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A Covenant with Color

—
**Race and
Social Power
in Brooklyn**
—

Craig Steven Wilder

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fending off the hardships of depression. The few jobs and training programs that black Brooklynites won lasted only as long as the war. The removal of nonwhite defense employees was completed as white veterans returned to their jobs, nonwhite industrial workers were laid off as the nation returned to peacetime production, and the defense industries began a steady migration to the segregated suburbs. Black women seized the opportunity in defense industries to sustain their families and communities, but they had virtually no opportunity to jump from defense work to organized labor. The same was true for black men, except for a *lucky* few who fought for entrance into construction unions and became laborers, helpers, and apprentices, not full members. In 1946, while federal money continued to fuel the construction industry, the National Urban League found only twenty-two licensed black electricians (six of whom held membership in the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers), six black men in the plumbers' local, and two unionized black plasterers in all of New York City (see table 8.5). Even black veterans faced rampant discrimination. At the end of the war the Urban League, in a study of fifty cities, called the employment prospects of black veterans "most disheartening." "The movement of Negroes into peacetime employment lags far behind the movement of white veterans," the report concluded.²⁷

There could be no stability in Brooklyn so long as black workers were excluded, and the Great Depression left white Brooklynites more determined to labor under the covenant of color.

CHAPTER NINE

Vulnerable People, Undesirable Places

**The New Deal
and the Making of
the Brooklyn Ghetto,
1920-1990**

#35

There is not a single, thoughtful person living in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area who will condone lawlessness or criminality, whether committed by white or black people. By the same token these same thoughtful people don't want to find that the area in which they live is designated as a crime belt, in which persons from other parts of the city may fear to travel. Reasoning people of the area should get together and peacefully discuss ways and means to keep and preserve this much maligned area as a desirable section in which persons of all racial groups and of all religious persuasions may live in peace and harmony in the true democratic American way.

—Henry K. Ashcroft

The urban negro problem exists all over the country. It has been aggravated by the war. It is not confined to New York City or to the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood. The City can't do everything. Individuals, families, churches and social organizations must do their part.

—Robert Moses

On July 16, 1964 a building superintendent sprayed three black boys with water near their Manhattan junior high school. They chased him into his building. Police Lieutenant Thomas Gilligan of the Fourteenth Division of Brooklyn was shopping in the area and responded to the commotion. He saw the three youths pounding on an apartment door with a garbage can top. He identified himself as a policeman and demanded that they cease. One boy drew a knife and charged the lieutenant, who would claim that he drew his

revolver after giving the boy a warning, after which he shot the boy in the hand and several times in the torso. Eyewitnesses contradicted Gilligan's version of the incident. The boys were sprayed with water on purpose, said Beulah Barnes, an African-American woman, housewife, and nurse. A scuffle broke out and they chased the superintendent into the building, but only stayed a short while. As the kids came out of the building, Gilligan shot one of them, then "stood there for maybe 10 minutes just staring at the body. The boy never had any words with the [police]man." Within minutes students from the junior high school were on the scene responding with rocks and bottles. It was several hours before calm returned to the area.¹

In the following days protest rallies in response to the shooting turned into riots during which participants looted stores, taunted passersby, and clashed with police. The police killed at least one other Harlem resident and injured hundreds. Chants of "killer cops" pierced the air, bricks and bottles rained down from apartment buildings onto the authorities, and downtown precincts shifted police officers to upper Manhattan.²

On July 18, 1964 the turmoil spread to Brooklyn. African Americans and Puerto Ricans demonstrated in the Brownsville section. A Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) rally in Bedford-Stuyvesant, to protest the killing of young James Powell, turned violent. Onlookers ignored the rally organizers' pleas to disperse and return home. About one thousand people remained at the intersection of Nostrand Avenue and Fulton Street, harassed the police, and sacked area stores. A few hours later quiet was restored. That day the local precinct captain met with thirty-five community leaders in his office, which had a photo of the captain shaking hands with Martin Luther King Jr. on one wall. Violence and rioting were repeated on Tuesday, July 21. Two Brooklyn residents were shot and sixty-five others were arrested. "Last night in Bedford-Stuyvesant, it was a time for the 'have nots' to get even," declared a *New York Post* article. Wednesday night brought damage to ninety stores in a ten-block area of Bedford-Stuyvesant. The cost to the business district was estimated at more than \$300,000.³

"Now, I want to address remarks directly to the people of Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, South Jamaica, East Harlem and all of the other areas of our city marked by congestion, unemployment, slum housing and other adverse social conditions," said Mayor Robert F. Wagner in a speech carried on most of the city's television and radio stations. Wagner eloquently asked the city for peace and offered verbal empathy to the suffering that urban life

so frequently imposed on citizens. As if the riots were expected, he gave voice to the myriad of inequalities that affected the residents of New York's ghettos, and he pledged to bring on change:

We must go all out to remedy injustice, to reduce inequality and to remove all conditions and practices which are a source of resentment and recrimination among these fellow citizens of ours.

We are no richer than our poorest citizen, no stronger than the weakest among us.⁴

Calm returned to New York, but the citizens the Mayor had addressed so skillfully that evening soon discovered that his promises were not contractual and that he could do little to relieve their plight.

The conditions that brought on the 1960s riots were rooted in the New Deal era, when Bedford-Stuyvesant was an overwhelmingly white and fairly affluent district. While the physical separation of black Brooklynites was the most dramatic result of New Deal policy in the borough, that isolation was only the lubricant of oppression. Racial concentration set the foundation for a broader social agenda that put the black population at the mercy of their white co-citizens. Segregation allowed white Brooklynites to shift the burden of their social system to the minority of the population, and eventually permitted a transfer of social inequality irrespective of public policy.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt took office, black people were spatially less segregated than white ethnics. In 1930 James Weldon Johnson could still call Brooklyn the place where "most of the upper class and well-to-do coloured people had lived." That same year the Bureau of the Census found that most (13 of 23) of Brooklyn's statistical areas had more than a thousand black residents, while only four had fewer than a hundred. Historian Harold X. Connolly, looking for the antecedents of Brooklyn's isolated black district, could find "no contiguous, compact ghetto such as existed in Harlem or South Side Chicago." Only "given hindsight" could one find even "in skeletal form by 1930 the outline of the future Brooklyn ghetto." Yet, by the time of Roosevelt's death in 1945, Central Brooklyn was the primary locale of nonwhite residency in the borough. And, in 1953, when President Truman left office, a vast black ghetto stretched across Brooklyn and was becoming the largest concentration of its kind. "Racial barriers blocked their access to a diverse range of urban institutions, socioeconomic necessities, and opportunities: labor unions, manufacturing jobs, housing facilities, churches and

public accommodations of various sorts," writes Joe William Trotter, Jr. of African Americans in the prewar city. "These developments had roots in tangible issues such as competition for better-paying jobs, scarce housing resources, and the struggle for control over the city's government and other urban institutions."⁵ Drawing its harshest divisions along white-black racial lines, the New Deal blurred the boundaries of European ethnicity and provided Brooklyn with a potent *whitening* experience (see table 9.1).

TABLE 9.1
Population of Brooklyn by Race, 1900-1990

Year	White	Black	Latino ^a	Chinese	Total
1900	1,146,909	18,367	—	—	1,166,582
1910	1,610,487	22,708	—	799	1,634,351
1920	1,984,953	31,912	—	811	2,018,356
1930	2,488,815	68,921	—	1,405	2,560,401
1940	2,587,951	107,263	—	1,251	2,698,285
1950	2,525,118	208,478	—	2,268	2,738,175
1960	2,245,859	371,405	—	4,636	2,627,319
1970	1,905,788	656,194	—	11,779	2,602,012
1980	1,265,769	723,748	393,103	26,067	2,230,936
1990	1,079,762	873,620	447,605	68,905	2,300,644

^aIncluded in the white and black populations before 1980.

Source: Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population, 1900-1990*.

Brooklyn entered the Great Depression already suffering a serious shortage of affordable housing. In 1918 the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities' Tenement House Committee was still waging its war against the overcrowded slum by trying to reform its residents. "Our education of the tenant has heretofore been entirely by moral suasion," admitted the frustrated Committee, "and we need a good dose of compulsion in many cases to impress the lesson on his mind." Flatbush, East New York, Bushwick, Williamsburg, and Brownsville were all problem areas. Bushwick ranked with the Bronx and Manhattan's Lower East Side and Washington Heights for overcrowding. From 1906 to 1915 one of every four residences built in Brooklyn was a tenement and Kings County absorbed 47 percent of all the tenements constructed in the city. Handing out "For You" folders to children in the public schools, the Committee worked to spread the gospel of good home life. Model flats in Williamsburg gave a "concrete illustration" of decent housekeeping. In April 1914 the Committee began educating slum dwellers "in cleanliness, order, ventilation, and proper waste disposal in relation to health, fire prevention,

and safety." Perhaps its most interesting tool was a "Ten Housing Commandments" card designed to correct the religious and domestic deficiencies that white Protestants so frequently observed in ethnics. A 1918 report on 3,227 working-class families, 17,737 people, noted that 56 percent lived in "discredited old law tenements."⁶

Brooklyn's old, affluent sections, including Brooklyn Heights, Park Slope, Fort Greene, and Bedford, were showing physical fatigue. Expansion into the outlying areas of the borough followed the extension of subway and elevated service and altered property values in the inner city. New, accessible, and competitively priced housing in South and East Brooklyn was attractive to the 4 million riders who used the city's trains each day. Subways and el's sped past the older brownstone neighborhoods of the borough and into the newer areas. In older districts many homeowners hoped to replace elevateds with subways for beautification, but the short-term result was the addition of heavy construction to already unsightly avenues. In the 1930s in Bedford, where the removal of the el was one of many schemes to shore up the housing market, residents were more than disappointed when the subway finally opened and people from Harlem had direct access to their community via the "A train."⁷ While the Heights' view of and proximity to Manhattan and the Slope's Prospect Park buoyed property values, Fort Greene and Bedford were at the beginning of a long period of decline.

In 1919 the Brooklyn Urban League surveyed its constituents' housing and found much of it to be substandard and congested. "The houses in which the great bulk of colored people are forced to live are totally unsatisfactory as homes in which to bring up healthy, moral families," the League reported. Many were made of wood, sheltered multiple families, and lacked light and ventilation. The 1918 Tenement House Committee investigation of working-class housing identified seventy black families, six of whom were West Indian. The black laboring class was distributed across North and Central Brooklyn, but they tended to live in sections with the highest concentration of old law tenements and the oldest physical plants. The only noticeable concentration of black families was in the St. Marks district, Central Brooklyn, where about a third of the families lived and where rental costs were highest. African-American workers concentration in service jobs explains their being gathered in high-rent districts, but they also paid a premium for being black. The Urban League reported that black families paid more for their accommodations than white families. League investigators found that rents increased as much as ten dollars

per month when black tenants replaced white occupants. In 1929 the League examined housing along Fleet Street near its headquarters. "The buildings are old, and outside of those facing Myrtle Avenue and a few on Hudson Avenue, all are frame and two or three stories high. In many of the frame buildings the toilets are in the yard. In only one building are there baths . . .," it reported.⁸

Housing for the white working-class was not considerably better. Thousands of apartments had toilets in the yards and in public hallways. Thousands of rear tenements that admitted little air or light were still in use. "There are millions of people living under these conditions," warned A. F. Hinrichs of the State Housing Bureau. "There are now houses standing and occupied that were condemned as unfit for habitation in 1885." Reformers campaigned against the slums and the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce pushed for the demolition of all blighted areas, but the destruction of tenements and dilapidated frame structures worsened the housing shortage. There was "no new construction available in Brooklyn for a person earning less than \$45 per week," Hinrichs continued. Developers concentrated on middle-income housing. From 1917 to 1927 Brooklyn's land values increased 89 percent, double the gain for the city as a whole. Even the "older sections" became more expensive. In 1926 the city announced plans for the construction of Brooklyn College (originally to have been called the University of Brooklyn) and speculation ran wild about its possible site. None of Brooklyn's developers seemed greatly interested in providing living space for laborers so long as the construction of middle-class communities remained profitable. As well-to-do newcomers were drawn to the perimeter, the poor struggled for space and the middle class in Bedford, Park Slope, and Fort Greene organized to make sure that they would not find it. Race and ethnicity delineated that contest. For instance, the Gates Avenue Association, organized in the 1920s, and the Midtown Civic Club, established in the following decade, existed for the sole purpose of stopping black people's movement into Bedford.⁹ They were joined by a number of similar organizations.

Luther Johnson, an African American and realtor in Brooklyn, noted the positive effect of black families purchasing properties in the borough. While many white families worried about the value of their homes as neighborhoods changed demographically, they tended to ignore the threat of a sagging real estate market. Black renters and buyers shored up rents and real estate prices throughout Central Brooklyn. "Our consistent buying of property for the past five years more or less has kept the market value of old Brooklyn property up

to a satisfactory standard," Johnson said. Bedford and Stuyvesant were particularly dependent upon black in-migration to stabilize prices. Abraham Staub found that out when he tried to rent out a restricted apartment house. Located just outside Bedford, the apartments attracted so few white applicants that Staub appealed to the Brooklyn Supreme Court to overturn the racially restrictive clause in his mortgage agreement. Justice Selah Strong refused the plea.¹⁰

Still, African Americans were physically less segregated than most new immigrants. "The gregariousness of the newly arrived immigrants," argued a former secretary of the Brooklyn Tenement House Committee, "is shown by the fact that Italians, Hebrews and Slavs are confined for the most part to two or three localities." Black Brooklynites were also being depicted as undesirable. Advertising the racial and ethnic purity of new neighborhoods was standard procedure. In 1925 John Edmead, a black real estate broker, publicized the case of a black woman who bought a three-family brownstone home on the corner of Classon Avenue and Madison Street. A Catholic priest led an interdenominational white protest outside the Building Department, causing such a scene that the priest was reassigned. He went on to further infamy when he called the Reverend George Frazier Miller a "saucy nigger" after Miller defended the integrity of black women. In 1929 W. E. B. Du Bois discovered the restrictive covenants governing real estate developer Alexander Bing's Sunnyside Gardens in New York and Radburn in New Jersey, and reminded Bing of the harmful national results of segregation. Bing returned the impotent apology, "We have in mind embarking shortly on a separate negro community." Robert De Forest and the directors of the Sage Foundation development refused Du Bois application to buy a home in exclusive Forest Hills, Queens, because of his race. That same year a white woman seeking revenge on her neighbors highlighted the restrictions on black Brooklynites' housing choices. The Lefferts Manor owners association questioned Ellen Morris, a resident, about guests staying in her home. In anger, Morris placed a large sign in front of her house announcing that it was for sale to "colored people only." Her white neighbors then camped outside her house and threatened her by phone.¹¹

In 1935 the racial geography of Brooklyn began to shift. That year, the New Deal was dramatically altered when the owners of a slaughterhouse in Brownsville, Brooklyn, sued the United States government. "We are of the opinion that the attempt through the provisions of the Code to fix the hours and wages of employees of defendants in their intrastate business was not a valid exercise of federal power," wrote Justice Hughes in the unanimous

Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States decision. With those words the legality of the National Industrial Recovery Act was destroyed and the era of the New Deal was neatly divided into two phases. Before *Schechter*, Roosevelt's cabinet had focused on reviving a stalled economy, easing the financial crisis, and controlling unemployment. Now New Dealers were faced with a decision that was as much an opportunity as it was a setback, and so began the "Second Hundred Days."¹²

A Roosevelt landslide in the election of 1936 seemed inevitable, and, with four more years of rule, Democrats looked forward to finishing the New Deal. This meant government spending for military expansion, public works, and housing construction. There were immediate benefits: public money could be used to shore up weak financial institutions and a faltering real estate market, government loans could spark consumer spending, affordable housing could reduce radical impulses, job patronage to Democratic voters could continue, government spending could drive the economy, and housing loans to white ethnics could help weaken the Republicans' suburban strongholds.

In New York the latter required changing the building trends of the metropolitan area. By the mid 1920s it was aphoristic that a neighborhood was judged as much on the ethnic background of its residents as it was on its housing stock, the convenience of its location, and the quality of its services. The Brooklyn Real Estate Board, which included virtually all of the borough's realtors and many of its major corporations (see table 9.2), made ethnic segregation its official policy. When the *New York Times* announced the publication of the Board's *Annual Year Book and Diary* of 1933, it reminded its audience that the book included interesting tidbits about taxes, zoning, and postage. The paper failed to mention that the *Diary* also contained a copy of the Board's Code of Ethics, which was adopted from the National Association of Real Estate Boards on November 1, 1927. Article 34 of the Code read: "A Realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood a character of property or occupancy, members of any race or nationality, or any individuals whose presence will clearly be detrimental to property values in that neighborhood."¹³

Black Brooklynites pooled their money and provided each other with the secure loans that banks and realtors denied them. About 1932 Barbadian men in the Bedford section of Brooklyn began addressing the economic hardships in the black community through an informal credit society. On July

18, 1939 they organized the Paragon Progressive Community Association. On January 29, 1941 the Paragon Progressive Federal Credit Union was established with an initial investment of \$225. Garveyite in its structure, the Association employed a practical economic nationalism, taking deposits, providing home and business loans at reasonable rates, and giving black people control of their own resources. The Paragon Women's Auxiliary raised funds to purchase a Fulton Street headquarters. Paragon's growth was remarkable. At the end of 1941 the credit union had 187 members and was approved to sell government bonds. By 1945 it counted 1,117 members and extended over \$200,000 in loans. Paragon expanded each decade thereafter and even moved its credit union to a more spacious site at 1471-1477 Fulton Street. When Paragon closed four decades later, it had assets of more than \$15 million. It had also lent or secured more than \$75 million in loans to its patrons. Churches also formed credit associations. Under the ministry of the Reverend Milton A. Galamison, Siloam Presbyterian in Bedford established a credit union in response to bank discrimination.¹⁴

TABLE 9.2

Major Corporations on the Brooklyn Real Estate Board, 1935

Abraham & Straus, Inc.	Green Point Savings Bank
Bay Ridge Savings Bank	Hamburg Savings Bank
Bond & Mortgage Guarantee	Home Insurance Company
Breevort Savings Bank of B'klyn.	Home Title Guarantee Company
Brooklyn Borough Gas Co.	Kings County Trust Company
Brooklyn Edison Company	Kingsboro Mortgage Corporation
Brooklyn Savings Bank	Lafayette National Bank
Brooklyn Trust Company	Lawyers Mortgage Guarantee
Brooklyn Union Coal Co.	Lawyers Title Corporation
City Bank Farmers Trust Co.	Lawyers Title & Guarantee Co.
City Savings Bank of B'klyn.	Lincoln Savings Bank of B'klyn.
Dime Savings Bank of B'klyn.	Manufacturers Trust Co.
Dime Savings Bank of W'msbg.	Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.
East Brooklyn Savings Bank	National Liberty Insurance Co.
East New York Savings Bank	New York Telephone Co.
Equitable Life Assurance Society	New York Title Insurance Co.
Flatbush Savings Bank	Roosevelt Savings Bank
Fulton Savings Bank of K.C.	South Brooklyn Savings Bank
Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co.	Title Guarantee & Trust Co.
Greater New York Savings Bank	Williamsburgh Savings Bank

Source: Brooklyn Real Estate Board, *Year Book and Diary for 1935* (Brooklyn: privately published, 1935), 39-60.

However Brooklyn's white business community was intent on profiting from the physical segregation and financial quarantine of people of color. Brooklyn Edison was more aggressive than the Real Estate Board in guiding the ethnic geography of the borough. Its *Market Survey* was filled with maps and information about housing construction and values. Edison divided Brooklyn into twenty-eight neighborhoods and catalogued the ethnic mixture of each along with more detailed descriptions of the specific locations of less desirable groups: Jews, Italians, and Negroes.¹⁵

The older areas of the borough had been losing population since the 1920s¹⁶ because of the discriminatory actions of local financial institutions that were heavily invested in South Brooklyn and constricting their activities in North Brooklyn. This was not simply a matter of focusing resources. Denying loans to North Brooklyn decayed its communities and forced many residents to move. They were likely to relocate to South Brooklyn where new housing and ample credit could be found. In Bedford, or Bedford-Stuyvesant as the area was increasingly called,¹⁷ frustrated citizens were publishing the *Bedford Home Owners News* to protest the financial crunch in their district. "The housing situation was brought about . . . by many profiteers," declared one editorial. Writers for the *News*, while at times scattered in their attempt to find the source of their woes, frequently charged that unreasonably high mortgage rates in the district, high taxes, and banks which refused to grant them "financial aid" to keep their homes in good order were the causes of Bedford's decline. Most were tired of hearing polite bank officers tell them that their houses were too old or that "too much money has already been loaned in that particular section." A group of desperate Bedford homeowners asked President Roosevelt and Congress to extend the legislation that protected farm owners and rural communities "to include in its benefits the urban and city home owners."¹⁸

Some North Brooklyn residents resorted to gimmicks to save their homes from devaluation. Many Bedford residents believed that the razing of the Fulton Street el and the construction of a subway line was the road to the revitalization. Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce president William Kennedy promised that "the removal of the elevated road on Fulton Street would have a definite bearing on the real estate value of the section." Other residents of the area began a buy-in-Bedford campaign to circulate money in the community and support local businesses. But elevated trains and commercial sales were not the problem. Banks were manufacturing the financial crisis. Rather than holding on to declining property, white homeowners in North Brooklyn sold to local realtors,

probably at a loss, and signed government mortgages in the new developments. Signs "to let," "for sale," and "for rent" sprouted across the region. Savvy investors bought properties at low prices and offered them at high rents to poorer groups who were barred from the more desirable sections. By 1936 it was irrational for middle-class white residents to remain in North Brooklyn.¹⁹

However, Brooklyn was not racially segregated until the federal government armed banks, insurance companies, and developers with public money and government authority. Banks and their government allies had ignored a simple caveat of Bedford's residents: "To prevent slums is better than having to clear them." In the 1920s Brooklyn's northern communities felt financial strains from the development of the borough's southern perimeter. In the 1930s an alliance of government, bank, real estate, and insurance interests destroyed the internal stability of North Brooklyn. Much of this damage took place under the direction of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC). Established in the summer of 1933 as one of the New Deal's emergency measures, HOLC was charged with intervening in the mortgage market to prevent widescale foreclosures and bank failures. At its high point it had a national staff of 20,000. In New York State, the Loan Corporation focused on suburban areas, helping families of modest incomes purchase and keep one- and two-family homes. Only 30.2% of HOLC's state loans were made to New York City.²⁰

HOLC was a failure in spite of its early rush of activity. In 1937 the Corporation had a 40 percent foreclosure rate and was losing money in New York State. When it liquidated its assets in 1951, the Loan Corporation showed a "slight profit." That turnaround was a result of the Corporation's regional lending policies and a closer marriage of its interests with those of financial institutions and realtors. By the late 1930s HOLC agents were surveying and mapping urban communities across the nation and working with banks and building investors to enact mortgage guidelines that guaranteed profit. The Loan Corporation's federal mandate insulated the process from local politics and protests. "The [Brooklyn] map and area descriptions were first made with the assistance of a representative of the HOLC Appraisal Department. They were then carefully checked with competent real estate brokers and mortgage lenders," wrote an agent. The borough's leading corporations were involved (see table 9.3). HOLC's Brooklyn consultants included George S. Horton, a three-term president, and Joseph W. Catharine, a two-term vice president and seven-term treasurer of the Brooklyn Real Estate Board while it was under its racially restrictive Code of Ethics.²¹

TABLE 9.3

Affiliations of Select Brooklyn Security Map Consultants

Atlantic Savings & Loan Association
 Bowery Savings Bank
 Dime Savings Bank
 East New York Savings Bank
 Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank
 Equitable Life Assurance Society
 Franklin Society for Home Building and Savings
 Greater New York Savings Bank
 Greenpoint Savings Bank
 Group V Mortgage Information Bureau
 Lincoln Savings Bank
 New York City Housing Authority
 Prudential Insurance Company of America
 Railroad Federal Savings Bank
 Regional Planning Association
 South Brooklyn Savings and Loan
 Williamsburgh Savings Bank

Source: "Explanation of Security Area Map," Section V of "Brooklyn-New York Security Map and Area Description Folder," in the Records of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, Home Owners' Loan Corporation, Records Relating to the City Survey File, 1935-40, New York, RG195, Box No. 58, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

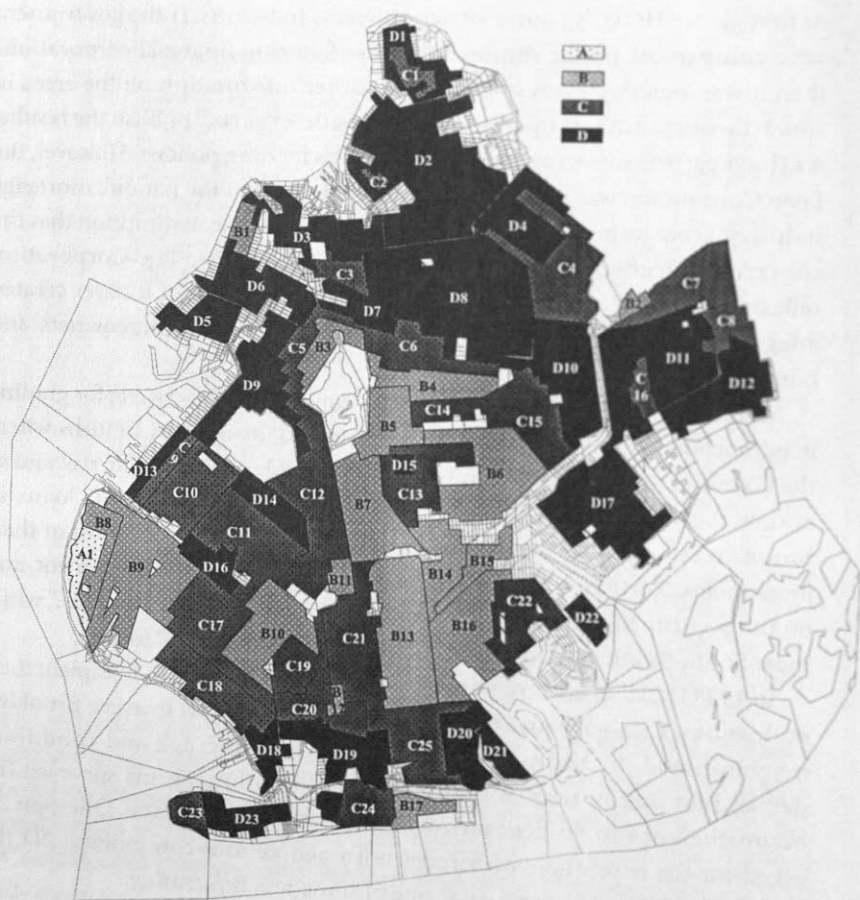
"The purpose of the Residential Security Map [see map 2] is to reflect graphically the trend of desirability in neighborhoods from a residential viewpoint," explained its creators. HOLC agents divided Brooklyn into sixty-six communities, surveyed them, and gave each one of four grades. Areas coded "A" and colored green on the map were "new well-planned sections, not yet fully developed." Grade "B" districts were colored blue. They "remain desirable places in which to live" but "as a rule are completely developed" and "have reached their peak." Zones that had old and obsolete housing, "inadequate transportation, insufficient utilities, heavy special assessments, poor maintenance of homes" or disagreeable populations were graded "C" and colored yellow on the map. Communities that received the fourth rating, "D," suffered run-down houses, "undesirable" residents, vandalism, and poverty. The legend on an earlier generation Security Map described "D" grade areas as "hazardous." Colored red, these neighborhoods were judged unsafe and unfit for mortgage investment, and the resulting financial boycott acquired the opprobrious label "redlining."²²

At first glance HOLC's course of action seems judicious. If the government were going to use public money to bolster faltering financial corporations then it was logical, even responsible, to gather information on the areas in which these institutions operated, consult with "experts," publish the results, and hold participants to practical and cautious lending policies. However, the Loan Corporation was never a disinterested steward of the nation's mortgage industry. From its inception HOLC operated under the assumption that the concerns of lenders and developers were paramount. The Corporation reflected the profit interests and prejudices of business, but it never created a legitimate mechanism for including the concerns of homeowners and homebuyers.

Moreover, the formulation and application of HOLC's criteria for grading neighborhoods were far from scientific. Most loans went to suburbs where the Loan Corporation used public moneys to underwrite private risk and to ensure the success of private developments. HOLC directed its loans in Brooklyn toward outer neighborhoods where developers held most of their investments. North Brooklyn was judged too risky for further investment, and on the Security Map most of that area was given the lowest grade "D," while most South Brooklyn neighborhoods managed at least "C" ratings.

In 1938 HOLC agents prepared sixty-six Area Descriptions to explain their evaluations. Each gave justifications for the grades given to every Brooklyn neighborhood. In addition to topography, housing age and condition, demand for unit purchases and rentals, and location, agents surveyed the occupations of area residents, median incomes, and relief levels. Question 2C asked for the percentage of foreign-born people in a community; 2D the percentage of Negroes; and 2E if one of these was *infiltrating*.

That HOLC sheltered the investments of real estate and financial institutions can be seen in its selection of Brooklyn's best neighborhoods; only on these surveys did agents consistently impose a reasonable standard (if a singular concern for profit can be described as reasonable public policy) for judging urban districts. Since most of New York State's housing construction was suburban, the Loan Corporation gave its A rating to only one of the borough's neighborhoods, Bay Ridge, which received that nod because local developers had concentrated their investments there. Brooklyn Heights received a "B" grade in spite of its affluence and its unrivaled view of Manhattan. Surveyors saw no chance for large-scale housing construction in the built-up Heights and developers were not deeply invested there, so its



Map 2. Security Map of the Home Owners Loan Corporation

GRADE A	GRADE B	GRADE C	GRADE D
1 Bay Ridge (A)	Brooklyn Heights (B)	Greenpoint (C-)	Greenpoint (D)
2	Highland Park (B)	Williamsburg (C-)	Williamsburg (D)
3	Park Slope (B)	Ft. Greene Hill (C+)	Navy Yd., B'klyn Bridge (D-)
4	Crown Heights (B)	Bushwick, Ridgewood (C)	Bushwick (D)
5	Upper Flatbush (B)	Lower Park Slope (C)	Red Hook (D)

6	Flatbush, Holy Cross (B-)	Eastern Parkway (C)	Gowanus Cnl., S. B'klyn (D)
7	Prospect Park, South (B+)	Arlington (C)	Hill Section (D)
8	Bay Ridge (B)	East New York (C-)	Bedford- Stuyvesant (D)
9	B.R. & Dyker Heights (B-)	West Sunset (C-)	West Park Slope (D)
10	Bensonhurst (B-)	Sunset (C)	Brownsville (D)
11	Midwood Manor (B-)	Borough Park (C+)	East New York (D)
12	Flatbush, Gravesend (B)	Prospect Park, SW (C)	New Lots (D)
13	Flatbush, E. Midwood (B)	Flatbush, Farragut (C)	West Suset, Bay Ridge (D)
14	Flatbush, Southeast (B)	North Flatbush (C-)	Kensington (D)
15	Flatbush, Kings Hwy. (B-)	West Brownsville (C-)	Flatbush (D)
16	Marine Park (B-)	East New York (C-)	New Utrecht (D)
17	Manhattan Beach (B)	West Bensonhurst (C-)	Canarsie (D)
18		Upper Bath Beach (C-)	Lower Bath Beach (D)
19		Bensonhurst, Malverne (C+)	Gravesend (D)
20		Gravesend (C-)	East Sheepshead (D)
21		Flatbush, Midwood (C+)	Gerritson Beach (D)
22		Flatlands (C)	Bergen Beach (D)
23		Sea Gate (C)	Coney Island (D)
24		Brighton Beach (C)	
25		Sheepshead Bay (C)	

Source: Reconstructed by author from an original color map in "Brooklyn-New York Security Map and Area Description Folder," in the Records of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, Home Owners' Loan Corporation, Records Relating to the City Survey File, 1935-40, New York, RG195, Box No. 58, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Base map courtesy of the New York Department of City Planning.

"rows of large old-fashioned brown stone singles" were listed as "Detrimental Influences." Park Slope suffered a similar fate. Prospect Park and the area's large white Protestant and Irish Catholic population earned only a B because they had little room for new construction, although Loan Corporation representatives preferred to claim that the in-migration of Jews caused the conservative valuation. Elegant Crown Heights was given a B grade because of "traffic," and a Jewish concentration. Beautifully located Manhattan Beach, perched on Brooklyn's Atlantic shore, earned the same mark because surveyors objected to the "slow infiltration of somewhat poorer class Jewish" people. A section of Flatbush got a B because canvassers disapproved of the mixture of Jewish, Irish, and Italian residents. HOLC's representatives were also willing to upgrade communities to secure investments. To protect private investments in top-rated Bay Ridge, agents gave neighboring Dyker Heights a liberal B although it had a mixed Irish, Jewish, and Italian population, a federal reservation, railroad scars, industrial sites, some obsolete housing, and was adjacent to a "very poor area." Strategically located Bensonhurst was also awarded a B, overcoming "mixed races," a Jewish cemetery, and its poorer neighbors.²³

The areas that received C-level ratings were more frequently judged on their ethnic compositions. This was partly an attempt to cover up the manipulation of federal money to secure private investments, partly an effort to cash in on housing segregation, and part meanspiritedness. These peculiar motivations forced HOLC staff to become more random in their accusations and more creative in their justifications but the underlying intent remained quite clear. Fort Greene, where Walt Whitman had built a brownstone a century before, had experienced decades of decline, but HOLC staff still gave it a gracious C+ because they approved of the "British" ancestry of its inhabitants. "German residents keep homes neat and orderly"—so Bushwick-Ridgewood was given a C in spite of the "infiltration" of Italians, a noisy elevated train, surrounding slum areas, and, paradoxically, its general shabbiness. In contrast, a more handsome section of Lower Park Slope, within a short distance of Prospect and containing "substantial houses," was given the same grade because of the "infiltration of lower grade [Italian] population." Also near Prospect Park and enjoying "substantial row brick construction" and convenient transportation, the Eastern Parkway district was punished with a C rating because of its Jewish majority and a tiny black colony. "Formerly a fine residential section of brick and stone singles," wrote the

agent who surveyed Eastern Parkway, the "area is being adversely affected by [the] infiltration of lower grade [black] people from the north." Actually, only 2 percent of the community's citizens were nonwhite. Sea Gate was nicer than Flatlands, which lacked sewers and paved streets and was filled with dumps and vacant lots, but both received C grades—Sea Gate being penalized for its Jewish majority and Flatlands rewarded for its Irish and British residency and its unimproved lands. Greenpoint's C<ms> was a result of the age of its buildings, the absence of construction space, and a population which, while "frugal" and "home loving," was, unfortunately, Polish. The same rating was given to nearby Williamsburg where an unhealthy combination of Jewish, Italian, and Polish residents offended the raters. "Mixed races"—Scandinavian, Italian, and Irish—in West Sunset led graders to slap it with a C<ms>; and similar ethnic combinations in Upper Bath Beach and Southwest Prospect Park caused each to get that same grade. The Italian presence in North Flatbush was all that representatives needed to hit it with a C<ms> and dismiss it as a collection of "makeshift houses," "shacks," and "junk yards." The Jews of West Brownsville depended upon government relief and "in the past [some] joined together in a rent strike." The image of tenants making demands on owners and lenders was abhorrent. A harsh C<ms> rating was given to the district, and government employees warned potential mortgagors that, while there was "no agitation . . . at present," a "communistic type of Jewish population" inhabited West Brownsville.²⁴

The lowest-grade areas of Brooklyn exposed the potential profits of residential segregation. Here, race, religion, and national origin were central concerns in HOLC's determinations. While the map does not portray it, true slums were juxtaposed with neighborhoods that had once been Brooklyn's most fashionable. HOLC agents stooped to stereotypes and name calling to support these decisions. For instance, surveyors ignored the fact that Brownsville was the home of Murder Inc., the crime gang which included the future lord-of-thugs Joseph "Joe Adonis" Doto, and which, in the 1930s, was responsible for perhaps 200 unsolved killings in Brooklyn and another 800 across the nation and in Canada. Rather, Brownsville's pushcarts, curbside markets, and "mixture of races" disturbed HOLC. They were particularly concerned with Jews: "Communistic type of people, who agitated 'rent strikes' some time ago."²⁵

"Bodies were constantly being discovered in our neighborhood, guys were constantly being killed. Neighbors were leaving for prison and coming

back. We didn't produce anything except robbery and gambling and fencing and hot goods," wrote Jerry Della Femina of his childhood in Gravesend. Loan Corporation agents graded the area harshly because they objected to its large and growing Italian community, who were "poor laboring class" and often found themselves on public relief. Warehouses, manufactories, old docks, and older houses earned the Navy Yard and pieces of Greenpoint and Williamsburg D and D- marks. The western section of Bushwick-Ridgewood received a D for its old-law tenements and growing Italian population. Irish, Italian, and Scandinavian Red Hook and Gowanus Canal, "slum type areas for many years," were both given D ratings. The old black district in Clinton Hill was listed with the borough's worst zones although it had few serious problems. Historic Bedford-Stuyvesant was condemned for its black population. Similarly, poor and working class Italians and Poles in West Park Slope explained its D grade. Assessors found nothing redeeming in the mingling of Italian, Danish, Polish, Swedish, and Jewish people in Kensington and, therefore, dubbed it a "very undesirable neighborhood of mixed races." Mappers carved a small Italian and black enclave out of handsome Flatbush, assigned it the fourth grade, and insulted it as "distinctly undesirable" for its "mixture of low grade races." When the Loan Corporation found poor Italians in New Utrecht, it blasted them as prideless, "low class," "low grade," and "of questionable occupation and income," while gratuitously predicting that the community had "very little likelihood of improvement." The public servants of HOLC called the laboring Jews and Italians of Canarsie "poor grade population" and rated that area D. "The low grade Italian population" of Lower Bath Beach was impoverished and "many [of them were] living in shacks and make-shift houses scattered throughout the area without plan or design," so HOLC wrote off the district.²⁶

The Home Owners' Loan Corporation used public money to remove risk from the construction and real estate investments of private financial institutions and builders, and positioned the federal government as the primary agent of segregation in the borough. Even as federal surveyors were compiling the Brooklyn Security Map, Joseph Sanner, HOLC's counsel in New York State, was coyly assuring the residents of preferred Bay Ridge that they could expect continued federal financial support.²⁷ Under the guise of protecting investments, surveyors targeted Jews and Italians as the white ethnics most frequently, consistently, and severely discriminated against through HOLC policies. But the victimization of African Americans was unparalleled.

Bensonhurst and a portion of Flatbush, with sizable Italian populations, managed at least B- grades, just as a number of Jewish areas received B or better ratings. In contrast, not one of the eighteen neighborhoods that received a B- or better had any black residency, except for Crown Heights where the black population was described as "Nil," meaning "2 or 3 families between Nostrand and Schenectady Ave., there for 15-20 years." Only four of the twenty-five zones that received C ratings had nonwhite residency, the largest of which was Upper Bath Beach's 5 percent. Black people were disproportionately represented in those districts that were given HOLC's lowest ratings, D- and D. More than half of these areas (13 of 25) had black populations. In fact, according to the Loan Corporation's Security Map, the simplest rule for determining a "hazardous" community was any with more than 5 percent black residency.

The Brooklyn Security Map was not intended to mirror contemporaneous prejudices. For instance, mappers did not mention Brooklyn's small Chinese population, although New York's popular culture regularly disparaged Asians and they were marginalized in labor and politics. Black Brooklynites were victimized in the late nineteenth century when they were less than 2 percent of the total population, and anti-Asian sentiment was rife in twentieth-century Brooklyn. Policymakers ignored Chinese residents because their small numbers made systematic exploitation unprofitable. Similarly, federal surveyors for HOLC did not punish Brooklyn Heights because "Latins" were one of its "predominanting" populations;²⁸ however, less than a decade later, state authorities began to aggressively redline Latinos as that community increased. The catalyst of both policies was not attitudes but greed. HOLC policies were intended to guarantee the development and stability of newer neighborhoods and suburbs. White North Brooklyn residents were forced to choose between holding on to devalued properties in declining areas or selling out and fleeing to perimeter districts with government guaranteed mortgages. Financially choked and hemorrhaging middle-class residents, North Brooklyn's decay was written into government policy. The drain of municipal services that occurred as the local government moved to meet the needs and demands of the growing areas of South Brooklyn and their powerful backers finally sealed North Brooklyn's fate.

Discriminatory lending practices drew middle-class white people to South Brooklyn and the suburbs and forced African Americans and Caribbeans into North Brooklyn, drawing a line of racial separation across the heart of the

borough. New Deal policies pushed targeted groups into limited areas and artificially increased the demand for and rental prices of the city's least desirable housing. On the other hand preferred groups were charged for the luxury of ethnic homogeneity. On both ends of the redlining process, banks, insurance companies, and realtors profited.

HOLC increased racialism in Brooklyn. The population of the ghetto and the perimeter remained fairly steady, increasing moderately each decade, but that constancy hid the fact that tens of thousands of black people were pouring into Central Brooklyn as white residents were streaming out. In fact, from 1930 to 1950 the only Brooklyn neighborhoods to experience net population losses were those white areas in North Brooklyn where white out-migration actually outpaced black residential growth (see table 9.4).²⁹ To relieve family fiscal pressures, white Brooklynites had to move to homogeneous communities, rid their neighborhoods of people who were different, and ensure that other groups did not *penetrate* their districts. The Security Map put the imprimatur of the federal government behind the proposition that the presence of some human beings was harmful. Jews were communistic and too many of them could injure a community. Italians were a threat to any neighborhood and their presence could retard property sales and assessments. HOLC policy not only made areas with large Italian and Jewish populations less attractive to buyers, it also made it difficult for those groups to move because few neighborhoods were willing to risk their presence. And no population was more dangerous than black people. No bank would lend them money to relocate to the newer areas, and the residents of those districts did not want black settlers. In zones that already had large nonwhite populations, white homeowners rushed to sell before banks stopped lending and property values plummeted. In areas with few people of color, white people maneuvered to make them leave. White families were punished for having black neighbors. They could lose their investment in their homes or they might be forced to sell them at a loss or ride them into worthlessness. If they chose to remain, the area around them was destined to decline. According to the federal authorities and local financial interests, black people were dangerous neighbors. That whole process was neither rational nor inevitable.

Many mansions still punctuate the stately brownstone rows of Bedford-Stuyvesant in a combination that forms a visual rebuttal to the suggestion that the area could ever be a slum; however, in two short decades those willing to draw wealth off misery destroyed the neighborhood. Bedford-Stuyvesant

lies at the center of the vast redlined district of North Brooklyn, and HOLC predicted that it "probably will be the center of [the] colored population in the Borough within the next twenty five years." In fact, HOLC's prophecy was self-fulfilling. Its activities guaranteed that African Americans would become the majority group. The Area Description warned of their "steady" influx, and included the contradictory rider: "Colored infiltration [is] a definitely adverse influence on neighborhood desirability although Negroes will buy properties at fair prices and usually rent rooms." It did not take long for the effects of the Loan Corporation's policies to manifest. By the early 1940s the *Times* was regularly referring to Bedford-Stuyvesant as "roughly analogous to the Harlem district in Manhattan" or, more concisely, "Brooklyn's 'Harlem.'"³⁰

TABLE 9.4
Population of Brooklyn Neighborhoods, 1930-50

Area	1930	1940	1950
Bay Ridge	290,080	311,976	316,218
Bedford	284,371	301,118	306,632
Brownsville	298,122	296,930	278,840
Bushwick	240,909	240,220	231,003
Flatbush	356,096	438,073	478,110
Fort Greene	217,004	207,867	220,337
Gravesend	212,196	262,296	278,636
Red Hook	185,474	176,229	170,693
Sunset Park	224,997	231,413	219,589
Williamsburg	251,152	232,163	216,249

Source: Brooklyn Council for Social Planning, *Growing Up in Brooklyn: A Report of Brooklyn's Little White House Conference on Children and Youth* (Brooklyn: 1951), 80.

Media, realtors, and politicians obnoxiously tried to explain the social disorder that resulted from segregation by inventing the borough's growing inequalities as racially, not socially, determined. In an arrogant inversion of historical truth, they claimed that New Deal relief programs had coddled black people, making them lazy and criminal. "Government handouts for the past decade have been all this new generation has ever seen," Midtown Real Estate Association president Thomas H. Doyle smugly stated. "They know nothing of the strength and independence derived from working for a living." Bedford-Stuyvesant's Monsignor John L. Belford, entering his third decade of accusing black people of destroying the area, pleaded that his neighborhood needed "not only protection but salvation." Harlemites, he continued, were flooding

into his district on the "A-train" and preying on white people. Combining his stereotypes, the Monsignor then complained that black public school children were attacking white parochial school kids. The community had become so violent that four area Catholic churches had canceled evening services. A Brownsville resident concurred, stating that he was tired of the "robberies, gambling, assaults and other criminal acts of all sorts [that] take place."³¹

Job and housing discrimination bred crime and unrest, but equally important in North Brooklyn's decline was the stretching of public services toward the newly built areas of South Brooklyn. As black Brooklynites were being thrust into Bedford-Stuyvesant, municipal services were shifting to protect and administer the new South Brooklyn developments. A *Brooklyn Eagle* headline in 1937 dubbed Bedford-Stuyvesant a "Copless, City Stepchild." Two years later George Wibecan and Sumner Sirtl, the latter of the Midtown Civic League, thought the situation in Central Brooklyn volatile enough to warrant a tolerance committee. In November 1941 Riis House, which was based on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, announced its plans to begin providing services to Bedford-Stuyvesant in response to crime, disease, overcrowding, and unemployment figures. Paul Blanshard, executive director of the Society for the Prevention of Crime, urged the Board of Estimate to provide funds to keep schools open at night for recreation in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Of the forty Brooklyn schools that had night activities for youngsters only one was in a district suffering high delinquency rates.³²

"This area at one time was one of the finest residential sections of this Borough," began the August 1943 Kings County Grand Jury report on Bedford-Stuyvesant. The Jury, which was convened in response to the growing media coverage and public outcry over conditions in central Brooklyn, pilloried Mayor LaGuardia and his top officials for neglecting the district, allowing crime to go unchecked, and denying responsibility for the conditions in Central Brooklyn. Gangs roamed wild, crime escalated, social conditions decayed, and lives were being ruined but no official was acting to prevent it. In response to the Grand Jury's precise questions, Mayor LaGuardia deflected the blame by introducing *race*: "Let's be more frank about it—this is the negro question we are talking about." "When a neighborhood changes its complexion that way there is bound to be trouble," he insisted.³³

"This is in no sense a race problem," the Jury retorted, criticizing the Mayor's attitude and inaction. Police Commissioner Valentine's testimony was filled with so many cavalier statements that the Jury berated his stance

as "equivalent to confessing anarchy." The Grand Jury resisted the suggestion that the crime problem in Bedford-Stuyvesant was racial, and concluded, "the fault lies with the responsible public officials, and particularly, with the Mayor of this City in failing to invoke all the powers in his command and take all the steps necessary [sic] to prevent the lawlessness we have referred to."³⁴

Federal officials never received full blame for the social turmoil that resulted from the discriminatory use of government funds and authority, nor were local officials ever held accountable for following those policies, gleaning every chance to benefit their voters at the expense of other citizens, and adding schemes and manipulations of their own. The mayor easily won the battle for public opinion. As the Grand Jury was conducting its business, LaGuardia made a point of publicly dismissing people who accused the City of neglecting Central Brooklyn as "liars" and "crackpots." When the Report hit the media, the Mayor dismissed it as "entirely political." Race remained the most effective defense. White Brooklynites had already decided that the logical cause of the disorder in Central Brooklyn was its black residents and that the Grand Jury was simply being polite in not directly accusing them. Understanding that prejudice, African Americans immediately objected to the Report's failure to discuss the social and economic causes of the conditions in Bedford-Stuyvesant. So LaGuardia and his top officials instructed white New Yorkers that there was a causal connection between color and decay. Parks Commissioner Robert Moses wrote the Mayor shortly after the Report broke in the press, declaring that any suggestion that Bedford-Stuyvesant had been neglected was erroneous. Moses used an exaggerated definition of the area, which included most of North Brooklyn, to defend the district's park services. The real problem was race, he too insisted. "The urban negro problem exists all over the country," Moses proudly declared. "It has been aggravated by the war. It is not confined to New York City or to the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood. The City can't do everything. Individual families, churches and social organizations must do their part." In a few lines, Moses had penned the position paper of New York City and most municipalities when confronted with the social results of their policies: If we are not the only ones who discriminate, we should not feel guilty about our discriminations.³⁵

On November 21, 1943, 500 (mostly white) residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant gathered at the Bedford YMCA to call for the Mayor's ouster and to cheer the suggestion that an "influx of sunburned citizens who come up from the South mistaking liberty for license" had turned Central Brooklyn

into "Little Harlem." Policeman David Liebman enthralled and mesmerized the audience with stories of "muggings" by the "sunburnt elements" and biological thieves in his precinct. Monsignor John Belford, who had probably never in his life turned down a chance to publicly slur other races, then stoked the flames of hatred. The white citizens in the audience were so convinced that black people were the source of their woes that when Henry S. Ashcroft, an African American and a lawyer, stood to defend them against the parade of slurs that had crossed and recrossed the room, he was "hissed and booed" while "more than half of those at the meeting started for the doors." Nonetheless, Ashcroft insisted that Bedford-Stuyvesant organizations had been struggling to get modern health, recreation, and educational facilities for more than a decade and that all the community's residents, black and white, were committed to seeing an end to criminality. "Every one knows that lawlessness and other unfortunate features of urban life are to some extent the result of poor economic conditions, lack of education—and lack of hope—which is no more than the result of frustration in the efforts of people to better themselves," Ashcroft concluded.³⁶

Reaction to the Bedford hysteria was mixed. LaGuardia continued to deny all wrongdoing. Sumner Sirtl was so disgusted with the Mayor's response to the problems in Central Brooklyn that he challenged Governor Thomas E. Dewey to investigate the section, the local government's actions, the records of borough banks and insurance companies, and the books of the Federal Housing Authority and the Home Owners Loan Corporation. The City tried police officer Liebman for his role in arousing hatred in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Herbert T. Miller, executive secretary of the Carlton YMCA, charged that people of color were being used as a "political football" and called for a fact-finding committee to investigate the claims of the Grand Jury, to examine employment discrimination, and to look into the lack of recreational facilities in Central Brooklyn. Branches of the NAACP and the CIO tried to calm fears in the area. The radical American Labor Party's local arm declared the whole incident a "renewed plot to employ organized anti-Negro attacks as a method of real estate business and a strategy for political power." Judge Nathan Sobel, while giving instructions to another Brooklyn Grand Jury, challenged the public:

What are we to do about it? Are we to erect a fence around the Bedford-Stuyvesant [section]? I think we have done enough. We have welcomed

our Negro brethren from the cabins in the South to the slums of New York. We have extended to them the privilege of paying the highest rents for the rottenest roosts out of the poorest wages for the dirtiest jobs. Now let us deny them relief! Let's punish the poor for being poor and the ignorant for being ignorant! Maybe we can create a smoke screen that will hide the real culprits—ourselves.³⁷

Beneath the vulgarisms of North Brooklyn's white residents was proof that their neighborhoods were viable and that they were not looking to abandon them. Bedford-Stuyvesant's homeowners had waged a decade-long war against the unfair distribution of mortgage funds. In 1938 the Bedford and Stuyvesant Ministers' Associations compiled a document describing neighborhood needs. The ministers linked black and white churches to address the problems of a neglected district with a growing population and rapid residential turnover. Noting that ethnic succession "occurs again and again in metropolitan centers," the ministers assured themselves that "no one is to blame, no one can be censured; it is one of those inevitable things that come with growth and economic change." After giving a full accounting of institutional resources and a description of needs, the report called for an end to labor discrimination: "equal opportunity to those of equal merit."³⁸

TABLE 9.5

Growth of the Paragon Progressive Federal Credit Union, 1941–1969

Year	Total Assets	Outstanding Loans
1941	n/a	\$2,185.63
1945	\$156,575.92	60,476.93
1949	493,888.93	276,256.51
1954	1,269,975.32	892,570.66
1959	2,219,181.88	1,348,336.48
1964	3,128,074.69	2,014,678.80
1969	4,716,477.55	3,492,929.95

Source: Clyde G. Atwell, *The Paragon Story (1939–1969)* (Brooklyn: privately printed, ca. 1976), 63–86.

Evidence of black Brooklynites' commitment to affordable and decent housing is also buried in the records of the Paragon Progressive Federal Credit Union (PPFCU) and its parent association. Both were born out of the housing and financial crisis. A president of the PPCA later recalled the socio-historical environment of its founding:

Where there is greed there is no conscience. The strong will take advantage of the weak. The rich will continue to milk the blood of kindness from the poor. And so the great chasm widens between mankind. Then as now fair trade did not include the poor. Prices were high. Schemes for fleecing the blacks were rampant. Being poor but ambitious our people were most vulnerable. With an eye on self-preservation some ventured their life savings in the purchase of two family brownstones. In many instances the intended investment became a misfortune.

In its first decades the PPFUCU served a largely Anglophone West Indian clientele. Clyde Atwell put it politely when he wrote that the membership "comes from the five continents with the heaviest preponderance from the Caribbean area." However, in time, Paragon's leadership could boast that a significant number of its clients were other West Indians, native-born black people, and a few Puerto Ricans. Paragon even assisted the formation of other credit unions among people of color and provided the Small Business Administration free office space to encourage entrepreneurship in Bedford-Stuyvesant.³⁹

Other community organizations were also looking for solutions to Bedford-Stuyvesant's problems. In late 1945 the Stuyvesant Community Center opened, under the direction of Albert Edwards, in a three-story building at 265 Decatur Street. It was a product of the cooperation of St. Philip's Church, the Bureau of Social Service, the Boy and Girl Scouts, the Urban League, and the YMCA and YWCA; it served all residents regardless of color. Brownsville Neighborhood Council chairman Milton J. Goell prepared a plan of action to meet area needs as the nation emerged from World War II and confronted "a war against poverty, discomfort, disease, [and] crime, in our country." Issuing a strong plea for racial harmony, Goell and the Council included two practical efforts to meet the needs of African Americans in Brownsville: an integrated nursery to support working mothers and an integrated recreation center in the heart of the black district. These were to bolster the "scant facilities which the heroic pastors of their churches seek to create for them out of straw." Integration was key, but integration with respect rather than condescension. "They [black people] would not be admitted by sufferance—they would be admitted because the building belonged to them as citizens." The plan also called for closed markets to reduce outdoor trade and crowding, transit upgrades to rid Brownsville of its two-fare zones and

trolleys, well-designed public housing, a casework center to deal with family problems, and the cleaning of Jamaica Bay.⁴⁰

Brownsville's was a modest plan when contrasted with the grandiose schemes of local public works commissioners, but Brooklyn banks, insurance companies, utilities, and realtors had declared Brownsville a slum, and because many of its residents were Jews who wished to revitalize their community and save their homes, HOLC labeled the neighborhood "communistic." The fact that some of these people were willing to live in harmony with their black neighbors made that epithet even more fitting in the eyes of mortgage lenders.

Post-World War II Brownsville was typical of North Brooklyn neighborhoods. The Brooklyn Council for Social Planning warned the city that Brownsville was a cauldron of racial tensions. Still predominantly Jewish, Brownsville had 25,000 black residents who "have very little of anything." The district's continued decline affected everyone. Eventually, of all the Neighborhood Council's proposals, the only improvement given to the area in a timely fashion was public housing. In 1945 plans for the Brownsville Houses were made with accommodations for more than 1,300 families.⁴¹ But, bank mortgage policies continued to draw middle-class residents to South Brooklyn and drain municipal services. That process isolated Brownsville's public housing projects in a falling neighborhood.

Brooklyn needed housing. Early in 1946 the Navy Yard chaplain warned that returning servicemen needed homes. That same year barracks at Manhattan Beach were converted into housing units for veterans. More than 20,000 Brooklyn applicants were waiting for government housing. Most new construction was in South Brooklyn, where George Gray, president of the Brooklyn Real Estate Board, set a goal of 30,000 new units for 1946. Yet, a year later 2,000 units of veterans' housing remained unsold because builders were using the crisis to continue their cozy relationship with government money.⁴²

The postwar building boom allowed real estate interests to complete the development of South Brooklyn and the ghettoization of nonwhite citizens. Local banks and insurance companies aggressively pursued both these goals. In January 1945 thirty-seven financial and insurance institutions (see table 9.6), already joined under the rubric of the Mortgage Conference of New York (MCNY), published a *Population Survey* that divided Brooklyn into twenty-seven mapped sections. The Conference controlled 60 percent of the mortgage funds in Greater New York and had been in operation since the depression year 1932-1933. It traced the movement of people of color in the

borough through the preceding decade and mapped the block-by-block residency of African Americans and Puerto Ricans for 1937, 1941, and 1945. That latter year the Savings Bank Trust Company of New York at No. 14 Wall Street—founded in 1933 to act as a central bank and general trust company for the state's mutual savings banks, and holding \$646 million—took control of the Mortgage Conference's records and at its own expense continued to distribute the *Survey* to lenders.⁴³

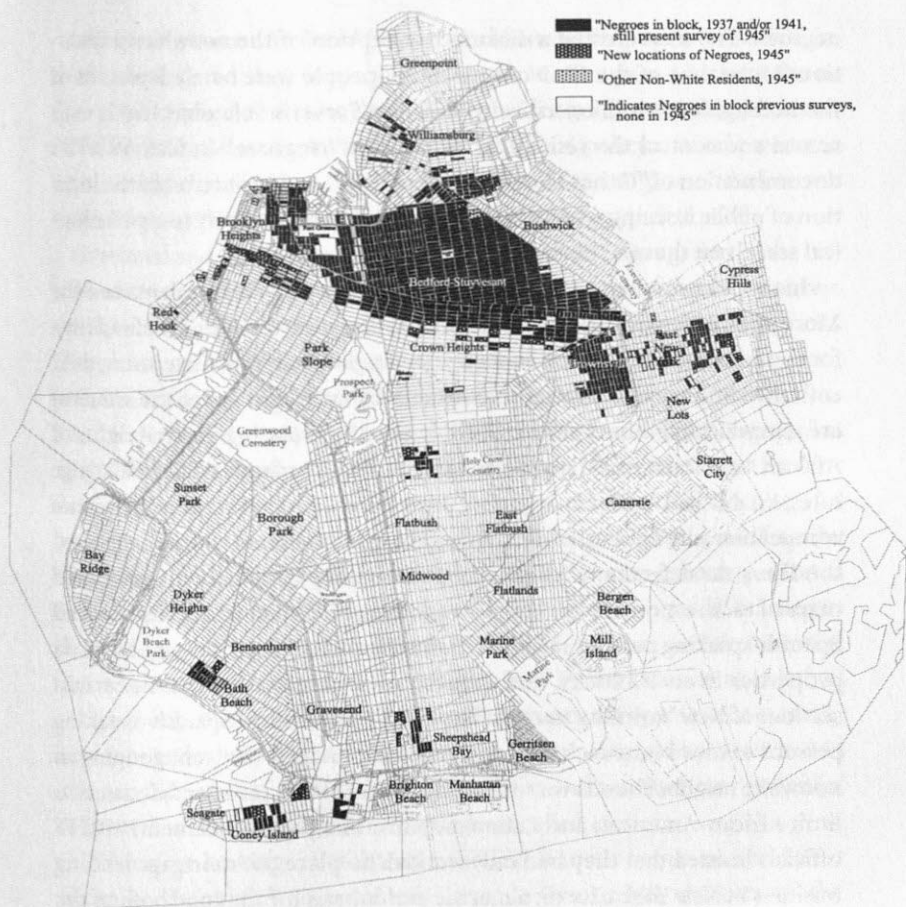
TABLE 9.6

Corporations in the Mortgage Conference of New York

Aetna Life Insurance Co.	Home Life Insurance Co.
Bankers Trust Co.	Home Title Guaranty Co.
Bronx Savings Bank	Irving Trust Company
Brooklyn Savings Bank	Lawyers Mortgage Corporation
Brooklyn Trust Co.	Manhattan Savings Bank
Canada Life Assurance Soc.	Manufacturers Trust Company
Central Savings Bank	Mutual Life Insurance Co. of NY
Chase National Bank of NYC	New England Mutual Life Ins.
City Bank Farmers Trust Co.	New York Life Insurance Co.
Dime Savings Bank of B'klyn.	New York Trust Company
Dollar Savings Bank of NYC	North River Savings Bank
Dry Dock Savings Institution	Prudential Insurance Company
Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank	Seamen's Bank for Savings
Empire City Savings Bank	Title Guarantee and Trust Co.
Franklin Savings Bank of NYC	Union Central Life Insurance Co.
Greenwich Savings Bank	Union Square Savings Bank
Guaranty Trust Co. of New York	West Side Savings Bank
Guardian Life Insurance Co.	

Source: *The New York Times*, 7 August 1946.

The Mortgage Conference betrayed the racist progression of public and private collusion over housing. MCNY fully extended the protections of whiteness to Jews and Italians—lesser victims of HOLC's work—and compensated with an increasing concern over the growth of Brooklyn's Latino population. However, the *Survey*'s primary purpose was to plot the locations of black citizens, concentrate them in convenient districts, and force them out of areas of investment. A single black resident became the basis for drawing a zone of caution around an entire city block; an exception being made for "Negro superintendents or servants" in white residences. Districts like Park Slope, Sunset Park, Borough Park, Flatbush, Canarsie, Bay Ridge, Bensonhurst, and Gravesend received the tribute "no residential



Mortgage Conference of New York, Brooklyn Population Survey

Source: Reconstructed by author from the Mortgage Conference of New York, "Population Survey No. 3-B, Brooklyn" (New York: The Mortgage Conference, 1945). BAsE map courtesy of New York Department of City Planning.

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negroes." The map created a distorted perception of the nonwhite population. At the time of the 1945 canvass, black people were barely 5 percent of the borough's 2.5 million citizens; still, the *Survey's* sole objective was to record and control the residential patterns of "Negroes." In fact, MCNY's documentation of "Other Non-White Residents" and its interest in the location of public housing were subordinate and complementary to a pathological assault on the civil liberties of black Brooklynites.⁴⁴

In the late summer of 1946 the United States Justice Department sued the Mortgage Conference, listing all the participating institutions as defendants, for conspiracy to monopolize mortgage lending in New York State, using their collective influence to prevent construction that might lower the value of areas in which members had extended loans, and violating the civil rights of African American and Puerto Rican citizens. The Conference fixed mortgage rates, established uniform appraisal procedures, and set rents to eliminate competition and drive up profits. To benefit from racial segregation, reported the *Times*, the defendants "prepared, published, kept current and distributed maps of each section of New York City showing blocks on which Negroes and Spanish-speaking persons resided; refrained from making mortgage loans on properties in such blocks, and induced owners of real estate in certain sections of New York City to refuse to permit Negroes and Spanish-speaking persons to move into such sections." The suit charged that rent gouging in nonwhite neighborhoods was one of the results of this unilateral decision to limit African-American and Latino mobility. In a public statement, MCNY officials insisted that they had only worked "to place the mortgage lending business in New York City on a more *scientific* basis for the good both of the lender and the borrower." Conference president Harold Rutan took personal offense at the Justice Department's unprovoked suit which slandered as "conspiracy" what New York State preferred to describe as "cooperation."⁴⁵

The Justice Department only sought to dissolve the Mortgage Conference and to enjoin its members from re-creating similar combinations in the future. Department officials did not involve themselves in the fact that these activities damaged the lives and life chances of hundreds of thousands of Brooklyn residents nor were they particularly interested in pursuing the Conference's defense that it had received its moral and legal authority during the Depression. The latter would bring them to the door of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation from which the Mortgage Conference of New York learned its trade.

African Americans in Brooklyn came to blame white people for their isolation but rarely did they focus their anger on Washington. Similarly, Ernest Quimby has noted, for white Brooklynites "no longer was the destabilization of Bedford-Stuyvesant seen as the result of official policy; rather it was seen as *caused* by the presence of nonwhites. That is, the stigma of decline was shifted from official hands to the hands of the Black population."⁴⁶

National and local Democrats hid their role in the segregation of the city behind a web of financial institutions and complex policies, and were always quick to use the "attitudes" of white constituents as their ultimate defense. Democrats even gained the loyalty of black Brooklynites whose infrequent political victories came through that party. On the eve of the 1944 election, Rev. Harten called Franklin Roosevelt the "greatest friend of the Negroes," as 10,000 black residents prayed and fasted for the president's and Senator Robert Wagner's re-election.⁴⁷ For such dedication, black Brooklynites did receive rewards, however slight. The local Democracy sold itself as the dynamic force of change in the borough. Since the housing shortage affected African Americans most, Democrats pointed to Brooklyn's public housing to show their responsiveness to the needs of black citizens and their sincere desire to ease the shortage of "Negro housing." Public housing already had a stigma, one reinforced by the banks and insurance companies that carefully held it outside their areas of investment and one enhanced by New Dealers who used it as proof that their party cared for and watched over people of color as they struggled against a vague force called *racism*.

"If you are looking for filth and juvenile delinquency, you can find your quota in Brooklyn," commented Gertrude Tanneyhill, director of the Brooklyn branch of the Greater New York Urban League. Two years earlier the Brooklyn Urban League-Lincoln Settlement and the New York Urban League merged to better focus the struggle for economic and political justice in New York City. Of particular interest to the League was the growing segregation of black New Yorkers (see table 9.7). "Checks must be placed upon the suicidal trend toward racial ghettos observed in the spread of restrictive property owners' covenants," forcing public housing into already segregated areas, and eliminating people of color from the pool of home buyers.⁴⁸

But the man who was in charge of New York's municipal construction had no tolerance for those who hungered for equality. Robert Moses, in his role as City Construction Coordinator, declared during an August 1947 radio interview that he had enough of radical minorities who delayed the city's

building plans with demands for "impossibly low rent ceilings and anti-discrimination clauses." Moses was tired of being victimized and being made the "scapegoat." In fact, he continued, he only kept his position because of the Administration's support and a "naive stubbornness."⁴⁹

TABLE 9.7
Concentration of the Black Population in Bedford-Stuyvesant, 1930-1957

Year	Black Bed-Stuy	% All Bed-Stuy	% All Bklyn.
1930	31,215	12	45
1940	65,166	25	61
1950	136,834	51	66
1957	166,213	66	—

Source: The Community Council of Greater New York, *Brooklyn Communities: Population Characteristics and Neighborhood Social Resources*, 2 Vols. (Brooklyn: September 1959), I: xviii-xxi, 100-1.

Moses was typical of a generation of "public servants" who felt that the Great Depression had given them the reason and the New Deal had given them the authority to inflict their view of progress upon the city without regard for the wishes of its citizens. "In less than ten years," predicted Moses in the summer of 1949, "one person out of every ten in New York City will look to the City Housing Authority as his landlord." A year later Thomas Farrell, chairman of the Housing Authority, praised the New York's public projects as a lesson in interracial living because all of the sites built after 1939 were integrated. A few months later Mayor O'Dwyer concurred, speaking at an Urban League luncheon at the Theresa Hotel in Harlem he complimented the city's public housing as a model of desegregated living. Both officials depended upon a loose definition of interracial. For instance, Brooklyn's Red Hook Houses were the first integrated projects in the New York, but less than one percent (24 of 2,545) of the original families were black.⁵⁰

Moreover, integration was not the pivotal issue. As the Justice Department's suit against the Mortgage Conference exposed, the borough's banks and insurance companies worked to keep public housing away from new developments. Most of Brooklyn's projects were located in the redlined sections of North Brooklyn and were, therefore, destined to become segregated as Puerto Ricans and African Americans flooded into these neighborhoods and white people flowed from them. Projects also placed additional

strains on North Brooklyn's dwindling public services, quickening rather than halting its decline.⁵¹

New York City's Slum Clearance Committee—created by Mayor William O'Dwyer in December 1948 in anticipation of Washington's Title-1 "urban renewal" funds—used its public authority and federal money to aid banks and investors in further segregating the borough, a manipulation that earned this program the pejorative label "Negro removal." Title 1 was intended to help cities acquire slum areas and discount them to private investors for redevelopment. It did not take long for business to learn the power that the Committee wielded. By naming sites and approving developments, the Committee controlled the displacement and relocation of urban residents who sat in the path of targeted projects. The city's financial institutions had already mastered the art of keeping nonwhite people out of areas of investment, control of the Slum Clearance Committee allowed them to uproot black people and Puerto Ricans already living in neighborhoods that were otherwise ripe for loans. From its beginning the Committee described its goals as being parallel to those of developers. Its organization was fully undemocratic. The City Controller did not audit the Slum Clearance Committee because its staff salaries were drawn from the budgets of other municipal departments. The Committee met irregularly, it was convened at the chairman's will, and averaged several one-hour meetings a year. A greater cause for concern was the transformation of the Slum Committee's membership. When O'Dwyer established the body it was composed of the Controller, the Housing Authority chair, the Corporation Counsel, the Board of Estimate's chief engineer, and, later, the State Power Authority chair; within a few years the first three resigned and were replaced by the Real Estate commissioner, the Building commissioner, and Thomas J. Shanahan, who the *Times* described as a "politician-banker." Having always been under the chairmanship of Robert Moses, the reconstituted Slum Committee sustained even closer ties to New York's financial and real estate interests and many of its staff were borrowed from city agencies that the chairman once headed or still led. Shanahan was the president of the Federation Bank and Trust Company and George E. Spargo, Moses' assistant, was a director of Federation Bank and a trustee of New York Savings Bank. Spargo and Shanahan were invited to govern the Clearance Committee although their institutions extended mortgage loans to the city's Title 1 projects. On three occasions the Slum Clearance Committee unilaterally dismissed a federally mandated New

York City Planning Commission report on blighted areas. The Planning Commission eventually acquiesced and amended its original guidelines to fit the Slum Committee's. By the summer of 1955 the SCC had handled almost \$150 million in federal and local grants and a half billion dollars in private investments. Adding the power to designate slums to their restraint of mortgage funds, New York's financial institutions now exercised the extraordinary ability to whiten or darken any neighborhood at will.⁵²

Local Democrats shamelessly used public housing to prove their responsiveness to the needs of African-American and Caribbean citizens, and to strengthen that impression they also engaged in a number of symbolic appointments and gestures. In 1939 Carolyn Dublin, a black resident of Bedford-Stuyvesant and an active member of St. Peter Claver's Church, became the first black probation officer in Brooklyn's higher courts. A year later 200 residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant and Williamsburg met at the First African Methodist Episcopal Church to demand the appointment of a black person to the Board of Education. Barely two months later, Mayor O'Dwyer named the Reverend John M. Coleman, pastor of St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church in Bedford, to a seven-year term. Coleman was the first black citizen to sit on the Board since 1918. That same summer Leonard Stanford, an African-American boy from Brooklyn, joined fifty other children in a ceremony at City Hall where a deputy mayor expressed great joy to see them and great shock that the young school patrol guards were barred from a function in Washington, D. C. because no hotels would take integrated groups. Few politicians went as far as O'Dwyer, who declared September 23, 1946 to be "End Lynching Day."⁵³

It is a twisted irony that Brooklyn's politicians offered more vocal protests against segregated sports than they had against the construction of a black ghetto. By attacking Jim Crow in professional sports, local officials were able to grandstand as champions of racial equality without tackling the politically costly issues of employment and housing discrimination. In 1939 State Senator Charles Perry of Manhattan introduced a resolution condemning race prejudice in Major League baseball. Perry continued to push the issue. The following year the sports editors of twenty-five area college papers joined the protest. During the summer of 1942 the CIO entered an objection to racial restrictions in the professional game. Commissioner Kenesaw M. Landis made his position clear in the winter of 1943: "Each club is entirely free to employ Negro players to any extent it pleases and the matter is solely for each club's decision without any restrictions whatsoever." In the summer of 1945 two black players received

tryouts with the Dodgers but were not signed. That same summer, New York representative Vito Marcantonio brought the issue of segregated professional baseball to the House of Representatives. Not to be outdone, Mayor LaGuardia asked Branch Rickey, president of the Dodgers, and Larry S. McPhail, president of the Yankees, to head up a committee to investigate sports discrimination. The Republican mayoral candidate, Judge Jonah Goldstein, took LaGuardia's challenge and publicly reminded the Major Leagues that "baseball is an American game, played in the American spirit of fairness and democracy. Baseball is not a Nazi game based on the hateful rules of so-called racial superiority. Every American, every true lover of clean and wholesome sports, loves baseball because it symbolizes our democratic national spirit. There should be only one test, the ability to play ball."⁵⁴

In October 1945 Branch Rickey signed Jack Roosevelt Robinson of the Negro League's Kansas City Monarchs to the Montreal Royals, the Brooklyn Dodgers' farm team. Robinson, then 26, was a graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles. During the war he rose from the rank of private to lieutenant. In April 1947 Jackie Robinson was called up to the Brooklyn Dodgers and, as a subdued *Eagle* reporter insultingly stated, became "the first Negro boy ever to reach the big leagues."⁵⁵ Yet, the integration of its famous baseball team was a mild accomplishment when measured against Brooklyn's extraordinary social divisions.

In Brooklyn and across the nation a dramatic restructuring of residential patterns had occurred. In 1955 the Federal Commission on Race and Housing began tracing public money in the housing industry. Three years later it reported that local, state, and national action was necessary to correct the patterns of segregation and ghettoization in the United States. Listing recommendations for every level of government, the Commission challenged builders, realtors, and mortgage lenders to take oaths to build and sell without regard to race, extend mortgages without racial or religious restrictions, and allow nonwhite business people into their professional associations. The Commission also called on the National Association of Real Estate Boards to make integration a goal rather than a possibility.⁵⁶

The borough of Queens, reported the Mayor's Committee for Better Housing, was the central location for recent housing construction in the city, and it competed with Staten Island for the smallest growth in nonwhite population. Because black residency was already low, Queens and Richmond Counties were favored sites for real estate developers. Similarly, from 1946 to

1955 Brooklyn received 200,000 units of new private housing, only 900 of which (less than half a percent) were sold to nonwhite people. Public housing was the only new construction available for black and Puerto Rican people, the report continued, but even that was normally constructed in segregated areas and therefore only served to reinforce ghettoization. The Committee demanded that the city face discrimination in housing "squarely" and take "positive steps" to open the housing market, that public housing be placed in open areas or slum areas that were not overwhelmingly nonwhite, that public housing officials make integration a goal, that the city begin to educate and regulate realtors, builders, and lenders on these aims, that statutes prohibiting such discrimination actually be enforced, and that mortgage lenders be asked to review their routines to remove discriminatory practices.⁵⁷ None of those recommendations were acted upon.

By 1950 it made sense to speak of "Negro neighborhoods" and "Negro housing," for both had been created in the Roosevelt years. In the following decades African Americans and Puerto Ricans pushed northward from Central Brooklyn toward Williamsburg and Bushwick and southward into Crown Heights while a growing population of black Caribbeans marched southward from Bedford-Stuyvesant through Crown Heights and into Flatbush. The northward pull was in part a result of concentrations of public housing, tenements, and houses divided for rental, while the southward draw was single-family homes (see table 9.8). As late as 1990 black Caribbeans' homeownership rates remained high, especially among Anglophone West Indians. For instance, people of Barbadian and Jamaican ancestry owned homes at about the rate for New York State (44%) and all black Caribbean communities owned homes at higher proportions than the state's total black population (24%). Moreover, West Indian homeownership in New York State, concentrated largely in the New York Metropolitan area, was far higher than that of Brooklyn's black (18%) and Latino (13%) communities, and competitive with white Brooklynites' rate (36%).⁵⁸

Bank and government policies ensured that the old, glamorous sections of the borough struggled and that segregation continued. As late as 1980 South Brooklyn neighborhoods like Bay Ridge, Bensonhurst, and Sheepshead Bay were more than 90 percent white while black and Latino families concentrated in North Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, and Bushwick. A decade later Bensonhurst's black population had grown to half a percent and Bedford-Stuyvesant's white population had fallen to less than a percent.⁵⁹

TABLE 9.8

Black West Indian Population and Homeownership Rates, 1990

Nationality	Brooklyn Population	Homeownership Rate*
Barbadian	13,651	40%
Belizean	2,543	29
British West Indian	13,040	27
Dutch West Indian	452	31
Guyanese	27,220	36
Haitian	53,448	33
Jamaican	61,214	38
Trinidadian/Tobagonian	25,883	32

*Owner-occupied units as a percentage of all units in the state per group.

Source: Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population, 1990*, CP-2-34, 335; Caribbean Research Center, *Statistical Analysis of Persons of Caribbean Ancestry: Basic Demographic, Social and Economic Profile Based on 1990 Census Data*, Part 1 (Brooklyn: CRC, Medgar Evers College, 1993), 81-99.

"Brooklyn cannot well compete with the suburbs for capturing big and well-established manufacturers seeking a location," wrote the distinguished urban observer Jane Jacobs in 1961. Each year, because of its infrastructure and the lure of outlying areas, the borough lost factories and was relegated to being an "incubator" of new industries which in their early life needed inexpensive old buildings and the other assets of the city to establish themselves, but would as they expanded then relocate to perimeter areas. Brooklyn, Jacobs concluded, for too long had failed to construct new buildings, creating a visible and inefficient disparity between old and new structures and leaving it to function as an industrial halfway house for the suburbs.⁶⁰

Brooklyn was in its adolescence when compared to the world's great metropolises. The decline of its industrial base and the illogic of its building stock were results of the manipulation of construction in the city. In 1962 President Kennedy ended the use of racial segregation as a criterion for federal housing authorities but nothing was done to reverse the effects of decades of discriminatory public building and spending.⁶¹ Businesses—frightened by the radical shifts in population, harmed by the loss of middle-class residents, disturbed by escalating crime and decreasing public services, reacting to the problems of protecting workers and insuring property in

red-lined areas, and seduced by the thriving government-subsidized suburbs—abandoned North and Central Brooklyn and finished the task of creating blight.

Segregated suburbs encircling isolated cities were not normal patterns of urban development. Across the nation, argued Harry P. Sharp of the University of Michigan, the division between white suburbs and nonwhite inner cities was growing. By 1960 twelve metropolitan areas had suburbs that were 93% white, Sharp continued. Prejudice, wrote the *Times* in agreement, was the catalyst beneath “the whole design of white residential suburbs around urban Negro slums [that] has been shaping up with unmistakable clarity in the North in recent years.” The borders of cities were the fastest growing urban spaces in the nation. Between 1950 and 1966 the suburban United States absorbed more than 27 million white residents, and the percentage of nonwhite people outside cities dramatically declined. In the New York Metropolitan area the rate of suburban growth far outpaced that of the city core.⁶²

From 1950 to 1970 more than a half million white residents left Brooklyn while the borough gained about 20,000 nonwhite people every twelve months. The influx of African Americans and Puerto Ricans reached 1,000 newcomers each week in the late 1950s.⁶³ Between 1940 and 1990 Kings County had a net loss of 1.5 million white people and a net gain of 1.3 million people of color. The movement came to be labeled “white flight,” which captured the visible flow of white people out of the city and the simultaneous entrance of people of color into it, but included the mistaken suggestion that dark-skinned people were driving white people from urban neighborhoods. In fact, white Brooklynites were not running from people of color as much as they were chasing down government subsidies in outlying communities. Moreover, the in-migration of nonwhite people was the only stabilizing force in Brooklyn and prevented the collapse of the housing market and the disappearance of the tax base.

Brooklyn could already predict its fate by the things lost and the number of “lasts” it experienced. On March 6, 1944 the last elevated train crossed the Brooklyn Bridge, packed with memory seekers; exactly six years later, the Bridge had its final trolley crossing. In 1947 one of the borough’s two daily newspapers, the *Brooklyn Citizen*, founded in 1886, folded. Only eight more years would pass before the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* ceased publication. “A great borough lost its voice,” Robert Moses sighed. In June of 1955 the bronze eagle

from the top of the newspaper's plant was removed to a local community college, and in October the wrecking ball leveled the site. In the years that followed there were at least two unsuccessful attempts to revive the *Eagle*. In 1952 the pioneer Brooklyn Children's Museum, located in Brower Park in Crown Heights, was soliciting funds from the city to relocate to a safer neighborhood to protect its young clientele. While the museum would remain in Crown Heights, the sense of desperation that had led it to seek a new home prevailed. In 1960 W. E. B. Du Bois, now 92, applied for membership in the Communist party from his Brooklyn home and then defected to Ghana, where he died three years later. In 1962 the legendary Brooklyn Paramount Theater was closed and sold to Long Island University. Most disruptive to borough life, was the decommissioning of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the largest industrial complex in the county, which resulted in the slow but steady transformation of the facility into a vast stretch of rusty buildings and rotting piers. While military spending in the United States continued to climb, the life of the urban yard had ended. At the same time, Brooklyn's sugar and brewing industries were collapsing. By 1960 only four major beer manufacturers—Rheingold, Schaefer, Piel, and Schlitz—remained.⁶⁴

The most painful symbol of the decline of urban life was the apostasy of the Brooklyn Dodgers following the 1957 baseball season. The Dodgers were the borough's greatest promoters. As the masters of a peculiar brand of baseball and the ambassadors of bad English, the Dodgers made Brooklyn internationally famous for its sport, its ethnic mix, and its accent. In January 1960 Ebbets Field, the legendary park in which "the Bums" had played since 1913, was sold to the Kratter realty firm. In February the New York City Planning Commission approved a \$22 million low-cost housing project for the site. That same month demolition of the park began for a September ground-breaking ceremony.⁶⁵

Brooklyn fell loudly. Beneath the symbols the real evidence of urban decline was written across the borough. The residential division of people in the county had resulted in the tacit segregation of public schools that served white children in white areas and black children in black areas. Local buses and trains turned either all white or all brown as they passed the various zones of the city; schools, parks, libraries, and recreational facilities lacked diversity because of their circumscribed neighborhoods; and business districts found themselves catering to increasingly monolithic populations. African-American and Puerto Rican Brooklynites fared worse. A 1953 Hospital

Council of Greater New York study of Bedford-Stuyvesant's health needs disclosed that gap:

Their income is low. Their housing is old and overcrowded. Their infant and neonatal death rates and other vital statistics indicate that health conditions need improvement. The Hospital Council is well aware of the unfavorable conditions under which the residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant live, particularly the Negro half of the population, and views with sympathy all efforts aimed at the mitigation and eventual removal of these conditions.⁶⁶

By 1957 one of ten Brooklyn residents lived in Bedford-Stuyvesant, the heart of the Central Brooklyn ghetto and the borough's largest neighborhood. Almost 86 percent of all black Brooklynites lived in "Bed-Stuy" and its adjacent neighborhoods. At the beginning of the decade, "the lowest median [income in Brooklyn]—\$2,338—was found in Health Area 28 . . . where almost 90 percent of the residents were Negro," noted the Community Council of Greater New York. Every Health Area in Bedford-Stuyvesant was beneath the median income for Brooklyn and the neighborhood's highest average incomes were in its predominantly white border areas. Bedford-Stuyvesant accounted for a quarter of the borough's relief cases although it housed only 10 percent of Brooklyn's population. It suffered an infant mortality rate a third higher than the borough-wide rate, four times the venereal disease cases, twice the tuberculosis occurrences, and a juvenile delinquency rate seven times Brooklyn's average.⁶⁷

The year of the Bed-Stuy riots, 1964, Rev. Galamison contributed an essay on Bedford-Stuyvesant to a book on Harlem. The Brooklyn ghetto was, to quote the minister, a "Land of Superlatives." In "The Box," as Bedford-Stuyvesant was called, profiteering and abusive landlords, realtors, and banks were free to violate any and all laws. Men and women were kept from honest employment. Children were persecuted in an inferior, segregated, overcrowded, and "ethnomaniacal" school system. Gerrymandering left the borough's most populous district politically impotent. The government pursued an inhumane and destructive "policy of littering an already deprived community with low-income housing projects." Politicians resigned themselves to the hopelessness of the situation and sought only their own advancement. And flocks of vultures including check cashers and liquor dealers descended to pick the flesh from the corpse.⁶⁸

But it was already axiomatic that black people were destructive. Oliver Pilat and Jo Ranson blamed the extension of the Independent Subway line, connecting Harlem to Brooklyn, for the decline of the Coney Island amusement park and beach. (Several subway lines end their runs at the Coney Island station.) "Coney was continuing to attract the most depressed layers of the urban population, particularly the Negroes, whose proportion on the clean white sand steadily grew," they lamented. Similarly, in his history of Jewish suburbanization, Isaac I. Gordon repeated the argument that African American and Puerto Rican movements into previously white neighborhoods was forcing the white exodus to the perimeter areas. Looking at New York City, Gordon anticipated the popular defense for white flight: "because standards and habits are different and because people like to live among their own kind."⁶⁹

In 1969 African Americans and Puerto Ricans attempted to force Mayor John Lindsay to exercise his authority over the NYC Planning Commission to ensure equal housing opportunities. The Committee for Minority Representation on the City Planning Commission was incensed that the policymaking board had never had a nonwhite member and insisted that "the Mayor can no longer appoint outsiders to positions from which they can determine how black and Puerto Rican people are going to live." The Committee included scholars Kenneth Clarke, John Henrik Clarke, and Herbert Gans; Eric Arroyo and Roberto Cassablanca of the Puerto Rican Citizens Committee on Housing; Robert Bodrick of the Brownsville Community Council; J. Max Bond, Jr. of Bond, Johnson, Ryder Architects; Amalia Betanzos, executive director of the Puerto Rican Community Development Project; and Telesforo Del Valle, chair of the Harlem-East Harlem Model Cities Policy Committee. But Lindsay was unwilling to confront the powerful interests that operated through the Planning Commission.⁷⁰

White residents began a decade-long, violent campaign throughout the five boroughs to control nonwhite homebuyers with fear and force. Every borough saw firebombings, cross burnings, and other terrorist acts. Canarsie, Brooklyn, became infamous because of its white residents' willingness to attack black homeowners and any real estate agents who sold to black people. Jonathan Rieder found that they also fled from New Deal liberalism and the Democratic party. Canarsie residents first looked to Southern Democrat, fringe presidential candidate, and rabid segregationist, George Wallace of Alabama for leadership, and, later, to the Republican party for a political message that kept people of color in their appropriate place. They described

the presence of black and Latino people as a physical and biological threat, a danger displayed in their alleged preference for ghetto life, their refusal to "get ahead," and their role as spoilers in white people's struggle for mobility.⁷¹ One need only look at their history to understand why white Brooklynites expected and demanded a right to social dominance.

In his sardonic novel, *The Brooklyn Book of the Dead*, Michael Stephens traced the journey of an Irish family reintroduced to Brooklyn during the father's funeral, and, in doing so, he captured the transfer of social inequality from white to black people in the borough. The matriarch was born in Bedford-Stuyvesant, the patriarch had immigrated to Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen and Irishtown, but lived most of his life among the thugs of Brooklyn's East New York. The parents eventually retired to Florida, the children to South Brooklyn and to the suburbs. Decades later the family returned to Brooklyn to bury their father in his former haunt, only to find:

The old ghetto in Brooklyn. East New York. That mythical land between Bushwick and Bed-Stuy, between hell and Brownsville. High crime, low rent, none of the buildings more than a few stories except the projects—and not a familiar face on the street. This neighborhood hadn't seen their kind since Kennedy became president, two or three junkyard dogs' lifetimes ago.⁷²

The formation of the Central Brooklyn ghetto ensured that race would be propelled into the future; for, the ghetto gave color an unmistakable, undeniable, and unavoidable daily reality, a reality that black people were accused of creating.

Segregation was the initial stride of domination. The Central Brooklyn ghetto allowed white people to hoard social benefits while people of color became the primary consumers of social ills. Its residents underwrote the life chances of those outside its borders. The ghetto guaranteed white Brooklynites a monopoly in public services and perpetual control of the local government, quality schools, cleaner and safer streets, more efficient transportation, a greater share of government subsidies, superior medical and health facilities, and greater access to parks, pools, and playgrounds. Those conditions, when coupled with white Brooklynites' power to limit the pool of nonwhite labor competitors, forcibly volunteered black Brooklynites for unemployment, crime, disease, and mortality. So people at the borough's periphery and in the suburbs quickly defended the ghetto as a product of

black people's nature and culture and, therefore, fixed, and as quickly denied that it was socially established and, therefore, changeable. White Brooklynites embraced these racial beliefs as they fought to preserve a milieu of discrimination in politics, housing, and employment against the more potent assaults of the borough's escalating nonwhite populations.

The treacherous nature of human affairs manifests most often in the habit of dishonoring the victims of injustice rather than its agents; for, as Clyde Atwell of the PPCA wrote, "the system under which we live reserves little dignity for the poor."⁷³

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New York Ordnance District, 15 November 1945), 29, collection of the Brooklyn Historical Society.

26. *Age*, 27 October 1945; Weaver, "Employment Trends," 29–30.

27. *NY Times*, 2 April 1946, 12 June 1946, 11 January 1947.

CHAPTER 9

1. *New York Post*, 17 July 1964; *The New York Times*, 17 July 1964; Langston Hughes, "The Harlem Riot—1964," in John Henrik Clarke, ed., *Harlem: A Community in Transition* (1964; New York: Citadell, 1969), 214–20.

2. *NY Times*, 19 July 1964; *Post*, 20 July 1964.

3. *NY Times*, 21 July 1964, 22 July 1964, 23 July 1964; *Post*, 22 July 1964, 23 July 1964.

4. *NY Times*, 23 July 1964.

5. James Weldon Johnson, *Black Manhattan* (1930; New York: Ayer, 1990), 59; Bureau of the Census, *Negroes in the United States 1920–32* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1935), 68; Harold X. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 54–55. Looking at Pittsburgh, Peter Gottlieb has also found that there was no delineated Negro ghetto before 1930. See *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916–30* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 67. Joe William Trotter, Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915–45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 3.

6. Brooklyn Tenement House Committee and Herbert S. Swan, *The Progress of Housing Reform in Brooklyn: A Report of the Tenement House Committee of the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities and a Study of Land Overcrowding in Brooklyn* (Brooklyn: Bureau of Charities, ca. 1918), 13, 22–23, 36–39, 14–15; *The Survey*, 28 April 1917; John C. Gebhart, *Housing Standards in Brooklyn: An Intensive Study of the Housing Records of 3227 Workingmen's Families* (Brooklyn: Bureau of Charities, 1918), 3, 59. In 1901 a then-new Tenement House Law was passed. It made "dumbell" tenements illegal.

7. *NY Times*, 1 January 1924, 3 April 1925, 17 May 1925, 16 January 1927; Oscar Handlin, *The Newcomers: Negroes and Puerto Ricans in a Changing Metropolis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 31; Connolly, *Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, 73–74. Gilbert Osofsky noted the impact of public transportation decisions on Harlem real estate. See, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890–1930*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 87–89.

8. BUL, *Annual Report, 1919*, 2–3; Gebhart, *Housing Standards in Brooklyn*, 46–50; BUL-Lincoln Settlement, Inc., *Annual Report, 1929*, 12.

9. Beginning in 1917 extension courses of the City College of New York were offered at Brooklyn's Boys' High School. Two thousand people were registered in that program when plans for the new university were announced. *NY Times*, 25 April 1926,

16 May 1926, 21 December 1926, 17 July 1927, 31 July 1927, 7 August 1927; Connolly, *Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn*, 59, 69.

10. *New York Amsterdam News*, 19 August 1925, 9 September 1925.

11. Gebhart, *Housing Standards in Brooklyn*, 50; *Amsterdam News*, 5 August 1925, 4 December 1929; W. E. B. Du Bois to Alexander Bing, 24 April 1929, Alexander M. Bing to W. E. B. Du Bois, 29 April 1929, in Herbert Aptheker, ed., *The Correspondence of W.E.B. Du Bois*, 3 Vols. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), 1: 401-2; W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (1940; New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction, 1992), 185-86.

12. *Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States*, in Henry Steele Commager, ed., *Documents of American History*, 4th ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948), 463; Alter F. Landesman, *Brownsville: The Birth, Development and Passing of a Jewish Community in New York* (New York: Bloch, 1969), 313-15; William Leuchtenberg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 145-46, 150.

13. *NY Times*, 25 December 1932; Brooklyn Real Estate Board, *Year Book and Diary for 1935* (Brooklyn: privately published, 1935), 75, 78.

14. Bert J. Thomas, "Historical Functions of Caribbean-American Benevolent/Progressive Associations," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, hereafter AANYLH, 12 (2) (July 1988), 51; Clyde G. Atwell, *The Paragon Story (1939-1969)* (Brooklyn: privately printed, ca. 1976), 13-21, 63-68. Information on the Siloam credit union is available in the Milton A. Galamison Papers, Schomburg Center, NYPL.

15. Brooklyn Edison, *Brooklyn Market Survey* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Edison Company, Inc., 1936), 13-14.

16. *Ibid.*, 20.

17. In 1931 the *Eagle* first referred to the area as Bedford-Stuyvesant. See Ernest Quimby, "Bedford-Stuyvesant," in Rita Seiden Miller, ed., *Brooklyn USA: The Fourth Largest City in America* (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1979), 230.

18. *Bedford Home Owners News*, July 1936, September 1936, October 1936.

19. *NY Times*, 24 April 1932; *Bedford Home Owners News*, October 1936.

20. *Ibid.*, September 1936; C. Lowell Harriss, *History and Policies of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation* (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1951), 51-57.

21. *Ibid.*, 3-6; Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 61; "Explanation of Security Area Map," Section V of "Brooklyn - New York Security Map and Area Description Folder," in the Records of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, Home Owners' Loan Corporation, Records Relating to the City Survey File, 1935-40, New York, RG195, Box No. 58, United States National Archives.

22. *Ibid.*

23. "Security Area Descriptions," Section VI, HOLC Records.

24. Ibid.
25. Ibid; Burton B. Turkus and Sid Feder, *Murder Inc.: The Story of "the syndicate"* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Young, 1951), 4, 13–14, 23, 27; Jenna Weissman Joselit, *Our Gang: Jewish Crime and the New York Jewish Community, 1900–1940* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 168–69; Landesman, *Brownsville*, 329–35.
26. Jerry Della Femina and Charles Sopkin, *An Italian Grows in Brooklyn* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978), 63; "Security Area Descriptions," Section VI, HOLC Records.
27. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 22 January 1937.
28. Security Area Descriptions," Section VI, HOLC Records.
29. Brooklyn Council for Social Planning, *Growing Up in Brooklyn: A Report of Brooklyn's Little White House Conference on Children and Youth* (Brooklyn: 1951), 80.
30. "Summary of a Survey of New York," "Security Area Descriptions," HOLC Papers; *NY Times*, 8 November 1941, 15 November 1941, 25 November 1941.
31. In fact, by 1941, almost 40% of the city's black population was dependent upon relief or temporary government jobs for support. That was largely due to discrimination in New Deal employment programs. *NY Times*, 17 March 1941, 8 November 1941, 26 November 1941.
32. Quimby, "Bedford-Stuyvesant," 231; *NY Times*, 13 March 1939, 15 November 1941, 25 November 1941.
33. Emphasis mine. Kings County Grand Jury, "Presentment of the August 1943 Grand Jury of Kings County In the Investigation of Crime and Disorderly Conditions of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Area of Brooklyn" (Brooklyn: 1943), 1, 2–3, 4–7, 12.
34. Ibid.
35. *NY Times*, 16 November 1943; Robert Moses, Commissioner to Hon. F. H. LaGuardia, Mayor of the City of New York, 19 November 1943, in "Recreation and Related Projects: Bedford-Stuyvesant Area," LIHS: Brooklyn Pamphlets, The Brooklyn Historical Society.
36. *NY Times*, 22 November 1943; *Eagle*, 23 November 1943.
37. Ibid., 1 November 1943, 22 November 1943, 23 November 1943; *NY Times*, 25 November 1943, 27 November 1943, 7 December 1943.
38. George H. Hobart, "Survey Bedford-Stuyvesant Area, Brooklyn, N.Y., February–March 1938, for the Bedford and Stuyvesant Ministers' Associations and the Brooklyn Church and Mission Federation" (Brooklyn: privately printed, 1938), 3, 16.
39. Atwell, *Paragon Story*, 15, 24–25, 89.
40. *New York Age*, 24 November 1945; Milton J. Goell, *A Post-War Plan for Brownsville* (Brooklyn: Brownsville Neighborhood Council, 1944), 7, 10–13, 16–27, 30.
41. *NY Times*, 31 July 1945, 21 April 1946.
42. Ibid., 6 January 1946, 21 January 1946, 29 January 1946, 27 February 1946, 11 March 1947, 18 May 1947.
43. The Mortgage Conference of New York, "Population Survey No. 3-B, Brooklyn"

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 10007

(New York: The Mortgage Conference, 1945); *Eagle*, 7 August 1946; *NY Times*, 7 August 1946.

44. MCNY, "Population Survey No. 3-B."

45. Italics mine. *Eagle*, 7 August 1946; *NY Times*, 7 August 1946.

46. Author's emphasis. Quimby, "Bedford-Stuyvesant," 232.

47. *NY Times*, 6 November 1944.

48. *Ibid.*, 6 April 1944, 11 April 1946, 2 June 1946.

49. *Ibid.*, 25 August 1947.

50. *Ibid.*, 4 May 1949, 12 February 1950, 9 June 1950.

51. The Citizens Union demanded that Mayor Wagner and Housing Authority chair Phillip J. Cruise stop reinforcing segregation by placing public housing in Negro and Puerto Rican areas. *Ibid.*, 30 July 1956. Joe William Trotter, Jr. has noted a similar relationship between public and private housing construction in Milwaukee. *Black Milwaukee*, 183. For an interesting critique of race and public housing, see Robert C. Weaver, "Racial Policy in Public Housing," *Phylon* (Second quarter, 1940), 149-61.

52. Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *The Urban Wilderness: A History of the American City* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 244; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 86; The Mayor's Committee for Better Housing of the City of New York, "Report of the Subcommittee on Urban Redevelopment, Including Slum Clearance, Neighborhood Conservation, and Rehabilitation" (August 1955), 5, in the Robert C. Weinberg Papers, Long Island University Library, Brooklyn Campus, Box LXXIV, Folder 1; *NY Times*, 30 June 1959. Through the 1960s African Americans and Puerto Ricans struggled to stop the Committee from further segregating the city. This conflict frequently played out in the Rockaways and the West Side and Lower East Side of Manhattan, see *Ibid.*, 11 November 1959, 22 November 1959, 21 June 1961, 16 May 1962, 30 May 1962, 23 June 1962. Many Brooklyn and area organizations—including the Bedford-Stuyvesant Neighborhood Council, the Bedford YMCA and Professional Men's Luncheon Club, the Central Brooklyn Coordinating Council, the Congress of Puerto Rican Municipalities, the Puerto Rican Association for Community Affairs, the Puerto Rican-Hispanic Leadership Forum, the Stuyvesant Community Center, and the Urban League of Greater New York—combined to oppose the construction of fancy homes and luxury apartments at Breezy Point. They wanted a public park built there so that many ethnic and socioethnic groups could have access to the area. The city eventually agreed to the demands. Committee for a Park at Breezy Point, "Information Kit: Breezy Point Park"; also a pamphlet titled "Stop the Bulldozers!" Weinberg Papers, Box LXXXII, Folders 4-5. *NY Times*, 15 March 1960, 19 October 1962, 31 October 1962, 1 November 1962, 12 November 1962, 3 June 1963. On African Americans' early optimism over slum clearance, see B. T. McGraw, "The Housing Act of 1954 and Implications for Minorities," *Phylon* No. 2 (1940), 171-82.

53. *NY Times*, 20 August 1939, 22 September 1946, 31 January 1947, 15 May

- 1948, 16 May 1948, 22 July 1948.
54. *Ibid.*, 17 May 1939, 23 January 1940, 14 April 1940, 30 July 1942, 4 December 1943, 7 April 1945, 8 April 1945, 25 April 1945, 12 August 1945, 24 September 1945.
55. *Ibid.*, 24 October 1945, 11 April 1947; *Eagle*, 11 April 1947.
56. *NY Times*, 10 November 1958.
57. Final Report of the Mayor's Committee for Better Housing of the City of New York, "65 Steps Toward Better Housing For All New Yorkers" (September 1955), 16-19, and "63 Steps Toward Better Housing For All New Yorkers" (September 1955), 9-10, Weinberg Papers, Box LXXIV, Folder 1.
58. The homeownership rate is the owner-occupied units as a percentage of all units. Caribbean Research Center, *Statistical Analysis of Persons of Caribbean Ancestry: Basic Demographic, Social and Economic Profile Based on 1990 Census Data*, Part I (Brooklyn: CRC, Medgar Evers College, 1993), 81-99; Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Population and Housing*, 1990 CPH-3-245H (Washington, DC: 1993), 923.
59. Department of City Planning, New York City, *Demographic Profiles: A Portrait of New York City's Community Districts from the 1980 & 1990 Censuses of Population and Housing* (New York: Department of City Planning, 1992), 90-161.
60. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage, 1961), 196-97.
61. William K. Tabb, *The Political Economy of the Black Ghetto* (New York: Norton, 1970), 16-17.
62. *NY Times*, 25 April 1956, 15 November 1956, 7 May 1961; *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (New York: Bantam, 1968), 243; Karl E. Taeuber and Alma F. Taeuber, *Negroes in Cities: Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Change* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 57.
63. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1960*, Vol. 1, Part 34, 16; New York Department of City Planning, *Bulletin* (22 November 1954), 8; *NY Times*, 27 December 1953, 29 July 1955, 18 August 1958.
64. *Ibid.*, 30 August 1947, 6 March 1944, 6 March 1950, 23 August 1952, 4 June 1944, 23 June 1955, 29 June 1955, 25 October 1955, 23 October 1960, 23 November 1961, 23 August 1962, 13 October 1962; Joseph Palisi, "The Brooklyn Navy Yard," in Miller, *Brooklyn USA*, 122; Will Anderson, "The Breweries of Brooklyn: An Informal History," in *Ibid.*, 133. On Du Bois return to Brooklyn in the early 1950s and his home at 31 Grace Court, see Shirley Graham Du Bois, *His Day is Marching On: A Memoir of W. E. B. Du Bois* (New York: Lippincott, 1971), 177-96; W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), *passim*.
65. *NY Times*, 1 January 1960, 18 February 1960, 24 February 1960, 21 September 1960.
66. Hospital Council of Greater New York, "Hospital Needs of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Area in Brooklyn" (December 1953), 2.

67. The Community Council of Greater New York, *Brooklyn Communities: Population Characteristics and Neighborhood Social Resources*, 2 Vols. (New York: 1959), I: xviii, 98–99, 105, 106–7. For instance, the census tracts at the north of the Bedford-Stuyvesant area were as much as 99% white while at the neighborhood's southernmost perimeter tracts with a 98% black population could be found. See *United States Census of Housing: 1950: Block Statistics, Brooklyn Borough, New York City*, Vol. 5, Part 127 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1952), 5–8.

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CHAPTER 10

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