice-are caught in a standoff, with suburban interests holding the upper hand.

TO COME



## **Chapter 7**

# **Where Do We Draw the Line?**

TO COME



# Chapter 8

## Teaching and Researching *On The Line*

This chapter describes how the book emerged through working with liberal arts undergraduates and Hartford-area community partners in the Cities Suburbs and Schools seminar at Trinity College. For educators, this chapter offers lesson ideas to help students of all ages explore key questions about past and present topics raised in the book. For historical researchers, this chapter describes some of the methods and source materials consulted in creating this book, and some questions that remain unresolved. By making our work process more transparent, we hope to inspire people to educate others and engage in further research on topics in this book.

### 8.1 Investigating Spatial Inequality with the Cities Suburbs and Schools Project

*I wrote this essay as an introductory overview to Hartford-area education and housing research, featuring studies conducted with students and faculty involved in the Cities, Suburbs, and Schools Project at Trinity College. It originally appeared in the 2011-12 preview edition of On The Line, and was later published in Xiangming Chen and Nicholas Bacon's 2013 edited volume on Hartford. This version has been revised and expanded to include more recent works and digital features.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup>Jack Dougherty, "Investigating Spatial Inequality with the Cities, Suburbs, and Schools Project," in *Confronting Urban Legacy: Rediscovering Hartford and New England's Forgotten Cities*, ed. Xiangming Chen and Nicholas Bacon (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 2013), 110–26, <http://books.google.com/books?isbn=073914944X>.

For over a decade, Trinity College students, colleagues, and I have worked together on the Cities, Suburbs, and Schools Project to better understand the past and present relationship between public education and private housing in metropolitan Hartford, Connecticut.<sup>2</sup> The CSS Project refers to the collective work done by undergraduates in the interdisciplinary seminar I teach, as well as independent studies, summer research assistantships, and other presentations and papers with student and faculty co-authors. Together, we formulate research questions from provocative readings from literature in history and the social sciences, and design studies using historical, qualitative, and/or quantitative methods to test these ideas in the Hartford region. Several leading scholars have kindly provided guidance and critical feedback via conference calls and professional meetings. Inspired by Trinity's broader Community Learning Initiative, we also have conducted several research projects in collaboration with local partner organizations, which help us to frame questions, identify sources, and interpret our findings.<sup>3</sup>

In its broadest sense, our work explores spatial inequalities arising from the increasingly tightening bonds between schooling and housing in the city-suburban Hartford region over the last century. Looking back, our past has been shaped by the lines we have drawn to separate ourselves. Real estate agents maintained the color line. Mortgage lenders engaged in discriminatory redlining. Locally elected officials drew exclusionary residential zoning lines. Suburban homebuyers shopped for better opportunities on the other side of public school attendance lines. As these boundaries became more powerful over time, civil rights activists fought to cross over, redraw, or erase these lines.

The story of schooling and racial inequality in Greater Hartford has attracted many scholars and journalists, most notably Christopher Collier's encyclopedic history, *Connecticut's Public Schools*, and Susan Eaton's close examination of one classroom amid the Sheff v O'Neill segregation case in *The Children in Room E4*.<sup>4</sup> The work of the CSS Project expands upon this literature by analyzing how the relationship between schooling and housing became more influential from the late nineteenth century to the present, generating the contemporary policy challenges of voluntary desegregation remedies and public school choice. Specifically, this chapter highlights and synthesizes research conducted by Trinity students who have worked with me to answer two questions. First, when and how did the most desirable schools shift from the city to selected suburbs, and what role did the real estate industry play in this transformation? Second, under growing pressure from civil rights activists, state and local government have implemented voluntary desegregation remedies and public school choice. Whose interests have been served by these policies—and whose have not? To answer those questions, we need to understand the historical evolution of the

<sup>2</sup>Cities Suburbs and Schools Project at Trinity College, <http://commons.trincoll.edu/cssp>.

<sup>3</sup>Community Learning at Trinity College, <http://cher.trincoll.edu>.

<sup>4</sup>Christopher Collier, *Connecticut's Public Schools: A History, 1650-2000* (Orange, CT: Clearwater Press, 2009); Susan Eaton, *The Children in Room E4: American Education on Trial* (Chapel Hill NC: Algonquin Books, 2007).

marketplace commonly known today as “shopping for schools,” and recent policy reforms that have attempted to decouple public education and private housing.

### **Follow the Money from City to Suburbs**

Trinity students encountering this topic for the first time are astounded to learn about the stark economic disparity surrounding their campus. According to 2009 estimates from the US Census Bureau, Hartford ranks as the 4th poorest city among those with populations over 100,000 in the United States (excluding Puerto Rico), with an average family income of only \$42,775 in 2009. Nearly three out of ten families in Hartford live below the current federal poverty line, currently around \$22,000 for a family of four. But what is most striking is that this impoverished city is located inside the 13th richest metropolitan statistical area, ranked by more than 350 such areas across the United States. In the Hartford metropolitan region (currently defined by the Census as Hartford, Middlesex, and Tolland counties), the average family income reached \$99,597 in 2009. When comparing the two columns in the table below, an income gap of over \$56,000 separates the average family living inside the Hartford city boundary from those residing in the Hartford metropolitan area.<sup>5</sup>

**8.1.0.0.1 Table: Lowest Average Family Income in US Cities over 100,000 (excluding Puerto Rico), 2009**

Rank	City	Avg Fam Income 2009
1	Flint city, Michigan	\$40,368
2	Cleveland city, Ohio	\$40,600
3	Detroit city, Michigan	\$41,443
4	<b>Hartford city, Connecticut</b>	\$42,775
5	Dayton city, Ohio	\$43,406
6	Hialeah city, Florida	\$45,010
7	East Los Angeles CDP, California	\$45,320
8	Brownsville city, Texas	\$45,507
9	Paterson city, New Jersey	\$46,954
10	Toledo city, Ohio	\$48,846
11	Rochester city, New York	\$49,072
12	South Bend city, Indiana	\$49,691
13	Allentown city, Pennsylvania	\$50,105
14	Syracuse city, New York	\$50,220
15	Laredo city, Texas	\$51,152

<sup>5</sup>“Average Family Income in the Past 12 Months in 2009 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars, Table SE:T:59” (American Community Survey 1-year estimates via Social Explorer, 2009), in author’s Google Spreadsheet, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AtmGKybdRLIZdDJEcDRxSXN1ZS1oZkNISmFEOE9UEE>.

**8.1.0.0.2 Table: Highest Average Family Income in US Metropolitan Statistical Areas, 2009**

Rank	Metro Statistical Area	Avg Fam Income 2009
1	Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT Metro Area	\$150,336
2	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area	\$127,167
3	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA Metro Area	\$120,407
4	Trenton-Ewing, NJ Metro Area	\$119,590
5	San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA Metro Area	\$118,713
6	Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH Metro Area	\$113,192
7	Boulder, CO Metro Area	\$110,988
8	Napa, CA Metro Area	\$106,579
9	NY-Northern NJ-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA Metro Area	\$105,680
10	Baltimore-Towson, MD Metro Area	\$101,836
11	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA Metro Area	\$100,854
12	Naples-Marco Island, FL Metro Area	\$100,466
13	<b>Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT Metro Area</b>	\$99,597
14	Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA Metro Area	\$98,712
15	Anchorage, AK Metro Area	\$98,290

But the region did not always look this way. In 1876, national headlines declared Hartford to be “the richest city in the United States,” relative to its number of inhabitants. When tabulating the value of all bank deposits, insurance company assets, and taxable property of homes and businesses, Connecticut’s capital city outperformed more famous competitors such as New York and Chicago. To be clear, this claim defined “richest” based on corporate (rather than individual) wealth. By 1903, scholars such as Hartford Seminary sociologist Alexander Merriam pointed out that local wealth varied widely in Hartford, between residences of “wealthier citizens...scattered in different parts of the city” and “a slum of almost the first magnitude” along the Connecticut river. Nevertheless, the central city of Hartford served as an economic engine for the capital region well into the first few decades of the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

Where did the money go? One way to visualize the spatial redistribution of wealth from the City of Hartford to its suburbs is to track home values by town during the twentieth century. For each decade in the map below, the average dwelling or single-family home value is indexed to the region to correct for historical price inflation, with higher values represented by darker shades of green. While not a precise measure, the rough differences over time are striking. In 1910, the region’s highest home values were located in the City of Hartford and its neighboring suburb of West Hartford. In second place were inner-ring suburbs with manufacturing jobs (such as East Hartford, Manchester, Windsor,

<sup>6</sup>Clark, “The Charter Oak City.”; Merriam, *The Social Significance of the Smaller City*, reprinted as Merriam, “The Social Conditions of the Smaller City.”

# SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY.

VOL. XIII.

NOVEMBER, 1876.

No. 1.

## THE CHARTER OAK CITY.



Figure 8.1: Explore this scrolling version of *Scribner's Monthly* in 1876, which declared Hartford as “the richest city in the United States,” relative to its population. Digitized by Google Books.<sup>8</sup>

and New Britain), followed by outlying farming towns to the west and southeast. In 1910, the average home value in Hartford was nearly \$5,000, four times more than the average \$1,200 home value in the agricultural community of Avon.

A century later, that relationship had reversed, as home values in the city fell to nearly the lowest in the region, while some outlying farm towns—known today as elite suburbs—climbed to the top. In 2010, the average sales price for a single-family home in Avon climbed to \$536,000, more than three times the average \$178,000 sales price in Hartford. In some eyes, the once-powerful city-based economic powerhouse had become a doughnut—a fiscally depressed center surrounded by an affluent suburban ring—though with wide variation in the middle. A closer look at recent data reveals wider variation across suburbs than most assume. The Connecticut Metropatterns report dispelled “the myth of the affluent suburban monolith” by illustrating how some suburbs face high levels of fiscal stress, based on the cost of educating their population of needy children relative to their local capacity to raise tax revenues.<sup>9</sup>

### The Rise of “Shopping for Schools”

The status of Hartford’s city and suburban school districts also reversed trajectories during this same period. A century ago, Hartford Public High School offered what nearly all agreed to be the best secondary education in the entire region, attracting students into the city. According to HPHS student records, one out of five students resided outside of Hartford, many in bordering towns, and paid tuition to enroll. Emerging suburbs typically had no high school or one that some viewed as substandard. In nearby Wethersfield in 1917, parents strongly objected to plans to eliminate Latin in their fledgling high school, while four members of the local school board sent their children to Hartford city schools. Two decades later, a prominent survey by Columbia University Teachers College praised Hartford’s public high schools for “maintaining the ‘gold standard’ of its college preparatory students,” with a reputation “widely and favorably known through eastern collegiate circles.” As late as 1958, surveys of Hartford teachers reported it to be “common knowledge in education circles that the city of Hartford and its school system have enjoyed an excellent reputation as a good place in which to live and work over the past 20 years,” according to Trinity researcher Eric Lawrence. At the same time, ten miles west of the city, the rural town of Avon ceased busing its older students to a neighboring district and began constructing their own high school building. By the late 1990s, after decades of urban decline nearly caused Hartford Public High School to lose its accreditation, Avon High School claimed title to the most prestigious public

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<sup>9</sup>Myron Orfield and Thomas Luce, *Connecticut Metropatterns: A Regional Agenda for Community and Prosperity in Connecticut* (Minneapolis, MN: Ameregis, 2003), <http://www.law.umn.edu/metro/metro-area-studies/metropolitan-area-studies-by-region.html>; See home value data sources in “Calculating Wealth and Poverty in Past and Present” chapter, TO COME in this book.

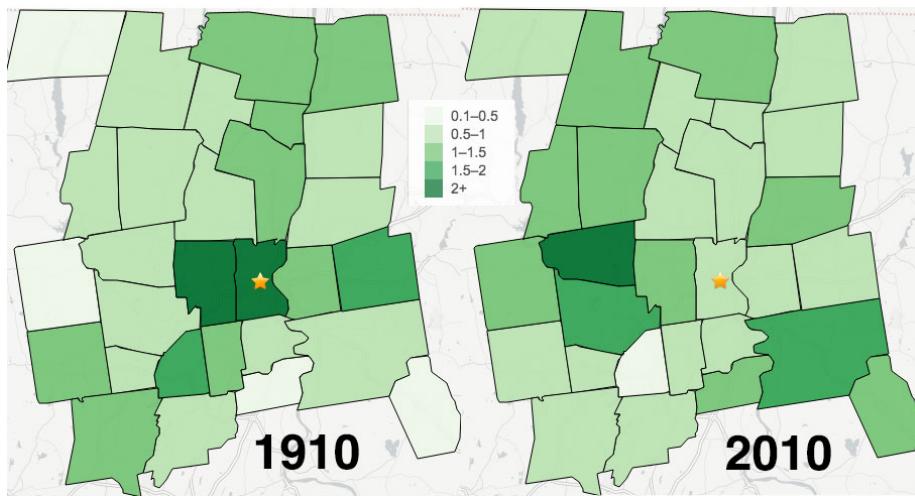


Figure 8.2: Explore the full-screen interactive map of home values in Hartford County, 1910-2010. The most valuable single-family homes (in dark green) shifted from the capital city to selected suburbs over time. Click the tabs or use arrow keys to advance years. Hover over towns for details. Home values have been indexed (where county average = 1.0) to adjust for rising prices over time. Missing values appear in gray. Sources: 1910-1980 from Connecticut Tax Commissioner, author's calculation of average dwelling value from equalized assessments; 1990 from Capital Region Council of Governments, median single-family home sales price; 2000-10 from State of Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management, average single-family home sales price (2000-2010). Learn more in "Calculating Wealth and Poverty in Past and Present" chapter, TO COME in this book. View historical sources and code for this map, developed by Ilya Ilyankou and Jack Dougherty, based on an earlier version with UConn MAGIC.<sup>11</sup>

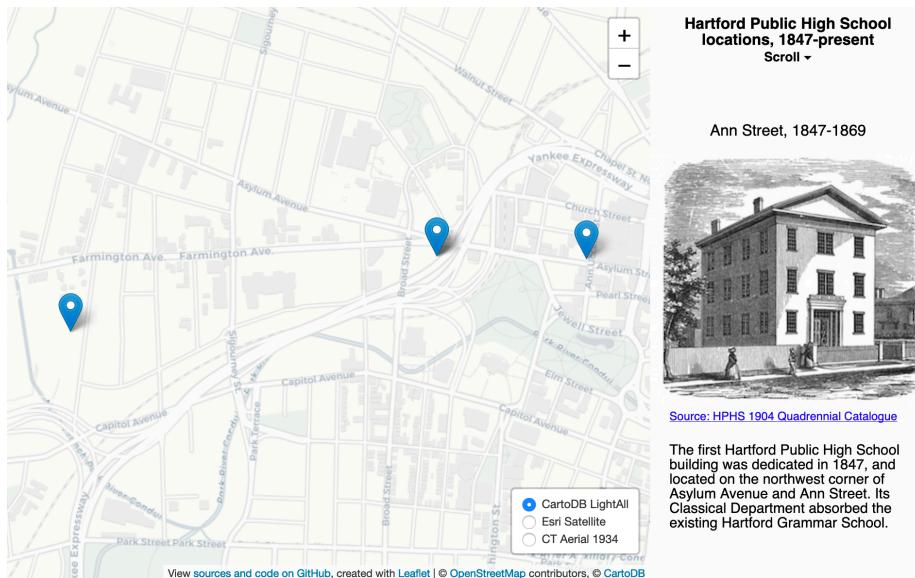


Figure 8.3: Scroll down this interactive storymap to view images of Hartford Public High School as it moved to different locations over time. View historical sources and code for this map, developed by Ilya Ilyankou and Jack Dougherty.<sup>14</sup>

secondary education in the Hartford region.<sup>12</sup>

What attracted white middle-class families to move from the cities to the suburbs? Ken Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier*, which paved a way of thinking for a generation of suburban historians, boiled down the causes of post-war mass suburbanization to "two necessary conditions...the suburban ideal and population growth—and two fundamental causes—racial prejudice and cheap housing." Indeed, there is supporting evidence for Jackson's thesis in the Hartford region, particularly the influence of discriminatory public policy decisions on private housing markets. For instance, my colleagues at the University of Connecticut Libraries MAGIC Center and I reconstructed Hartford area maps, originally created by the federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation and private lenders in 1937 to assess mortgage risks by neighborhoods. Officials coded the best investments in green, and the worst in red, which led them to be known in later

<sup>12</sup>Hartford Public High School, "Student Records" (HPHS Museum and Archive, 1882); "Kicks on Schools in Wethersfield.", p. 11; George D Strayer and N. L. Engelhardt, *The Hartford Public Schools in 1936-37: A Comprehensive Report of the Survey of the Public Schools of Hartford, Connecticut: Survey Pamphlet* (New York: Division of Field Studies, Institute of Educational Research, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1937), <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/11136338>, pamphlet X, p. 13; "Personnel Policies: A Report Submitted to the Hartford Board of Education" (Pamphlet Collection, Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library, 1958), cited in Eric Lawrence, "Teacher Suburbanization & the Diverging Discourse on Hartford Public School Quality, 1950-1970" (American Studies senior research project, Trinity College, 2002), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/35/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/35/).

years as “redlining” maps. But rather than evaluate only the physical property conditions, field agents were instructed to record the racial, ethnic, and social composition of current residents, based on the prevailing White standards of the time. The reports discouraged lenders from offering mortgages to neighborhoods with an “infiltration” of “Negro,” “Foreign-born,” and “Relief families,” thereby favoring mortgage lending to White middle-class areas. Similarly, during the early 1940s, suburban West Hartford officials blocked African-Americans from moving into federally subsidized wartime public housing.<sup>15</sup>

Around the same time, some West Hartford real estate developers wrote racially restrictive covenants into deeds that prohibited residents “other than the white race” from renting or buying property, which remained legally enforceable until 1948, as Trinity alumna Tracey Wilson and student researcher Katie Campbell discovered. These and other hidden chapters of Northern racial injustice, as well as activists’ efforts to overturn them, have been recounted by Trinity researchers in a special section of ConnecticutHistory.org. See also Writing Greater Hartford’s Civil Rights Past with ConnecticutHistory.org with Elaina Rollins and Clarissa Ceglio, and Restricting with Property Covenants with Tracey Wilson and Vianna Iorio, both in this book.<sup>18</sup>

But Jackson does not explain how public schools fit into his equation, because their role shifted over time. During the immediate post-war years, doubts about the quality of schools in new suburbs meant that they did not serve as a primary motivator for leaving Hartford. Yet by the late 1950s and 1960s, suburban schools became powerful magnets that, on their own, began to attract White middle-class families. How do we explain this shift? The story of post-war metropolitan history needs to address how real estate interests, suburban homebuyers, and government officials contributed to the rise of a relatively new practice known as Selling and Shopping for Schools, as described in more detail elsewhere in this book.”<sup>21</sup>

Migration out of Hartford was not driven by a perception of higher-quality suburban schools in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In several oral history interviews that Trinity researcher Jacqueline Katz conducted with former Hartford residents who moved to suburbs in the immediate post-war era, none mentioned educational quality as a deciding factor. Clifford Floyd, a Hartford insurance accountant who moved to Avon in 1952 with his spouse and three young children, gave a typical response. “We didn’t come to Avon because of the schools,” he explained. “We just thought it would be better to have a lot more land for the kids to play around in.” Even in West Hartford, where suburbanization

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<sup>15</sup> Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, p. 287; See Federal Lending and Redlining, with Sean McGann and Racial Barriers to Public Housing, with Emily Meehan, both in this book.

<sup>18</sup> “Trinity College Students Call Attention to Histories of Inequality,” ConnecticutHistory.org, May 2013, <http://connecticuthistory.org/trinity-college-students-call-attention-to-histories-of-inequality/>

<sup>21</sup> Jack Dougherty, “Shopping for Schools: How Public Education and Private Housing Shaped Suburban Connecticut,” *Journal of Urban History* 38, no. 2 (March 2012): 205–24, <http://juh.sagepub.com/content/38/2>

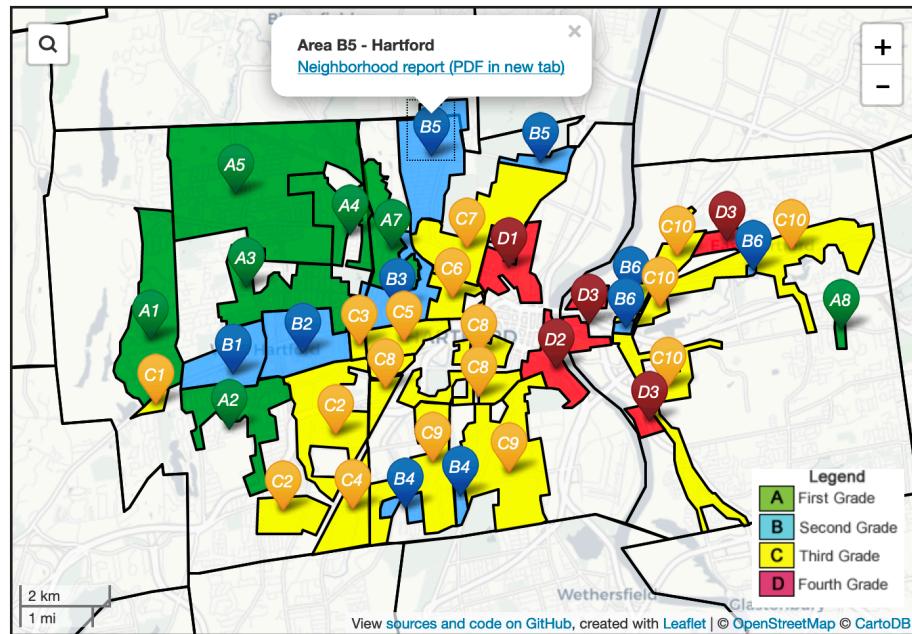


Figure 8.4: Click on color-coded areas in this interactive map to view neighborhood appraisals by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) in the Hartford area, 1937. HOLC prioritized neighborhoods to receive mortgage lending from the highest level (A, in green) to the lowest (D, in red). This federal agency worked with local banks and lenders to evaluate Hartford and over 200 other cities during the Great Depression. They measured not only physical conditions, but also the “social status of the population,” and downgraded neighborhoods with non-white, immigrant, and poor residents. In later decades, activists labeled these discriminatory lending practices as “redlining.” View historical sources and code for this map, developed by Ilya Ilyankou and Jack Dougherty, based on an earlier version with UConn MAGIC and the Kirwin Institute.<sup>17</sup>

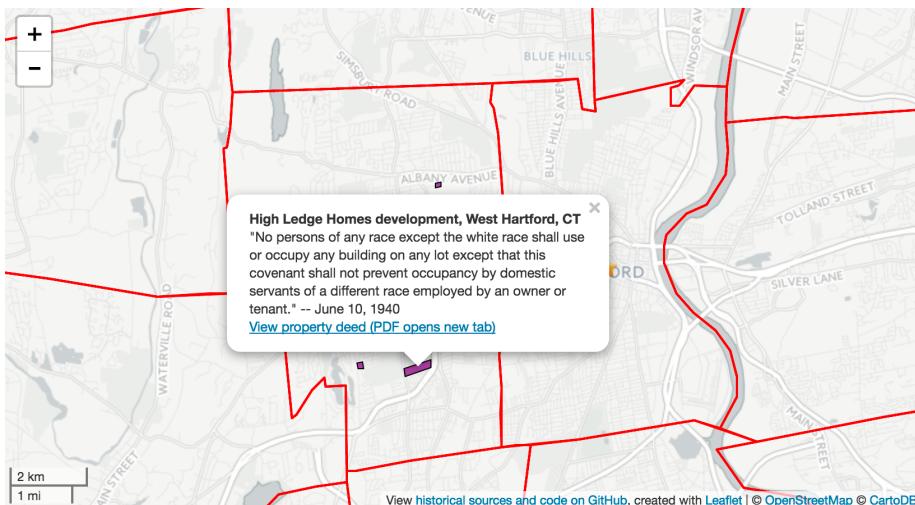


Figure 8.5: Click on colored rectangles in the full-screen interactive map of restrictive covenants in the Hartford area in the 1940s. Real estate developers wrote restrictions into property deeds that prohibited occupants “other than the Caucasian race.” The U.S. Supreme Court approved these restrictions in the 1926 Corrigan v. Buckley ruling, but later declared them unenforceable in the 1948 Shelley v. Kraemer decision. Yet these restrictions still exist in official property records. To date, we have found 5 race restrictive covenants in West Hartford. If you know of similar restrictions, by race or religion, anywhere in Connecticut, contact the author. View historical sources and the code for this map, developed by Ilya Ilyankou and Jack Dougherty, based on an earlier version created with UConn MAGIC.<sup>20</sup>

began decades before the war, local newspaper editor Bice Clemow found low standards in school facilities, curriculum, and teacher salaries when using a survey drawn from *Life* magazine. “If we lived in a mill town, where the income level was modest, it would not be startling to find that we could not afford the best in public education,” wrote Clemow. “To document that we have grade B-secondary education available in West Hartford is a shock of another order.”<sup>22</sup>

The rise of suburban schools can be attributed partly to the actions of real estate firms, which promoted selected private suburban homes by marketing their access to more desirable public schools. In West Hartford, as school enrollments grew with the post-war baby boom, a heated controversy arose at a 1954 school board meeting over a proposal to address overcrowding by redistricting neighborhoods to less crowded schools. Parents who objected based their views on the real estate market. “Whenever real estate men sell property, they tell their clients that they are in the Sedgwick, Webster Hill, or Bugbee areas,” attendance zones on the newly-constructed western side of town. Superintendent Edmund Thorne responded by blaming real estate agents for creating “social class consciousness” in the suburb, and asked, “Doesn’t it boil down to some people thinking there is more prestige to going to one school than another?” But what Thorne perceived as an imaginary distinction was becoming very real for suburban homebuyers.<sup>23</sup>

Newspaper advertisements reflect the rise of “branding” marketing by real estate firms during the 1950s and 1960s. Trinity researcher Kelli Perkins and other students compiled a sample of real estate ads in the *Hartford Courant Sunday* edition from 1920 to 1990. We tabulated the proportion of ads that mentioned a specific school by name, rather than a generic description such as “near school.” Compared to other suburbs, West Hartford had the highest proportion of school-specific ads, peaking at 38 percent of all residential ads in the town in 1965. Through marketing, real estate firms sought to increase the dollar value of a private home by signaling its location within what homebuyers perceived as a more desirable public school attendance zone. Simply moving into the suburb of West Hartford was no longer sufficient: success also entailed buying into the “right” neighborhood” to attend a “good” public school.<sup>24</sup>

But real estate firms did not treat all suburbs equally. Most agents refused to sell homes to Blacks in any suburb in the region during the 1950s, but they eventually shifted their stance on one town, Bloomfield, located on the northern border of Hartford and West Hartford. Middle-class African Americans such as

<sup>22</sup>Clifford Floyd, “Oral History Interview on Avon, CT” (Cities, Suburbs, Schools Project, Trinity College Digital Repository, June 2003), cited in Jacqueline Katz, “Historical Memory and the Transformation of City and Suburban Schools” (Educational Studies Senior Research Project, Trinity College, 2004), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/27/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/27/); Bice Clemow, *A Layman Looks at Schools in West Hartford: A Series Reprinted from the West Hartford News from January 25 Through February 15, 1951, Based on the Life Magazine Questionnaire* (West Hartford, CT: West Hartford News, 1951), <https://history.westhartfordlibrary.org/items/show/506>

<sup>23</sup>“New School Lines Offered by Thorne,” *Hartford Times*, April 8, 1954

<sup>24</sup>Dougherty, “Shopping for Schools.”

## 8.1. INVESTIGATING SPATIAL INEQUALITY WITH THE CITIES SUBURBS AND SCHOOLS PROJECT115



Figure 8.6: Three West Hartford private real estate ads in 1960, with public schools highlighted in red. Copyrighted by the *Hartford Courant*, reprinted here under Fair Use guidelines.<sup>26</sup>

Spencer Shaw, a librarian from the city of Hartford, reported having had “several refusals before from real estate people,” yet finally succeeded in purchasing a home through an agent in the early 1960s, from a Greek couple in Bloomfield. The sale sparked a racial transition. “I think within about two months, four or five of the other families moved out,” Shaw told Trinity interviewer Jacqueline Katz.<sup>27</sup>

Real estate firms engaged in two discriminatory practices—block-busting and racial steering—that shaped the composition of Bloomfield and neighboring suburbs during the late 1960s and 1970s. In block-busting, a real estate agent introduced Black homebuyers into a White neighborhood to scare owners into selling their homes below market value to the agent, who immediately resold them above market value to Black buyers. This sales technique played on White racial fears to make a quick profit. Trinity researcher Aleesha Young compared city directory listings for selected streets where block-busting occurred in Bloomfield, and found some, such as Alexander Road, experienced a residential turnover rate of 41 percent from 1970 to 1975. In the related practice of racial steering, real estate firms diverted Black buyers to home sales in areas such as Bloomfield, while redirecting White buyers to places such as Avon and West Hartford. According to witnesses such as John Keever, a White homebuyer who asked to view homes in Bloomfield, real estate agents “made innuendos about the school system” there and warned about racial attacks against his daughter, but spoke about White suburban school districts in “glowing terms.” Together, busting and steering contributed to the racial population of the Bloomfield school district changing at a much faster rate than the town at large, illustrating a strengthening bond between public schools and private real estate, in the

<sup>27</sup>Spencer Shaw, “Oral History Interview on Bloomfield, CT” (Cities, Suburbs, Schools Project, Trinity College Digital Repository, July 2, 2003), cited in Katz, “Historical Memory and the Transformation of City and Suburban Schools.”



Figure 8.7: Spencer Shaw, a Black Hartford resident, successfully purchased a home in a White neighborhood in Bloomfield in the early 1960s. Photo by Jacqueline Katz.



Figure 8.8: Adelle Wright organized Bloomfield residents against real estate block-busting in the early 1970s.

opposite direction.<sup>28</sup>

Local organizations, with assistance from National Neighbors, a multi-racial advocacy group, led different challenges against real estate firms in the Hartford region. Adelle Wright, chairwoman of Bloomfield's Human Relations Committee, recalled the "snowstorm of signs" on streets visited by block-busting real estate agents. The signs "reminded the people going into that neighborhood, every day of their lives [that], 'My neighborhood is turning. I might be the last one here,'" she recalled in an interview with Trinity researchers. In 1973, Wright's committee persuaded the Bloomfield town council to pass an ordinance against door-to-door and telephone solicitation by real estate agents, and a ban against "for sale" and "sold" signs being posted in front of private homes.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Aleesha Young, "Real Estate, Racial Change, and Bloomfield Schools in the 1960s and '70s" (Educational Studies Senior Research Project, Trinity College, 2005), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/18/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/18/); Keever quoted in James Ross, "Realty By-passing Told by Resident," *Hartford Courant*, June 21, 1973, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/551637521?accountid=14405>, p.52

<sup>29</sup>Adelle Wright, "Oral History Interview on Bloomfield, CT, Part One" (Cities, Suburbs, Schools Project, Trinity College Digital Repository, April 11, 2005), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_ohistory/5](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_ohistory/5)

Meanwhile, a Hartford-based organization known as Education/Instrucción, led by a trio of activists—Ben Dixon, Boyd Hinds, and Julia Ramos—mounted a broader challenge against discriminatory practices across the entire real estate and lending industry. In 1973, they organized teams of testers to visit real estate firms and pose as buyers to document racial steering, which was a violation of the 1968 Fair Housing Act. As Ramos explained in an oral history interview with Trinity researcher Jasmin Agosto, she and a Hispanic male “posed as a couple that barely spoke English, you know, our English was supposedly very minimal to a West Hartford real estate company. We walked in and basically made known through gestures and a little bit of English that we wanted to buy a house in West Hartford.” After some back and forth with the real estate office staff, “we were steered to the North End of Hartford and the South End of Hartford, shown houses and given listings in these two locations. All of this we taped.” With dozens of detailed accounts like this, activists built a legal case against eight large real estate firms in the Hartford area, and persuaded the US Justice Department to prosecute them for racial steering. In addition, Education/Instrucción published a series of reports, *Fair Housing at its Worst*, which extended charges of discrimination to mortgage lenders, downtown insurance corporations, and complicit government regulators. Although the court case resulted in a settlement against the real estate firms, they denied all wrongdoing and received a relatively mild penalty: monitoring and mandatory training on fair housing law. See also Mobilizing Against Racial Steering and Redlining with Jasmin Agosto and Vianna Iorio, also in this book.<sup>30</sup>

The only large realty firm not to be charged with discriminatory practices was The R. W. Barrows Company. Former co-owner Larry Barrows spoke about real estate sales during this period during oral history interviews with Trinity researcher Cintli Sanchez. Barrows never used racial scare tactics nor had first-hand knowledge of those who did, but he conceded that, “We said some stuff we couldn’t say now.” He openly discussed racial, religious, and other qualities of neighborhoods and schools with clients. “I’m an old time liberal Democrat, so I would tell them, ‘Mixed neighborhood, mixed schools,’ and so forth,” Barrows explained, to help his clients identify the social composition of the neighborhood they desired. Sometimes he had candid discussions with Jewish homebuyers, to help them break into neighborhoods that had previously excluded them. Barrows acknowledged that when real estate agents talked about schools, “we were making judgments on the teachers and principals, which we had no business doing.” Still, Barrows emphasized that agents needed to be responsive to the needs of clients, especially Hartford’s large insurance corporation employees, who transferred into the region and “were brainwashed before they even looked at houses,” by co-workers who coached them to buy into a particular neighborhood. ” As he remembered, “People used to call an agent, and they would say,

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<sup>30</sup>Grenier, “Oral History Interview on Education/Instrucción, Part 1.”, cited in Agosto, “Fighting Segregation, Teaching Multiculturalism.”; Education/Instrucción, *Fair Housing at Its Worst [Series of Reports 1-8 on Title VIII, 1974; Report 9 on Redlining, 1977, Report 10 on Insurance Redlining, Circa 1978]*



Figure 8.9: Education/Instrucción Co-Directors Boyd Hinds, Julia Ramos McKay, Ben Dixon, circa 1974.<sup>32</sup>

'I want to be in a certain school district'... They wanted somebody who really knew quite a bit about the schools and the districts and so forth. So that was how you got business."<sup>33</sup>

By the late 1980s, real estate firms had discovered how to respond to clients' requests about neighborhood school quality without violating fair housing laws. Rather than voicing their opinions, agents began distributing packets of school data, which became more widely available after Connecticut passed a 1985 law to create standardized student achievement tests (such as the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), and subsequent requirements for uniform reporting of district data (the Strategic School Profiles). "Agents get so many questions from buyers about schools, and they are very conscious and concerned about giving out misleading information," Lynda Wilson, President of the Greater Hartford Association of Realtors, told a reporter in 1993. "They are afraid if they give wrong information, they can be accused of steering." Margaret O'Keefe, who had previously served as PTO president of two West Hartford schools, added that she understood new federal restrictions to mean it was permissible to share objective education data with clients, but not her own subjective judgments about the quality of individual schools. "You're treading on very dangerous ground," she concluded, "unless

<sup>33</sup>Larry Barrows, "Oral History Interview on West Hartford Real Estate, Parts 1 and 2" (Cities, Suburbs, Schools Project, Trinity College Digital Repository, June 27, 2007)

you have facts.”<sup>34</sup>

The politics of the school accountability movement, combined with growing access to the Internet, fueled this data-driven wave of “shopping for schools” in the suburban housing market. In 1995, the Prudential Connecticut Realty Company opened its first experimental “computerized library,” located at their West Hartford office, for potential buyers to browse photographs of homes and “information on communities’ demographics and school systems.” The Connecticut Department of Education launched its own website in 1996, and began to include test score data for individual schools for the first generation of web surfers in 1997. By the year 2000, homebuyers with computer access could easily and instantly view details about local schools, whether located around the corner or across the country. Part of the data revolution was driven by state education agencies, to comply with the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. But private real estate firms and non-profit education advocates also harnessed the Web to deliver school-level test scores and demographics to millions of families who eagerly consumed it.<sup>35</sup>

How much money were families willing to pay to purchase a private home on the more desirable side of a public school boundary line? Trinity Professor Diane Zannoni and her team of econometrics students collaborated with me to answer this question. We compiled public records for single-family home sales in the West Hartford Public School district (to avoid differences between suburbs), and mapped them inside the eleven elementary school attendance zones, which varied by test scores and racial composition. We limited our study to a ten-year period (1996 to 2005) where test formats and attendance zones remained relatively stable, which we split into two halves to gauge the growing influence of school data available via the Internet. Furthermore, we controlled for characteristics of the house (such as interior square footage and lot size), and also the neighborhood, by identifying sales within a very close distance of boundary lines that were drawn through the middle of residential areas, rather than along major roads or parks. Overall, we found that the test-price relationship was positive and significant: a one standard deviation in elementary school test scores produced a 2 percent increase (about \$3,800) in the price of an average home during this decade. But we also discovered the increasing significance of race in this predominantly White suburb. During the latter half of our time period (2002-05), the racial composition of the school became much more influential: a one standard deviation in the percentage of minority students led to a 4 percent decrease (about \$7,500) in the cost of an average home. In other words, as homebuyers in this predominantly White suburb make decisions about where to live, the sales data suggest that they are becoming more sensitive to the racial composition of their children’s future classmates than their test

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<sup>34</sup>William Hathaway, “After the Price, the Next Question Is: How Are the Schools?” *Hartford Courant*, September 26, 1993, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.trincoll.edu/docview/2123811530/?accountid=14405>

<sup>35</sup>Dougherty, “Shopping for Schools.”

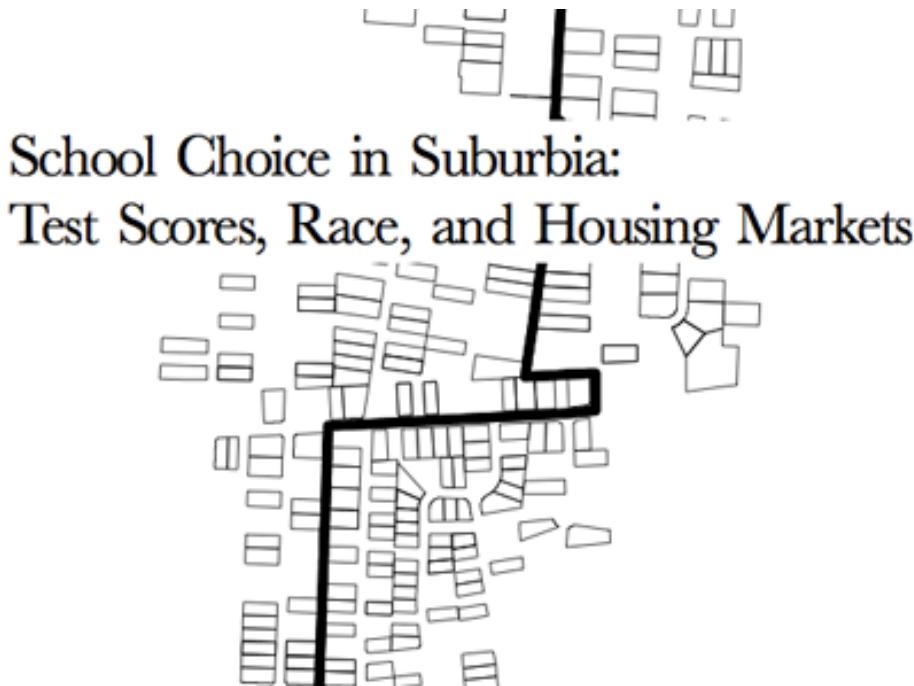


Figure 8.10: Our study compared home prices on opposite sides of public school attendance zones in West Hartford over time.

scores.<sup>36</sup>

In this suburb, how do we explain why test scores mattered, but the school's racial composition became more influential on single-family home prices over time? Part of the answer comes from a parallel qualitative study conducted by Trinity researcher Christina Ramsay and co-authors in the CSS seminar, based on door-to-door interviews conducted with 89 recent homebuyers in West Hartford. Fewer than 35 percent of those homeowners with (or expecting) children reported directly "researching" schools by searching for school information online or visiting schools in person. By contrast, over 50 percent found information about school quality through indirect means: their social networks of family, friends, and co-workers. Another part of the answer appears in a Washington DC study, which monitored how users actually conduct searches with an online school information site. They found that users were strongly biased toward checking demographic data on schools, and when making comparisons, tended to reject those with higher percentages of Black students. Together, these three studies suggest that while not all homebuyers directly access school information

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<sup>36</sup>Jack Dougherty et al., "School Choice in Suburbia: Test Scores, Race, and Housing Markets," *American Journal of Education* 115, no. 4 (August 2009): 523–48, [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/1](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/1)

online, the expansion of the Internet may amplify the power of racial and test data as it travels through their social networks.<sup>37</sup>

### Challenges of Desegregation and Choice

For nearly half a century, school desegregation advocates have pushed for a metropolitan Hartford solution to lift urban minority students up to the same quality of education as white suburban students. Advocates lobbied for voluntary interdistrict busing in the 1960s, then pressed for stronger desegregation mandates across the entire metropolitan region in the 1989 *Sheff v O'Neill* lawsuit. Victory finally arrived for the Sheff plaintiffs in the Connecticut supreme court's 1996 decision, by a 4-3 vote, that racial and socioeconomic isolation deprived Hartford schoolchildren of their state constitutional right to an equal education opportunity. Yet the court did not specify any remedy or timetable to address this injustice, handing the responsibility over to the executive and legislative branches, where neither the Republican Governor nor the Democrat-led General Assembly desired to alter the boundary lines that divided city and suburban districts. Although Sheff allies proposed a metropolitan school district to unite students across the Hartford region, this bold plan never gained sufficient political traction among local education officials in the suburbs, nor the city, as Trinity researcher Jennifer Williams documented in her interviews with key actors. At present, the limited school desegregation remedies that exist in the Hartford region are based primarily on voluntary measures, under the popular slogan of "choice," that effectively protect the interests of privileged suburban families while delivering only partial justice to the intended urban beneficiaries.<sup>38</sup>

In 1966, when representatives of the Project Concern interdistrict busing program attempted to persuade suburban districts to enroll small numbers of Hartford minority students in their districts, they encountered intense resistance from white residents determined to defend their boundary lines. Trinity researcher Grace Beckett discovered that even in West Hartford, one of the few districts that eventually agreed to start up Project Concern, the controversy generated the largest crowd (estimated at 1,200) at a board of education meeting, including many residents who booed religious leaders speaking in support of the plan. After the initial controversy faded, more suburban districts agreed to participate in Project Concern and accept the state subsidy that came with it. In its peak year in 1979, the program enabled approximately 1,175 Hartford

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<sup>37</sup>Christina Ramsay, Cintli Sanchez, and Jesse Wanzer, "Shopping for Homes and Schools: A Qualitative Study of West Hartford, Connecticut," Cities, Suburbs, and Schools Project (Hartford, Connecticut: Trinity College, December 2006), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/25/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/25/); On the Washington DC study, see Jack Buckley and Mark Schneider, *Charter Schools: Hope or Hype* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>38</sup>Jennifer Williams, "The Unthinkable Remedy: The Proposed Metropolitan Hartford School District" (Presentation slides, Cities Suburbs and Schools Project at Trinity College, July 2004), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/19/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/19/)



Figure 8.11: View the oral history video interview and transcript with Elizabeth Horton Sheff in 2011.<sup>41</sup>. See additional oral histories with participants in the Sheff v O'Neill school desegregation lawsuit.<sup>42</sup>

students to enroll in suburban districts. Based on 24 interviews that students conducted with Project Concern alumni, Trinity researcher Dana Banks and I found a mix of support and ambivalence about the program. More than half suggested that daily bus rides of an hour (or more) represented a “forced choice,” with less autonomy than the suburbs that voluntarily decided to accept them.<sup>43</sup>

A second wave of voluntary metropolitan desegregation arose with interdistrict magnet schools, designed to attract families from city and suburban towns with specialized curricula. While three magnets emerged in Hartford during the 1980s, the largest expansion occurred in the aftermath of the Sheff ruling, when the state legislature agreed to fund most construction costs for selected proposals. Magnet schools became a politically popular response to segregation because they allowed individual suburban districts and families to “choose” whether or not to participate in a policy solution.<sup>44</sup>

Magnet schools also served multiple interests, and not exclusively those of Hart-

<sup>43</sup>Grace Beckett, “Suburban Participation in Hartford’s Project Concern School Desegregation Program, 1966-1998” (Educational Studies Senior Research Project, Trinity College, 2004), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/11/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/11/); Dana Banks and Jack Dougherty, “City-Suburban Desegregation and Forced Choices: Review Essay of ‘the Other Boston Busing Story’ by Susan Eaton,” *Teachers College Record* 105 (2004): 985–98, <http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/facpub/21/>. See also Laurie Gutmann, “Whose Concern Matters?: Student Support and Project Concern” (Educational Studies Senior Research Project, Trinity College, 2003), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/17/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/17/)

<sup>44</sup>See Connecticut’s early magnet school history in Thomas C. Reynolds, “Magnet Schools and the Connecticut Experience” (Master’s thesis, Trinity College, 1994), <http://ctwweb.wesleyan.edu:7002/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=114767>

ford students. In the early 1990s, Trinity College faced increasing urban poverty and declining admissions statistics, and its Board of Trustees “even began to explore the feasibility of moving the College out of the city,” according to former vice president Kevin Sullivan. Incoming Trinity President Evan Dobelle leveraged private endowment funds to gain state support for the Learning Corridor, a \$110 million magnet school complex built on an abandoned field adjacent to the campus in 2000. But Trinity researcher Nivia Nieves and I found that Sheff magnet school funding diverted earlier plans for a Hartford neighborhood school, and reduced the number of seats available to city youth from the Latino community around campus. Although interdistrict magnets were more racially diverse than most city or suburban schools, the relatively low percentage of Hartford students able to attend them led Trinity researcher Sarah Kaminski to question their effectiveness in addressing overall segregation levels.<sup>45</sup>

Years after the Sheff ruling, plaintiffs and state officials finally agreed to a legal settlement in 2003, with a four-year goal of placing 30 percent of Hartford minority students in “reduced isolation” settings, generally defined as schools with under 75 percent minority students. Together with Trinity researchers Jesse Wanzer and Christina Ramsay, our Missing the Goal report illustrated the limited success of voluntary remedies in meeting that objective, followed by a more detailed analysis of overlapping policy obstacles. We also detected spatial inequalities in how desegregation was implemented. For instance, suburban districts enrolling the highest proportion of Hartford minority students through the Open Choice transfer program (previously known as Project Concern) were more likely to be located farther away from the city, requiring longer bus rides. Also, suburban districts with the highest magnet school participation rates were more likely to have fewer White students (such as Bloomfield), making racial balance more difficult than desegregation planners had anticipated. In 2008, plaintiffs and state officials agreed to a second Sheff settlement, featuring a more comprehensive management plan and a more ambitious desegregation goal to be reached by 2013.<sup>46</sup>

Public school choice became more prevalent in the Hartford area in 2008, as the new Regional School Choice Office recruited suburban applicants for interdis-

<sup>45</sup> Kevin B. Sullivan and James A. Trostle, “Trinity College and the Learning Corridor: A Small, Urban Liberal Arts College Launches a Public Magnet School Campus,” *Metropolitan Universities* 15, no. 3 (2004): 15–34, <https://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/muj/article/view/20176/19787>; Peter Knapp, *Trinity College in the Twentieth Century: A History* (Hartford Conn.: Trinity College, 2000), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/w\\_books/2/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/w_books/2/); Nivia Nieves and Jack Dougherty, “Latino Politicians, Activists, and Parents: The Challenge of Implementing City-Suburban Magnet Schools” (American Educational Research Association conference paper, April 10, 2006), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/30/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/30/); Sarah Kaminski, “Magnet Schools: An Effective Solution to Sheff V. O’Neill?” *The Trinity Papers* 21 (2002): 63–71, [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/9/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/9/)

<sup>46</sup> Dougherty, Wanzer, and Ramsay, “Missing the Goal”; Jack Dougherty, Jesse Wanzer, and Christina Ramsay, “Sheff V. O’Neill: Weak Desegregation Remedies and Strong Disincentives in Connecticut, 1996-2008,” in *From the Courtroom to the Classroom: The Shifting Landscape of School Desegregation*, ed. Claire Smrekar and Ellen Goldring (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2009), 103–27, [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/3/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/3/)

trict desegregation, and the Hartford Public Schools launched its own district-wide choice initiative to increase school accountability. For many Hartford parents, the opportunity to go “shopping for schools” as suburban parents had done felt empowering, yet the confusion caused by competing choice programs (with similar names but separate application processes) was overwhelming. To address this concern, Trinity students and community partners and I collaborated with Academic Computing staff Jean-Pierre Haeberly and David Tatem, and Social Science Center Coordinator Rachael Barlow. In January 2009, we launched SmartChoices, a parent-friendly digital guide that lists all eligible public school options across the metropolitan region, with an interactive map and tools to sort schools by distance, racial balance, and student achievement. With funding from a local education foundation, Trinity students conducted parent outreach workshops with hands-on guidance on using the tool, while interviewing parents in English or Spanish about their decision-making process. Based on our sample of 93 workshop participants, we found that providing richer information makes a difference: two-thirds either changed or clarified their top-ranked school after the hands-on workshop, and many found options with higher test scores or greater racial balance located closer to their neighborhood. But we also observed some Black and Latino parents using the tool to avoid schools with high concentrations of students from racial groups other than their own.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Learn about the SmartChoices public school search tool, which the Cities Suburbs & Schools Project ran from 2008 to 2014, at <https://commons.trincoll.edu/cssp/smartchoices/>; Devlin Hughes, *Designing Effective Google Maps for Social Change: A Case Study of SmartChoices* (Hartford, Connecticut, 2009), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/8/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/8/); Jack Dougherty et al., “School Information, Parental Decisions, and the Digital Divide: The SmartChoices Project in Hartford, Connecticut,” in *Educational Delusions? Why Choice Can Deepen Inequality and How to Make Schools Fair*, ed. Gary Orfield and Erica Frankenberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 219–37, <https://books.google.com/books?id=x9AIDQAAQBAJ&lpg=PR1&pg=PA219#v=onepage&q&f=false>



Figure 8.12: Trinity student researchers Ada Avila '11 (left) and Courtney Coyne '10 (right) interview Hartford parents as they explore SmartChoices during a workshop focus group in 2009.

A DIGITAL GUIDE TO  
Public School Choice  
IN THE GREATER HARTFORD REGION

# SmartChoices

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ABOUT THIS WEBSITE
CONTACT US
[Like](#) 13
[Tweet](#)

SEARCH FOR SCHOOLS

Student's home address:

Student's grade next year in Fall 2014:

Show me:  
 District schools  
 Interdistrict schools  
 More Pre-Kindergarten centers

278 schools found.

Map data ©2013 Google

Sort by:

School & Management (click for website)	Address (in 2014-2015) (click to zoom)	Dist. (straight line) <small>(Read more)</small>	Grades	More Info	Racial Balance <small>Black □ White □ Hispanic □ Other Oct 08 2012 <small>(Read more)</small></small>	Test Goal <small>Students at or above in 2013 <small>(Read more)</small></small>	Test Gain <small>across grades 2012 to 2013 <small>(Read more)</small></small>
Wintonbury Early Childhood Magnet School	44 Brown St Bloomfield, CT	6.9 miles	PreK3 to K	<a href="#">Apply to RSCO by Feb 28, 2014</a> <a href="#">See RSCO</a>		No test data from CT Dept of Ed	No test gain data available

To better understand the “shopping for schools” market, the CSS Project expanded our research agenda to analyze which types of families do (and do not) participate in public school choice programs in the Hartford region, and how they vary by student characteristics, school composition, and neighborhood demographics. Our work builds on prior studies by Trinity researchers who statistically analyzed magnet school application data, conducted door-to-door

interviews with parents in selected Hartford neighborhoods with very high or low application rates, and used geographic information systems (GIS) to display results through maps to understand how different stakeholders interpret their meaning.<sup>48</sup>

Our most recent “Who Chooses?” report, co-authored with Professor Diane Zannoni and her econometrics students, examines Hartford-resident grade 3-7 students enrolled in Hartford Public Schools and whether they applied to an inter-district magnet school or Open Choice suburban transfer program through the Regional School Choice Office lottery in Spring 2012. Overall, we found that lottery participation was not random, but linked to student socioeconomic characteristics that often showed higher rates by more privileged families. In this particular sample, we found statistically lower levels of lottery participation among English Language Learners and students with special needs, and generally higher levels by students with high standardized test scores, and those who live in census areas with higher median household incomes and higher percentages of owner-occupied housing. Our analysis does not reveal the cause of this disparity. Plausibly, it could be driven by school “creaming” (recruitment or discouragement of selected students) and/or family “climbing” (using their social capital for upward mobility). In any case, uneven lottery participation raises a troubling question: can Connecticut’s educational inequality be remedied by a voluntary school choice plan that burdens the most marginalized families to achieve their own justice?<sup>49</sup>

More research remains to be done in several related areas that Trinity students and faculty have begun to study. Our understanding of magnet schools would improve with further examination of student-to-student relationships and attitudes toward other races. We also would benefit from more cultural comparisons between suburban school districts, and analysis of achievement gaps within suburban districts. The role played by Catholic and private schools in educational

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<sup>48</sup>Naralys Estevez and Jack Dougherty, “Do Magnet Schools Attract All Families Equally? A GIS Mapping Analysis of Latinos” (American Education Research Association conference paper, April 10, 2006), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/16/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/16/); Jesse Wanzer, Heather Moore, and Jack Dougherty, “Race and Magnet School Choice: A Mixed-Methods Neighborhood Study in Urban Connecticut” (American Educational Research Association conference paper, March 28, 2008), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/22/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/22/); Brittany Price, “The Usage of Maps in Facilitating Conversations with Stakeholders About Educational Desegregation in Hartford” (Educational Studies Senior Research Project, Trinity College, 2009), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/26/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/26/); Matthew DelConte et al., “Who Chooses? A Preliminary Analysis of Hartford Public Schools” (Cities Suburbs and Schools Project presentation slides, January 2012), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/37](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/37)

<sup>49</sup>Jack Dougherty et al., “Who Chooses in Hartford? Report 1: Statistical Analysis of Regional School Choice Office Applicants and Non-Applicants Among Hartford-Resident HPS Students in Grades 3-7, Spring 2012” (Hartford, CT: Cities Suburbs Schools Project at Trinity College, May 12, 2014), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/46](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/46); Jack Dougherty et al., “Who Chooses in the Hartford Region? Report 2: A Statistical Analysis of Regional School Choice Office Applicants and Non-Applicants Among Hartford and Suburban-Resident Students in the Spring 2013 Lottery” (Hartford, CT: Cities Suburbs Schools Project at Trinity College, October 17, 2015), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/48/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/48/)

markets deserves closer study, as does the legislative history of funding school districts and interdistrict programs. Of course, fruitful ideas for researching schooling and housing in metropolitan Hartford can be found in publications by scholars at other institutions, and in works on other regions.<sup>50</sup>

### Conclusion

While our society values equal opportunity for all, our CSS Project research has challenged my students to recognize how the powerful relationship between schooling and housing often blocks us from achieving that goal. Although we call them “public” schools, we buy and sell access to most as “private” commodities, based on the underlying real estate and governmental boundary lines that restrict entry. Access to more desirable elementary and secondary schooling became more valuable in the post-World War II labor market, with rising economic returns for students attaining higher education degrees, which fueled the practice of “shopping for schools” in suburbs today. As civil rights activists have battled against barriers to equal access over the years, state lawmakers have gradually begun to decouple housing and schooling by offering interdistrict transfers and magnet schools, which do not require families to rent or buy a home in a suburban district. In essence, Connecticut’s voluntary desegregation policy has created a second “shopping” marketplace, called public school choice, in our attempt to remedy the ills of the existing market based on private housing.

Yet desirable public school options remain scarce. Moreover, this second

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<sup>50</sup>On student relations and attitudes, see Molly Schofield, “Increasing Interracial Relationships” (Educational Studies Senior Research Project, Trinity College, 2002), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/24/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/24/); Nicola Blacklaw, “The Presence of Contact Conditions in a Magnet School” (Educational Studies Senior Research Project, Trinity College, 2002), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/12/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/12/); David Reuman, “Effects of an Inter-District Magnet Program on Inter-Racial Attitudes at School” (American Educational Research Association conference paper, April 25, 2003), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/32/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/32/). On suburban districts, see Antonio DePina, “Comparing Suburban School Culture in Metropolitan Hartford: How Does the Formal and Hidden Curriculum Vary Across Two High Schools?” (Educational Studies Senior Research Project, Trinity College, 2003), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/15/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/15/); Rebecca Wetzler, “The Effects of Health, Mobility, and Socio-Economic Status Factors on the Race Gap in Achievement” (Psychology senior thesis, Trinity College, 2006), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/20/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/20/). On parochial and private schools, see Carmen Green, “Catholic Schools, Racial Change, and Suburbanization, 1930-2000” (History of Education Society conference paper, November 5, 2004), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/13/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/13/); Heather Moore, “Private School Choice and Educational Outcomes in Metropolitan Hartford” (Cities Suburbs and Schools Project presentation slides, July 2005), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/36](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/36). On school finance, see Lis Pennington, Emily Steele, and Jack Dougherty, “A Political History of School Finance Reform in Metropolitan Hartford, Connecticut, 1945-2005” (American Educational Research Association conference paper, April 2007), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/29/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/29/); David MacDonald, “The Funding of Interdistrict Magnet Schools in Connecticut: A Failed Approach to Addressing the Sheff Vs. O’Neill Connecticut Supreme Court Ruling?” (Public Policy graduate course paper, Trinity College, 2005), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/34/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/34/)

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government-run choice market relies on individual families (with varying levels of literacy) to sort through glossy brochures and competing advertising campaigns to identify the “best” schools for their children, without fully considering the aggregated effects of these decisions on who gets ahead, and who is left behind.

By itself, research will not eliminate the disparities that divide us. But it is an essential step in the process. Uncovering the underlying causes of inequalities, and understanding the success and limitations of past reform efforts, helps us come to terms with the depth and scope of the real issues facing us. Learning about the evolution of cities, suburbs, and schools—particularly in the company of reflective community partners, with perspectives broader than our own—can teach us important lessons about privilege and power, and strengthen our collective capacity. Reconstructing a roadmap of how we arrived at our present-day policy dilemmas does not provide us with a detailed reform agenda. But the process can suggest possible avenues and future directions for moving all of us a few steps forward.



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## 8.2 Writing Greater Hartford’s Civil Rights Past with ConnecticutHistory.org

by Elaina Rollins, Clarissa Ceglio, and Jack Dougherty

This chapter originally appeared in *Connecticut History Review*, whose editor granted permission to republish here with digital links and images.<sup>51</sup> Several Trinity students’ ConnecticutHistory.org essays have been expanded into chapters in this book.

Through a campus-community partnership, Trinity College undergraduates have published essays under the guidance of <http://ConnecticutHistory.org> editors that enrich our understanding of twentieth-century civil rights history. Two years ago, Dougherty, a Trinity faculty member, and Ceglio, an editor for the Connecticut Humanities’ project, developed a public history writing

<sup>51</sup>Elaina Rollins, Clarissa Ceglio, and Jack Dougherty, “Writing Greater Hartford’s Civil Rights Past with ConnecticutHistory.Org,” *Connecticut History Review* 53, no. 2 (2014): 220–26, <http://ontheline.trincoll.edu/teaching.html#writing-greater-hartfords-civil-rights-past-with-connecticuthistory.org>

assignment. Based on primary source research, students in the Cities, Suburbs, and Schools seminar have authored nearly a dozen short articles on too-often-forgotten histories of Northern injustice, focusing on housing discrimination, segregated education, and efforts to combat inequality in metropolitan Hartford. This assignment challenges undergraduates to accurately and clearly interpret past controversies for contemporary audiences, while instilling an appreciation for writing as an iterative process of reflection and refinement. Newer web-based tools enable drafts to be collaboratively reviewed by peers and the editor and also allow digital evidence—from archival documents, images, and interviews—to be incorporated directly into the essays. Overall, students' reflections on this process emphasize the intrinsic value of actively contributing to the reshaping of Connecticut's civil rights history on the public web, rather than simply earning a grade within the confined walls of the classroom.

ConnecticutHistory.org is an award-winning digital re-imagining of the traditional state encyclopedia that takes into account the ways in which information seekers use the internet not only for topic-specific searches but also for serendipitous discovery and, through Facebook, Twitter, and other social media, for sharing.<sup>52</sup> Connecticut Humanities (CTH), the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, developed this online resource in partnership with the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University and the Digital Media Center of the University of Connecticut's Digital Media & Design Department. Built using WordPress, a free, open-source content management system suited to the needs of web-based publishing, ConnecticutHistory.org debuted in 2012.<sup>53</sup> Since then, by adding new material on a weekly basis, the site has grown to encompass more than 1,300 entries, 3,784 bibliographic records, more than 2,893 connections to digitized primary sources residing elsewhere on the web, and 258 resource pages—one for each of the state's 169 towns and others on an expanding list of topics and people.<sup>54</sup> Those who read and make regular use of the site include history buffs, educators and students (chiefly grades 7 through 12), and other repeat visitors with a sustained interest in state history. Of the roughly 16,700 visits to the site each month, many are the result of specific search queries as well as "click-throughs" from linked citations in other online publications, such as those of the National Geographic Society and Smithsonian Institution.<sup>55</sup>

Entries include lighter fare, such as the "Today in History" and "Who Knew?" series, which appeals to casual readers. But even short pieces encourage self-

<sup>52</sup>The website's permanent web address is <http://connecticuthistory.org/>. ConnecticutHistory.org received the 2013 New England Museum Association First-place Publication Award for excellence in design, production, and effective communication in websites for organizations with institutional budgets over \$500,000.

<sup>53</sup>Clarissa Ceglio, "ConnecticutHistory.Org Opens a New Gateway to Our State's Past," ConnecticutHistory.org, May 22, 2012, <https://connecticuthistory.org/connecticuthistory-org-opens-a-new-gateway-to-our-states-past/>

<sup>54</sup>ConnecticutHistory.org site statistics as of June 2014; data on file Connecticut Humanities.

<sup>55</sup>Total site visits in fiscal year 2013-14 were 200,748, a 226% increase over fiscal year 2012-13 visitation (88,483); data on file Connecticut Humanities.

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guided exploration, through tags as well as links to related ConnecticutHistory.org articles of greater depth. These more substantive entries are produced in collaboration with scholars and authors in the state's museums, libraries, archives, historical societies, and universities.<sup>56</sup> Such partnerships are essential to a sustainable, nonprofit publishing model built on collaborative content acquisition rather than commissioning. Editorial staff hold advanced degrees in public history, primary contributors are experts in their subject matter, and, unlike an academic journal, content does not undergo external peer review. The intent is to maintain a nimble publishing schedule, mindful of the public's media consumption habits and responsive to topical interests created by contemporary concerns.

Importantly, the partnership model provides collaborators with an additional platform for disseminating scholarship produced in support of exhibitions, lectures, and other public fora that do not remain in the public eye. Scholars who publish in peer review journals and for academic presses also work with ConnecticutHistory.org to present this research in public-friendly form and thereby reach different audiences.<sup>57</sup> Content, including essays written by Connecticut State Historian Walter W. Woodward, also comes from ConnecticutHistory.org partner *Connecticut Explored* magazine, which is co-published by Connecticut Humanities. Lastly, ConnecticutHistory.org structures its entries so that information seekers will be directed out to the institutions and repositories that hold and interpret primary source materials related to that particular slice of history. In other words, entries function as connectors by providing links to related institutions, primary source documents, online databases, digitized finding aids, places to visit, books to read, and other means of digging deeper into a given subject. This supports CTH's mission to encourage the state's communities to "explore new ideas and historical perspectives, and experience the cultural richness around them."<sup>58</sup>

Helping to increase access to heritage resources is only one facet of the project's commitment to public history. It also undertakes a range of collaborations designed to introduce students to the work of public history or dedicated to bringing lesser known histories of the state to wider general audiences.<sup>59</sup> An example of the latter is a long-term effort to rethink how state encyclopedias can be more inclusive with regard to Native histories, particularly by including indigenous knowledge and voices. The Trinity College collaboration detailed

<sup>56</sup>Clarissa Ceglio, "The Dos, Don'ts and Dividends of Digital Collaboration." *NEMA News*, Winter 2013, [https://www.academia.edu/3223779/The\\_Dos\\_Don\\_ts\\_and\\_Dividends\\_of\\_Digital\\_Collaboration](https://www.academia.edu/3223779/The_Dos_Don_ts_and_Dividends_of_Digital_Collaboration)

<sup>57</sup>Ben Railton, "Yung Wing, the Chinese Educational Mission, and Transnational Connecticut," ConnecticutHistory.org, accessed June 19, 2019, <https://connecticuthistory.org/yung-wing-the-chinese-educational-mission-and-transnational-connecticut/>

<sup>58</sup>Connecticut Humanities, "Mission," accessed July 11, 2014, <http://cthumanities.org/about/mission>.

<sup>59</sup>An additional example of how ConnecticutHistory.org supports student scholarship is its ongoing partnership with the state's National History Day program. See Rebecca Taber-Conover, "History Day in Connecticut," *Connecticut History* 51, no. 2 (Autumn 2012): 261–4

here works toward both goals; its iterative writing assignment engages students in our shared criteria for sound historical methodology, clarity of expression, and use of multi-media documentation to educate non-specialist public audiences about historical patterns of racial discrimination in education and housing. This collaboration has inspired similar work with Wesleyan University, Central Connecticut State University, and Capital Community College.

For the past two years, Dougherty and Ceglio have collaborated on this ConnecticutHistory.org public history writing assignment during a three-week unit in his Cities, Suburbs, and Schools interdisciplinary seminar at Trinity.<sup>60</sup> Students enrolled in the seminar investigate historical and contemporary relationships between schooling and housing in metropolitan Hartford, and this unit is only one example of student learning through community research with a partner organization. Dougherty and Ceglio co-designed the public history writing assignment which requires each student to compose a digital essay, not to exceed 1,000 words, on a designated topic of interest to readers of ConnecticutHistory.org.<sup>61</sup> Since the undergraduates are not necessarily history majors, Dougherty generates an online “organizer” page: a list of prospective topics with links to relevant primary source materials, including oral history interviews prior students have recorded, print items he has scanned, and digital holdings from online repositories. Together, Dougherty and Ceglio tailor the list to highlight specific episodes in Greater Hartford’s past that lend themselves to a short essay, with an eye toward expanding civil rights history coverage on ConnecticutHistory.org.

Unlike typical college papers, which are seen only by the student and the instructor, this public history writing assignment is designed for broader audiences, and its key stages occur on the public web. Ceglio visits the seminar to co-introduce the assignment and the editorial standards of ConnecticutHistory.org. Over the next two weeks, students select a topic from the list that interests them, then analyze and translate historical sources into engaging and accessible stories for diverse online audiences. They author their first drafts in a Google Document, a web-based tool that allows individuals to word-process their own text while simultaneously benefiting from online peer review by classmates, the instructor, and the editor, based on our common evaluation criteria.<sup>62</sup>

1. Does the essay open with a compelling argument or story that explains the significance of the topic to Connecticut history? Does it inspire readers to think in new ways?

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<sup>60</sup>Educational Studies 308: Cities, Suburbs, and Schools syllabi, Fall 2012 and Fall 2013, Trinity College, <http://commons.trincoll.edu/cssp/seminar/prior-syllabi/>

<sup>61</sup>Dougherty and Ceglio, “Compose Web Essay for ConnecticutHistory.org,” Cities Suburbs and Schools seminar, Trinity College, October 13, 2013, <http://commons.trincoll.edu/cssp/seminar/assignments/connecticut-history-entry/>

<sup>62</sup>Jack Dougherty, “Co-Writing, Peer Editing, and Publishing in the Cloud,” in *Web Writing: Why and How for Liberal Arts Teaching and Learning*, ed. Jack Dougherty and Ten-nyson O’Donnell (University of Michigan Press, 2015), <http://epress.trincoll.edu/webwriting/chapter/dougherty-cowriting>

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Figure 8.13: Clarissa Ceglio teaches Trinity students Emily Meehan and Sean McGann how to write for ConnecticutHistory.org.

The Connecticut legislature was in complete disarray after the 1964 United States Supreme Court ruling in *Reynolds v Sims* (Collier 593). In an 8-1 decision, the Court found that the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause requires state legislatures to apportion representatives based on each district's population to ensure that all citizens are equally represented ("Reynolds v. Sims"). This "one man, one vote" law thus made Connecticut's system – 2 representatives for every district – unconstitutional (Collier 591).

The sole purpose of 1965 Connecticut Constitutional Convention was to fix the state's unequal representation system so it aligned with the *Reynolds v. Sims* decision. John Bailey, the influential and forceful Democratic chairman, had no interest in seeing any proposals regarding education (Collier 593). However, this did not stop Bernstein from voicing his concerns about Connecticut's lack of a constitutional guarantee to education: "I was enough of a history student of law, a lawyer, to know that once a convention is called for the state or national, nothing is irrelevant," Bernstein stated in an oral interview (Campbell 10).

After being ignored by Bailey and threatening to discuss his frustration with the media, Bernstein was finally given five minutes to draft his proposal, which the delegates then overwhelmingly supported. Bernstein's amendment is general because he believed the language of the Constitution should reflect overall principles and ideas (Campbell 11). The education amendment states that, "There shall always be free public elementary and secondary schools in the state. The general assembly shall implement this principle by appropriate legislation" (Collier 591).

Although the word "equal" is not explicitly written in the amendment, its inference has been

Emily Heneghan  
8:12 PM Oct 9, 2013 Resolve

When I read this paragraph I was kind of confused as to what you were trying to lead into. It was not until I finished the second paragraph and then reread the first paragraph that I understood exactly where you were going but that could have just been me not reading carefully enough. I really like your opening sentence but it might make it less confusing if you started off mentioning the Connecticut Constitutional Convention and then talking about Reynolds v Sims and how the state's unequal representation is what had started the whole convention.

Show less

Clarissa Ceglio  
2:31 PM Oct 12, 2013

I agree that the transition is a little abrupt, especially since you are now moving back to the scene of your first paragraph. You might bring the reader back to that moment by echoing your opening words. For example: "One of the reasons Bernstein's agenda at the

Figure 8.14: Students and mentors comment on draft essays using Google Documents.

2. Are the claims supported with appropriate evidence and reasoning? Is the historical research accurate and balanced, with full source citations?
3. Does the writing style engage broad audiences, and provide sufficient background for those unfamiliar with the topic? Is the text well organized and grammatically correct?
4. [For second draft only:] Are digital elements (such as links, images, and videos) thoughtfully integrated into the web essay, and properly credited?

After students revise their second drafts and embed links and images to relevant digital sources, all are required to post their work on the seminar's public WordPress site. In accordance with the assignment guidelines, the editor and the instructor encourage selected students to revise and submit a third draft to ConnecticutHistory.org, with no guarantee that submissions will be accepted for publication. To date, about one-third of the students have eventually met the editorial standards for publication, which usually requires them to do additional work beyond the end of the semester. Multiple rounds of peer review and editing make the assignment much more real-world than the typical college essay, and students are challenged to raise their writing skills to contribute to an education larger than their own.

Trinity student essays published on ConnecticutHistory.org cover a variety of topics, from discriminatory housing practices to efforts to combat educational inequality. These true tales of Northern injustice come as a shock to those who assume historical racial discrimination was limited to the South. By collaborating with ConnecticutHistory.org, Trinity students are able to spread awareness of this forgotten history. In his essay "The Effects of 'Redlining' on the Hartford Metropolitan Region," student Shaun McGann discusses how current racial

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isolation in Hartford was shaped by past discriminatory housing practices. McGann writes that in 1937, the newly established Home Owner's Loan Corporation (HOLC) created maps that color-coded neighborhoods based on investment opportunities in those areas; however, HOLC ratings were not always objective. Rather than simply relying on physical property conditions, HOLC frequently assigned poor investment values to neighborhoods with proportionally larger populations of blacks, immigrants, or members of the economic underclass—a process known as “redlining.” Another student essay by Mary Daly, “Race Restrictive Covenants in Property Deeds,” elaborates on discriminatory practices designed to maintain the racial homogeneity of white suburbs in the 1940s. Some housing developers inserted restrictions into property deeds that prohibited “persons of any race except the white race” from owning or occupying selected homes in Greater Hartford, language that the United States Supreme Court deemed “unenforceable” in 1948 but was not made illegal until the 1960s. Furthermore, Emily Meehan’s essay, “The Debate Over Who Could Occupy World War II Public Housing in West Hartford,” recounts how white suburban residents and locally elected leaders effectively blocked African American workers from residing in federally subsidized wartime housing. Together, these pieces illuminate moments of Northern history that may have been forgotten over the years but have undoubtedly contributed to the racial housing patterns that still exist today in Greater Hartford.<sup>63</sup>

Other Trinity student essays highlight challenges against other forms of inequality by Connecticut activists, including the creation of the state’s education amendment and other more recent school desegregation programs. In “Five Minutes that Changed Connecticut: Simon Bernstein and the 1965 Education Amendment,” Elaina Rollins tells the story of Simon Bernstein, a Hartford lawyer and author of Connecticut’s education amendment, which guarantees free elementary and secondary schooling for children across the state. Bernstein not only lobbied against racially restrictive covenants, such as those described in Daly’s essay, he also advanced the amendment on his own accord, despite significant obstacles from his political superiors. Connecticut’s education amendment later served as the basis for school inequality lawsuits such as the 1989 *Sheff v. O’Neill* case, which charged that Greater Hartford’s racially isolated schools were unconstitutional. Trinity student Brigit Rioual discusses the aftermath of this landmark case in her essay “*Sheff v. O’Neill Settlements Target Educational Segregation in Hartford.*” The Connecticut Supreme Court ruled in 1996 that the state must provide equal educational opportunities for Hartford students, but Rioual’s piece explains how Connecticut initially failed to follow through on the court’s order. While the state had agreed to enroll at least 30 percent of Hartford minority children in “reduced isolation” settings (i.e., schools where minorities made up less than three-quarters of the student body),

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<sup>63</sup> McGann, “The Effects of ‘Redlining’ on the Hartford Metropolitan Region.”; Mary Daly, “Race Restrictive Covenants in Property Deeds,” ConnecticutHistory.org, January 2013, <http://connecticuthistory.org/race-restrictive-covenants-in-property-deeds/>; Meehan, “The Debate over Who Could Occupy World War II Public Housing in West Hartford.”

only 17 percent had been achieved by 2007. Rioual's essay tells a relatively recent story, but the roots of the Sheff case date back to historical patterns of racial segregation and educational advocacy efforts. By collaborating with ConnecticutHistory.org, Trinity students are helping to make public important connections between past injustices and present reforms. Their contributions illustrate in an engaging, informative manner how historical knowledge can help us understand present-day circumstances.<sup>64</sup>

Students who complete additional rounds of editing with ConnecticutHistory.org experience memorable transitions when they become published authors. College students frequently spend hours on assignments that are ultimately read only by their professor, so to see one's name in the byline on a respected public website validates seminar participants' research and writing in a way that a grade alone cannot. Several students have commented that before working with ConnecticutHistory.org, they doubted their own skills as writers. Victoria Smith-Ellison, a sophomore at the time, said that although she struggled with composing essays before beginning college, this collaborative public history project "allowed me to be comfortable with my writing skills that I have learned thus far." Other students noted how the collaborative nature of the project inspired them to improve their essays even after handing in the required drafts. "After I got the comments [from Dougherty, Ceglio, and classmates], I was at first very overwhelmed," said Mary Daly. "But I actually really enjoyed polishing my work. I think that [the editing process] helped me, because in the future, I can actually tackle a process and finish it through all the way to the end."

Collaborating with ConnecticutHistory.org also encouraged undergraduate students to recognize themselves as authors contributing to a broader public history. Nicole Sagullo, a science student who did not have much experience with humanities writing before Dougherty's course, said that after her article was published, she discovered that another student on campus had cited her essay in an assignment. "It was just a really good feeling to think that someone had looked at it and read it who wasn't in that particular class with us," Sagullo explained. Another seminar participant described how collaborating with a community partner elevated her own view and expectations of herself. "You felt more like a contributor or colleague rather than just a student handing in an assignment," explained Amanda Gurren. "We felt like we were working with people rather than for them... We felt very respected." Through several rounds of feedback and revisions, collaborative writing not only incentivizes students to seek improvement in their own work, but also view themselves and their peers

<sup>64</sup>Elaina Rollins, "Five Minutes That Changed Connecticut: Simon Bernstein and the 1965 Connecticut Education Amendment," ConnecticutHistory.org, January 2014, <http://connecticuthistory.org/five-minutes-that-changed-connecticut-simon-bernstein-and-the-1965-connecticut-education-amendment/>; Brigit Rioual, "Sheff V. O'Neill Settlements Target Educational Segregation in Hartford," ConnecticutHistory.org, April 2013, <http://connecticuthistory.org/sheff-v-oneill-settlements-target-educational-segregation-in-hartford>

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Figure 8.15: Watch the video clip on Trinity students reflecting on their writing process with ConnecticutHistory.org in 2013.<sup>67</sup>

as published contributors to Connecticut's online history.<sup>65</sup>

What are the essential ingredients behind successful public history writing collaborations such as this? First, all participants—students, faculty, and editors—must be motivated to devote additional time and energy to work together on a common goal, with support from their respective institutions. In our partnership, everyone wins. Undergraduate learning benefits from the talent and attention provided by an additional guest writing instructor and evaluator, and in return, high-quality essays on forgotten aspects of civil rights history enrich Connecticut's understanding of its past. Second, our collaboration became easier with advances in web-based writing tools and online publications. Nowadays, students can write and quickly receive multiple peer reviews from readers, both on and off-campus. Since ConnecticutHistory.org favors shorter essays written for broad audiences, this public history assignment works for a wide array of undergraduates, and its entirely online publication means a speedier turnaround for student contributors who meet their standards. Third, because all of the essays can easily be found on the public web—rather than locked behind a paywall or available only in selected libraries—our contributions to state's civil rights history are widely accessible and more valuable to readers both inside and outside of Connecticut. We take pride that Tom Sugrue, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and the nation's leading scholar of Northern civil rights history, took a brief moment to publicly recognize the students' essays during his April 2014 keynote address to the Association for the Study of Connecticut

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<sup>65</sup>Student quotations excerpted from CTHprograms, "Make Life Collaborative" (YouTube video, April 8, 2013), <http://youtu.be/NuWg9Jrkpw>

History.<sup>68</sup>

For many historians, the digital era raises fears about the future of our profession. What does it mean when anyone can instantly publish their historical interpretation, whether good or bad, on the Internet? How do newer technologies change—and perhaps challenge—what it means to do history? Rather than avoiding the digital turn, we believe that it also provides an ideal opportunity—if wisely exercised—to bring a younger generation to the table and to fully engage them in doing what historians have always done: telling true and meaningful stories about the past for audiences broader than ourselves.<sup>69</sup>

### **Trinity College Student Contributions to ConnecticutHistory.org**

See link to all essays.<sup>70</sup>

Race Restrictive Covenants in Property Deeds, by Mary Daly '15. "No persons of any race except the white race shall use or occupy any building on any lot... ." Language such as this still appears in Hartford-area housing covenants today.<sup>71</sup>

Connecticut Takes the Wheel on Education Reform: Project Concern, by Amanda Gurren '15. As one of the earliest voluntary busing programs in the US, Project Concern sought to address educational inequalities.<sup>72</sup>

The Effects of "Redlining" on the Hartford Metropolitan Region, by Shaun McGann '14. Historical data reveals long-term patterns of inequality that can be traced back to now-illegal practices adopted by federal and private lenders in the 1930s.<sup>73</sup>

The Debate Over Who Could Occupy World War II Public Housing in West Hartford, by Emily Meehan '16. In the 1940s, African American war workers eligible for government-funded housing found access restricted to some properties despite vacancies.<sup>74</sup>

Sheff v. O'Neill Settlements Target Educational Segregation In Hartford, by Brigit Rioual '14. This landmark case not only drew attention to inequalities in area school systems, it focused efforts on reform.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2009), <http://books.google.com/books?isbn=0812970381>; See also Twitter post at ASCH meeting, April 5, 2014, <https://twitter.com/DoughertyJack/status/452440673942536192>

<sup>69</sup>Jack Dougherty and Kristen Nawrotzki, eds., *Writing History in the Digital Age* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.3998/dh.12230987.0001.001>

<sup>70</sup>"Trinity College Students Call Attention to Histories of Inequality."

<sup>71</sup>Daly, "Race Restrictive Covenants in Property Deeds."

<sup>72</sup>Amanda Gurren, "Connecticut Takes the Wheel on Education Reform: Project Concern," ConnecticutHistory.org, April 2013, <http://connecticuthistory.org/connecticut-takes-the-wheel-on-education-reform-project-concern/>.

<sup>73</sup>McGann, "The Effects of 'Redlining' on the Hartford Metropolitan Region."

<sup>74</sup>Meehan, "The Debate over Who Could Occupy World War II Public Housing in West Hartford."

<sup>75</sup>Rioual, "Sheff V. O'Neill Settlements Target Educational Segregation in Hartford."

Five Minutes that Changed Connecticut: Simon Bernstein and the 1965 Connecticut Education Amendment, by Elaina Rollins '16. "There shall always be free public elementary and secondary schools in the state. The general assembly shall implement this principle by appropriate legislation."<sup>76</sup>

How Real Estate Practices Influenced the Hartford Region's Demographic Makeup, by Nicole Sagullo '14. Persistent segregation is the historic legacy of steering and blockbusting, two discriminatory tactics that played a role in shaping suburban neighborhoods.<sup>77</sup>

Hartford's Great Migration through Charles S. Johnson's Eyes, by Victoria Smith Ellison '15. During the Great Migration of the early 1900s, African Americans from the rural South relocated to Hartford and other Northern cities in search of better prospects.<sup>78</sup>

Education/Instrucción Combats Housing Discrimination, by Savahna Reuben '15. This group's bilingual name reflected its educational mission as well as its dedication to unified, multicultural cooperation for the common good.<sup>79</sup>

*About the authors: Elaina Rollins (Trinity 2016), Clarissa Ceglio, and Jack Dougherty co-wrote this essay based on their collaboration in the Cities Suburbs and Schools seminar.*



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## 8.3 Who Owns Oral History? A Creative Commons Solution

*by Jack Dougherty and Candace Simpson*

<sup>76</sup>Rollins, "Five Minutes That Changed Connecticut."

<sup>77</sup>Nicole Sagullo, "How Real Estate Practices Influenced the Hartford Region's Demographic Makeup," ConnecticutHistory.org, February 2013, <http://connecticuthistory.org/how-real-estate-practices-influenced-the-hartford-regions-demographic-makeup/>.

<sup>78</sup>Victoria Smith-Ellison, "Hartford's Great Migration Through Charles S. Johnson's Eyes," ConnecticutHistory.org, February 2013, <http://connecticuthistory.org/hartfords-great-migration-through-charles-s-johnsons-eyes/>.

<sup>79</sup>Savahna Reuben, "Education/Instrucción Combats Housing Discrimination," ConnecticutHistory.org, December 2014, <http://connecticuthistory.org/educationinstrucion-combats-housing-discrimination/>.

*This is an updated version of an essay that was previously published in 2012 in an open-access book, Oral History in the Digital Age.<sup>80</sup>*

Who “owns” oral history? When an oral history narrator shares her story in response to questions posed by an interviewer, and the recording and transcript are deposited in an archive, who holds the rights to these historical source materials? Who decides whether or not they may be shared with the public, quoted in a publication, or uploaded to the web? Who decides whether someone has the right to earn money from including an interview in a commercially distributed book, video, or website? Furthermore, does Creative Commons, a licensing tool developed by the open access movement to protect copyright while increasing public distribution, offer a better solution to these questions than existing oral history protocols?[\[http://creativecommons.org\]](http://creativecommons.org)

Oral historians have begun to ask these types of questions as we confront new challenges of doing our work in the Internet era. At a November 2010 planning symposium for the *Oral History in the Digital Age* project, law and technology professor Sheldon Halpern posed the provocative question: “What do you think you own?” One of the symposium participants, Troy Reeves, reflected on its broad implications for the field. Over a decade ago, when narrators granted an oral history interview and signed a release form, they could assume that the audio/video recording and transcript “would remain under the care and control” of an archive or library, which would hold ownership rights and grant access to the public as it deemed appropriate. But the Web is dramatically revising these assumptions. Many oral history repositories have begun to share the content of their holdings online and, in the words of one archivist, believe “it is worth giving up some control for the greater good of having more people use the materials.”<sup>81</sup> We elaborate on our thinking about how the Internet has transformed the historical profession in our open-access edited volume, *Writing History in the Digital Age*.<sup>82</sup>

As an alternative to traditional protocols, Jack and his student researchers began to incorporate Creative Commons language in oral history consent forms while conducting interviews in the metropolitan region of Hartford, Connecticut for the Cities Suburbs and Schools Project at Trinity College. Several interviews are featured in our freely accessible, public history web book, *On the Line: How Schooling Housing, and Civil Rights Shaped Hartford and its Suburbs*, and many are hosted by the Trinity College Digital Repository.<sup>83</sup> By blending interpretive text with oral interviews and other interactive features, this web-book tells the story of how real estate firms maintained the color line, mortgage lenders en-

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<sup>80</sup>Jack Dougherty and Candace Simpson, “Who Owns Oral History? A Creative Commons Solution,” in *Oral History in the Digital Age*, ed. Doug Boyd et al. (Washington, DC: Institute of Library and Museum Services, 2012), <http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/2012/06/a-creative-commons-solution/>

<sup>81</sup>Troy Reeves, “What Do You Think You Own,” in *Oral History in the Digital Age*, 2012, <http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/2012/06/what-do-you-think-you-own/>.

<sup>82</sup>Dougherty and Nawrotzki, *Writing History in the Digital Age*.

<sup>83</sup>Cities Suburbs and Schools Project, Trinity College Digital Repository.

gaged in red-lining, families sought homes on the more desirable side of school attendance lines, and activists fought to cross, redraw, or erase these lines. We initially presented this essay as part of a broader discussion on “Whose Civil Rights Stories on the Web?” at the 2012 joint meeting of the Organization of American Historians/National Council on Public History.<sup>84</sup>

Jack: In the mid-1990s, I began to conduct oral history interviews for my dissertation research on African-American school reform activists in Milwaukee. I recorded interviews, followed standard protocols for consent forms and institutional review, and made good on my promise to transcribe and return a free copy of the tape and transcript to each of the sixty participants who kindly shared their history.<sup>85</sup> But the “best practices” in the field left me feeling unsatisfied. Originally, I had been drawn toward oral history and public history as means of community empowerment on civil rights history, but the standard guidelines required me to ask people who freely offered their stories to sign away some of their rights.

At that time, my reference guide for consent forms was the Oral History Association’s pamphlet by John Neuenschwander, *Oral History and the Law*, which has since been expanded into a book.<sup>86</sup> On the legal question of ownership, as soon as the interview is recorded, the oral history narrator initially holds the copyright, but standard practice is to prepare a consent form to transfer away those rights. As Neuenschwander explains, “The vast majority of oral historians and programs at some point secure the transfer of the interviewee’s copyright interests by means of a legal release agreement,” and offers sample language in the appendix.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, the Oral History Association’s 2009 statement on “Principles and Best Practices” fully expects oral history participants to sign over their rights as part of the standard procedure for conducting interviews: “The interviewer should secure a release form, by which the narrator transfers his or her rights to the interview to the repository or designated body, signed after each recording session or at the end of the last interview with the narrator.”<sup>88</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Jack Dougherty and Candace Simpson, “Whose Civil Rights Stories on the Web? Authorship, Ownership, Access and Content in Digital History” (Presentation at Organization of American Historians & National Council on Public History, April 20, 2012), [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/40/](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/40/).

<sup>85</sup> Jack Dougherty, *More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), <http://uncpress.unc.edu/books/T-4956.html> with interviews archived at Jack Dougherty, “More Than One Struggle Oral History Project Records,” University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Libraries, 2004, <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi/f/findaid/findaid-idx?c=wiarchives;view=reslist;subview=standard;didno=uw-mil uwmmss0217>, and some digitized at “March on Milwaukee,” University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Libraries, accessed November 23, 2018, <https://uwm.edu/marchonmilwaukee/>

<sup>86</sup> John Neuenschwander, *Oral History and the Law, Revised Edition*, Oral History Association Pamphlet Series No. 1 (Albuquerque: Oral History Association, 1993), originally published in 1985, has been updated and retitled as John A Neuenschwander, *A Guide to Oral History and the Law* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009)

<sup>87</sup> Neuenschwander, p. 64. He also cites case law that the copyright may be jointly held by the interviewee and interviewer.

<sup>88</sup> Oral History Association, “Principles and Best Practices,” 2009, <http://www.oralhistory.org>.

As I understood copyright law, since I wished to create a transcript of the interview and freely quote from it in my scholarly writing, the transfer of copyright away from the narrator was in my best interest.

But here was the ugly irony: as a white scholar of the civil rights movement, my consent form required African American activists to “sign over” rights to their oral history interview. At that time, the best arrangement I could negotiate was a two-step process, because I was working with two different repositories. First, my consent form asked oral history narrators to transfer their copyrights directly to me, which in turn, I donated with the tapes and transcripts to two institutions: the Wisconsin Black Historical Society/Museum (a local public history organization that was best positioned to share these stories with the African-American community) and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Library archives (a better-funded, predominantly white institution that was better equipped to share this history more widely on the emerging Internet). I intentionally partnered with both repositories, and kept my promise to give tapes and transcripts back to all parties, to counter prior generations of white academics and journalists who had come into Milwaukee’s black community to “scoop” up stories, while leaving nothing behind. The 1995 version of my oral history consent form included this key language, paraphrased from Neuenschwander’s 1993 pamphlet:

I agree to be interviewed and tape recorded by Jack Dougherty, as part of his dissertation research on the recent history of African-American education in Milwaukee. At the end of the research project, the original tapes and edited transcripts will be donated to the Milwaukee Urban Archives at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Wisconsin Black Historical Society/Museum. These materials will be identified by my name and made available to the public for scholarly and educational purposes, unless exceptions are listed below...

I also grant to Jack Dougherty any title to copyright, property right, or literary rights in the recording(s) and their use in publication, as well as to any reproductions, transcripts, indexes, or finding aids produced from the recording(s).

My participation in this project is entirely voluntary, and I may withdraw at any time prior to its conclusion and the donation of the materials to the Archives.

Check here to receive a free copy of the tape.

Check here to receive a free copy of any transcripts (whole or partial) for the opportunity to proofread or clarify your spoken words.

Yet I was frustrated with this language about copyright transfer. In my eyes, the wording was a necessary evil to preserve these valuable oral histories in a

university archive (whose staff at that time coached me on the consent form) and to allow me to quote extensively from them in my eventual book (as required by my publisher's copyright permissions process). Understandably, many Black Milwaukeeans were highly skeptical or hesitant when I explained the terms of the consent form. Several expressed deep concern that it asked them to sign away their life stories, which I assured them was not the case. A few agreed to be interviewed but did not sign the form. A few others refused to be interviewed at all. One persuaded me, after our interview, to write up a special consent form that preserved her copyright and granted me permission to quote specified passages in my writing, but did not extend any rights to others, such as the archives. Eventually, over sixty oral history participants did agree to sign my consent form, for which I was grateful. Some signed in exchange for a free copy of the recording and transcript as a contribution to their own family histories. Others were motivated by the public good of preserving and sharing their civil rights stories through one or both of my archival partner organizations. Together, all of these conversations challenged me to think more deeply about who benefited from this contractual arrangement. If activists freely shared their civil rights stories with me, did I have the right to profit as a professional historian? The process expanded my thinking about oral history and the public good, and upon receiving an academic book contract, I returned my share of royalties (and later, prize money and speaking fees) back to the Wisconsin Black Historical Society/Museum to continue their public history work.

Given my understanding of oral history and copyright law as a graduate student in the mid-1990s, this was the best user-friendly consent form I could envision. Looking back, there were some alternatives that deserved more consideration. For instance, I could have expanded on the copyright transfer language by adding a line that retained the narrators' rights to utilize their own interviews during their lifetimes.<sup>89</sup> But adding this clause fails to address the underlying issue of transfer of copyright ownership away from the narrator, and out of their family's hands at the end of their lifetime. Another alternative I could have explored further was to ask narrators to make their interviews part of the public domain. But this option would have gone to the extreme of eliminating all of their rights under copyright law, and furthermore, at that time I could not find useful examples of this approach by oral historians.<sup>90</sup> Under these circumstances, this mid-1990s consent form was the best I could do at the

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<sup>89</sup>As I recall, one reason I did not include this clause in the consent form was because, in my mind at that time, I feared that the suggested language from the 1993 Oral History Association pamphlet (p. 46) and its emphasis on death might have scared away some of my elderly participants: "Allow me to copy, use and publish my oral memoir in part or in full until the earlier of my death or [insert date]." By contrast, Neuenschwander's 2009 edition (p. 116) includes more life-affirming language: "[In return for transferring copyright], the Center grants me a nonexclusive license to utilize my interview/s during my lifetime."

<sup>90</sup>Neuenschwander's 2009 edition now includes this sample language: "In making this gift I fully understand that my interview/s will not be copyrighted by me or the Oral History Program but will be immediately placed in the public domain. This decision is intended to provide maximum usage by future researchers" (p. 85).

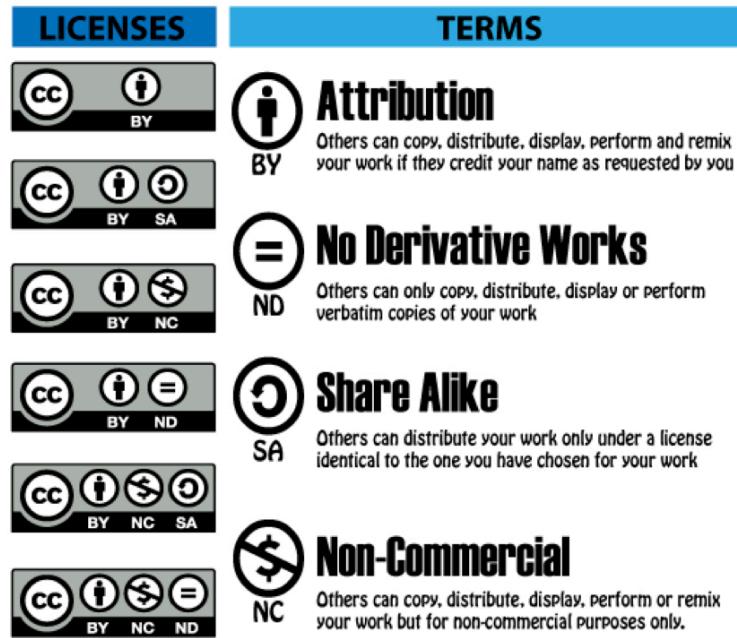


Figure 8.16: Six types of Creative Commons licenses. Image source, 2012.

time, yet it left a bitter taste and a strong desire to find a better model in the future.

Candace: When I began working with the *On The Line* public history web-book project in the summer of 2011, one of my tasks was to conduct oral history interviews with Hartford civil rights activists. At this point, our research team had stopped using conventional consent forms (which asked participants to “sign over” all rights to their interviews) and had begun using a new form that Jack developed with Creative Commons language. Basically, Creative Commons (CC) is a standardized license that maintains the original copyright for the creator of a work, and allows it to be shared more widely with the public, with certain restrictions if desired. Initially released in 2002 with support from the Center for the Public Domain, there are now six types of CC licenses that offer different combinations of licensing terms for source attribution (BY), no derivative works (ND), share alike (SA), and non-commercial (NC) use.<sup>91</sup>

At present, our standard oral history consent form uses the CC By Attribution—NonCommercial license, with this key language:

I voluntarily agree to participate in an oral history video interview

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<sup>91</sup><https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

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about [insert topic.] I can choose to pause, stop, or erase the recording at any time during the interview.

Afterwards, I grant permission for the oral history video recording, with my name and a summary or transcript, to be distributed to the public for educational purposes, including formats such as print, public programming, and the Internet.

Under this agreement, I keep the copyright to my interview, but agree to share it under a Creative Commons Attribution—NonCommercial 4.0 International license (BY-NC). This allows the public to freely copy, remix, and build on my interview, but only if they credit the original source and use it for non-commercial purposes.

In return, the interviewer will send one free copy of the interview recording, and summary or transcript, to my address below.

See the full oral history consent form in this book.

We prefer the Creative Commons (CC) consent form because it clearly keeps the copyright in the hands of the oral history interview participant, but allows us to freely share the recording and transcript on our open-access public history book and library repository, where individuals and organizations may copy and circulate it, as long as they credit the original source and do not charge any fees. This NonCommercial restriction assures participants that other people cannot profit by selling their interviews, unless the participant wishes to do so under a separate agreement. As the Creative Commons “Frequently Asked Questions” section clarifies, once a CC license is applied to a work, it *cannot be revoked*, but all CC licenses are *non-exclusive*, meaning that the holder of the copyright (in this case, the interview participant) may grant additional licenses to other parties (such as a for-profit book or movie, if desired). Also, CC licenses do not limit “fair use” provisions of existing U.S. copyright law, meaning that commentators have the same rights to report on or quote from the original work.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, CC licenses are increasingly used by leading knowledge-based institutions such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) OpenCourseWare project and the Public Library of Science (PLOS). Overall, we believe that this combination of intellectual property tools—traditional copyright with Creative Commons licensing—fits better with our primary goal of historical preservation and public education than does traditional copyright alone.

In Hartford, a specific oral history interview we conducted with school integration activist Elizabeth Horton Sheff deserves mention, because she took our Creative Commons consent form one step further by renegotiating its terms, just before we began our video recording. Sheff agreed with our goal of preserving her oral history for the public good, but her primary concern was to avoid

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<sup>92</sup><https://creativecommons.org/faq/#how-do-cc-licenses-operate>



Figure 8.17: View the oral history video interview and transcript with Elizabeth Horton Sheff in 2011.<sup>96</sup> See additional oral histories with participants in the Sheff v O’Neill school desegregation lawsuit.<sup>97</sup>

being quoted out of context, as she had experienced with journalists in the past. She wanted her oral history interview to be made available in its totality on the web, but not to allow others to create a modified or excerpted version. Fortunately, Sheff was familiar with Creative Commons because her son is in the independent music business. She asked for a “no derivatives” restriction, and on the spot, we modified the consent form license to the ByAttribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives CC license. As a result, her video recorded interview and transcript both appear in the Trinity College library digital repository, but to respect her restriction, we blocked users from downloading a copy of the video, to make it harder for them to create an edited version. Yet anyone can move the video time slider on their web browser to watch only a certain portion if desired (such as minutes 28 to 32). Furthermore, anyone may download the transcript of the interview, and quote from the text under “fair use” guidelines.<sup>93</sup>

We do not contend that Creative Commons has resolved all of our questions about who “owns” oral history, nor do we claim expertise in intellectual property law. But as oral historians seeking alternatives, we believe that this combination—traditional copyright with Creative Commons licensing—fulfills our dual needs to maintain the rights of individual participants while sharing history with the public.

*About the authors: Jack Dougherty and Candace Simpson (Trinity 2012) developed these ideas while conducting oral history interviews for this book, and*

<sup>93</sup>Sheff, “Oral History Interview on Sheff Vs. O’Neill.”

*co-presented at the 2012 joint meeting of the Organization of American Historians/National Council on Public History. Jack later expanded the essay for publication.*



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## 8.4 Oral History Consent Form

*This sample oral history consent form emerged from our thinking about “Who Owns Oral History? A Creative Commons Solution” in this book. Readers are welcome to be adapt and modify this form for their own purposes.*

[Insert title of] Oral History Project

Informed consent and copyright permission form

I voluntarily agree to participate in an oral history video interview about [insert general topic, such as: my memories and experiences about schooling, housing, and civil rights in the Hartford region.] I can choose to pause, stop, or erase the recording at any time during the interview. Afterwards, I grant permission for the oral history video recording, with my name and a summary or transcript, to be distributed to the public for educational purposes, including formats such as print, public programming, and the Internet. Under this agreement, I keep the copyright to my interview, but agree to share it under a Creative Commons Attribution—NonCommercial 4.0 International license (BY-NC). This allows the public to freely copy, remix, and build on my interview, but only if they credit the original source and use it for non-commercial purposes. In return, the interviewer will send one free copy of the interview recording, and summary or transcript, to my address below.

Name:

Mailing address:

Phone and/or email:

Signature:

Date:

If younger than 18, parent/guardian signature:

Interviewer's signature (to agree with copyright ownership by interviewee, with CC license):

Questions? [Insert project director(s) name and contact info, plus project web-site]

*Keep one signed copy for project files and offer one copy to participant for their records*



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## 8.5 How We Found Restrictive Covenants

*by Katie Campbell Levasseur and Jack Dougherty*

The Restricting with Property Covenants section in this book was inspired by the Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project. Students and faculty at the University of Washington-Seattle uncovered the largely forgotten story of White-only restrictions that landowners wrote into more than 400 property deeds from the 1910s to the 1960s, which shaped the racially segregated metropolitan region that exists today. Their public history project launched a campaign that led the governor to sign a 2006 bill that made it easier for neighborhoods to officially remove these covenants, which became unenforceable in 1948, but persisted on legal documents.<sup>98</sup>

Our goal was to search for restrictive covenants of any type, racial or religious, in the metropolitan Hartford area. But no one we consulted had ever seen such a document, nor did we have any experience searching property deeds. So we read about the history of these barriers in other cities and learned as much as we could about the research process. People with more experience (such as property lawyers, professional deed searchers, and scholars who specialize in this topic) may have more helpful advice to offer.

We limited our search of restrictive covenants to property records held by the Town of West Hartford, Connecticut, the largest municipality that borders the central city of Hartford, because of easy access to public data and our focus on suburban history. Our study did not examine any property records in the City of Hartford or any other suburban town, and we encourage other researchers

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<sup>98</sup>Gregory, "Segregated Seattle."



Figure 8.18: In this video, Katie Campbell Levasseur describes how we found restrictive covenants in the Town of West Hartford property records in 2011.<sup>100</sup>

to expand our collective search. Tracey Wilson, the West Hartford town historian, long-time high school history teacher, and history columnist for the West Hartford Life monthly periodical, gave us leads from anecdotal accounts she had heard about restrictive covenants from long-time residents. Our most specific lead came from Mary Everett, who in our recorded oral history interview described how she bought a home at 30 Ledgewood Road around 1970, and her lawyer mentioned that the property included a racially restrictive covenant from the 1940s that was no longer enforceable.<sup>101</sup>

Our first search strategy was to begin with oral history leads about specific properties, then work backwards to trace the sale to the original deed. When we conducted our research in 2011, the Town of West Hartford had recently made recent property records available online.<sup>102</sup> Searching by name for Mary Everett (or her spouse, Ronald) pointed us to a 1970 warranty deed listing in book 474, page 185, which we had to find in the paper records at Town Hall. Also, her residence at 30 Ledgewood Road appeared as building lot #78 in the microfilmed parcel map records of the original land development from the 1940s. In the paper books, we traced the 1970 sale further back into time, and eventually discovered the original 1940 deed for the High Ledge Homes subdivision, which included this race restriction: “No persons of any race except the white race shall use or occupy any building on any lot except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race employed by an owner or

<sup>101</sup>Everett, “Oral History Interview on West Hartford.”

<sup>102</sup>As of 2017, Town of West Hartford property records can be searched for recent transactions (1970s and later) at <https://www.westhartfordct.gov/gov/onlinesvc.asp>

tenant.”<sup>103</sup>

But few of our anecdotal leads yielded successful results. So our second search strategy was to conduct a broader search of property records during the racial covenant time period (1920s through the late 1940s). In the Town of West Hartford property records room, we skimmed the Grantor Index Corporate Pages for “agreements,” and then inspected each agreement in its physical book to see if the deed included a restriction between parties. Using this approach, we identified about 200 deeds that listed agreements, and among those we found 22 agreements that included some type of restrictions, all between 1933 and 1949. (We determined that before 1933, searching for “agreements” was not a productive way to look for restrictions, because we found restrictions in deeds that were not listed as having “agreements”.)

Overall, we found two types of restrictions on property deeds between 1915 and 1950, which we labeled “value” and “race.” Value restrictions were more common than race restrictions. Value restrictions typically stated that the owner could not build a home below a certain square footage, or below a minimum price (such as \$5,000 in the 1920s), in an effort to maintain higher property values. But race restrictions stated that the land could not be occupied by non-White people, except for domestic servants. In some cases, deeds combined the two types. In either case, individuals or developers used these restrictions to control the social class and/or racial composition of a neighborhood, and its relative price in the minds of prospective wealthy White buyers.

Our study of West Hartford in 2011 was not exhaustive. We found only 5 race restrictive covenants, which covered less than 200 parcels of land, or around 3 percent of the 6,000 single-family homes that had been constructed in the town according to the 1940 Census. The first race restrictive covenant we found was introduced to High Ledge Homes in March 1940 by Edward Hammel, a developer of “fine homes” in Westchester County, NY and Fairfield County, CT. After he established the Whites-only restriction in his subdivision of about 75 homes, we found 4 similar development-wide covenants in other parts of West Hartford for 1940 and 1941. In 2012, we placed all of these historical documents and parcel maps in an interactive Google Map, hosted by the University of Connecticut Libraries Map and Geographic Information Center. Then in 2016-17 we migrated the historical source data into our GitHub public repository and an interactive Leaflet map.<sup>104</sup>

When searching for “racial covenant” and related terms in the full-text Hartford Courant Historical database, we found only a handful of news stories relevant to Connecticut, but none of them specific to West Hartford. For example, the Courant describes how Hartford lawyer and Democratic alderman Simon Bernstein sought to pressure the Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut General

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<sup>103</sup>High Ledge Homes Inc., “Agreement Concerning Building Restrictions.”

<sup>104</sup>Ilyankou and Dougherty, “Map,” 2017. For housing data, see SE:T75, Housing Units by Type of Unit, for West Hartford tracts (C1-6), 1940 Census Tracts, Social Explorer, <https://www.socialexplorer.com/tables/C1940TractDS/R11422383>.

Assembly to invalidate race- and religious-restrictive covenants in 1947. We were fortunate to conduct an oral history interview with Bernstein at age 98, and he told us about one race restrictive covenant case he was involved in, regarding the Mountain Road area of West Hartford, which was settled out of court. But we never found any documentation about it.<sup>105</sup>

Local historian Tracey Wilson heard several anecdotal accounts from West Hartford residents regarding anti-Jewish and anti-Catholic covenants during this period. In her 2010 essay, Wilson wrote: “By word of mouth I had heard that in the 1930s and 1940s and into the 1950s, no Roman Catholics could live on Stoner Drive, the first street developed on ‘the mountain.’ No Catholics could buy on Wood Pond or Sunset Farms. According to another resident, the address of a house on the corner of Foxcroft Road and Fern Street was changed to Fern Street because no Jews were allowed on Foxcroft Rd.”<sup>106</sup> But we have not yet found a religion-based restriction in a property deed in West Hartford. It is possible that some residents may have confused property deed covenants (which would appear in town hall documents) with homeowner association agreements (which may exist on paper, but not filed with town governments) or real estate agents’ refusals to show property to outsiders (which may have been openly discussed, but not documented on paper). To be clear, our study of West Hartford was not comprehensive, and we suspect that more race and religious restrictions exist on paper in this and other cities and towns across the state.

*About the authors:* Katie Campbell Levasseur (Trinity 2011) conducted research on restrictive property records and co-authored this essay with Jack Dougherty.



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<sup>105</sup>“Bernstein Seeks End of Restrictive Clauses”; Bernstein, “Oral History Interview on Connecticut Civil Rights.”

<sup>106</sup>Wilson, “Taking Stock of High Ledge Homes and Restricted Covenants.”



# Chapter 9

## Mapping and Publishing *On The Line*

This chapter details our design process and web technologies we used to create this open-access digital book. Our interactive web maps, built with open-source Leaflet code, help broader audiences to visualize spatial and historical change over time. The chapter also describes our publishing workflow, based on the open-source Bookdown package for RStudio, which produces both HTML web pages and PDF print pages. We share our knowledge about these tools so that others may innovate and build more digital books to tell their own stories.

### 9.1 A Digital History Dialogue

*by Jack Dougherty with editors of The Metropole blog of the Urban History Association*

*The editors of the “Digital Summer School” series of The Metropole, the official blog of the Urban History Association, invited me to dialogue with them about the process of creating *On The Line*, and gave me permission to republish the essay and add footnotes.<sup>1</sup>*

#### Digital Summer School: On The Line in Metropolitan Hartford, Connecticut

This is the second installment in our annual Digital Summer School series which highlights digital humanities projects focusing on urban history...

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<sup>1</sup>“Digital Summer School: On the Line in Metropolitan Hartford, Connecticut.” The Metropole, July 17, 2019, <https://themetropole.blog/2019/07/17/digital-summer-school-on-the-line-in-metropolitan-hartford-connecticut/>.

Featured Project: Jack Dougherty, *On the Line: How Schooling, Housing, and Civil Rights Shaped Hartford and its Suburbs*

**9.1.0.0.1 Why did you establish this digital project, meaning why a digital book rather than your more traditional academic text? Who do you see as its audience and why?**

Many historians have a bad habit of splitting our work into separate categories, such as “digital projects” versus “scholarly books.” Some institutional factors feed this division, such as revenue-driven publishers (who depend on book sales) and conventional tenure committees (who cannot imagine how to evaluate digital projects). But this false dichotomy between projects and books does not serve our broader interests as academic authors. In our field of history, as the average scholarly monograph sells only a few hundred copies, and the retail price tag approaches \$50 per copy or higher, our audience is increasingly likely to search on the web for historical sources and interpretation, and to view these results in their browsers. In today’s digital context, dividing projects and books is not a viable path; we need options to merge them into one.

Kristen Nawrotzki and I made this general argument in our introduction to *Writing History in the Digital Age*. Over twenty-five contributors and our publisher, the University of Michigan Press, agreed to share our peer-reviewed publication under an open-access license, where readers can discover and view the full-text book on the web (for free) or in print (for a reasonable price). Scholars holding full-time jobs in academic institutions operate primarily in a reputation-based economy. If readers can access our ideas with our names attached and determine them to be of high-quality, then our value goes up. By contrast, if our ideas are locked inside hard-to-access books or behind paywalls, regardless of their quality, our reputations among readers will suffer. My thinking about these issues continued to evolve, and I experimented further with blending web technology and book production, as I co-edited a second open-access book, with Tennyson O’Donnell, *Web Writing*, and launched an open-access textbook with Ilya Ilyankou, *Data Visualization for All* (in-progress).<sup>2</sup>

These three works illustrate lessons I learned while working on my current book, *On The Line: How Schooling, Housing, and Civil Rights Shaped Hartford and its Suburbs* (in-progress, under contract with Amherst College Press). Set in Connecticut’s capital region, the book makes visible the hidden boundaries that have divided American cities and suburbs over the past century, as well as the civil rights struggles of families and activists who crossed over, redrew, or erased these powerful lines. As a work of history, *On The Line* blends textual narrative

<sup>2</sup>Kristen Nawrotzki and Jack Dougherty, “Introduction,” in *Writing History in the Digital Age* (University of Michigan Press, 2013), 1–18, <https://muse.jhu.edu/chapter/1030699>; Jack Dougherty and Tennyson O’Donnell, eds., *Web Writing: Why and How for Liberal Arts Teaching and Learning* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), <http://WebWriting.trincoll.edu>; Jack Dougherty and Ilya Ilyankou, *Data Visualization for All* (Trinity College, book-in-progress, 2019), <http://datavizforall.org>

and digital sources into one book, with web and print editions. Perhaps it's most appropriate to call it a digital-first book, because the richest edition is the one that appears on the open web. The narrative is wrapped around digital evidence—including interactive maps, oral history audio and video, and scanned documents—to make racial and class boundaries visible to broader audiences and to amplify the voices of people who challenged these lines.

TODO: INSERT IMAGE

Screenshot from 1985 video of Saundra Foster explaining why she and other Black parents were arrested by a predominantly White suburb in the Jumping the School District Line section in this book.

#### 9.1.0.0.2 How did this project come to fruition? What obstacles did you have to overcome?

Thanks to the wonderful Way Back Machine by the Internet Archive, I took another look at the first version of *On The Line that I published on the public web in 2010*. At that very early stage, I presented some dreams and demos to obtain grant funding and naively predicted to finish everything by 2012 (Ha!) This early version also reminded me that my previous publishing partner insisted I create two interconnected yet separate products—a digital repository (free) and a scholarly book (for sale)—each designed to stand alone, but to refer readers back and forth. Under this early model, readers would have to buy or borrow the book to read the text and go to the companion website to explore the interactive maps, videos, and other digital elements. Honestly, I'm glad that I didn't finish on my initial deadline, under the restrictive terms of this proposed publishing arrangement, since the final product would have been disappointingly fragmented.<sup>3</sup>

The truth is that the origins of *On The Line* can be traced back to my personal frustration with the status quo of scholarly communication. “Why separate the digital project and the book?” I recall asking. “Why not create a better book that unifies text and sources into one product?” I began exploring open-source digital tools that merged web and PDF publishing into one workflow. First the Anthologize WordPress beta plugin (by the One Week One Tool team at the Center for History and New Media, George Mason University), then the Pressbooks/Open Textbook/WordPress plugin platform (by PressBooks and BC Campus), and now I use the Bookdown package (by RStudio). Each step has brought me closer to an improved workflow: composing easy-to-edit text that cleanly produces a web edition, with embedded interactive maps and videos, and a PDF edition, with static screenshots and links to interactive web content. Fortunately, I work with a supportive group of current and former students, librarians, and IT staff, because building an ambitious digital-first book like this one involves many steps: designing and coding interactive historical maps; transcribing and hosting oral history audio and video; managing citations and

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<sup>3</sup><https://web.archive.org/web/20100614053219/http://ontheline.trincoll.edu/>

external links; future-proofing; and embedding all of this content into web and print formats. I'm not a speedy writer, and managing all of these steps has slowed me down even further.

**9.1.0.0.3 On a purely functional level, when considering the project's internal structure, how did you think about incorporating aspects of *On the Line* such as its interactive maps, videos, and other features?**

As a historian, my job is to tell meaningful true stories about the past. For this book in particular, the goal is to help readers see the “invisible” race and class boundary lines that have increasingly divided city and suburban residents over time, and to draw attention to the ways that families and activists sought to cross over or erase lines, such as movements for school integration and inclusionary zoning. Showing how these people tell their own civil rights stories in oral history video clips is more powerful than merely retelling their stories in the text. While working on each chapter, often with student co-authors, we continually ask these types of questions: *How can we tell stories that connect with our present-day readers? How can we persuade readers to explore and accept our interpretation of the evidence? And how can we guide both local and distant readers through spatial and historical change in our place-based narrative of a central city and its diverging suburbs?* Creating this type of book requires traditional research and writing, but also dreaming up digital sources – interactive maps, video clips, and digitized documents – to embed into the narrative and illustrate our analysis. Some of my best teachers in this genre have been digital journalists (such as Alvin Chang, formerly at CTMirror.org, now at Vox.com).

For example, consider how historians have published over time about “redlining,” or discrimination in financial services based on people’s residence, typically linked to their race or ethnicity. Ken Jackson’s book, *Crabgrass Frontier* (1985), introduced many readers to the 1930s Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) and their color-coded neighborhood appraisal maps, which he quoted from and included an image of to demonstrate their segregative intent. Subsequent scholars such as Amy Hillier (2003) analyzed archival records with spatial computing methods and questioned whether actual HOLC lending practices matched this intent. A decade later, historians Robert K. Nelson, LaDale Winling, Richard Marciano, Nathan Connolly and their colleagues released their *Mapping Inequality* digital history project (2016), with its impressive compilation of over 150 HOLC maps and appraisals, with commentary. In *On The Line*, former student Sean McGann and I co-authored a chapter that interprets this redlining history with a Hartford-area narrative. The chapter is illustrated with an interactive map of neighborhood appraisals created with the Map and Geographic Information Center (MAGIC) at University of Connecticut Libraries and the assistance of Trinity College graduate Ilya Ilyankou. The eye-catching redlining maps pull local readers further into the *On The Line* narrative, and allow them to explore archival documents for specific neighborhoods. But our book

also argues that other federal programs, such as the Underwriting Manuals of the Federal Housing Administration, which are not as visually attractive as the HOLC maps, may have been more influential in segregating suburbs. Overall, this digital-first book delivers a hybrid combination of textual interpretation and interactive sources that, in my view, is vastly superior to the alternative: a separate book and web site.

TODO: INSERT IMAGE

Screenshot from Federal Lending and Redlining section in this book.

**9.1.0.0.4 What role do digital projects like *On the Line* play in the field of history? Where do you see this project and others like it going in the future?**

Based on local feedback, I know that *On The Line* has already begun to achieve one of its primary goals for Hartford-area audiences: to educate residents on ways that housing and education barriers have shaped our city and suburbs, and about the strategies used by activists and families who fought back against them. Although it's still a book-in-progress, my student co-authors and I are publishing chapters and sources, as we complete them, on the open web. Our analytics tell us that thousands of readers have discovered this history, and dozens of local organizations and schools have invited us to give public presentations. Not bad for a not-yet-finished book.

As for the broader historical profession, another goal is for *On The Line* to help change the way we envision scholarly communication, by offering a reproducible example of blending textual narrative and digital sources into a book with both web and print editions. But I don't have much evidence of progress to share. Look again at the wording of the question above, which refers to *On The Line* as a "digital project" rather than a "book." It's surprising to me how slowly the historical profession is creeping into the digital age, while keeping its traditional publishing paradigms intact. Relatively few historians appear to be writing digital-first books that genuinely blend textual narrative and digitized sources. I fully realize that these types of books require more work by collaborative teams, not just individual scholars; a wider range of skills not typically taught in history graduate schools; and sources of both start-up and sustainable funding. When I began work on this nearly a decade ago, I sincerely believed that more historians would be moving in this direction. Yet it still feels lonely to me. (While typing these words, I secretly hope to hear back from readers who will prove me wrong and share links to other digital-first books that blend text and evidence.)

**9.1.0.0.5 It seems over the past few years two aspects of urban history have arisen 1) greater emphasis placed on education as key factor in suburban development notably in the case of your work here and others such as Ansley Erickson and 2) efforts by more academic and**

popular historians (I'm thinking of perhaps Richard Rothstein's *The Color of Law* which fundamentally synthesized a large body of work) to really grapple with how suburbs and their attendant segregation came to be. How do you explain these developments which in many ways are embodied by the project itself?

Yes, I've been very impressed by recent works on the historical relationship between housing and education, such as Ansley Erickson's *Making the Unequal Metropolis* (2016), Richard Rothstein's *The Color of Law* (2017), and others. This may be a case where historians are just now catching up with our audiences. For several decades, privileged Americans and our politicians have understood the growing two-way equation between housing and schooling: where you live shapes your children's education, and their level of education shapes their future income and where they can afford to live. So why has it taken historians so many decades to write about this?

The "Bridging the History Gap" section of *On The Line* argues that we have not fully understood how this dynamic relationship between housing and schooling played a central role in shaping metropolitan America because a prior generation of historians split these topics into separate bodies of literature and essentially drew boundaries around these disciplinary subfields. On one side of this scholarly divide, urban and suburban historians, such as Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, and Ken Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, described how housing policies and racial discrimination fueled the post-World War II decline of cities and expansion of outlying suburbs, but schools did not play a meaningful role in their equation. On one side, educational historians who followed the lead of David Tyack (*The One Best System*) focused on the rise and fall of big-city school districts, yet paid little attention to their relationship with suburbs. Whereas most educational historians halted at the city line, urban and suburban historians generally stopped at the schoolhouse door. So it's a refreshing development to see newer historical works by Ansley Erickson, Matthew Lassiter, and others blur these boundaries.

#### 9.1.0.0.6 So far, what moment or event related to your digital project comes to mind when I say greatest achievement or unique insight?

Years ago, when teaching or presenting about the history of cities, suburbs, and schools, I used to "talk with my hands," waving them around in the air in my feeble attempt to visually represent racial and economic change across neighborhoods over time. Now I teach and give talks with interactive historical maps. Seems to be a much better way to communicate about urban history, and less annoying for the audience.

TODO: INSERT IMAGE

*Jack Dougherty is Professor of Educational Studies and Director of the Center for Hartford Engagement and Research (CHER) at Trinity College. Since learn-*

*ing how to create interactive urban history maps, he spends less time talking with his hands. (Photo by Andy Hart)*



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## 9.2 List of Interactive Maps and Charts

*by Jack Dougherty and Ilya Ilyankou*

Interactive Map of Home Value Index in Hartford County, CT, from 1910-2010, <https://ontheline.github.io/otl-home-value/index-caption.html>

Interactive Storymap of Town Borders in Hartford County, CT, from 1600s to Present, <https://ontheline.github.io/otl-town-borders/>

Interactive Map of Federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation "Redlining" in Hartford area, 1937, <https://ontheline.github.io/otl-redlining/index-caption.html>

Interactive Map of Restrictive Covenants in Hartford area, 1940s, <https://ontheline.github.io/otl-covenants/index-caption.html>

Interactive Storymap of Hartford Public High School locations, 1847-present, <https://ontheline.github.io/otl-hphs/>

TODO - more to come



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## 9.3 Building with Bookdown, GitHub, and Zotero

*by Jack Dougherty and Ilya Ilyankou*

We are building this open-access book with open-source tools—namely Bookdown, GitHub, and Zotero—and openly sharing the knowledge we acquire so that others may improve on the process. We welcome feedback from digitally-minded authors and software developers on Twitter or directly on the GitHub repo for this page <https://github.com/OnTheLine/otl-bookdown/blob/master/09.3-bookdown.Rmd>.

- Bookdown, an open-source software package by Yihui Xie at RStudio, allows authors to compose in version of Markdown, an easy-to-read-and-write cross-platform syntax, and create one workflow that produces books in multiple formats, such as Web edition, PDF edition, ePUB ebook edition, and Microsoft Word. Furthermore, Bookdown generates the Web edition as a set of static-site HTML files, which display digital elements (such as interactive maps and videos) and load very quickly into readers' web browsers. Individual authors can install Bookdown on their Mac, Windows, or Linux computers, and publish their work through a free and simple GitHub Pages account, rather than a separate and complex web server. Interestingly, Bookdown requires installing the open-source R Project and RStudio console and editor, which typically are used for statistical data analysis. Behind the scenes, Bookdown converts the text of the book from R-flavored Markdown files into Web and eBook editions using PanDoc, an open-source universal document converter, without requiring authors to learn complex Pandoc instructions. Although Bookdown may not be the best choice for novice computer users, installation steps are outlined below, along with a recommended workflow for authoring and publishing with GitHub and Zotero.<sup>4</sup>
- GitHub is an open-source repository that enables us to publicly share the text and code in this book, with a version-control system that allows collaborators to work on different sections at the same time. Also, the GitHub Pages feature allows us to freely host online all of the book editions (Web, PDF, etc.), with a custom domain name purchased through another service, Reclaim Hosting. As this is an open-access publication, we intentionally make its contents public—and also share instructions like this—while we work on the book, which is consistent with the contract signed with our open-access publisher. Note that GitHub also allows users the option to make repositories private.
- Zotero is an open-source bibliography manager to collect sources and organize citations, created by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. Better BibTeX is an extension by Emiliano Heynes that makes Zotero citation keys work better with Markdown text workflows. While Bookdown does not require using Zotero, scholars who need to manage multiple source materials and citations will benefit from the Bookdown—Zotero—Better BibTeX workflow described

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<sup>4</sup>For a detailed guide, see Yihui Xie, *Bookdown: Authoring Books and Technical Documents with R Markdown*, 2018, <https://bookdown.org/yihui/bookdown/>

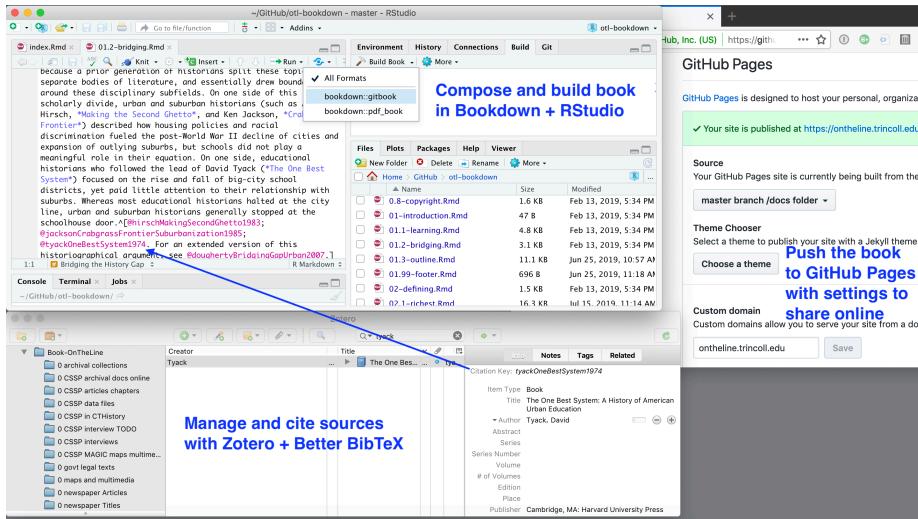


Figure 9.1: Overview of the workflow on a Mac desktop: Compose and build the book in RStudio with Bookdown (top left), manage sources and insert citation keys with Zotero + BetterBibTex (bottom left), and push the built book files to GitHub Pages with settings shown via web browser to share online (right).

below.

Before leaping into Bookdown or any software tool, see Alternative Publishing Platforms in this book.

### Install Bookdown with R, RStudio, and a LaTex Engine

Below are steps we followed to setup the publishing platform for this book, using our Macintosh OS 10.14 computers. The same general principles also should apply to Windows computers. No special knowledge is required, but this may not be recommended for novice computer users. Installation steps—and inevitable problems that pop up—will be easier if users are willing to feel adventurous with their computers, or already have some familiarity with text editors, GitHub, or R Studio.

- Install R Project statistical programming language <https://www.r-project.org>, which Bookdown requires. See screenshot
- Install the free RStudio Desktop to make R easier to use with a visual editor. See screenshot
- Inside RStudio, select the Packages tab, and select Install. See screenshot
- Inside RStudio, install the “bookdown” package to build your book, and select Install Dependencies. See screenshot

- Bookdown now should be successfully installed in RStudio. See screenshot
- For Bookdown to create a PDF edition of your book, you need to install a LaTeX engine to prepare your Markdown plain text, citations, and images into stylized pages. Since the full-sized LaTeX project is very large, Bookdown recommends the smaller TinyTeX package. Inside RStudio, select the Packages tab, select Install, and enter “tinytex” to find and upload the package. See screenshot
- To finish the installation, in the RStudio console, type `tinytex::install_tinytex()` and press return. See screenshot

#### 9.3.0.0.1 Sidenote: About the PDF edition, and TinyTeX vs XelaTeX

The PDF edition of this Bookdown-generated publication is still a work-in-progress, and the settings are not yet finalized. Read more about various options at <https://bookdown.org/yihui/rmarkdown/pdf-document.html>. To avoid some unicode error messages when generating the PDF edition for this book, we installed XelaTeX instead of TinyTeX. If you do the same, be sure to modify this line in your Bookdown index.Rmd settings: `latex_engine: xelatex`

#### 9.3.0.0.2 Sidenote: If TinyTeX installation error

- Once upon a time, we received this error message when attempting to install tinytex in RStudio on our Mac: `/usr/local/bin not writeable`. We resolved by reading the software developer’s GitHub issue <https://github.com/yihui/tinytex/issues/24> and following these steps:
- In the Mac Applications > Utilities folder, open the Terminal application.
- Carefully type `sudo chown -Rwhoami:admin /usr/local/bin` and press return.
- Carefully type (without “sudo”) `~/Library/TinyTeX/bin/x86_64-darwin/tlmgr path add` and press return.
- Close the Terminal application.
- In the RStudio console, type `tinytex::install_tinytex(force = TRUE)` and press return.

#### Download and Build a Sample Bookdown Book

- Create a free GitHub account <https://github.com> to simplify steps for the next two sections. While Bookdown does not require you to use GitHub, the workflow described below features GitHub to copy a Bookdown template and to host your own Bookdown editions online.
- In your web browser, log into your GitHub account, go to the Bookdown developer’s `bookdown-minimal` repo <https://github.com>.

com/yihui/bookdown-minimal, and fork a copy to your GitHub account. To learn about forking in GitHub, see this chapter <http://datavizforall.org/github.html> in the *Data Visualization for All* book.

- Install GitHub Desktop <https://desktop.github.com> to transfer files between your online GitHub repo and local computer. While software developers may prefer to access GitHub by typing commands in their terminal, GitHub Desktop provides easier point-and-click access for most users.
- In your web browser, go to your forked copy of `bookdown-minimal`, click the green **Clone or Download** button, and select **Open in Desktop**. This should automatically open the GitHub Desktop application, and you can navigate where you wish to store a copy of your code repo on a folder in your local computer.
- In RStudio in the upper-right corner, select **Project > Open Project** to open the `bookdown-minimal` folder on your local computer. See screenshot
- In RStudio, open the `index.Rmd` file and make some simple edits to the text of this minimal book. For example, remove the hashtag `#` comment symbol in line 8 to “uncomment” and activate the PDF book option. Save your edits. See screenshot
- Optional: If you wish, you can modify your `bookdown-minimal` files outside of RStudio, by using your preferred text editor, such as Atom editor <https://atom.io>.
- In RStudio, upper-right corner, select the **Build** tab, select **Build Book**, and choose **All Formats** to build both the gitbook-style static web edition and PDF edition.
- If RStudio successfully builds both editions of your minimal book, the output will be saved into your `bookdown-minimal` folder, in a subfolder named `_book`, because that’s how this sample is configured. The RStudio internal browser should automatically open your web edition (but it’s not a very good browser, so we typically close it and manually open the `index.html` file with Firefox or Chrome browser.)
- Also, open the subfolder and inspect the PDF edition of your book. If RStudio found any errors, they will appear in the Build viewer. See screenshot
- Hint: In future sessions with RStudio, you may need to select Packages tab and click Update to keep bookdown and other software packages up to date. See screenshot
- Close RStudio.

### Host your Book with GitHub Pages

- Open GitHub Desktop and navigate to the `bookdown-minimal` folder on your local computer. Write a quick summary to commit (or save) the changes you made above to your master branch, and push this version to your online GitHub repo.

- In your web browser, go to your online GitHub repo, with a web address similar to <https://github.com/USERNAME/bookdown-minimal> (insert your own GitHub username).
- In your GitHub repo, select Settings, and scroll down to the GitHub Pages section, which is a free web hosting service to publish your code and book editions on the public web. Select Master Branch as your source, and Save.
- Scroll down to this section again, and the web address of your published site should appear. Copy this address.
- In a new browser tab, paste the web address from above, and at the end add `_book/index.html` because this sample is configured to store all web and PDF editions in your `_book` subfolder. Your web address should be similar to: [https://USERNAME.github.io/bookdown-minimal/\\_book/index.html](https://USERNAME.github.io/bookdown-minimal/_book/index.html)
- Reminder: You may need to wait up to one minute for edits to your GitHub online repo to appear live at your GitHub Pages web address. Also, after waiting for GitHub Pages to make changes, be sure to “force reload” or “hard refresh” your web browser to update directly from the GitHub Pages server, not the browser’s internal cache. On Mac, press shift + command + R. On Windows, press ctrl + F5.

### Customize Bookdown and GitHub Settings and Domain Name

- To see the file structure, settings, and content for this *On The Line* book, view its online repository at <https://github.com/ontheline/ontheline-bookdown>.
- See details about configuration settings in Yihui Xie’s Bookdown technical guide.<sup>5</sup>
- In this publication, the `_bookdown.yml` file is set to build all of the book outputs (Web edition, PDF edition, etc.) in directory folder named `docs` in the GitHub repo as shown below. (Proper indenting is important here.)

```
output_dir: "docs"
book_filename: "Dougherty-etal-OnTheLine"
edit: https://github.com/ontheline/otl-bookdown/edit/master/%s
language:
  label:
    fig: "Figure "
ui:
  edit: "Edit"
chapter_name: "Chapter "
```

In this book, the Bookdown setting has been changed from the default `_books` folder to the `docs` folder to take advantage of the GitHub Pages setting that allows hosting online content from the `master/docs` folder, rather than the entire

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<sup>5</sup>Xie

`master` branch. Choosing these Bookdown and GitHub Pages settings allows authors to publicly share their book source code and raw text on the `master` branch, **and** host online the Web and ebook editions from the `master/docs` sub-folder of that branch. (Years earlier, GitHub previously required users to separate these tasks on two different branches, typically called `master` and `gh-pages`, but now users can do both through one branch, which is simpler.) Also, following this `master/docs` method simplifies the address of your GitHub Pages published web edition to this format: <https://USERNAME.github.com/REPONAME>. (See further below about customizing the web address.)

In this publication, the `index.Rmd` file is set to produce the Web edition in the GitBook style, with additional settings explained further below. (Proper indenting is important here.)

```
output:
  bookdown::gitbook:
    dev: svglite
    css: css/style.css
    includes:
      in_header: [custom-scripts.html, google-analytics-otl.html]
    split_by: section
    split_bib: true
    number_sections: true
```

In the GitHub repo for this book, here is the root file structure:

- Preface of the book with non-numbered sections: `index.Rmd`
- Chapters with first-level headers, such as: `01-introduction.Rmd`
- Sections with second-level headers, which belong to chapters, such as `01.1-section.Rmd` and `01.2-section.Rmd`
- The `images` folder, where JPG, PNG, and PDFs to display in chapters are located.
- The `docs` folder, which contains the published book products, such as Web edition (`index.html`, `introduction.html`, etc.), the PDF edition (`Dougherty-etal-OnTheLine.pdf`), etc.
- Additional helper files described further below.

When you change the names of chapters/sections, Bookdown builds new HMTL pages based on those new names, but old HMTL pages based on old chapter/section names may still exist in the same subfolder. To avoid confusion, you may wish to carefully delete old HTML pages in `docs` whenever you significantly alter names and build a new version of the book.

In addition, this GitHub Pages repo is published with a custom domain name <https://OnTheLine.trincoll.edu>. Learn more about custom domain names at <https://help.github.com/articles/using-a-custom-domain-with-github-pages/>.

Typically, a custom domain name is purchased from a web hosting service, such as ReclaimHosting, and you may need customer support to access the Manage DNS (domain name system) to point your new URL to your GitHub Pages online site. For this book's custom domain name, <https://ontheline.trincoll.edu>, the IT staff at Trinity College created a subdomain on their .edu domain, which shows that my scholarship is affiliated with an academic institution. Adding a GitHub Pages custom domain name creates an additional `CNAME` file in the `docs` subfolder. Avoid accidentally erasing the `CNAME` file if you need to clear out any old HTML files in your subfolder.

The web edition of this book includes two custom files that are referenced in the `index.Rmd` file header, and are generated into the web edition when building the book:

```
output:
  bookdown::gitbook:
    dev: svglite
    css: css/style.css
    includes:
      in_header: [custom-scripts.html, google-analytics-otl.html]
```

- the `custom-scripts.html` file includes specific instructions to set the height or width of iframes for specific interactive maps and charts in the web edition, which is explained further in the Style Guide section of this book. (Thanks to Michael Dorman for this tip.)
- the `google-analytics-otl.html` file records web traffic with Google Analytics, if you create a free account and insert your code.
- The web edition of this book also includes a custom `404.html` file that redirects any bad web addresses under the domain back to `index.html` page. A copy of this file must be manually transferred into the `docs` subfolder, because it is not automatically built by Bookdown.

In this book, the `index.Rmd` file also contains instructions to create footnotes and a bibliography from a Zotero-Better BibLaTeX exported file named `ontheline.bib`, in a specific Chicago-style format. Other `.csl` files are downloadable from the Zotero Styles Repository <https://www.zotero.org/styles>.

```
bibliography: ontheline.bib
citation-style: chicago-fullnote-bibliography.csl
```

Also in this book, the `index.Rmd` file is set to produce a PDF edition of the book using the `xelatex` engine (or see `tinytex` or `latex` alternatives described above). Furthermore, additional PanDoc settings are required to create the desired Chicago-style footnotes and bibliography in the PDF edition. See more details at <https://pandoc.org/>.

```
bookdown::pdf_book:
  latex_engine: xelatex
  citation_package: none
  pandoc_args: [ "--csl", "chicago-fullnote-bibliography.csl" ]
```

### Zotero and Better BibTex for Footnotes and Bibliography

This workflow uses the open-source Zotero bibliography manager (<http://zotero.org>), with the Better BibTeX extension (<https://retorque.re/zotero-better-bibtex/>) to work more easily with Markdown and Bookdown. Rather than typing full references directly into the text, authors can insert a short citation key to each source, and the tools will automatically generate the desired references (such as Chicago-style footnotes, which historians love) and an alphabetized bibliography for the book. Furthermore, since authoring this *On The Line* book has been a multi-year process with multimedia sources whose web addresses have changed over time, this workflow ensures that the most up-to-date information in your Zotero database also appears in all editions of your book.

With these tools installed, here's an outline of the author's workflow:

- An entry for each source (book, journal article, document, etc.) must be created in the author's Zotero library (or a specific collection), either automatically from the web or manually.
- Better BibTeX generates a unique citation key for each source (example: ^[@tyackOneBestSystem1974]), which authors insert into the Markdown text to create a full reference (such as a footnote) and a bibliography.
- The author identifies their preferred citation style at <https://www.zotero.org/styles>, uploads the file (example: chicago-fullnote-bibliography.csl) to the local book repo, and lists it in the `index.Rmd` settings for both the Web edition and the PDF edition.
- Before each build in Bookdown, the author sets their Zotero preferences, and exports the Zotero library or specific collection to the root level of the local book repo (example: `ontheline.bib`).

#### 9.3.0.0.3 Installation and Settings

- Download and install Zotero for Mac, Windows, Linux, and add connectors to your browsers.
- Install the Better BibTeX extension and follow all of the site's instructions for initial setup.
- At the top of each entry in Zotero, the extension will generate a unique citation code (example: `tyackOneBestSystem1974`).
- You can copy and paste the citation code into your Markdown text, and add a caret, square brackets, and the at symbol `^[@tyackOneBestSystem1974]`, as described in the Style Guide in this book.)
- Also, you can set Zotero preferences > Export > Better BibTeX Quick Copy to use Zotero's drag-and-drop quick copy feature.

- To export a bibliography (.bib) from Zotero library or collection into the local Bookdown repo:
  - Select Library > Right-click to export the collection
  - Select format > Better BibLaTeX (*IMPORTANT* I use this setting, rather than “Better BibTex”, because “Better BibLaTeX” includes full dates in newspaper citations, and urls). Also, I leave all of the checkboxes blank during the export, and do NOT select “keep updated”. This means that if my Better BibTeX citation codes suddenly change in Zotero because the author, title, or year changed, then I’m responsible for running find-and-replace to make these edits in the text of the book.
  - Save the output as FILENAME.bib, save into your book repo, and be sure to match the settings in `index.Rmd`.

These Zotero types appear correctly with this Bookdown workflow:

- Book
- Book chapter
- Journal article
- Newspaper
- Thesis
- Report
- Blog post
- Web page
- Document

– Use this all-purpose entry in place of other types: Law case, Presentation, Interview, Video recording, Television broadcast, etc. Insert important details (such as the archival location information) in the Publisher field.

To help other researchers find items cited in this book, URLs should be included in Zotero entries whenever feasible, even if not required by convention. For example, some print-only books and documents are hard to locate, so include an OCLC WorldCat permalink to make them easier to find (example: <http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/20683509>). Also, if a print source has been digitized by HathiTrust, Google Books, or the Internet Archive, add one of these URLs to the Zotero entry.

Reminder: Chicago full-note works exactly as it was designed, meaning that the second instance of a citation currently appears as an abbreviated note (author, with title when appropriate). TODO: Find or create a modified .CSL file to display the full footnote entry in *every* instance in the web version, so that users do not need to scroll to find the complete source info.



*On The Line* is an open-access, born-digital, book-in-progress by Jack Dougherty and contributors at Trinity College, Hartford CT, USA. This work is copyrighted by the authors and freely distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. Learn about our open-access policy and code repository and how to read and cite our work. This book-in-progress was last updated on: 2019-08-13

## 9.4 *On The Line* Style Guide for Bookdown + RMarkdown

NOTE: View this file and the code used to create the examples directly on the GitHub repo at <https://github.com/OnTheLine/otl-bookdown/blob/master/09.4-style-guide.Rmd>.

Also, this style guide was created primarily for the web edition <http://OnTheLine.trincoll.edu>, and may require additional modifications for the final PDF print edition.

Use HTML-style code comments to insert notes that are invisible to most readers, yet visible to authors (or anyone) viewing the public GitHub repo

```
<!-- this comment appears in the source code, but not the book products -->
```

Use brackets and parentheses for an embedded link

Use parentheses only for a non-embedded link (<http://example.com>)

Similarly, display URL with angle brackets: <http://example.com>

If necessary, use HTML tags to create link that opens in a new page

### Headers and Cross-reference links

- Chapter titles are first-level headers with one hashtag: `# Chapter Title`
- Section titles are second-level headers with two hashtags: `## Section Title`
- Avoid third-level headers with three hashtags, as we have not yet found an easy way to control `toc_depth` in HTML edition.
- Subheaders are fourth-level headers with four hashtags: `#### Subheader in body text`
- Currently for Markdown tables, use fifth-level headers with five hashtags: `##### Table title`

Since the `index.Rmd` settings add numbers to chapters/sections, remember to block numbers from appearing in fourth- and fifth-level headers by adding curly brackets around a hyphen: `#### Subheader non-numbered {-}`

In Bookdown, a short chapter/section title `# Introduction` has a short default reference: `#introduction`. But a longer chapter/section title `# Defining City and Suburban Lines` has a longer default reference: `#defining-city-and-suburban-lines`.

In this book, we simplify each chapter/section title references by adding a short ID name in curly brackets, like this: `# Defining City and Suburban Lines {#defining}`.

Also, we match the short ID name `{#defining}` to the file name `02-defining.Rmd`. Although Bookdown does not require the file name and short ID to match, this method helps authors to organize all cross-references.

To embed a cross-reference to another chapter/section in the book, add an HTML link using brackets and parentheses. See code: `*by [Ilya Ilyankou and Jack Dougherty] (authors-and-contributors.html)*` with demo: `by Ilya Ilyankou and Jack Dougherty`. This method works best for the HTML edition.

### Preface and Footers

In this book, `index.Rmd` begins with a non-numbered first-level header `# Preface {-}`, followed by non-numbered second-level headers such as `## Authors and Contributors {-}` and `## Acknowledgements {-}`. All of this content is placed in the `index.Rmd` file because creating zero-numbered files (such as `0.1-about.Rmd`) generated Bookdown errors.

Also, at the end of each section in the main text, a footer has been manually pasted that includes HTML links to sections in the Preface. The purpose of the footer is to ensure that each long web page contains author and copyright information, in case readers print out individual web pages from their browsers. Also, manually inserting a footer is not ideal, but we have not yet created a custom-script that performs the same function.

### Formatting and Footnotes

For an em-dash, use three hyphens—like this—rather than two hyphens.

For a block quote, start each line with a caret **AND** add two spaces to insert a line break:

I thoroughly disapprove of duels. If a man should challenge me, I would take him kindly and forgivingly by the hand and lead him to a quiet place and kill him.

— Mark Twain  
— notable American author

A text-only footnote.<sup>6</sup>

To create a footnote with citations only, separate BibTeX citation keys with semi-colons:<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>This is a footnote, with no reference.

<sup>7</sup>Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*; Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*; Tyack, *The One Best System*.

Since footnotes also may include text and punctuation in Markdown syntax, always insert a caret symbol prior to the brackets to demarcate a footnote:<sup>8</sup>

### Figures: Interactive Content and Static Images

In body of the book, avoid inserting images with simple Markdown syntax, because it lacks auto-numbering. Instead, follow this R code chunk method, especially to display interactive content on the HTML web edition, with static screenshot images in the PDF edition:

#### 9.4.0.0.1 Overview of steps

- Define a text reference for captions, because this method accepts complex syntax, such as RMarkdown cites and links, as shown below. For details, see Bookdown sections on Figures <https://bookdown.org/yihui/bookdown/figures.html> and Markdown extensions <https://bookdown.org/yihui/bookdown/markdown-extensions-by-bookdown.html>.
- Insert a BLANK LINE between the text reference and the R code chunk coming up.
- Insert an R code chunk <https://bookdown.org/yihui/bookdown/r-code.html>, with NO SPACES between ref:chunk-label, as shown below.
- To reduce the width (or height) of the output, add `out.width="30%"` to the code chunk, which works for Web edition and also PDF edition. If width is less than full, also insert `fig.align="center"`.
- To display interactive content in the Web edition and a static image in the PDF edition, create both elements and insert an if-else statement in the R code chunk to display these elements in different outputs, as shown below. (Thanks to Michael Dorman for this tip.)
- If the interactive content includes an iframe (for a map or chart), the default height will be 400 pixels. To adjust the iframe height (or width), insert a line of code in `custom-scripts.html` and add a code comment to the text to serve as a reminder, as shown below. Also, make sure that the `index.Rmd` file includes the custom script in the header, as described in the section above.
  - Optional: In the body text, insert a dynamic reference to the figure in the same file, because PDF engine creates floating images that may be placed on the next page. Sample dynamic reference to a figure further below: ... as shown in Figure 9.3.

---

<sup>8</sup>On this theme, see Jack Dougherty, “Review of ‘Connecticut’s Public Schools: A History, 1650-2000’ by Christopher Collier,” *Connecticut History* 50, no. 1 (2011): 120–22, [http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp\\_papers/41](http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp_papers/41). On a different theme, see Dougherty et al., “School Choice in Suburbia.”, pp. 33-35

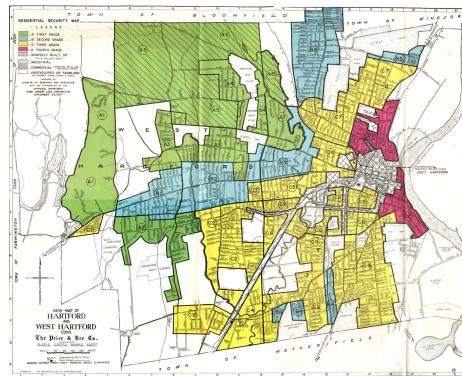


Figure 9.2: Caption for sample static image, with Markdown formatting, links, citation.

- Reminders:
  - If the image appears a second time in the book, in a separate chapter, be sure to relabel the text ref: year-title2.
  - Bookdown does not auto-number figures in the index.Rmd file, which serves as a preface or introduction.
- STILL TODO
  - Decide if ‘out.width’ and ‘out.height’ is preferable in all cases to “`fig_height=7`”
  - Accessibility: use `alt=""` for brief image description? Or do the detailed captions replace this need?
  - About `auto_pdf`: “`include_graphics()` can be smart enough to use PDF graphics automatically when the output format is LaTeX and the PDF graphics files exist, e.g., an image path `foo/bar.png` can be automatically replaced with `foo/bar.pdf` if the latter exists. PDF images often have better qualities than raster images in LaTeX/PDF output. To make use of this feature, set the argument `auto_pdf = TRUE`, or set the global option `options(knitr.graphics.auto_pdf = TRUE)` to enable this feature globally in an R session.” from <https://bookdown.org/yihui/bookdown/figures.html>

#### 9.4.0.0.2 Example: Static image in all editions, half-size output, no interactive version

#### 9.4.0.0.3 Example: Interactive iframe in web edition (with adjusted height), static image in PDF edition

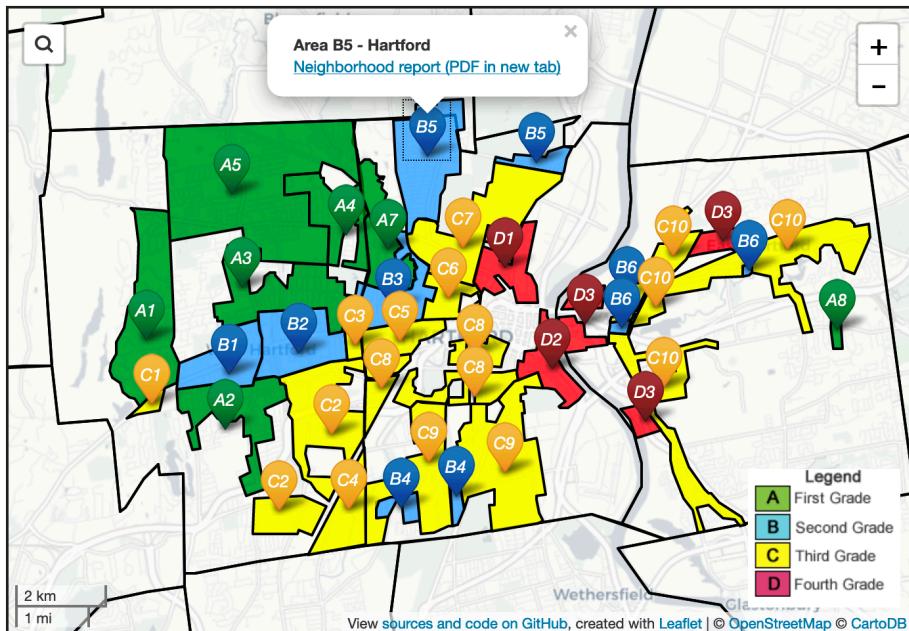


Figure 9.3: Caption for all versions here, with link to full-screen interactive map with its own caption, and link to sources and the code View map historical sources, known issues, and the code, developed by Ilya Ilyankou and Jack Dougherty, with footnote.<sup>10</sup>



Figure 9.4: Here's a sample YouTube caption, with option to add Markdown links and footnote.

**9.4.0.0.4 Example: YouTube video clip in web edition, static image in PDF edition**

**9.4.0.0.5 Example: Vimeo video clip in web edition, static image in PDF edition**

**9.4.0.0.6 Example: CTDA video clip in web edition, static image in PDF edition**

**9.4.0.0.7 Example: Kaltura video clip in web edition, static image in PDF edition**

**9.4.0.0.8 Example: Scrollable PDF in web edition, static screenshot in PDF edition**

## Tables

For now, use Markdown table formatting, with header above and caption (in italicized text) below. See <http://www.tablesgenerator.com/> with Markdown output. TODO: Decide on Bookdown-recommended kable package for tables, link to CSV in GitHub repo, and so on.



Figure 9.5: Here's a sample Vimeo caption, with option to add Markdown links and footnote.



Figure 9.6: Here's a sample CTDA video caption, with option to add Markdown link and footnote.



Figure 9.7: Here's a sample Kaltura video caption, with option to add Markdown link and footnote.

## Sample PDF

Created for testing [PDFObject](#)

This PDF is three pages long. Three long pages. Or three short pages if you're optimistic. Is it the same as saying "three long minutes", knowing that all minutes are the same duration, and one cannot possibly be longer than the other? If these pages are all the same size, can one possibly be longer than the other?

I digress. Here's some Latin. *Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Integer nec odio. Praesent libero. Sed cursus ante dapibus diam. Sed nisi. Nulla quis sem at nibh elementum imperdiet. Duis enim tincidunt mauris. Fusce nec tellus sed augue semper porta. Mauris*

Figure 9.8: Here's a sample local scrollable PDF caption, with option to add Markdown link and footnote.

#### 9.4.0.0.9 Sample table

Header 1	Header 2	Header 3
Security Grade	Second	Third
Location	Hartford	Hartford
Trend Next Decade	Stable	Stable

In the table above, insert a caption in *italics*, with optional links and footnote.<sup>11</sup>

#### References for above

- R Markdown book section on figures
  - <https://bookdown.org/yihui/rmarkdown/html-document.html#figure-options>
  - <https://bookdown.org/yihui/rmarkdown/r-code.html#figures>, which states:
    - “PDF documents are generated through the LaTeX files generated from R Markdown. A highly surprising fact to LaTeX beginners is that figures float by default: even if you generate a plot in a code chunk on the first page, the whole figure environment may float to the next page. This is just how LaTeX works by default. It has a tendency to float figures to the top or bottom of pages. Although it can be annoying and distracting, we recommend that you refrain from playing the “Whac-A-Mole” game in the beginning of your writing, i.e., desperately trying to position figures “correctly” while they seem to be always dodging you. You may wish to fine-tune the positions once the content is complete using the `fig.pos` chunk option (e.g., `fig.pos = ‘h’`). See [https://www.sharelatex.com/learn/Positioning\\_images\\_and\\_tables](https://www.sharelatex.com/learn/Positioning_images_and_tables) for possible values of `fig.pos` and more general tips about this behavior in LaTeX. In short, this can be a difficult problem for PDF output.”
- R Markdown reference <https://www.rstudio.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/rmarkdown-reference.pdf>
- On R code chunks in RMarkdown <https://bookdown.org/yihui/rmarkdown/r-code.html>
- On R code chunk options in knitr package <https://yihui.name/knitr/options/#code-chunk>
- On positioning images in LaTeX [https://www.overleaf.com/learn/latex/Positioning\\_images\\_and\\_tables](https://www.overleaf.com/learn/latex/Positioning_images_and_tables)
- Tips and tricks <http://zevross.com/blog/2017/06/19/tips-and-tricks-for-working-with-images-and-figures-in-r/#arguments-out.width-and-out.height-apply-to-both-existing-images-and-r-generated-figures>

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<sup>11</sup>Ilyankou and Dougherty, “Leaflet Map of HOLC “Redlining” Security Map for Hartford CT Area, 1937.”



*On The Line* is an open-access, born-digital, book-in-progress by Jack Dougherty and contributors at Trinity College, Hartford CT, USA. This work is copyrighted by the authors and freely distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. Learn about our open-access policy and code repository and how to read and cite our work. This book-in-progress was last updated on: 2019-08-13

## 9.5 Alternative Publishing Platforms

Before leaping into Bookdown or any other software platform, consider the costs and benefits of using tools to achieve your goals, such as writing and publishing a web-and-print book like this one.

- Conventional word processors: Most authors work primarily with text, and are content with a traditional book-publishing workflow that begins with composing in Microsoft Word or LibreOffice, then handing it off to a publisher for review, copyediting, layout, and distribution. But this book is designed to blend text and digital media (such as interactive maps, video clips, scanned documents, and links) and publishing the book in two formats: on the public web (for free) and an inexpensive paperback (for sale). Traditional word processors do not achieve this goal.
- Sophisticated word processors: Scrivener by Literature & Latte is a powerful word-processor and outlining tool designed to help authors see both “the forest or the trees” of book-length manuscripts. In fact, the first few chapters of this *On The Line* book were initially composed in Scrivener. Although Scrivener supports a different version of Markdown, the tool was not designed to integrate interactive maps and charts into text, nor does it support multi-author collaboration or sharing files on a public repository.
- Cloud-based word processors: Some authors realize the benefits of writing collaboratively or sharing drafts in public or semi-public venues for early feedback. One way to attain these benefits with little investment of technology and time is to compose chapters of a book in Google Documents or similar cloud-based word-processors. In fact, some text of chapters for this book were collaboratively composed and edited in Google Docs, then converted to Markdown format using a Google add-on tool, Docs to Markdown by ed.bacher, and migrated to Bookdown. Although Google Documents can display static images of interactive maps and videos, with links to live online versions, it was not designed to publish book-length editions for the web or PDF.
- WordPress.org is an open-source web authoring platform, used by over 33 percent of the top 10 million websites as of 2019. Users can create a free account on WordPress.com, or freely download the WordPress software

and run a self-hosted version on a server, which requires developer skills or a third-party service, such as ReclaimHosting.com. Although WordPress creates web pages, it was not designed to produce PDFs or print books. An earlier version of this *On The Line* book was hosted on a WordPress site from its inception in 2010 until 2014, as shown in these links to the Internet Archive.<sup>12</sup>

- Pressbooks is an open-book publishing platform built on an open-source variation of WordPress Multisite, which produces books in different formats: web, print (PDF), ebooks (ePUB), etc. Authors can pay to publish on the Pressbooks.com platform or a third-party service such as ReclaimHosting.com, or freely download the software to run on a server, which requires developer skills. Although Pressbooks is a powerful tool, it requires an investment of time and resources to install and maintain its platform, dependencies, and updates. Also, creating a book in Pressbooks requires authors to compose directly in the WordPress-style editor, or copy-and-paste content from word processor to web platform. The latter workflow is better for authors who wish to easily see and edit across all of their chapters, but requires continually updating back-and-forth between the word processor and web platform to keep both versions identical. An earlier version of the *On The Line* book-in-progress existed on a self-hosted Pressbooks server at Trinfo.Cafe at Trinity College from 2015 until 2017, as shown in these links to the Internet Archive. While the digital and print versions looked great, maintaining the self-hosted Pressbooks site was a chore, and continually moving back-and-forth between the word processor and web platform versions was not ideal. Composing in Bookdown was simpler because there was only one version of the book: the word processor and web platform are the same.
- Scalar is an open-source scholarly authoring and publishing platform by the Alliance for Networking Visual Culture, with support from the Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The platform was created primarily for authors to assemble born-digital book-length works online, with media from multiple sources, and it allows multi-author collaboration. But the platform was not designed to produce PDFs or print books, so was not considered for this book. See examples of online-only works at <https://scalar.me/anvc/scalar/showcase/>. Users can freely register to create works on the Scalar platform hosted by the University of Southern California at <http://scalar.usc.edu/works/>, or
- Manifold is an open-source scholarly publishing platform created through a collaboration by the University of Minnesota Press, the Graduate Center at the City University of New York, and Cast Iron Coding, with funding from the Mellon Foundation. The platform was designed primarily for authors to integrate digital media into their texts, and also for readers to view and annotate drafts and finished books online. It appears that

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<sup>12</sup>Jack Dougherty, “On the Line,” Wayback Machine, Internet Archive, October 1, 2010, [https://web.archive.org/web/2010100100000\\*/ontheline.trincoll.edu](https://web.archive.org/web/2010100100000*/ontheline.trincoll.edu)

print book production is handled separately. Since installing Manifold on a server requires developer skills, most authors will submit text and media to be uploaded to a server hosted by a publisher or other organization. For example, see Manifold-produced books on the University of Minneapolis Press server at <https://manifold.umn.edu>. Since the Manifold platform can ingest texts written in Markdown, Microsoft Word, and other formats, it should be feasible to upload a manuscript that was originally produced in Bookdown.

- Fulcrum is an open-source scholarly publishing platform created University of Michigan Library and Press working with partners from Indiana, Minnesota, Northwestern, and Penn State universities, with initial funding from the Mellon Foundation. The platform was designed primarily for authors to add or integrate digital media into their works, and for readers to view finished books online. It also appears that print book production is handled separately. Since installing Fulcrum on a server requires developer skills, most authors will submit text and media to be uploaded to a server hosted by a publisher or other organization. For example, see Fulcrum-produced books on the University of Michigan Press server at <https://www.fulcrum.org/michigan>, and note that only a portion of these are open-access books. Current documentation does not clearly explain formats authors can submit for Fulcrum to ingest.

# Chapter 10

## Bibliography

### About undergraduate co-authors

Since 2002, over 30 Trinity College student researchers have co-authored publications and/or research presentations with faculty, staff, and community partners through the Cities Suburbs and Schools Project. CSSP is both an undergraduate seminar and a research team for independent studies. Their works listed below include articles, book chapters, papers, and presentations, and many of these have been archived in the Papers and Publications section of the Cities Suburbs and Schools Project on the Trinity College Digital Repository.

### Archival Collections

Aerial Photographs of Connecticut, Connecticut State Library. <http://cslib.cdmhost.com/digital/collection/p4005coll10>. Avon History Collection, Avon Public Library. <http://avonhistory.info>. Boyd Hinds Papers, Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library. [http://hhc2.hplct.org/boyd\\_hinds.html](http://hhc2.hplct.org/boyd_hinds.html). Butch Lewis Video Collection, Hartford History Center, Hartford Public Library. <http://hhc.hplct.org/butch-lewis-video-collection/>. Case Look-up, Judicial Branch, State of Connecticut. <https://www.jud.ct.gov/jud2.htm>. Cities Suburbs and Schools Project, Connecticut Digital Archive. <http://collections.ctdigitalarchive.org/islandora/object/120002%3Acssp>. Cities Suburbs and Schools Project, Trinity College Digital Repository. <http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/cssp/>. Connecticut Digital Archive. <http://collections.ctdigitalarchive.org/>. Connecticut Historical Society. <https://chs.org/>. Connecticut History Illustrated. <http://connecticuthistoryillustrated.org/>. Connecticut Open Data, State of Connecticut. <https://data.ct.gov/>. Connecticut State Data Center, University of Connecticut. <http://ctsdc.uconn.edu/>. Connecticut State Library. <https://ctstatelibrary.org/>. ConnecticutHistory.org,

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