

UNDER ASPHALT AND CONCRETE: POSTWAR URBAN REDEVELOPMENT IN
DALLAS AND ITS IMPACT ON BLACK COMMUNITIES, 1943-1983

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DEDICATION

This, as everything else I do in life, is for my children, Ryan, Bradley, and Aubrey.

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ABSTRACT

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This study, which spans from 1943 to 1983, explores the impacts of Dallas' postwar urban redevelopment ventures on the city's black communities. This research argues that decades of stringent residential segregation generated slum conditions in Dallas' black communities and made them targets for postwar slum clearance projects that ultimately exacerbated blight in these communities. Residential segregation, which forced the establishment and evolution of Dallas' black communities, ultimately led to overcrowding and dilapidation as the city's black population swelled. In turn, Dallas city leaders directed a series of postwar urban renewal projects through black communities as part of a slum clearance campaign meant to clear blighted areas and bolster the city's image. Coupled with residential segregation, Dallas' postwar urban renewal projects exacerbated slum conditions in Dallas' black communities by destabilizing social and economic milieus and by intensifying the black housing crisis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
MAP	vi
CHRONOLOGY.....	vii
DALLAS' BLACK POPULATION, 1859-1970	viii
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW	1
II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF DALLAS' BLACK COMMUNITIES	29
III. POSTWAR URBAN REDEVELOPMENT IN DALLAS.....	57
IV. CONSEQUENCES OF POSTWAR REDEVELOPMENT	86
V. CONCLUSION.....	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	125
APPENDICES	
A. Miscellaneous Images.....	136
B. Images Related to North Dallas.....	140
C. Images Related to the Tenth Street Neighborhood.....	153
D. Images Related to Little Egypt	158
E. Images Related to Deep Ellum and Stringtown.....	164
F. Images Related to Elm Thicket.....	172
G. Images Related to Bon Ton	177
H. Images Related to the Fair Park Neighborhood.....	182

MAP

Dallas' Black Communities and Postwar Redevelopment Projects



1. North Dallas Freedman's Town
2. Tenth Street Neighborhood
3. Little Egypt
4. Deep Ellum
5. Stringtown
6. Elm Thicket
7. Bon Ton
8. Fair Park Neighborhood

- A. Central Expressway (Opened August 19, 1949)
- B. Central Expressway (Opened 1950)
- C. Love Field (Completed 1955)
- D. Central Expressway (Opened August 15, 1956)
- E. Fair Park (Constructed 1956-1957, expanded 1968-early 1980s)
- F. South R. L. Thornton (Opened May 11, 1959)
- G. Private Development (1962)
- H. C. F. Hawn Freeway (Opened January 6, 1964)
- I. Woodall Rodgers Freeway (Constructed between 1958 and 1983)

CHRONOLOGY

1943	Right-of-way acquisitions for Central Expressway begin.
March 3, 1947	Construction begins on North Central Expressway.
August 19, 1949	First section of North Central Expressway, from Fitzhugh Avenue on the north to San Jacinto Street on the south, opens to traffic.
1950	First leg of South Central Expressway, from San Jacinto Street on the north to Grand Avenue on the south, opens to traffic.
November 1953	Construction begins on the expansion of Love Field.
1955	Construction of Love Field expansion complete.
December 1955	Construction begins on South R. L. Thornton Freeway
April 1956	Construction begins on Fair Park's southeast auxiliary parking lot.
August 15, 1956	Final portion of South Central Expressway, from Grand Avenue on the north to State Highway 310 on the south, opens to traffic.
1957	Fair Park's southeast auxiliary parking lot completed.
1958	Construction of Woodall Rodgers Freeway begins.
May 11, 1959	First section of South R. L. Thornton, from Marsalis Avenue on the south to Commerce Street on the north, opens to traffic.
1960	Construction of C. F. Hawn Freeway begins.
May 1962	Private developers purchase Little Egypt
January 6, 1964	First section of C. F. Hawn Freeway, from South Central Expressway to Lake June Road in South Dallas, opens to traffic.
September 1965	South R. L. Thornton completed between downtown Dallas and the southern county line.
1968	Construction begins on expansion of Fair Park's southeast auxiliary parking lot.
Early 1980s	Construction of Fair Park's auxiliary parking lot completed.
May 1983	Woodall Rodgers Freeway opens to traffic.

DALLAS' BLACK POPULATION, 1859-1970

1859 (Dallas County)	1,080
1870 (Dallas County)	2,109
1880	4,947
1890	11,177
1900	13,646
1910	20,828
1920	24,355
1930	50,407
1940	61,605
1949	75,000
1950	80,000
1962	130,000+
1970	210,342

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

On the evening of Friday, August 19, 1949, roughly 7,000 Dallas residents, along with several city and state officials, gathered at the newly constructed overpasses at Ross Avenue and Hall Street to celebrate the opening of the first leg of Central Expressway, the city's first and most highly anticipated freeway (see Appendix B.8). The two-mile stretch, which spanned from Fitzhugh Avenue on the north to San Jacinto Street on the south, was only a small segment of the proposed thirteen-mile thoroughfare which would carry traffic north and south through the heart of the city.¹ In the works for over three decades, the opening of what some referred to as "the finest expressway in the world" and "the greatest single achievement in Dallas history" was cause for celebration.² In the warm August air, the American Legion Band played while six C-46 troop carrier aircraft put on a show in the clear summer sky above. Looking upon the newly erected overpass, John Rice, Secretary of the Dallas Negro Chamber of Commerce, remarked, "It's not like

¹ George E. Kessler, *A City Plan for Dallas*, Dallas, 1911, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas. Plans for Central Expressway were first proposed in the Kessler Plan of 1911 wherein city planner George Kessler suggested the relocation of the Houston & Texas Central tracks to make way for a major north-south thoroughfare.

² "New Expressway is World Wonder," *Dallas Morning News*, August 19, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985; "38-Year Dream Becomes Reality," *Dallas Morning News*, August 20, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

a building...it's a whole section that once was one thing and now is something else.”³

Rice's words perfectly summed up the transformation that had taken place in the area, for the ground upon which attendees danced and cheered had, prior to the construction of Central Expressway, been home to the commercial center of a thriving black community called North Dallas.⁴ Postwar prosperity had arrived in Dallas, and with it came momentous change for the people and landscape of the growing city.

In the years following World War II, Dallas, like many American cities, experienced an economic boom that resulted in a myriad of redevelopment projects as city leaders sought to create a more lucrative, attractive, and accessible urban center.⁵ Between the years of 1943 and 1983, Dallas officials, both elected and otherwise, oversaw the completion of several urban infrastructure developments including the construction and improvement of multiple freeways, the expansion of Love Field Airport, and the extension of the Fair Park fairgrounds. This study, which spans from the earliest

³ “38-Year Dream Becomes Reality,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 20, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Dallas Negro Chamber of Commerce,” Register and Researcher's Guide, Dallas History & Archives, Dallas Public Library. The Dallas Negro Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1926, grew out of the Dallas chapter of the National Negro Business League. Although initially plagued by a lack of leadership, organization, and funding, the Chamber experienced a revival in 1932 when it came under the leadership of civil rights activist A. Maceo Smith. The Chamber, which maintained close ties to the Dallas chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), sought to improve the lives of black Dallasites by promoting black businesses, holding voter registration drives, cultivating employment opportunities, and advocating for better schools. The organization became known as the Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce in 1976.

⁴ Marsha Prior and Robert V. Kemper, “From Freedman's Town to Uptown: Community Transformation and Gentrification in Dallas, Texas,” *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development, Communities Old and New in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area*, 34, no. 2/3 (2005): 177–216. Most North Dallas businesses were concentrated at and around the intersection of Hall Street and Cochran Street.

⁵ For an in-depth analysis of the United States' postwar economy, see *Postwar Urban America: Demography, Economics, and Social Policies* by John F. McDonald (New York: Routledge, 2015).

right-of-way acquisitions for Central Expressway in 1943 to the opening of Woodall Rodgers Freeway in May 1983, explores the impacts of Dallas' postwar urban redevelopment ventures on the city's black communities. This research argues that Dallas' long history of residential segregation generated slum conditions in Dallas' black communities and made them targets for postwar slum clearance projects that ultimately exacerbated blight in these communities.

Although postwar urban renewal projects may have helped Dallas become a leading commercial center, they proved catastrophic for the city's black communities. Several of the city's urban redevelopment ventures began with the bulldozing of black homes, churches, and businesses. Each of Dallas' eight black communities—North Dallas Freedman's Town, the Tenth Street neighborhood, Little Egypt, Deep Ellum, Stringtown, Elm Thicket, Bon Ton, and the Fair Park neighborhood—experienced, to one degree or another, loss of both physical property and communal unity as a result of the city's postwar urban improvement projects.⁶

The northern portion of Central Expressway, which opened to traffic in 1949, not only bisected the historically black North Dallas neighborhood, formerly known as Freedman's Town, but also paved over a large portion of the Freedman's Town cemetery

⁶ The communities listed here constitute Dallas' primary black communities. Other smaller black neighborhoods did exist. These included: the Heights and the Bottom in Oak Cliff; Queen City, located southwest of the Fair Park fairgrounds; Spring Valley in Far North Dallas; Frog Town, located in what is now Dallas' West End; and Joppa in far South Dallas. Many of these small black residential areas depended on nearby larger black communities for goods, services, and community institutions.

where more than one thousand former slaves and their descendants were buried.⁷ The expansion of Love Field in 1953-1955 came at a cost of hundreds of black homes in the Elm Thicket neighborhood. In 1954-1956, the construction of the southern portion of Central Expressway mortally wounded Deep Ellum, a predominantly black commercial district located east of downtown, obliterated Stringtown, a small neighborhood of shotgun houses on either side of the Houston & Texas Central (H&TC) tracks which served as a link between North Dallas and Deep Ellum, and destroyed several black homes in the Bon Ton neighborhood of South Dallas.⁸ More black homes fell with the expansion of Fair Park in 1956-57 and two years later the construction of South R. L. Thornton Freeway tore through the Tenth Street neighborhood.⁹ The remnants of the

⁷ Dallas' Freedman's Town became formally known as North Dallas in 1889. Much of the land that was Freedman's Town is now Uptown, a high-end residential and commercial district.; James M. Davidson, "Living Symbols of their Lifelong Struggles: In Search of the Home and Household in the Heart of Freedman's Town, Dallas, Texas," In *Household Chores and Household Choices: Theorizing the Domestic Sphere in Historical Archaeology*, ed Kerri S. Barile and Jamie C. Brandon, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004). Between 1991 and 1994, an archeological investigation of Dallas' Freedman's Town cemetery, prompted by plans to expand Central Expressway, exhumed the remains of more than 1,000 individuals.; Dallas City Code, Article 225, PD 225, *State-Thomas Special Purpose District*. A small segment of the southwest portion of North Dallas--bounded by Fairmont Street, Colby Street, McKinney Avenue, and Worthington Street--was designated the State-Thomas Historic District in 1986.

⁸North Central Expressway is the section of US Highway 75 that spans from downtown Dallas in the south to Sam Rayburn Tollway in McKinney in the north.; Samuel Wilson, Jr, *New Orleans Architecture, Volume IV: The Creole Faubourgs*, (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing, 1996), 71. Found primarily in the southern United States, shotgun houses are narrow, rectangular dwellings that were popular among low-income groups, particularly blacks, between the late 1800s and the 1920s. Some scholars argue that the term "shotgun house" is derived from the structure's floorplan wherein the front and back doors are aligned so that if a shotgun were fired through the front door the blast would travel through the home and out the back door.; John Michael Vlach, "The Shotgun House: An African Architectural Legacy, Part I," *Pioneer America*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (January 1976), 47-56. Some scholars, such as John Michael Vlach, argue that the term is derived from the Haitian term 'togun,' which means "place of assembly."

⁹ Craig Weflen, *Tenth Street: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, Film, buildingcommunityWORKSHOP, 2015. The Tenth Street neighborhood, now designated the Tenth Street Historic District, is located southwest of downtown on the opposite side of the Trinity River and sits between two other historically black neighborhoods: the Bottom to the south and the Heights to the north.

North Dallas neighborhood faced further destruction in 1958 with the construction of Woodall Rodgers Freeway, a project that spanned over two decades.¹⁰ Two years later, C. F. Hawn Freeway cut through the Bon Ton neighborhood, effectively dividing it in half and isolating the southern section from the rest of Dallas.¹¹ Today there remains only one route in and out of Bon Ton. In 1962, private developers, with the aid of city officials, demolished the whole of Little Egypt to construct a shopping center. Finally, the second expansion of Fair Park, which took place between 1968 and the early 1980s, destroyed an additional 350 homes in the Fair Park neighborhood.

This study addresses the role of residential segregation in the formation of Dallas' black communities, tracks their development into vibrant, self-sufficient enclaves during the early decades of the 1900s, and examines the rise of slum conditions caused by pervasive discriminatory housing policies. In addition, this research examines the identities and motives of city decision-makers along with the nature of the urban renewal projects that these individuals and groups directed through Dallas' black communities as part of a slum clearance program. The physical, social, and economic impacts of Dallas' postwar urban renewal and slum clearance efforts on Dallas' black communities, as well as opposition offered by residents in response to projects that threatened their

¹⁰ In the 1980s, officials relocated a shotgun house located at 2807 Guillot, near the heart of North Dallas, from the path of Woodall Rodgers Freeway to Old City Park, now Dallas Heritage Village, where it currently stands complete with period furnishings. For more information, visit the Dallas Heritage Village website at <http://www.dallasheritagevillage.org/>.

¹¹ C. F. Hawn Freeway, located southeast of downtown, is the section of US 175 that heads eastward toward Mesquite after an interchange at State Highway 310.

neighborhoods and remedies proposed to aid those displaced or those communities divided by these projects, are also explored.

This research provides a comprehensive examination of the geographic, social, and economic effects of postwar urban redevelopment on Dallas' black communities. It examines the ways that postwar urban renewal projects exacerbated the city's black housing crisis through the destruction of homes and disrupted communal unity by displacing residents, demolishing businesses and churches, and creating both physical and social barriers in once cohesive neighborhoods. In addition, it places these neighborhoods and the projects that affected them alongside one another to demonstrate how, despite being separated geographically, Dallas' black communities were nonetheless interconnected and therefore impacted by projects taking place in other neighborhoods. Construction in one community, thus, had implications for others by prompting population shifts and by destabilizing social and economic centers patronized by black residents from around the city. Because these projects impacted each of the city's black communities in rapid succession and because residential segregation remained in place, those displaced had few options other than moving to another overcrowded community.

While Dallas' postwar urban renewal projects also impacted white communities, black Dallasites, unlike their white counterparts, had few options when the bulldozers arrived. Whites who lost homes or businesses to postwar construction projects had the freedom to relocate to other parts of the city or to the suburbs while blacks did not. Many

black Dallasites threatened by construction projects either moved in with neighbors or relocated to other black areas within the city—black areas that faced similar threats of destruction from urban renewal projects—where they lived doubled-up like thousands of other black families in these severely overcrowded neighborhoods. Similarly, because black Dallasites had become largely dependent on their communities for their economic and social well-being, it may be argued that disruptions in communal unity wrought by Dallas’ postwar urban renewal projects had a much more significant impact on black Dallasites than it had on whites.

Most black communities in Dallas formed following emancipation when whites used both legal and extralegal means to limit black housing options. Over the years, Dallas’ black neighborhoods became close-knit, self-sustaining units. Residents built homes and established churches and schools. Some residents within the community owned and operated businesses such as funeral homes, pharmacies, salons, cafes, and clothing stores. Others worked in an array of occupations, from cooks and janitors to lawyers and doctors. By the 1920s, these communities served as thriving centers of black life in Dallas. North Dallas, for example, had become the epicenter of medical and dental care for Dallas’ black citizens by this time.¹² However, racially discriminatory housing policies, which had contributed to the growth of black communities for decades by limiting where blacks could live, led to overcrowding and dilapidation beginning in the

¹² Marsha Prior and Robert V. Kemper, “From Freedman’s Town to Uptown: Community Transformation and Gentrification in Dallas, Texas,” *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development, Communities Old and New in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area*, 34, no. 2/3 (2005): 177–216, 184.

1920s and 1930s.¹³ Significant increases in the city's black population between 1920 and 1950 exacerbated these conditions and made black communities targets for slum clearance schemes in the postwar years.¹⁴ With residential segregation becoming more rigid after the war, black Dallasites found themselves trapped in doomed communities, without the political or financial resources to save their homes or neighborhoods from the city's expansive urban renewal program. Because the city's postwar redevelopment projects disrupted the stability of Dallas' black communities and contributed to the black housing crisis, these projects ultimately exacerbated slum conditions in Dallas' black communities.

The process of postwar urban renewal that occurred in Dallas—wherein city officials utilized urban renewal projects to clear slum areas--closely mirrored that which took place in other urban centers throughout the country. Following the war, cities across the nation initiated massive urban redevelopment efforts aimed at revitalizing downtown business districts by making them more attractive and accessible through the improvement of roadways, airports, and public facilities. City leaders saw urban renewal

¹³ According to the United States Census Bureau, the term "dilapidated" refers to a dwelling that is "rundown or neglected, or is of inadequate original construction so that [it] does not provide adequate shelter or protection against the elements or it endangers the safety of the occupants."; The Federal Housing Act of 1937 defines a slum as "any area where dwellings predominate which, by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangements or design, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities, or any combination of these factors, are detrimental to safety, health or morals."; "Slum Clearance: 1932–1952," In *Editorial Research Reports 1952*, vol. II, 801-20, Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1952. The physical characteristics of urban slums include "decayed housing structures, inadequate hygienic facilities, and congestion of inhabitants." Social and psychological trappings of slums include "a lack of social organization among its inhabitants and an individual acceptance of squalor as the norm of existence."

¹⁴ Donald Payton, "Timeline A Concise History: Black Dallas Since 1842," *D Magazine*, June 1998. Between 1920 and 1950, Dallas' black population grew from 24,355 to 80,000.

initiatives as avenues for attracting new people and industries while accommodating growing urban populations.¹⁵ Federal legislation such as the G.I. Bill of 1944, the Federal Airport Act of 1946, and the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, bolstered the construction of homes, airports, and highways in and around urban areas while the Federal Housing Act of 1949 provided federal funds for slum clearance.¹⁶

Postwar prosperity and federal subsidies allowed city leaders to finally tackle urban slums, an issue that surfaced after the industrial revolution and worsened over the decades as more people, particularly immigrants and non-whites, moved to cities.¹⁷ In 1949, a report issued by the Senate Banking and Currency Committee stated that roughly one out of five urban families lived under slum conditions.¹⁸ As of 1950, the United States contained approximately 29.2 million urban dwellings. Of those, 1.6 million were dilapidated, 2.2 million lacked indoor toilets, 3.2 million had no bathtub or shower, and 1.1 million had no running water whatsoever.¹⁹ Twenty-seven percent of urban dwellings occupied by blacks were considered dilapidated while only seven percent of urban

¹⁵ United States Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population and Housing*, 1960, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1960. In 1940, 56.5 percent of the United States' population lived in urban areas. That percentage rose to 64 percent in 1950 and to 69.9 percent in 1960.

¹⁶ The G. I. Bill of 1944 provided returning servicemen with numerous benefits including low-cost mortgages and low-interest loans. The Federal Airport Act of 1946 created the Federal Aid Airport Program which allotted \$75 million annually for the construction and maintenance of airports. The Federal Housing Act of 1949 granted federal money to local authorities for slum clearance and urban redevelopment. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 called for 41,000 miles of interstate highway across the country and allotted \$26 million in funds for the federal government to cover ninety percent of construction costs.

¹⁷ "Slum Clearance: 1932–1952," In *Editorial Research Reports 1952*, vol. II, 801-20, Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1952.

¹⁸ "Slum Clearance: 1932–1952," In *Editorial Research Reports 1952*, vol. II, 801-20, Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1952.

¹⁹ United States Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population and Housing*, 1950, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1950.

dwellings occupied by whites qualified as dilapidated. Of the black homes not considered dilapidated, twenty-four percent lacked running water while only ten percent of white-occupied urban homes lacked running water.²⁰ Because most urban slums or blighted areas were occupied by blacks, postwar slum clearance ventures became calculated assaults on urban black communities.²¹ The element of residential segregation made urban black communities unique in that they were “apt to have a highly developed social and family spirit” while “other slums, filled with cheap rooming houses, engender no feeling of neighborliness; the population is floating, anonymous, rarely includes stable families with children.” In turn, although slum clearance did impact low-income urban whites as well, it did so to a much lesser degree and with far fewer social and economic consequences.²²

Previous scholarship on the impacts of postwar redevelopment on Dallas’ black communities remains limited, with scholars neglecting to fully explore the subject and focusing primarily on the most prominent of Dallas’ black neighborhoods while overlooking many others. *Deep Ellum and Central Track: Where the Black and White Worlds of Dallas Converged* by Alan B. Govenar and Jay F. Brakefield provides the only

²⁰ United States Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population and Housing*, 1950, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1950.

²¹ “Slum Clearance: 1932–1952,” In *Editorial Research Reports 1952*, vol. II, 801-20, Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1952. An urban area did not have to be deemed ‘dilapidated’ or meet qualifications as a “slum” to be threatened with slum clearance projects. Often, being labeled ‘blighted’ was enough to spell demise for urban neighborhoods. Although lacking an official legislative definition, blighted areas are considered those with a “somewhat lesser degree of squalor, or a slum in the making.”

²² Slum Clearance: 1932–1952,” In *Editorial Research Reports 1952*, vol. II, 801-20, Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1952.

comprehensive examination of the Deep Ellum neighborhood.²³ However, while the authors do include a brief history of the area along with its significance to Dallas' black population, their primary focus is on the plethora of musicians to come out of Deep Ellum. They assert, briefly and without much expansion, that the construction of Central Expressway led to the neighborhood's demise. This research expands on this point by showing in detail how the roadway impacted Deep Ellum and the repercussions this had on Dallas' black population.

Marsha Prior and Robert V. Kemper discuss the transformation of Dallas' Freedman's Town, later known as North Dallas, from a bustling black community to a high-end residential and commercial district. Their article "From Freedman's Town to Uptown: Community Transformation and Gentrification in Dallas, Texas" explains that the community, founded in 1869 by former slaves, became "self-sufficient," a place where residents could "rely on one another for goods and services, protection, and social needs."²⁴ Due in large part to the proximity of the H&TC railroad tracks, the North Dallas neighborhood flourished until the 1940s when two government-sponsored projects—the Roseland Homes public housing complex and the northern section of Central Expressway—decimated the area. The authors assert that the construction of Central Expressway not only brought the eviction of black homeowners and the demolition of black homes, businesses, and churches but it also "physically bisected the

²³ Alan B. Govenar and Jay F. Brakefield, *Deep Ellum and Central Track: Where the Black and White Worlds of Dallas Converged*, (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1998).

²⁴ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 179.

community, with serious consequences for the social and economic dynamics essential to the community's solidarity for nearly 80 years."²⁵ This research adds to the scholarship of Prior and Kemper by elaborating on the physical and communal destruction of the North Dallas neighborhood wrought by Central Expressway and by placing the fate of North Dallas alongside a comprehensive analysis of similar events that took place in black neighborhoods across the city.

Like many urban centers after WWII, Dallas faced a severe housing shortage that proved especially grave for black urbanites. The destruction of black homes and businesses for the city's urban redevelopment projects only amplified the black housing crisis. Black neighborhoods contained a limited number of dwellings and were some of the most densely populated areas in the city.²⁶ Meanwhile, whites made it clear that their neighborhoods were off limits. When middle-class blacks moved into traditionally white areas, whites responded with violence. For instance, in 1941 and again in 1951, hostile whites bombed dozens of black-owned homes located in traditionally white neighborhoods.²⁷

City officials recognized the severe shortage of housing available to blacks even before urban renewal projects commenced. Both the Kessler Plan of 1911 and the

²⁵ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 191.

²⁶ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 24. Bartholomew estimated the population density of North Dallas as roughly 35 persons per acre, the most densely populated area of the city.

²⁷ Michael Phillips, *White Metropolis: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Dallas, 1841-2001*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 125.

Bartholomew Plan of 1945, municipal master plans which guided city officials in urban development, acknowledged the housing crisis faced by black Dallasites and warned that failure to remedy the housing shortage would be highly detrimental to the city's progress.²⁸ The city's answer to the black housing crisis usually came in the form of public housing projects, which often proved inadequate, while attempts to establish new black enclaves faced harsh opposition from whites.²⁹ The Hamilton Park neighborhood, however, served as one of the few successful attempts to address the black housing shortage and placate white Dallasites. Established in 1953 with the help of Dallas philanthropists and community organizations, Hamilton Park provided middle-class black Dallasites with an attractive neighborhood of homes, churches, stores, and a school.

William H. Wilson's book *Hamilton Park: A Planned Black Community in Dallas* tracks the development of Hamilton Park from an abstract idea to a successful community, placing emphasis on the challenges faced by planners and early residents.³⁰ Wilson asserts that the establishment of Hamilton Park helped alleviate the housing shortage for middle-class blacks and provided residents with a community in which they could live, work, worship, and shop with minimal exposure to hostile whites. However, Wilson also makes clear that the boundaries of Hamilton Park did not shield residents

²⁸ In 1909, the Dallas City Plan and Improvement League hired city planner George E. Kessler to draft a master plan for the City of Dallas. Kessler's plan focused heavily on controlling flooding of the Trinity River and improving the city's inadequate thoroughfares. In 1943, the City of Dallas hired Harland Bartholomew and Associates, a city planning firm out of St. Louis, Missouri, to build on Kessler's work and create a postwar plan for Dallas.

²⁹ As of May 1950, Dallas was home to two public housing projects: Roseland Homes in North Dallas and Frazier Courts in Bon Ton.

³⁰ William H. Wilson, *Hamilton Park: A Planned Black Community in Dallas*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

from pervasive racism and the continued struggle for racial equality. Despite the success of Hamilton Park, which consisted of more than 700 homes upon its completion, the black housing shortage persisted and worsened with each postwar redevelopment project, leaving many black Dallas residents, especially those with few resources, with no place to go.

City leaders made few tangible efforts to alleviate the chronic housing shortage faced by black Dallasites as a result of residential segregation and destructive redevelopment projects. According to Robert F. Fairbanks, author of *For the City as a Whole: Planning, Politics, and the Public Interests in Dallas, Texas, 1900-1965*, when city officials did act, they did so not to alleviate the plight of blacks but to placate whites who hoped to keep blacks out of white neighborhoods.³¹ Fairbanks contends that city leaders embraced the “city as a whole” concept wherein problems within one segment of the city affected others. Per this philosophy, city officials prioritized the “needs of the city as a whole over the wants of particular populations, neighborhood groups, or other special interest groups.”³² Hence, city leaders sought to address the issue of black housing in a way that curtailed white opposition and safeguarded the city’s reputation as a growing commercial center. The “city as a whole” dogma as described by Fairbanks may explain why Dallas officials proved willing to sacrifice black communities for the sake of urban infrastructure development.

³¹ Robert Bruce Fairbanks, *For the City as a Whole: Planning, Politics, and the Public Interest in Dallas, Texas, 1900-1965*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998).

³² Fairbanks, *For the City as a Whole*, 3.

Like most urban blacks in the postwar years, black Dallasites found themselves confined to small residential pockets scattered throughout the city as a result of racially discriminatory official policies and public attitudes. In *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, Douglass S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton explore the evolution of urban racial segregation and the rise of the black ghetto.³³ The authors describe the ghetto as "a set of neighborhoods that are exclusively inhabited by members of one group, within which virtually all members of that group live."³⁴ Massey and Denton explain that prior to 1900, ghettos did not exist in most urban areas; urban blacks and whites lived alongside one another. However, numerous factors—namely economic opportunities--prompted blacks, in both the north and south, to flock to cities. Their arrival roused fear and hostility among whites and sparked the evolution of the black ghetto. Seeking to safeguard white neighborhoods from black incursion, urban whites managed to confine blacks to small residential enclaves throughout the city. Whites often employed harassment, threats, and violence in addition to establishing neighborhood improvement associations to prevent blacks from buying or renting homes in white neighborhoods. As a result, over the course of the 20th century, blacks became "increasingly divided from whites by a hardening color line in employment, education, and especially housing."³⁵

³³ Nancy A. Denton and Douglass S. Massey, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

³⁴ Denton and Massey, *American Apartheid*, 19.

³⁵ Denton and Massey, *American Apartheid*, 30.

Massey and Denton explain that patterns of racial segregation that began in the first half of the 20th century not only persisted but also became more stringent in the postwar years. Most significantly, racial segregation in the years following WWII became characterized by the active role of federal and state governments in reinforcing color lines. Discriminatory federal housing programs such as the Home Owner's Loan Corporation, the Federal Housing Administration, and the Veteran's Administration spurred the growth of white suburbs and channeled investment away from the inner city. While these federal housing programs allowed returning servicemen to move to suburban areas and start families, they simultaneously undervalued black urban neighborhoods and made it difficult for blacks to obtain home loans. The Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954 granted federal money to local authorities for slum clearance and urban redevelopment. Although these acts required adequate replacement housing to be made available prior to clearance, "urban renewal almost always destroyed more housing than it created."³⁶ Local governments frequently sought to counter the destruction of black neighborhoods by building public housing within or near the existing black ghetto thereby forcing more blacks into already congested urban areas. The size of the ghetto increased as blacks moved into bordering areas recently abandoned by whites, but discriminatory real estate policies, wherein agents refused to rent or sell to blacks in white neighborhoods, ensured that blacks would not venture further into white territory.³⁷

³⁶ Denton and Massey, *American Apartheid*, 56.

³⁷ Denton and Massey, *American Apartheid*, 50.

Stephen Grant Meyer expands on the realities of postwar racial segregation in his book *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door: Segregation and Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods*.³⁸ While Massey and Denton focus largely on government policies that fostered racial segregation in urban areas, Meyer emphasizes the often-violent efforts of white urbanites in keeping blacks out of traditionally white neighborhoods. Crimes committed by whites, both as individuals and in groups, who “refuse[d] to accept blacks as neighbors” included assault, kidnapping, threats, bombings, arson, and shootings.³⁹ Most of the perpetrators involved were otherwise law-abiding citizens whose deeply embedded racial prejudices led them to carry out violent and destructive crimes against black persons and property for which there would be little to no legal ramifications. One of the numerous examples used by Meyers to support his argument is an account of the series of bombings in Dallas that occurred in the early 1940s and again in the early 1950s. Like those discussed in Meyer’s book, the perpetrators of the Dallas bombings never faced conviction for their actions.⁴⁰

Jim Schutze provides a thorough examination of the Dallas bombings in his book *The Accommodation: The Politics of Race in an American City*.⁴¹ Schutze explains that, following outcry from black community leaders, Dallas city officials assembled a blue-

³⁸ Stephen Grant Meyer, *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door: Segregation and Racial Conflict in American Neighborhoods*, (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000).

³⁹ Meyer, *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door*, 4.

⁴⁰ Meyer, *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door*, 58-63.

⁴¹ Jim Schutze, *The Accommodation: The Politics of Race in an American City*, (Secaucus, New Jersey: Citadel Press, 1986).

ribbon grand jury to investigate the bombings and charge those responsible.⁴² Some of the individuals found to be involved in the bombings were prominent members of Dallas society such as religious leaders and neighborhood association members. Due to the identities and reputations of those involved, the grand jury refused to take any substantive action, claiming that the suspects, whose identities remained anonymous, would be reprimanded.⁴³ The three men arrested for the bombings, one of whom was Dallas businessman and neighborhood association leader George Goff, never faced conviction.⁴⁴ Schutze makes clear that city officials prioritized the preservation of white ascendancy over the protection of its black citizens.⁴⁵ The works of Massey, Denton, Meyer, and Schutze aid in understanding how racial prejudices and inequitable policies contributed to the formation of Dallas' black neighborhoods and how black Dallasites became essentially trapped in these neighborhoods. Discriminatory housing policies coupled with an overall housing shortage ensured that black Dallasites had few options when city officials initiated urban redevelopment efforts.

While the expansion of Love Field and Fair Park demolished hundreds of black homes, freeway construction proved far more devastating to Dallas' black neighborhoods, as was the case in most urban settings during the 1950s and 1960s. Mark H. Rose and Raymond A. Mohl, authors of *Interstate: Highway Politics and Policy Since 1939*, argue that it was no mere coincidence that an overwhelming number of freeways

⁴² Schutze, *The Accommodation*, 7.

⁴³ Schutze, *The Accommodation*, 15.

⁴⁴ Schutze, *The Accommodation*, 8-9.

⁴⁵ Schutze, *The Accommodation*, 60-66.

built during the postwar decades tore through black urban communities.⁴⁶ In fact, according to Rose and Mohl, officials chose to route highways through black enclaves based on the notion that freeways should serve as tools in slum clearance efforts and because black neighborhoods provided cheap land and minimal political opposition due, in part, to the limited voting power of blacks. In 1939, the National Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), under the leadership of highway engineer Thomas H. MacDonald, published a report entitled *Toll Roads and Free Roads*, which proposed that “highway planning should be used in slum clearance and urban redevelopment...to cut through and clear out blighted areas.”⁴⁷ Other agencies and groups, such as the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the American Road Builders Association (ARBA), and automobile manufacturers voiced their support for MacDonald’s proposal. In turn, most of those displaced by freeway construction were poor and black.

Although MacDonald warned in his report that new homes needed to be built before freeway construction began, few shared his sentiment. The private and public entities involved in the construction of highways felt that their job was to build roadways and any social consequences of such should be handled by other agencies. Similarly, state and federal agencies viewed the bulldozing of black homes and neighborhoods as an

⁴⁶ Mark H. Rose and Raymond A. Mohl, *Interstate: Highway Politics and Policy Since 1939*, 3rd ed., (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012).

⁴⁷ Rose and Mohl, *Interstate*, 98-99.; Joseph F. C. DiMento and Cliff Ellis, *Changing Lanes: Visions and Histories of Urban Freeways*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2013), 76. MacDonald echoed these sentiments in a 1947 article entitled “The Case for Urban Expressways” in which he advocated the improvement and expansion of roadways as they would “pass through ‘blighted’ sections where property values are low, and most of the buildings are of the type that should be torn down in any case, to rid the city of its slums.”

“acceptable cost of creating new transportation routes and facilitating urban economic development.”⁴⁸ While the federal government provided most of the funds for highway construction, state and local governments chose the routes. Many used this power as a means of reinforcing urban residential segregation along the color line. This thesis adds to the scholarship of Rose and Mohl by addressing the motives of Dallas city officials in routing freeways through black neighborhoods.

In his book *Folklore of the Freeway: Race and Revolt in the Modernist City*, Eric Avila addresses public responses to the postwar freeway construction boom that Avila calls a “calculated assault on urban communities of color.”⁴⁹ Avila explains that, following World War II, people and industry began moving away from downtown areas and into the suburbs. In response, city officials, encouraged by the Highway Act of 1956, initiated massive freeway construction programs aimed at saving the urban center. Seen by city leaders as “job creators, slum destroyers, and all-around growth generators,” freeways “demolished some 37,000 urban housing units per year” between 1956 and 1966.⁵⁰

Although black communities were, according to Avila, specifically targeted for freeway projects, white communities were sometimes threatened as well. While whites possessed the political, economic, and social resources to band together and successfully thwart freeway proposals that endangered their neighborhoods, blacks did not, and

⁴⁸ Rose and Mohl, *Interstate*, 97.

⁴⁹ Eric Avila, *The Folklore of the Freeway: Race and Revolt in the Modernist City*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 3.

⁵⁰ Avila, *The Folklore of the Freeway*, 18-20.

despite their best efforts at opposition, saw their homes and communities decimated by massive roadway projects. Avila asserts that highway construction, alongside other urban redevelopment endeavors such as suburbanization, slum clearance, and public housing, effectively isolated black urban neighborhoods and precipitated their swift and drastic deterioration. Building on Avila's work, this study addresses the manner, breadth, and outcome of opposition posed by Dallas' black communities in response to freeway projects. This information is vital to understanding how black Dallasites perceived the roadways that cut through their neighborhoods and how city officials responded to their concerns.

In attempting to understand the postwar experiences of urban blacks, it is necessary to examine not only the causes and consequences of urban redevelopment strategies but the identities and motives of the decision-makers as well. In Dallas, the Dallas Citizens Council (DCC), an unelected body of business elites with substantial political power, played a pivotal role in the city's various urban renewal ventures.⁵¹ Michael V. Hazel discusses the Dallas Citizens Council in his book *Dallas: A History of "Big D."*⁵² Hazel explains that Dallas businessman R. L. Thornton, who served as mayor from 1953 to 1961, founded the DCC in 1937 as a nonprofit organization designed to study and meet the needs of Dallas and Dallas County. Membership in this invitation-

⁵¹ Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954-64*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994). The Dallas Citizens Council should be not confused or associated with the citizens councils that were formed in many southern cities during the 1950s to oppose racial integration.

⁵² Michael V. Hazel, *Dallas: A History of "Big D."* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1997).

only organization, which kept rosters confidential, was limited to white male elites, namely presidents, executive officers, and top executives of Dallas firms such as banks, insurance companies, newspapers, and manufacturing firms.⁵³ According to Hazel, the DCC sought “ordered growth” to make Dallas “a place attractive to businessmen and investors.”⁵⁴ The DCC supported projects deemed beneficial to the city. Although the DCC had no official power, the organization managed to exercise significant control over city government through the Citizens Charter Association, the unofficial political arm of the DCC.

According to Gregory D. Squires, this type of arrangement, in which private entities made decisions traditionally reserved for municipal governments, became common following World War II.⁵⁵ In *Unequal Partnerships: The Political Economy of Urban Redevelopment in Postwar America*, Squires has compiled twelve case studies which analyze the nature and significance of public-private partnerships in postwar urban redevelopment.⁵⁶ Squires argues that these partnerships, which involve elements of the public and private sectors cooperating to address the needs of urban areas, are rarely

⁵³ Darwin Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council: An Obligation of Leadership*, (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 2008), 15.

⁵⁴ Hazel, *Dallas*, 37.

⁵⁵ While public-private partnerships became commonplace in many urban areas in the postwar decades, exceptions did exist. In New York, for example, urban redevelopment initiatives were led primarily by one man, Robert Moses, rather than a group of business and political leaders as in Dallas with the DCC. Moses, who held a dozen appointive state and local positions between 1924 and 1975, is credited with initiating hundreds of redevelopment projects including parks, roadways, bridges, and housing complexes. For more information, see *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974) by Robert A. Caro.

⁵⁶ Gregory D. Squires, *Unequal Partnerships: The Political Economy of Urban Redevelopment in Postwar America*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989).

equal. Business most often holds a privileged position due to tax incentives and the pervading myth that the private sector is more capable of addressing public needs. Meanwhile, neighborhoods have little say in projects that directly affect them, and the costs of urban redevelopment schemes are passed onto citizens while businesses reap the benefits. Squires asserts that the “inherently unequal nature” of public-private partnerships has “given rise to the uneven development of [urban] communities.”⁵⁷

Similarly, Marc V. Levine’s article entitled “The Politics of Partnership: Urban Redevelopment Since 1945,” which is one of the twelve articles featured in Squires’ book, focuses on the character of public-private partnerships in postwar America.⁵⁸ Levine states that public-private partnerships of the 1950s became characterized by single-project collaborations as city governments “joined forces with private developers in more formal and systematic collaborative enterprises” in hopes of counteracting the “growing blight in downtown areas.”⁵⁹ Through these arrangements, the power to make momentous decisions regarding urban renewal projects shifted from the public sector to the private. As a result, “municipal democracy [became] compromised” and the city’s most pressing problems such as poverty, neighborhood decay, and unemployment went unaddressed.⁶⁰ In addition, Levine states that urban redevelopment projects undertaken through public-private partnerships addressed the needs of business while the city’s most

⁵⁷ Squires, *Unequal Partnerships*, 2-3.

⁵⁸ Mark V. Levine, “The Politics of Partnership: Urban Redevelopment Since 1945,” In *Unequal Partnerships: The Political Economy of Urban Redevelopment in Postwar America*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989).

⁵⁹ Levine, “The Politics of Partnership,” 12.

⁶⁰ Levine, “The Politics of Partnership,” 16.

troubled neighborhoods were either crippled by renewal ventures or ignored altogether. Levine asserts that postwar public-private partnerships had four primary characteristics. First, they were “governed by local corporate committees composed of the city’s leading private sector elites whose chief goal was to revitalize downtown business districts.”⁶¹ Second, they were enticed by federal funds made available through Title 1 of the Housing Act of 1949. Third, they were “controlled by virtually autonomous redevelopment authorities.”⁶² Finally, they were promoted by mayors who pledged full support for redevelopment initiatives. Interestingly, Levine uses the Dallas Citizens Council as an example of the typical postwar public-private partnership.⁶³

The scholarship of Rose, Mohl, and Avila aid in understanding the role of freeways in slum clearance schemes and public responses to such projects. The works of Hazel, Squires, and Levine expand our knowledge of the character of urban decision-making bodies in the postwar years. Together, these scholars provide a framework for analyzing the identities and motives of those who planned and executed postwar urban renewal projects in Dallas, what these individuals and groups hoped to achieve through renewal projects, and how Dallasites—namely black Dallasites--reacted to projects that threatened their homes and communities.

Taken together, the secondary sources discussed herein provide a glimpse into the realities faced by black Dallasites in the years following World War II, but they do not

⁶¹ Levine, “The Politics of Partnership,” 19.

⁶² Levine, “The Politics of Partnership,” 21.

⁶³ Levine, “The Politics of Partnership,” 17-18.

capture precisely how postwar urban redevelopment impacted black communities in Dallas. Fortunately, a wealth of primary sources exist that help fill in the blanks left by secondary scholarship. The *Dallas Morning News* Historical Archive contains digitized versions of Dallas' most prominent daily newspaper, which include a multitude of articles that cover subjects relevant to my topic. Similarly, digitized copies of *The Dallas Express*, the city's primary black newspaper, and the *Dallas Times Herald* can be accessed through the Dallas Public Library and the University of North Texas' Portal to Texas History. In addition, maps, municipal records, city directories, photographs, post cards, newspapers, and news scripts can also be accessed through the Portal. The Portal also provides digitized copies of both the Kessler Plan of 1911 and the Bartholomew Plan of 1945, both of which are city planning reports that guided city officials in their urban renewal efforts. The Dallas Municipal Archives, located at Dallas City Hall, contain detailed records of city government proposals, policies, and initiatives. The Dallas History and Archives Division of the Dallas Public Library contains manuscripts, photographs, city directories, maps, oral histories, and Dallas County records. The Texas Highway Department Archives at the Texas State Archives consist of blueprints, maps, photographs, drawings, meeting minutes, memorandums, correspondence, and reports pertaining to Texas Highways. All of these resources were utilized in this research.

Chapter two of this study argues that residential segregation, which forced the establishment and evolution of Dallas' black communities, ultimately led to the development of slum conditions that made these neighborhoods targets for postwar slum

clearance. This chapter explores the realities of racial segregation in Dallas and its role in the development of Dallas' black communities from small black settlements to thriving self-contained, self-sufficient units. The nature of these communities following World War II--including their history, size, location, socioeconomic makeup, and housing conditions--is also explored. Finally, chapter two expounds on the consequences of residential segregation as it led to overcrowding and dilapidation of Dallas' black communities, conditions that arose during the 1920s, worsened following significant black population increases between 1920 and 1950, and made black communities targets for slum clearance in the postwar years. Examining the development of Dallas black communities and the crucial role played by residential segregation in both their formation and decline is vital to understanding why city officials targeted these communities and the nature and scope of the impact of urban redevelopment.

Chapter three argues that Dallas city officials routed redevelopment projects through black communities as part of a slum clearance campaign meant to clear blighted areas and bolster the city's image. This chapter examines the nature of Dallas' postwar urban renewal projects, which are presented in chronological order, and demonstrates how Dallas' urban redevelopment agendas fit into the narrative of postwar growth across the nation. This chapter also analyzes the rationale of city leaders including Dallas mayors, the Dallas Citizens Council, and other political, business, and community leaders. City planning reports created by Harland Bartholomew in 1945, built upon planning reports published by George Kessler in 1911, which guided city leaders in their

redevelopment efforts, are also examined to show what city leaders sought to achieve and how those goals stood to impact Dallas' black neighborhoods. In addition, chapter three explores the manner of funding involved with these projects.

Chapter four argues that Dallas' postwar urban renewal projects coupled with residential segregation exacerbated slum conditions in Dallas' black communities by destabilizing social and economic milieus and by exacerbating the black housing crisis. This chapter examines in detail how Dallas' postwar urban redevelopment ventures affected each of the city's black neighborhoods and emphasizes the way that these projects exacerbated the black housing crisis through the destruction of homes and created physical barriers between once cohesive neighborhoods, disrupting communal unity and leaving black communities in a state of disarray. This chapter demonstrates that, because residential segregation limited where blacks could live and because these projects occurred within rapid succession of one another, Dallas' postwar urban renewal campaign left those displaced by projects with no place to go. This chapter also discusses opposition posed by Dallas' black communities and examines efforts to relocate those displaced by the city's urban renewal projects through the construction of public housing and the establishment of Hamilton Park. White opposition to these relocation efforts is also explored.

This study concludes with an analysis of the long-term consequences of the city's postwar urban renewal efforts on Dallas' black communities and an explanation of how this research adds to the fields of Dallas history, urban history, and African American

history. Together, these chapters support the argument that decades of residential segregation, which forced the growth of Dallas' black communities, led to overcrowding and dilapidation that made black enclaves targets for postwar slum clearance projects that ultimately worsened blight in these communities.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DALLAS' BLACK COMMUNITIES

Residential segregation, which forced the formation and evolution of Dallas' black communities, ultimately led to the development of slum conditions as the city's black population swelled, making these communities targets for slum clearance after World War II. Some black Dallas communities formed following emancipation as newly freed blacks from the area settled together on lands granted by former slave owners. Others began to take shape in the 1870s with the arrival of the railroads that brought blacks from other areas into the city where they joined established communities or formed new ones. In addition, some began as white settlements that gradually became predominantly black over several decades.

Because racial segregation limited where blacks could live and work, black communities became largely self-contained, self-sufficient units—cities within a city. As the city's black population swelled, Dallas' black communities began to experience overcrowding and dilapidation in the 1920s, a situation that worsened significantly during the decades between 1920 and 1950 as rural blacks in search of jobs poured into the city.⁶⁴ Dallas' established black communities, which served as the only option for incoming blacks due to housing discrimination in other parts of the city, proved unable to

⁶⁴ Donald Payton, "Timeline A Concise History: Black Dallas Since 1842," *D Magazine*, June 1998. Dallas' black population grew by more than 55,000 between 1920 and 1950.

accommodate the ever-growing black population. By the postwar years, slum conditions—including housing dilapidation, overcrowding, disease, and crime—existed, to one degree or another, in every black community.

Although racism in Dallas “remained largely invisible to the outside world because of its sophistication and subtlety,” it has proven for more than a century to be a formidable obstacle for black Dallasites, an obstacle most clearly evidenced by racial segregation in housing and employment.⁶⁵ Racial segregation in Dallas, with its roots in antebellum, began to take tangible shape following emancipation.⁶⁶ Upon gaining freedom, blacks from across the county and beyond migrated to the city in search of better opportunities.⁶⁷ The influx of blacks roused fear and hostility among white Dallasites whose racially discriminatory policies and attitudes effectively limited where blacks could live and work. Motivated by notions that blackness “equaled savagery, license, and irresponsibility” and that “[a]malgamation, of the white with the black race,

⁶⁵ Michael Phillips, *White Metropolis: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Dallas, 1841-2001*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 17.

⁶⁶ Donald E. Reynolds, *Texas Terror: The Slave Insurrection Panic of 1860 and the Secession of the Lower South*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 29-32. A massive fire on July 8, 1860, which consumed nearly every building in around the Dallas town square, was blamed on a slave insurrection and served to bolster white paranoia. However, the fire can most likely be attributed to a combination of dry climate, extreme heat, and strong wind; several other North Texas towns—including Forth Worth, Denton, Pilot Point, Honey Grove, Ladonia, Blackjack Grove, Sulpher Springs, and Waxahachie--also experienced fires that day.

⁶⁷ George Jackson, *Sixty Years in Texas*, (Dallas: Wilkinson Printing Co. Publishers, 1908), 231. In 1859, the population of Dallas County consisted of 7,729 whites and 1,080 blacks. The black population of the county had increased by several hundred since 1850.; Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 40. Freed blacks were drawn to cities due to “greater religious, social, and educational opportunities” and because cities allowed them to “secure better protection to their persons.”; Donald Payton, “Timeline A Concise History: Black Dallas Since 1842,” *D Magazine*, June 1998. By 1880, the black population of Dallas had grown to 4,947. By 1900, that number had increased 13,646. In 1910, the city’s black population stood at 20,828.

inevitably [led] to disease, decline, and death,” Dallas city officials passed laws to keep blacks out of white neighborhoods and establishments.⁶⁸ To limit the voting power of black citizens, city leaders initiated a poll tax in 1902 that left black Dallasites with little political recourse when the city began instituting discriminatory housing codes.⁶⁹ Although several of Dallas’ black churches frequently organized fundraisers to pay poll taxes for those without the financial means, by 1928 fewer than 3,000 out of a potential 10,000 black Dallasites were registered to vote.⁷⁰

In 1907, city officials amended the city charter to “impose racial segregation in schools, churches, and public amusement venues.”⁷¹ In 1916, Dallas voters passed a referendum, which allowed for residential segregation by officially designating Dallas neighborhoods as white, black, or open. In turn, “neighborhoods already occupied by one race would be closed to others.”⁷² Although the Texas Supreme Court invalidated the law in 1917, Dallas city leaders passed a law in 1921 that allowed residents to formally request their neighborhood be designated for use by only one race. Once an official designation was in place, it could only be overturned following a written request signed by at least three-fourths of the neighborhood residents.⁷³ Similarly, deed restrictions,

⁶⁸ Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 12, 20.

⁶⁹ Harvey J. Graff, *The Dallas Myth: The Making and Unmaking of an American City*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 169.

⁷⁰ *The Dallas Express*, Vol. 26, No. 13, Ed. 1, January 11, 1919, Texas Digital Newspaper Program, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas.; Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 113.

⁷¹ Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 63-64.

⁷² Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 63-64.

⁷³ Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 63-64.

which prevented whites from selling to blacks, confined black Dallasites to existing black neighborhoods.⁷⁴

Firmly established by World War I, racial segregation in Dallas increased dramatically during the 1920s and 1930s as more blacks moved to the city and faced exclusion from both new and old predominately white neighborhoods.⁷⁵ In some instances, whites resorted to violence to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods. *The Dallas Express*, the city's most prominent black newspaper, warned readers that "the white man" would go to great lengths to "prevent you from living on a front street, even if it takes force—brute force—to stop you."⁷⁶ In 1927 and again in 1929, white Dallasites "enforced segregation by bombing and burning the homes of blacks moving into marginal all-white neighborhoods."⁷⁷ As the city's black population continued to grow exponentially, existing black communities, already beginning to experience overcrowding and dilapidation, served as the only housing options available to new arrivals.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 186.

⁷⁵ Donald Payton, "Timeline A Concise History: Black Dallas Since 1842," *D Magazine*, June 1998. Between 1920 and 1930, Dallas' black population grew from 24,355 to 50,407, an increase of nearly 30,000 over the course of a single decade.; Patricia Evridge Hill, *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City*, (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1996), 101-105. The Ku Klux Klan, which experienced a nationwide revival in the 1920s, had a significant presence in Dallas during this decade. By 1923, the local chapter—which included city officials, business leaders, and attorneys—held almost complete control over city government. Dallas' chapter of the NAACP essentially ceased to exist during the 1920s out of fear of being attacked by the Klan. However, the Klan's rhetoric alarmed the city's more moderate business leaders who, with their allies, formed anti-Klan groups such as the Dallas County Citizens League and the Municipal Nonpartisan Citizens League and managed to effectively end organized Klan activity within the city by the mid-1930s.

⁷⁶ *The Dallas Express*, Vol. 26, No. 13, Ed. 1, January 11, 1919, Texas Digital Newspaper Program, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas.

⁷⁷ Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 64.

⁷⁸ Graff, *The Dallas Myth*, 167.

Despite the rigid confines of pervasive racism, black Dallasites managed to create a “counterculture that valued blackness” and build thriving, self-sufficient communities.”⁷⁹ By the early 20th century, black Dallasites lived and worked primarily within eight communities: North Dallas Freedman’s Town; the Tenth Street neighborhood; Little Egypt; Deep Ellum; Stringtown; Elm Thicket; Bon Ton; and the Fair Park neighborhood (see Appendix A.1).⁸⁰ Built from the ground up and well-established by the 1920s, at which time there existed a small black middle-class and a growing number of black professionals, black Dallas communities featured homes, churches, schools, businesses, and medical facilities--institutions that provided residents with social and economic opportunities frequently denied to blacks outside of their neighborhoods.⁸¹ The sense of communal unity that developed in black communities afforded residents a degree of security, a facet not so easily attained in the Jim Crow south.⁸² Churches played a pivotal role in the development and sustainment of Dallas’

⁷⁹ Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 103.

⁸⁰ Amruta Sakalker, “Settlements to Districts - Tracing the Identities of Downtown Dallas Neighborhoods,” buildingcommunityWORKSHOP. March 10, 2016.; Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944. The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 13.

⁸¹ W. Marvin Dulaney and John Dittmer, “Whatever Happened to the Civil Rights Movement in Dallas?,” In *Essays on the American Civil Rights Movement*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993), 69.

⁸² Prior and Kemper, “From Freedman’s Town to Uptown,” 191.; Craig Weflen, *Bonton + Ideal: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, Film, buildingcommunityWORKSHOP, 2016.; Weflen, *Tenth Street: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2015.

black communities by providing a myriad of services including education, healthcare, and financial resources.⁸³

Despite being distinct neighborhoods located in different parts of the city, black communities became interconnected through familial, social, and economic ties.⁸⁴ *The Dallas Express*, founded in 1893, served to connect the black population of Dallas. The paper, which survived into the 1970s, advocated for blacks within Dallas and beyond through promoting black-owned businesses, encouraging political activism, and providing advice on subjects such as financial responsibility, healthcare, community engagement, and lawfulness. Black churches from across the city also served as cohesive elements among Dallas' black population by frequently cooperating to address the needs of black Dallasites and their communities. When money was needed for a black orphanage, for example, several black churches pooled funds from their congregations

⁸³ Alwyn Barr, "Black Urban Churches on the Southern Frontier, 1865-1900," In *The African American Experience in Texas: An Anthology* by Bruce A. Glasrud, (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2007), 102. According to Barr, "religion became an even more important source of strength in the lives of former slaves as they made the transition to free people...and exercised greater control over their worship experience." Churches also "related to a variety of other activities pursued by African Americans after emancipation." Thus, churches became central to black communities, particularly those in urban settings, following the Civil War.; "Educational and Religions," *The Dallas Express*, Vol. 26, No. 15, Ed. 1, January 25, 1919, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas. *The Dallas Express* warned, "If these institutions are not nursed, the race will go bankrupt."

⁸⁴ *Neighborhood Stories: Tenth Street*, ebook, POP: People Organizing Place, buildingcommunityWORKSHOP, June 15, 2013. Black residents of the Heights and the Bottom, small black settlements located to the north and south of the Tenth Street neighborhood, patronized Tenth Street for the plethora of business and community establishments located there.; Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum & Central Track*, xiv. The variety of goods, services, and black-friendly establishments located in Deep Ellum, which served as the "black downtown," attracted blacks from across the city and beyond.; Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 184. Blacks from across the city patronized North Dallas for medical, surgical, and dental care and for various other economic and social institutions such as schools, businesses, and churches.

for donation.⁸⁵ Similarly, prominent black Dallasites from across the city worked together in addressing the needs of the city's black population. In 1919, for example, several black doctors, attorneys, and professionals organized to create the Negro Welfare Board of Dallas to "look after the interests of the Colored people, and recommend to the mayor...the improvements needed [in black communities]...such as sanitary conditions, street improvements, and sewer connections."⁸⁶ The Board, looked upon by black Dallasites as "sentinels of sanitation, guardians of cleanliness," succeeded in acquiring numerous improvements including the establishment of a tubercular hospital and the securing of sewer upgrades in black neighborhoods.⁸⁷ It was through this spirit of cooperation, perseverance, and activism that black Dallasites managed to build and sustain their communities in the face of official and de facto racial discrimination.

Founded in 1869 by former slaves, North Dallas Freedman's Town is one of the oldest black neighborhoods in Dallas.⁸⁸ Located just northeast of downtown and bounded by four cemeteries to the north and white-owned homes to the south, east, and west, the area became the largest and most densely populated black settlement in the city (see Appendix B.1). Shortly after founding the settlement, a group of North Dallas freedmen purchased two acres of land on the northeast edge of North Dallas from former slave

⁸⁵ *The Dallas Express*, Vol. 26, No. 14, Ed. 1, January 25, 1919, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas.

⁸⁶ N. W. Harllee, "The Negro Welfare Board of Dallas—Its Work Reviewed," *The Dallas Express*, Vol. 26, No. 15, Ed. 1, January 25, 1919, Texas Digital Newspaper Program, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas.

⁸⁷ N. W. Harllee, "The Negro Welfare Board of Dallas—Its Work Reviewed," *The Dallas Express*, Vol. 26, No. 15, Ed. 1, January 25, 1919, Texas Digital Newspaper Program, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas.

⁸⁸ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 179.

owners William and Elizabeth Bowles and established a community cemetery, known today as the North Dallas Freedmen's Cemetery.⁸⁹ The arrival of the H&TC in 1872 spurred the growth of Freedman's Town which, at the time, had more than five hundred residents.⁹⁰ In the late 1880s, the original settlement of Freedman's Town, located to the west of the tracks, absorbed a smaller black settlement that had grown up on the east, thereby increasing the size and population of the community.⁹¹ Around the same time, the area became designated as the Ninth Ward and officially known on city documents as North Dallas.⁹² In 1884, North Dallas became home to the city's second school for black children, the Strother's Colored School, and in 1892 the first brick school building for black children was built in the area.⁹³

By the 1900s, North Dallas had become well-established, featuring grocery stores, meat markets, a millinery, dress makers, shoe repair shops, and several churches including New Hope Baptist, Evening Chapel, St. Paul Methodist Episcopal, St. John Missionary Baptist, and Bethel African Methodist.⁹⁴ The Hall Street Negro Park, one of the first city parks designated for black Dallasites, was built in the neighborhood in

⁸⁹ Lisa Belkin, "Unearthing of Freed-Slave Cemetery May Put Dallas Road Project on Hold," *The New York Times*, August 13, 1990. Several ancestors of Dr. Robert Prince, Dallas physician and local historian, are buried in the cemetery. Dr. Prince, whose great-grandfather Dock Rowen was part of the group that purchased the land for the cemetery, argues that the land may have been used as a slave cemetery prior to emancipation.

⁹⁰ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 180.

⁹¹ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 181.

⁹² Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 181.

⁹³ "The Fire Yesterday," *Dallas Morning News*, November 25, 1885, NewsBank/Readex, *The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985*; Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 181.

⁹⁴ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 181.

1915.⁹⁵ North Dallas residents worked in an array of fields such as skilled and unskilled labor, education, ministry, undertaking, dentistry, medicine, and law.⁹⁶ Homes within the community reflected the area's socioeconomic diversity. Connected by unpaved roads and alleys, small, shotgun style homes, many of which lined the tracks, stood among "larger, irregular shaped houses."⁹⁷

North Dallas reached its zenith in the 1920s, by which time it had become the "residential and social center" for black Dallasites.⁹⁸ Blacks from across the city came to North Dallas for health services, education, shopping, and numerous other amenities. The McMillan Sanitarium, the Flowers Building, and the Pinkston Clinic made North Dallas the center for medical and dental care for black Dallasites and "served to unify the African American population at large."⁹⁹ Both of the city's black high schools were located in North Dallas.¹⁰⁰ In 1922, Dallas Colored High School moved into a new building and became known as Booker T. Washington High School. The older building became B.F. Darrell Elementary, an all-black elementary school.¹⁰¹ The Moorland YMCA, the city's first YMCA for young black males, opened in North Dallas in the 1930s.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ Peter Simek, "The Lost History of Dallas' Negro Parks," *D Magazine*, June 2016.

⁹⁶ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 181.

⁹⁷ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 181.

⁹⁸ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 183.

⁹⁹ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 184.

¹⁰⁰ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 184.

¹⁰¹ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 184.

¹⁰² "History of the Moorland YMCA - Dallas, Texas," Moorland YMCA and Dallas and QuimbyMcCoy Preservation Architecture, LLP, February 18, 2008.

The North Dallas community featured a thriving economic sector that grew exponentially during the 1920s. The number of businesses and self-employed individuals rose from fifty following World War I to over one hundred and thirty by 1924.¹⁰³ By this time, North Dallas businesses included drug stores, cafes and restaurants, ice cream parlors, furniture and clothing stores, taxi companies, taverns, barbershops, beauty salons and schools, hotels, garages, and theaters.¹⁰⁴ Home to several nightclubs including the Empire Room and the Powell Hotel & Court, North Dallas also served as a center of entertainment for black Dallasites.¹⁰⁵

The North Dallas community proved important to blacks outside of Dallas as well. An overwhelming majority of black Dallas businesses listed between 1941 and 1964 in the Negro Motorist Green Book, an annually published guide for black travelers, operated out of North Dallas.¹⁰⁶ These establishments included the Palm Café, Smith's Drug Store, Walker's Service Station, Jack's Service Station, the Regal Night Club, Washington's Barber Shop, Johnson's Eat Shop, the Grand Terrace Hotel, and several others.¹⁰⁷ This was especially significant during the Jim Crow years when most white establishments refused to serve blacks. Blacks travelling to or through Dallas from other areas found solace in the multitude of black-friendly institutions in North Dallas.

¹⁰³ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 184.

¹⁰⁴ Prior and Kemper, "From Freedman's Town to Uptown," 184.

¹⁰⁵ Kevin Pask, "Deep Ellum Blues," *Southern Spaces*, October 30, 2007.

¹⁰⁶ Victor Hugo Green, *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, New York, 1936-1966, Digital Collections, New York Public Library, New York.

¹⁰⁷ Jennifer Anderson, "Dallas Green Book Listings," City of Dallas Historic Preservation Program, January 22, 2019.

Like North Dallas, the Tenth Street neighborhood began as a freedman's town. Following emancipation, former slaves of cotton farmer William Brown Miller settled near Oak Cliff Cemetery southwest of downtown.¹⁰⁸ Bounded by Eighth Street on the north, Clarendon Drive on the south, Jefferson Boulevard on the west, and Moore Street on the east, Tenth Street developed into a "self-contained and self-sufficient" community during reconstruction (see Appendix C.1).¹⁰⁹ The arrival of the Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Railway (GCSF) in 1882 brought people and industry to the area. Similarly, the Trinity Heights streetcar line, established in the early 1900s, provided quick travel between Tenth Street and downtown and bolstered the growth of the community.¹¹⁰ By the 1930s Tenth Street had become a "dynamic, largely self-contained community" of "tight-knit middle-and-lower-income families" whose occupations included skilled and unskilled laborers, teachers, lawyers, chauffeurs, waiters, and business owners.¹¹¹

The community flourished throughout the first half of the 20th century, reaching its zenith in the 1950s at which time it featured hundreds of homes, businesses, and various community establishments. "Second only to North Dallas in geographic size and population as an African-American enclave in Dallas," Tenth Street served as a "shopping mecca" and a center for social and cultural engagement, featuring an array of

¹⁰⁸ Weflen, *Tenth Street: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2015.

¹⁰⁹ Weflen, *Tenth Street: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2015.

¹¹⁰ Weflen, *Tenth Street: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2015.

¹¹¹ Kathryn Holliday, "The Road to Disinvestment: How Highways Divided the City and Destroyed Neighborhoods," *AIA Dallas: Springboard.*; Weflen, *Tenth Street: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2015.

businesses and community institutions.¹¹² Churches, restaurants, barber shops, pharmacies, clinics, grocery stores, a pool hall, shoe repair shops, dry-cleaners, a school, a hospital, and a funeral home served not only residents of Tenth Street but blacks in nearby areas as well.¹¹³ Nestled between two other black neighborhoods--the Heights to the north and the Bottom to the south—Tenth Street served to connect black residents of Oak Cliff.¹¹⁴ Black Dallasites from the Heights and the Bottom frequented the Tenth Street neighborhood for school, church, and the variety of goods and services offered in the community.¹¹⁵

The black Dallas community of Little Egypt, sometimes called Mission Hill, also began as a freedman's town, founded after emancipation on land purchased by former slaves Jeff and Hanna Hill from their previous master.¹¹⁶ Bounded by Northwest Highway on the south, white-owned farmland on the north, Easton Road on the east, and Foree Road (now Ferndale) on the west, Little Egypt stood on a thirty-five-acre tract of land northeast of downtown near the northern tip of White Rock Lake (see Appendix D.1).¹¹⁷ Many Little Egypt residents worked as farmers or sharecroppers and lived in

¹¹² Weflen, *Tenth Street: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2015.

¹¹³ Weflen, *Tenth Street: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2015.

¹¹⁴ Weflen, *Tenth Street: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2015.

¹¹⁵ Weflen, *Tenth Street: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2015.

¹¹⁶ "Little Egypt May Fade with Times," *Dallas Morning News*, November 1, 1961, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985. The Hills paid \$300 for the 35-acre tract of land which would become Little Egypt.

¹¹⁷ "200 Little Egypt Residents to Leave 'Bondage' Today," *Dallas Morning News*, May 15, 1962, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

wooden shacks that lacked electricity, running water, and gas.¹¹⁸ Unpaved roads traversed the small settlement which featured a community store owned by Jeff Hill, peach and plum orchards, and a school.¹¹⁹ The Egypt Baptist Church, established in 1870, played a central role in the community's social and cultural milieu.¹²⁰ Residents met there every night.¹²¹

According to aerial photographs, most of Little Egypt's original structures survived into the 1930s.¹²² However, at some point between 1930 and 1945, nearly all of the original structures had been cleared for reasons that remain undefined (see Appendix D.2).¹²³ By 1962, however, the community had been revived, featuring more structures than before.¹²⁴ The increase in the number of structures alludes to a significant population increase between 1945 and 1962. According to Gloria and Joann McCoy, sisters who lived in the community during the 1950s, their home had electricity but no running water or indoor plumbing; the family used an outhouse.¹²⁵ The sisters assert that their father fought to convince the city to provide running water to the community. City officials,

¹¹⁸ Michael E. Young, "Life Was Hard in Freedman's Town Called Little Egypt," *Dallas Morning News*, February 24, 2003.; "200 Little Egypt Residents to Leave 'Bondage' Today," *Dallas Morning News*, May 15, 1962, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹¹⁹ "200 Little Egypt Residents to Leave 'Bondage' Today," *Dallas Morning News*, May 15, 1962.

¹²⁰ "200 Little Egypt Residents to Leave 'Bondage' Today," *Dallas Morning News*, May 15, 1962.

¹²¹ "Little Egypt May Fade with Times," *Dallas Morning News*, November 1, 1961, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985. In the 1960s the community continued to use the original building which they "patched as the years [went] by."

¹²² 1930 Fairchild Survey, Dallas Historic Aerial Photographs, Central University Libraries, Southern Methodist University.

¹²³ 1945 USDA Survey, Dallas Aerial Photographs, Central University Libraries, Southern Methodist University.

¹²⁴ *Historic Aerials*, Netronline, Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC, <https://www.historicaerials.com>.

¹²⁵ Bill Zeeble, "'Little Egypt,' A Nearly-Lost Freedmen's Town In Dallas, Resurfaces Thanks To College's Digging," KERA News, February 19, 2019."

who had recently installed a new irrigation system at nearby Flag Pole Hill, proved indifferent.¹²⁶ The McCoy residence had the only telephone in Little Egypt and the whole community used it to make and receive calls.¹²⁷ By the early 1960s, Little Egypt appeared to exist in another time when compared to the surrounding area. The community, which featured roughly twenty wood-frame structures connected by a web of unpaved roads, had become entirely encircled by newly constructed homes and businesses.¹²⁸

Deep Ellum, located east of the downtown business district, began as a “Wild West saloon district near the railroad station of the 1870s” and became what many referred to as the “black downtown” where black-and-Jewish-owned establishments served blacks from around the city.¹²⁹ Although some blacks did live in Deep Ellum, it primarily served as the city’s largest black-friendly business district.¹³⁰ Following the arrival of the H&TC, Eastern European Jews, many of whom relocated from Corsicana, Texas, began opening businesses in portable buildings near the tracks. The railroad also brought new blacks to the city, many of whom found work in nearby industries such as dairies, meat-packing plants, planing mills, and oil works.¹³¹ These black laborers settled nearby in shotgun houses that lined the tracks (see Appendix E.5). The small community

¹²⁶ Flag Pole Hill is a community park located southwest of what was Little Egypt.

¹²⁷ Bill Zeeble, “‘Little Egypt,’ A Nearly-Lost Freedmen’s Town In Dallas, Resurfaces Thanks To College’s Digging,” KERA News, February 19, 2019.

¹²⁸ Christina Hughes Babb, “Do you remember ‘Little Egypt’? If So, You Could Help ‘Rebuild’ It,” *Lake Highlands Advocate*, September 21, 2015.

¹²⁹ Alan B. Govenar and Jay F. Brakefield, *Deep Ellum and Central Track: Where the Black and White Worlds of Dallas Converged*, (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1998), xi, xiv.

¹³⁰ Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum and Central Track*, xiv.

¹³¹ Alan B. Govenar and Jay F. Brakefield, *Deep Ellum: The Other Side of Dallas*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2013), 36.

became known as Stringtown and served to connect Deep Ellum and North Dallas (see Appendix E.1).

By the early 1900s, black-owned businesses began to appear in the area. These businesses gradually replaced most of the shotgun houses of Stringtown.¹³² The area around the intersection of Central Avenue, which ran adjacent to the H&TC tracks, and Main Street became predominantly black as black-owned businesses replaced those owned by whites.¹³³ Elm Street remained populated by Jewish-owned businesses that catered to blacks.¹³⁴ A plethora of establishments, including shoeshine stands, cafes such as the McMillan Café, furniture stores, grocery stores, clothing stores, the Penny Bank, and several pawn shops, served black and white patrons alike.¹³⁵ The pawn shops of Deep Ellum, most of which were owned by Jewish merchants, “served a real need for poor blacks” by “operat[ing] as a bank, lending money and giving credit and selling merchandize at reasonable prices.”¹³⁶ The Grand Lodge of the Colored Knights of Pythias, established in 1916, served as the primary hub for Dallas’ black professionals and housed the Negro Business Bureau, the Standard Life Insurance Company, and the American Mutual Benefit Society.¹³⁷ It also contained office spaces, a ballroom, and a barbershop.¹³⁸

¹³² Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum: The Other Side of Dallas*, 36.

¹³³ Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum: The Other Side of Dallas*, 36.

¹³⁴ Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum: The Other Side of Dallas*, 36.

¹³⁵ Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum & Central Track*, 20-21.

¹³⁶ Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum & Central Track*, 45.

¹³⁷ Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum: The Other Side of Dallas*, 38.

¹³⁸ Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum: The Other Side of Dallas*, 38.

Deep Ellum also became a central location for black entertainment and nightlife. Referred to as the “Broadway of the Dallas Black Belt,” Deep Ellum featured numerous black-owned theaters including the Black Elephant Theater, the Swiss Airdome Theater, the Star Theater, the Mammoth, the Circle, the Harlem Theater, and the Park Theater.¹³⁹ Black Dallasites enjoyed music and dancing at nightclubs and dance halls like Green Parrot Jazzland, the Tip Toe Dance Hall, and the Gypsy Tea Room (see Appendix E.4).¹⁴⁰ By the 1930s, Deep Ellum had become “the gathering place of blacks from all over the country” and served as “a crossroads...where peoples and cultures could interact and influence each other in relative freedom.”¹⁴¹

Although few records exist that illustrate the beginnings of the Elm Thicket neighborhood, a historically black neighborhood located southeast of Love Field, existing records indicate that blacks had settled in the area as early as 1912 (see Appendix F.1).¹⁴² Although largely agrarian-- with corn and cotton fields scattered throughout, and lacking paved roads--newspaper articles from the 1920s and 1930s depict the area as a bustling, well-developed community of “small-to-modest houses.”¹⁴³ A bus line established in the 1930s that carried Elm Thicket residents to and from downtown served an estimated six

¹³⁹ “Hidden Nooks: ‘Deep Ellum’ Has Its Renown but After All it is Merely the Darkies’ Parade Ground,” *Dallas Morning News*, November 18, 1925, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum & Central Track*, 20-21.

¹⁴⁰ Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum & Central Track*, 20-21.

¹⁴¹ Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 65.; Govenar and Brakefield, *Deep Ellum: The Other Side of Dallas*, 14.

¹⁴² “Charge of Murder Against White Man,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 30, 1912, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁴³ William H. Wilson, *Hamilton Park: A Planned Black Community in Dallas*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 46.

hundred persons per day.¹⁴⁴ The community featured several churches including the Elm Thicket Colored Methodist Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Bethany Baptist Church.¹⁴⁵ Sometimes referred to as the Webster and Woods Addition, Elm Thicket also hosted a “negro resort,” a baseball field, the Negro Garden Club, and at least one restaurant—Eltee O. Dave’s BBQ, the largest barbecue restaurant in Dallas.¹⁴⁶ Several of the communities establishments also provided residents with gambling and bootlegging.¹⁴⁷ The children of Elm Thicket attended school at the Elm Thicket School or the New York School for Negroes which won the All-City Dental Improvement Cup for dental hygiene in 1943.¹⁴⁸ Many young boys joined the community’s Negro Boy Scouts chapter.¹⁴⁹ Elm Thicket also housed one of the city’s two childcare centers for black

¹⁴⁴ “Bus to Elm Thicket Proving Profitable,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 28, 1935, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁴⁵ “Methodist Pastors Laud Work of Sheriff Marshall,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 26, 1925, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Negro Preacher Found Guilty of Murdering Renter,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 05, 1939, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Warring Groups in Negro Church Call in Officers,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 16, 1937, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁴⁶ “Three Negroes Fatally Burned,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 30, 1928, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “300 Arrests Sunday Set County Record; 252 Negroes Jailed,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 8, 1927, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Monarchs Play Today,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 1, 1940, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; *Neighborhood Stories: Elm Thicket*, Film, The City of Dallas Office of Neighborhood Plus, Elm Thicket - Northpark Advisory Council, buildingcommunityWORKSHOP, 2017.

¹⁴⁷ “Distilleries and Whisky Seized, Negro is Sought,” *Dallas Morning News*, November 28, 1931, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁴⁸ “Bluff View Club to Improve Elm Thicket Grounds,” *Dallas Morning News*, November 13, 1935, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “School Receives Dental Cup Award,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 22, 1943, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁴⁹ “Blood Tests Mark Start of Hall Clinic,” *Dallas Morning News*, March 7, 1941, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

children.¹⁵⁰ A Dallas Morning News article from July 1939 described the neighborhood as “sanitary, ventilated, comfortable, [and] uncongested.”¹⁵¹

The South Dallas neighborhood of Bon Ton began as a cluster of black settlements established in the late 1920s and early 1930s. In the early 1900s, wealthy Jewish merchants began to settle in South Dallas. They brought with them black “cooks, maids, and yardmen.”¹⁵² By the 1920s, South Dallas had become predominantly populated by blue-collar whites.¹⁵³ However, an increase in the area’s black population prompted the establishment of several black-only housing developments. Built on land near Metzger’s Dairy and O.E. Taylor’s farm, the area contained nineteen black-only suburban additions upon completion, including Jewel Courts, SD Lawrence, City Blocks, Webster’s South Dallas, Woodside, Ervay Cedars, Lincoln Manor, Lincoln Manor No. 2, Lincoln Manor No. 3, Elite, Lomas Park, H.T. Lackey’s, Camp Peachland, South Lawn, Oakland Place, Ideal, and Bon Ton (see Appendix G.1).¹⁵⁴

Contracted as middle-class neighborhoods for black homeowners, Ideal and Bon Ton, which together comprised more than four hundred and fifty lots, gave black residents a “sense of pride.”¹⁵⁵ The neighborhoods, although distinct, developed into a

¹⁵⁰ “Infant Care Provided at Nurseries,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 30, 1938, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985. The city’s other childcare center for black children was located in North Dallas.

¹⁵¹ “Blighted Areas Hosts of Death,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 14, 1939, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁵² Weflen, *Bonton + Ideal: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2016.

¹⁵³ Weflen, *Bonton + Ideal: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2016.

¹⁵⁴ Weflen, *Bonton + Ideal: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2016.

¹⁵⁵ Briana Payne, “Oral History of Bonton and Ideal Neighborhoods in Dallas, Texas,” Master’s Thesis, University of North Texas, 2015, 39.

“tight-knit” and “socially cohesive” community where “children took care and watched out for each other, neighbors disciplined the same as their parents, and home life was structured.”¹⁵⁶ Churches played a pivotal role in the community. Many residents considered the congregation an extended family.¹⁵⁷ Neighborhood children attended school at Lincoln High School and H.S. Thompson Elementary and many young boys joined the local chapter of the Negro Boy Scouts.¹⁵⁸

Bexar Street, which ran north to south through the area, became the social and commercial center of Bon Ton. Along Bexar, pronounced “bear” by residents, there stood a plethora of black-owned establishments including restaurants and cafes, a shoe store, a beauty shop, salons, a candy store, a comic book store, and the Lincoln Theater.¹⁵⁹ Owned and frequented by community residents, the businesses on Bexar kept money in the community and, in turn, “provided a type of economic vitality that keeps...neighborhoods going.”¹⁶⁰ These institutions “represented a type of economic protest” in the face of stringent racial segregation.¹⁶¹

Like Bon Ton, the Fair Park neighborhood began as a white settlement and evolved into a black community over the course of the first half of the twentieth century. Located southeast of the Texas State Fairgrounds, the Fair Park neighborhood is

¹⁵⁶ Payne, “Oral History,” 59-61.

¹⁵⁷ Weflen, *Bonton + Ideal: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2016.

¹⁵⁸ “Blood Tests Mark Start of Hall Clinic,” *Dallas Morning News*, March 7, 1941, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁵⁹ Payne, “Oral History,” 77.

¹⁶⁰ Payne, “Oral History,” 77.

¹⁶¹ Weflen, *Bonton + Ideal: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2016.

considered one of the city's oldest residential neighborhoods (see Appendix H.2).¹⁶² Although settled by wealthy Jewish families in the late 1880s, black Dallasites lived in the area as early as 1907.¹⁶³ By this time the neighborhood featured at least two schools for black children--the Fair Park School and the Carroll Avenue School.¹⁶⁴ Also located in the area was the Colored Free Will Baptist Church which housed the Carroll Avenue School.¹⁶⁵ The black population of the area increased gradually over the decades, a change in racial composition that quickened after World War II.¹⁶⁶ By the early 1950s, the Fair Park neighborhood had become "almost entirely black."¹⁶⁷ By 1969, the average Fair Park resident was "black, married, with 3.5 dependents" and had "owned his own home for eleven years."¹⁶⁸ The mixed-income neighborhood of "tree-lined streets" and "modest single-family homes," was home to blacks who served as "landlords as well as tenants, business owners as well as employees."¹⁶⁹

The same forces that compelled Dallas' black communities to become thriving, self-sufficient enclaves ultimately led to overcrowding and dilapidation as these

¹⁶² Elizabeth Durham Davies, "Fair Park Expansion: A Case Study of Political Bias and Protest in Urban Politics," Master's Thesis, University of North Texas, August 1974, 13-14.

¹⁶³ "School Board Gives Three Teachers Places," *Dallas Morning News*, February 11, 1908, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁶⁴ "School Board Gives Three Teachers Places," *Dallas Morning News*, February 11, 1908, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Says New Textbooks Are of Superior Merit," *Dallas Morning News*, November 17, 1908, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁶⁵ "Carroll Avenue School Opens," *Dallas Morning News*, November 26, 1907, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁶⁶ Davies, "Fair Park Expansion," 15-16.

¹⁶⁷ Davies, "Fair Park Expansion," 15-16.

¹⁶⁸ Davies, "Fair Park Expansion," 15-16.

¹⁶⁹ Davies, "Fair Park Expansion," 14.; Jim Schutze, "New Report Tells Sordid Past of Fair Park, State Fair of Texas — but Offers Hope," *Dallas Observer*, August 3, 2017.

communities became obligated to accommodate the city's growing black population. Prohibited from settling in white neighborhoods or establishing new black enclaves within the city, black Dallasites became trapped in congested communities. By 1930, 50,407 black Dallasites were crammed into the city's eight established black communities, equaling "some three and one-half square miles" of segregated neighborhoods.¹⁷⁰

The city's black population swelled further during the Great Depression as rural blacks flocked to the city in search of jobs.¹⁷¹ By 1940, the black population of Dallas sat at 61,605 and the city's black communities had become some of the most densely populated areas in the city.¹⁷² At this time, North Dallas' population density sat at 36.22 persons per acre while the Tenth Street and Fair Park neighborhoods averaged roughly 10.8 persons and Elm Thicket and Bon Ton averaged between 4.4 and 5 persons per acre.¹⁷³ In comparison, the population density of white neighborhoods ranged from five to ten persons per acre in areas close to downtown and from zero to five persons per acre

¹⁷⁰ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 10-11.

¹⁷¹ Donald Payton, "Timeline A Concise History: Black Dallas Since 1842," *D Magazine*, June 1998. Between 1930 and 1940, Dallas' black population rose from 50,407 to 61,605.; Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 110. Dallas fared better than many American cities during the Great Depression due, in part, to an oil boom in the region which prompted petroleum companies and investors to establish headquarters in Dallas. This relative prosperity attracted blacks from nearby rural areas.; Nina Mjagkij, *Organizing Black America: An Encyclopedia of African American Associations*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 2001), 180. Aid programs offered in the city also enticed rural blacks during the Great Depression. The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), for instance, provided employment services for black men and boys during the 1930s.

¹⁷² Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 24.

¹⁷³ "\$200,000,000 in Housing," *Dallas Morning News*, September 20, 1946, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

in other parts of the city.¹⁷⁴ Roughly forty percent of housing units within black neighborhoods contained one or more persons per room while white areas contained less than twenty percent of homes with more than one person per room.¹⁷⁵ Meanwhile, there existed only 11,000 homes available to black Dallasites at this time.¹⁷⁶ During World War II, more blacks moved to the city in search of war industry jobs.¹⁷⁷ By 1949, the city's black population had increased to 75,000.¹⁷⁸ Because the city contained a mere 12,451 dwellings available to blacks, more than 9,400 of the city's 22,000 black families lived doubled-up.¹⁷⁹ Many others lived in fields and viaducts.¹⁸⁰ By 1950, the city's black population stood at 80,000, an increase of 30,000 over the previous two decades.¹⁸¹ With residential segregation remaining firmly in place, Dallas' black communities began to burst at the seams.

Overcrowding in Dallas' black communities inevitably led to deterioration, which began in the 1920s and worsened significantly over the following decades. Because Dallas' black communities featured many structures of "extremely poor quality" packed closely together "without adequate open space," every increase in the black

¹⁷⁴ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 45.

¹⁷⁵ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 43.

¹⁷⁶ "Mounting Negro Population Hard Pressed for Housing," *Dallas Morning News*, March 9, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁷⁷ Donald Payton, "Timeline A Concise History: Black Dallas Since 1842," *D Magazine*, June 1998. Between 1940 and 1949, Dallas' black population increased from 61,605 to 75,000.

¹⁷⁸ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 21.

¹⁷⁹ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 21.

¹⁸⁰ "Mounting Negro Population Hard Pressed for Housing," *Dallas Morning News*, March 9, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁸¹ "Annexing Urged for West Dallas," *Dallas Morning News*, May 28, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

population put additional strain on already distressed communities.¹⁸² A survey conducted between 1924 and 1925 concluded that substandard rental properties comprised a quarter of the city's black housing. In addition, sixty percent of Dallas' black housing lacked running water and fifty percent lacked electricity.¹⁸³ A 1938 survey conducted by City Plan Engineer R. E. McVey determined that 349 out of 426 homes in North Dallas were substandard.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, in 1941, a city-wide survey of black housing conditions showed that 8,350 black Dallasites lived in substandard rental units, over forty percent of which lacked indoor plumbing.¹⁸⁵ By 1949, eighty-six percent of Dallas' black housing qualified as substandard.¹⁸⁶

Characterized by "old homes, unsanitary conditions, and bad or inadequate facilities," Dallas' black communities also became breeding grounds for disease and illness, having higher occurrence rates of diarrhea, influenza, pneumonia, syphilis, kidney disease, and cancer than white neighborhoods.¹⁸⁷ In 1934, officials discovered that the water supply to Elm Thicket was contaminated with sewage and typhoid fever.¹⁸⁸ Dallas'

¹⁸² Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 17.

¹⁸³ Michael V. Hazel, *Dallas: A History of "Big D,"* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1997), 28.

¹⁸⁴ "Negro Housing Unit Urged After Survey," *Dallas Morning News*, July 7, 1938, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁸⁵ "New Negro Housing Unit to be Built," *Dallas Morning News*, February 9, 1941, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁸⁶ "Mounting Negro Population Hard Pressed for Housing," *Dallas Morning News*, March 9, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁸⁷ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 20.; "Blighted Areas Hosts of Death," *Dallas Morning News*, July 14, 1939, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁸⁸ "City Begins Testing Water Wells to Find Typhoid," *Dallas Morning News*, March 17, 1934, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

black communities also had higher instances of tuberculosis deaths than did white neighborhoods. Between 1933 and 1937, North Dallas experienced 8.25 tuberculosis deaths for every 1,000 persons while the most densely populated white neighborhoods experienced only 2 deaths per 1,000 persons in the same time frame.¹⁸⁹ A *Dallas Morning News* article from July 1939 cited North Dallas' "high rates of tuberculosis" and labeled the area "dirty, neglected, crowded, [and] fetid."¹⁹⁰ Black communities also experienced high rates of diabetes, high blood pressure, and venereal disease.¹⁹¹ For instance, a health screening performed in 1941 by the David Graham Hall Foundation's diagnostic clinic, which examined 251 black Dallasites over the course of a year, found that twenty-nine percent of those tested had venereal disease while almost thirty percent suffered "some other ailment."¹⁹²

Dallas' black communities also suffered higher crime rates than their white counterparts. As of 1940, rates of juvenile delinquency in black communities ranged from four cases per 1,000 persons in Elm Thicket to ten cases per 1,000 persons in the Fair Park neighborhood.¹⁹³ White neighborhoods, meanwhile, experienced between two and

¹⁸⁹ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 57.

¹⁹⁰ "Blighted Areas Hosts of Death," *Dallas Morning News*, July 14, 1939, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁹¹ "Diagnostic Clinic Finds High Rate of Venereal Diseases," *Dallas Morning News*, May 25, 1941, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Physician's \$300,000 Gift Will Establish Medical Foundation," *Dallas Morning News*, May 27, 1940, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985. Established in 1940 by octogenarian Dr. David Graham Hall, the foundation promoted social and communal welfare through the prevention and treatment of communicable diseases. Hall donated his entire life savings, roughly \$300,000, to establish the foundation.

¹⁹² "Diagnostic Clinic Finds High Rate of Venereal Diseases," *Dallas Morning News*, May 25, 1941, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁹³ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 59.

three cases per 1,000 persons.¹⁹⁴ Juvenile gangs were prominent in black communities. In 1944, for example, a group of black teenagers “robbed and terrorized” North Dallas residents and two black juvenile gangs “spread a wave of terror” across Elm Thicket.¹⁹⁵ Murder also occurred more often in black communities. For instance, Dallas experienced sixty-seven homicides in 1944, fifty-nine of which took place in black communities and involved black Dallasites.¹⁹⁶

Although some white neighborhoods near downtown also experienced slight overcrowding, the consequences of such--including dilapidation, health hazards, and crime--did not manifest as they did in black neighborhoods. While city officials labeled black neighborhoods as “obsolete areas needing mass rebuilding and rehabilitation,” white neighborhoods with similar population densities were considered “areas of good residence needing protection.”¹⁹⁷ Housing conditions in even the most populated white neighborhoods proved far better than those in black neighborhoods. In almost every black community, and especially in North Dallas, most homes were over forty years old while those in nearby white neighborhoods averaged roughly twenty years old.¹⁹⁸ More than

¹⁹⁴ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 59.

¹⁹⁵ “Juvenile Gangs under Better Control than at Any Time in Years,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 13, 1945, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁹⁶ “Dallas Negro Citizenry Seeks Halt to Race's Appalling Crime Rate,” *Dallas Morning News*, February 11, 1945, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

¹⁹⁷ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 45.

¹⁹⁸ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 37.

eighty percent of black homes needed major repairs while less than forty percent of homes in comparable white neighborhoods needed major repairs.¹⁹⁹

Differing conditions in black and white neighborhoods with similar population densities may have been rooted in the types of housing found in those areas. In highly-populated white neighborhoods--those nearest downtown--many large, older homes had been converted to multi-dwelling rental units and were maintained by landlords.²⁰⁰ In black neighborhoods, multiple families lived together in small, older wood-frame homes, many of which were owned by absentee landlords.²⁰¹ Because the quality of Dallas' rental dwellings was "dependent on the amount of money a family [could] afford to pay for housing," those with fewer financial resources, typically non-whites, occupied rental properties of far lower caliber than did their white counterparts.²⁰² Rental rates in white neighborhoods ranged from \$25 per month to over \$50 per month while those in black neighborhoods averaged less than \$15 per month.²⁰³ Similarly, many of those black Dallasites that owned their homes lacked the funds necessary to keep their property up to

¹⁹⁹ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 41.

²⁰⁰ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 11.

²⁰¹ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 36.

²⁰² Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 14

²⁰³ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 31.; Several residents of North Dallas, for instance, resided in shotgun houses for which they paid \$10 per month.

code or make necessary repairs.²⁰⁴ When these families required additional square footage to accommodate more people, they simply built on to the existing structure, often with inexpensive materials.²⁰⁵ Thus, due to substandard building materials and practices along with a lack of regular maintenance, black housing suffered decay to a far greater degree than did white housing in comparable neighborhoods. These factors explain why slum conditions developed almost exclusively in Dallas' black communities. Despite worsening conditions, however, black Dallasites liked their neighborhoods. According to a survey conducted in the early 1940s, residents of Tenth Street, Bon Ton, and Fair Park stated that they would not move to another neighborhood even if able to do so.²⁰⁶

Conclusion

Established between the 1870s and the early 1900s and shaped, in part, by racially discriminatory policies, Dallas' black communities of North Dallas Freedman's Town, the Tenth Street neighborhood, Little Egypt, Deep Ellum, Stringtown, Elm Thicket, Bon Ton, and the Fair Park neighborhood evolved into well-developed, self-sufficient

²⁰⁴ "Poor Housing Menace to City," *Dallas Morning News*, June 2, 1939, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985. The median monthly income for black Dallasites in 1939 was \$48.12 while that of whites was \$74.50.; "Mounting Negro Population Hard Pressed for Housing," *Dallas Morning News*, March 9, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; In 1940, fifty-eight percent of black Dallasites earned between \$400 and \$1,800 annually while twenty-three percent earned \$1,801 to \$3,000 annually.; Mary S. Bedell, "Employment and Income of Negro Workers - 1940-52," *Monthly Labor Review*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, June 1953. In 1945, the national median income of black urbanites stood at \$2052 while that of whites stood at \$3085. By 1950, the median income of black workers was \$1,295, 48 percent less than that of comparable white workers.

²⁰⁵ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 20.

²⁰⁶ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, Dallas, December 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 32.

communities throughout the first half of the 20th century. Within the confines of pervasive racism, black Dallasites built vibrant communities that included businesses, schools, churches, parks, and medical facilities—institutions that provided Dallas' black population with opportunities nearly unattainable beyond their neighborhoods. However, faced with rapidly growing populations and the inability to expand beyond established boundaries, Dallas' black communities began to experience overcrowding and dilapidation in the 1920s and 1930s, a problem further exacerbated by large influxes of rural blacks during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Overcrowding led to slum conditions—such as deterioration, illness, and crime—and made these communities targets for slum clearance in the postwar years.

CHAPTER THREE

POSTWAR URBAN REDEVELOPMENT IN DALLAS

By the 1930s, Dallas city officials had become aware of the growing blight in the city's black communities but struggled to adequately address the issue. Over two decades later, a lack of statewide slum clearance legislation prevented the city of Dallas from utilizing funds through the Federal Housing Act of 1949 and stymied the city's attempts to cooperate with private developers in clearing and rebuilding slum areas. Meanwhile, civic slum rehabilitation efforts, hampered by government indifference and a lack of local funds, proved ineffective. Although unable to obtain federal assistance through the housing act, alternative federal and state legislation—including the Federal Airport Act of 1946, the Colson-Briscoe Act of 1949, and the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956—along with city tax dollars, allowed Dallas officials to acquire and clear blighted areas through the construction of public works projects, such as airports, roadways, and public amusement venues. Thus, city officials targeted black communities for slum clearance and utilized postwar urban redevelopment projects—including the expansion of Love Field, the extension of Fair Park, and the construction of numerous roadways—to clear out large portions of the city's black communities in rapid succession.

Beginning in the 1930s, the Dallas Citizens Council (DCC) served as the city's foremost decision-making body. Founded in 1937 by Dallas businessman Robert L. Thornton, the Dallas Citizens Council sought to “study, confer, and act upon any matter,

civic or economic in character,” impacting the city and county of Dallas.²⁰⁷ Thornton felt that the city needed a powerful group of men who possessed the ability to respond quickly and efficiently to the needs of the city without having to confer with associates or superiors.²⁰⁸ Hence, membership in the DCC was limited to top executives of Dallas businesses such as bankers, insurance brokers, manufacturers, merchants, and newspaper publishers—men who possessed immense economic and political resources.²⁰⁹ The DCC, which kept membership rosters confidential for decades, did not allow non-whites, women, or attorneys to become members until the mid-1980s.²¹⁰ “Keenly concerned with advancing their interests,” members of the DCC “nourished a vision of a prosperous Dallas” and used their power to benefit themselves and the city as a whole.²¹¹

Despite having no official political power, the DCC exerted almost complete control over city politics through its relationship with the Citizens Charter Association (CCA). Founded in 1930, the CCA “nominated candidates for positions on the city commission.”²¹² By installing a council-manager system in place of the city’s long-established commission form of government, the DCC consolidated their power and

²⁰⁷ “Legacy,” Dallas Citizens Council, <https://www.dallascitizenscouncil.org/legacy>.

²⁰⁸ Darwin Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council: An Obligation of Leadership*, (Dallas: Three Forks Press, 2008), 13.

²⁰⁹ Michael V. Hazel, *Dallas: A History of “Big D,”* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1997), 12.; Hill, *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City*, 101. Dallas oil magnates from the Magnolia, Oriental, and the East Texas Oil Field maintained close ties to the DCC, particularly with founder R. L. Thornton.

²¹⁰ Hill, *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City*, 122. Founder Robert L. Thornton stated, “Lawyers are not eligible. I don’t care how prominent an attorney might be, he doesn’t head a corporation.”

²¹¹ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 1.

²¹² Royce Hanson, *Civic Culture and Urban Change: Governing Dallas*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 47.

created a more malleable political environment.²¹³ Many CCA members held business ties, usually subordinate roles, to members of the DCC that used its vast resources to supply the CCA with candidates to run for city offices. Once elected, those individuals served the DCC by supporting their agendas.²¹⁴ The DCC managed to secure the support of most Dallas mayors who either held memberships in the organization or had close associations with DCC members.²¹⁵ Being elected to office within the city of Dallas often hinged upon DCC support which “became so essential...that once a candidate received the clique’s blessing he could win office without making a single campaign speech or holding one rally.”²¹⁶

Often able to “act independently of voters,” the DCC held power over the masses by encouraging lower-income whites “to believe that political resistance was not just futile, but sinful.”²¹⁷ Because the DCC possessed greater power and resources and proved more adept at quick action, the organization quickly surpassed the Chamber of Commerce as the city’s preeminent decision-making body.²¹⁸ City officials at nearly every level sought DCC support for various initiatives.²¹⁹ By the postwar years, the DCC had become “a collection of near-demigods” that “exerted its authority...for virtually every civic accomplishment into the 21st century.”²²⁰

²¹³ Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 135.

²¹⁴ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 13.

²¹⁵ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 13.

²¹⁶ Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 136.

²¹⁷ Warren Leslie, *Dallas Public and Private: Aspects of an American City*, (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1998), 65.; Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 16.

²¹⁸ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 14.

²¹⁹ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 14.

²²⁰ Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 4-5; Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 15.

The DCC and other city leaders became aware of worsening conditions in black communities by the 1930s but failed to provide any tangible solutions. Speaking at the first general meeting of the DCC on March 1, 1938, DCC leader and theater owner Karl Hoblitzelle argued that Dallas needed a new city plan that would “demonstrate fairness to the negro population...eliminate slums and improve housing,” a plea that he echoed at another DCC meeting in 1941.²²¹ Also in 1938, city plan engineer R.E. McVey suggested that the city acquire additional federal funding for public housing because “slum clearance projects [were] needed in the city’s most blighted areas,” namely Elm Thicket, Bon Ton, and North Dallas.²²²

In 1943, the Dallas City Council, prompted by Mayor Woodall Rodgers, hired St. Louis city planner Harland Bartholomew to draft a master plan for the city to serve as a guide for postwar redevelopment.²²³ In this report, published between 1944 and 1945, Bartholomew assessed the current state of affairs within the city and made suggestions regarding issues that the city needed to address to achieve postwar prosperity. Along with advising city officials to expand Love Field, extend Fair Park, and initiate a massive roadway improvement program, Bartholomew acknowledged the black housing crisis and

²²¹ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 21, 27.

²²² “Three Million for Dallas,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 26, 1938, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²²³ Hill, *Dallas: The Making of a Modern City*, 122. Because Rodgers was an attorney, he was excluded from becoming a member of the Dallas Citizens Council. However, Rodgers maintained close economic and social ties to DCC leadership.

warned that failure to remedy the situation could be detrimental to Dallas' future as a leading economic center.²²⁴

The report called the black housing shortage “one of the most serious problems confronting the community” and suggested vast slum clearance programs in each of the city's black communities.²²⁵ To combat slum conditions, Bartholomew suggested rehabilitating dwellings through repairs and maintenance, clearing and rebuilding those beyond rehabilitation, and strictly enforcing health and safety codes to prevent further blight. Bartholomew recognized the inevitable expansion of Dallas' black population and urged officials to establish new black residential areas. Because existing black communities had become surrounded by businesses and white neighborhoods, “any logical or unhampered expansion of the city's negro areas” was deemed impossible.²²⁶ Hence, Bartholomew suggested four “expansion zones”—two in West Dallas, one north of West Dallas near Love Field, and one in the easternmost portion of South Dallas.²²⁷

Four years after publication of the Bartholomew Plan, the Dallas City Plan Commission appointed a special committee to study slum conditions throughout the city with special emphasis on those suggested for slum clearance by Bartholomew.²²⁸ The

²²⁴ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas Report 3: Past and Probable Future Population*, Dallas, October 1943, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 12.; Dallas City Plan Commission, *An Outline of the Dallas Master Plan*, Dallas, 1946, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 20. Bartholomew also prompted city officials to route all traffic “on highways of significant width” around rather than through neighborhoods.

²²⁵ Bartholomew, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, 20.

²²⁶ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 10.

²²⁷ Bartholomew, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 10: Housing*, 20.

²²⁸ “City Appoints Panel to Study Slum Clearance,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 15, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

committee found blight in each of Dallas' black communities. In Bon Ton, for example, the committee discovered blocks of "weather-beaten, unpainted shacks so close together a man could stand between two houses and touch them both with his arms barely extended."²²⁹ Entire blocks, consisting of dozens of dilapidated wooden shacks, shared one outdoor toilet and one water faucet.²³⁰ Surveyors also discovered black families living in abandoned and derelict city buses for which the families paid a rental rate of \$5 per month.²³¹

Despite overwhelming evidence of the existence of slum conditions in Dallas' black communities, city officials struggled to adequately address the issue. In 1945, following Bartholomew's recommendation that the Texas Legislature pass an "Urban Redevelopment Law" to give cities the necessary authority to rebuild slums, Dallas officials submitted two bills to the Texas Legislature that would grant cities the authority and funds necessary to condemn blighted areas, clear them, and sell them to private developers or individuals.²³² Despite similar slum clearance legislation being passed in seventeen other states, the Texas Legislature rejected the bills due, in part, to overwhelming opposition from real estate boards who criticized the proposed legislation

²²⁹ "Slum Clearance Committee Inspects Mill Creek Area," *Dallas Morning News*, July 24, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²³⁰ "Slum Clearance Committee Inspects Mill Creek Area," *Dallas Morning News*, July 24, 1949.

²³¹ "Slum Clearance Committee Inspects Mill Creek Area," *Dallas Morning News*, July 24, 1949.

²³² Dallas City Plan Commission, *An Outline of the Dallas Master Plan*, Dallas, 1946, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 21.; "Plan OK'd by Senate Panel," *Dallas Morning News*, March 15, 1945, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

for not “specify[ing] that condemnation should be ordered only in areas recognized as blighted.”²³³

The state’s lack of a necessary enabling law hindered Dallas’ ability to use federal funds for slum clearance initiatives. In 1949, following passage of the Federal Housing Act, Dallas city leaders applied for \$25,000,000 in federal funds for slum clearance.²³⁴ Dallas was one of the first five cities to apply for aid and provide federal housing officials with detailed slum clearance plans, which entailed raising blighted areas and selling the land to private corporations for redevelopment.²³⁵ Although the Federal Housing Authority approved the city’s request for funding, the state’s lack of an enabling law to allow Texas cities the authority to clear and rebuild slums prevented Dallas from receiving federal aid in their slum clearance plans, forcing federal officials to withhold funds.²³⁶ A spokesperson for the Federal Housing and Finance Agency explained, “Before we can give the Federal Government’s money away, we have to be sure that the

²³³ “Blitzkrieg Against Slums,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 5, 1945, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Neighborhood Planning,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 17, 1945, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Texas Losing Housing Aids,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 14, 1946, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²³⁴ “City Appoints Panel to Study Slum Clearance,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 15, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; Dewitt Greer to the Texas Highway Commission, May 10, 1956. Commission Letters, Texas Highway Department Records, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

²³⁵ “Council, DHA Sign Pact for Operation of Low-Cost Homes,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 19, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²³⁶ “Lack of Proper State Laws Endangers Slum Rebuilding,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 26, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Slum Clearing Discussed by Two Officials,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 23, 1955, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Slum Property Resale Upheld,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 4, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985. Dallas was one of the first seventy-seven cities to be approved for federal slum clearance assistance.

local governing body receiving it has the authority to carry out the requirements of the act... Texas does not have specific legislation authorizing urban redevelopment.”²³⁷

In response, city leaders attempted to use a 1937 Texas Housing Authority law to obtain federal funds. City leaders argued that the law granted the Dallas Housing Authority (DHA) power to use eminent domain to condemn blighted areas for redevelopment by private builders and they hoped to use a test case to determine the validity of their argument.²³⁸ With attorney and South Dallas property owner David C. McCord Jr. acting as nominal defendant in the case, a suit was brought to the 134th District Court where Judge Mac Taylor sided with the City of Dallas and the DHA.²³⁹ McCord appealed the court’s decision and four months later the Dallas Court of Civil Appeals reversed Judge Taylor’s decision, arguing that the 1937 law did not “expressly authorize the city and DHA to condemn and buy slum property, re-plat and redevelop it, and then sell it to private interests for residential building.”²⁴⁰ Eminent domain, the court

²³⁷ “Lack of Proper State Laws Endangers Slum Rebuilding,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 26, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²³⁸ “Making Neighborhoods Over,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 16, 1945, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Appeals Court Decision Stymies Dallas Slum Clearance Program,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 21, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; Tiffany Dowell, “Eminent Domain in Texas,” *Texas Agricultural Law Blog*, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Texas A&M University, March 17, 2014. Eminent domain is described as “the power of the government...to take private property for public use.” In Texas, eminent domain contains three elements: condemnation by a government body; intention of public use for condemned property; and adequate compensation for the owner of condemned property.

²³⁹ “Slum Property Resale Upheld,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 4, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁴⁰ “Appeals Court Decision Stymies Dallas Slum Clearance Program,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 21, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

asserted, could only be used for public use, not private development. The Texas Supreme Court upheld the appellate court decision in January 1951.²⁴¹

With federal aid proving elusive, Dallas officials and business leaders began exploring alternative slum clearance methods. The Dallas Free Enterprise Council, a group of Dallas businessmen, advocated use of the Baltimore Plan in addressing the city's slum conditions.²⁴² Hoping to avoid federal aid, and intrusion, the Free Enterprise Council recommended that the city address its blighted areas through the improvement of dwellings and the strict enforcement of fire and sanitary codes, thereby rehabilitating neighborhoods rather than raising them. In cooperation with eighty-eight local civic organizations, the Free Enterprise Council launched a block-by-block "local self-help" slum rehabilitation program wherein participants spent the day of May 27, 1950 canvassing blighted areas and reaching out to property owners.²⁴³ The program succeeded in getting several owners to clean up their properties. Organizers and participants argued

²⁴¹ "Court Defeats Slum Project," *Dallas Morning News*, January 4, 1951, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁴² "Enterprise Council Bases Slum Program on Baltimore's Plan," *Dallas Morning News*, January 26, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985. The city of Baltimore, Maryland tackled its slum areas "with strict laws governing construction defects, plumbing, fire, and health hazards." Owners who did not comply within thirty days received a minimum fine of \$100. Grand jury indictments and stiffer fines were used for those owners that refused to comply with codes. The city successfully cleaned and improved more than 6,000 substandard dwellings between 1947 and 1950. Hence, the Baltimore Plan emphasized improving and modernizing rather than clearing dilapidated dwellings.; "Committee on Housing Starts Task," *Dallas Morning News*, December 4, 1955, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985. Although Dallas officials ultimately failed to utilize the Baltimore Plan in the city's black neighborhoods, they did so in Little Mexico, Dallas' primary Mexican-American community.

²⁴³ "Delay Asked in Ordering Slum Study," *Dallas Morning News*, April 16, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "88 Civic Organizations Invited to Assist Slum Rehabilitation," *Dallas Morning News*, April 23, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

that the program could be initiated city-wide so long as the city could ensure the enforcement of health and safety codes.²⁴⁴ Although city officials agreed to utilize the Baltimore Plan on a trial basis, few tangible efforts were made, and the program dissipated almost as quickly as it arose.²⁴⁵

The issue of slum clearance became an even more pressing matter when viewed against the backdrop of Dallas' postwar goals. Dallas, like many urban centers across the nation, entered a period of economic prosperity following World War II. City officials aimed to use this prosperity to make Dallas one of the nation's leading commercial centers by increasing the city's appeal to attract new people and industries while bolstering the city's ability to accommodate the multitude of people and businesses already flocking to the area.²⁴⁶ It quickly became apparent that slum conditions in the city's black communities had the potential to hinder the city's postwar progress. Because "the reality of black housing could be ignored just as long as it did not tarnish the city's bright image of progressive commercial prosperity," by the time city officials proved ready to address the issue, it was at crisis levels.²⁴⁷ Mayor Wallace Savage labeled black housing conditions as "a boil which must be lanced immediately by one means or

²⁴⁴ "88 Civic Organizations Invited to Assist Slum Rehabilitation," *Dallas Morning News*, April 23, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁴⁵ "Slum Clearance Task," *Dallas Morning News*, July 6, 1955, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁴⁶ John F. McDonald, *Postwar Urban America: Demography, Economics, and Social Policies*. (New York: Routledge, 2015). During World War II, the population of Texas grew by 20% while that of Dallas grew by 59%. Between 1950 and 1970, the population of Dallas grew by 149%, a rate that exceeded that of several other major cities including Los Angeles, Seattle, and Denver. People and industries were drawn to Dallas in the postwar years due to the area's "good business climate"—a lack of labor unions, aggressive marketing, sponsorship of industrial parks, and subsidies to industry.

²⁴⁷ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 10.

another.”²⁴⁸ City officials and residents alike agreed that “prompt postwar action must be taken to eradicate this rot that is eating at the vitals of the community.”²⁴⁹ Because officials planned to devote large sums of money to postwar projects, slum areas, which proved to be “a heavy financial drain on any city’s public and private agencies,” required immediate and exhaustive attention. Officials feared that, without funding from the Federal Housing Act of 1949, slum clearance would have to “give precedence financially to more immediate municipal needs such as . . . street development.”²⁵⁰

Thus, city leaders had to devise alternate means of ridding the city of its blighted areas; the solution came in the form of eminent domain coupled with other federal and state legislation. Utilizing funds from the Federal Airport Act of 1946, the Colson-Briscoe Act of 1949, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, and city tax revenue, Dallas city officials surmised that they could use the power of eminent domain to build infrastructure projects through blighted areas thereby clearing slums through public rather than private means.²⁵¹ Through this approach, postwar urban redevelopment projects achieved two goals at once—the bolstering of Dallas’ image and the clearing of slum

²⁴⁸ “Public Housing Demanded for Dallas Negroes,” *Dallas Morning News*, February 10, 1950.

²⁴⁹ “Commission on Slums,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 12, 1945, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁵⁰ “Home Project Seen Far Off,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 14, 1947, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁵¹ The Federal Airport Act of 1946 created the Federal Aid Airport Program which allotted \$75 million annually for the construction and maintenance of airports.; John D. Huddleston, “Highway Development: A Concrete History of Twentieth-Century Texas,” in *Texas: A Sesquicentennial Celebration*, ed. Donald W. Whisenhunt (Austin: Eakin Press, 1984). The Colson-Briscoe Act of 1949, enacted by the 51st Texas Legislature, appropriated \$15 million per year from the Omnibus Tax Clearance Fund to the Texas Highway Department for the construction and improvement of Texas roadways. Funding increased to a minimum of \$23 million per year in 1962.; The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 called for 41,000 miles of interstate highway across the country and allotted \$26 million in funds for the federal government to cover ninety percent of construction costs.

areas. Hence, city officials used postwar urban renewal projects--including the expansion of Dallas Love Field Airport, the extension of the Fair Park fairgrounds, and the construction and improvement of multiple roadways—to clear large portions of Dallas’ black communities.

Built during a nationwide surge in automobile traffic and highway construction, the construction of Central Expressway, which took place between 1947 and 1956, served the dual purpose of providing Dallasites with a modern north-south thoroughfare while simultaneously eliminating roughly 500 homes and businesses in North Dallas, Stringtown, Deep Ellum, and Bon Ton (see Appendix E.2).²⁵² Officials praised Central Expressway for “eras[ing] much of the sluminess” of these neighborhoods by replacing black homes and businesses with a modern freeway and several “motels, offices, apartments, and other new buildings.”²⁵³

Bartholomew considered Central Expressway the “most important” of Dallas’ planned thoroughfares as it would carry all traffic on US 75 through the heart of the city.²⁵⁴ First proposed by the Kessler Plan of 1911, Central Expressway—referred to as Central Boulevard by both Kessler and Bartholomew—began as a plan to build a “six-

²⁵² “The Postwar Economy: 1945-1960,” *American History: From Revolution to Reconstruction and Beyond*, University of Groningen. “The number of automobiles produced annually quadrupled between 1946 and 1955.”

²⁵³ “Spirit of Unity Augurs Well for Dallas Future,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 11, 1959, NewsBanks/Readex, *The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985*.

²⁵⁴ Dallas City Plan Commission, *An Outline of the Dallas Master Plan*, 71.

lane, 200-foot-wide corridor” along the path of the H&TC.²⁵⁵ Building on Kessler’s proposal, Bartholomew suggested that Central Expressway should run north and south through the city with a concrete divider and limited, signal light-controlled intersections “to permit traffic to pass through at a fixed rate of speed” thereby enabling seamless travel between residential areas and the business district.²⁵⁶

The DCC wanted Central Expressway completed by 1939, but purchase negotiations with Southern Pacific Railways proved problematic.²⁵⁷ Dallas city officials and railway executives eventually reached an agreement in June 1941. However, World War II stalled construction for several more years.²⁵⁸ After the war, resources once earmarked for wartime production became available and by 1947 crews had begun dismantling the H&TC tracks north of downtown.²⁵⁹ Partnering with the Texas Highway Department and the Federal Bureau of Roads, Dallas city officials altered the original plans for Central Expressway to include grade separations and a drainage tunnel, thereby transforming Central Expressway from “just a boulevard” to a “state-of-the-art modern

²⁵⁵ Oscar Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways: Texas-Sized Ambition*, 2014, 78-80.; Oscar Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways: Texas-Sized Ambition*, 2014, 296. In 1995, the Texas State Legislature designated the section of South Central Expressway between IH 45 and SH 310 and the section of SH 310 from the South Central Expressway connection to Loop 12 as S. M. Wright Freeway in honor of Dallas civil rights leader Sylvester Marilyn Wright.

²⁵⁶ Dallas City Plan Commission, *An Outline of the Dallas Master Plan*, 71.

²⁵⁷ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 23.

²⁵⁸ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 79.

²⁵⁹ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 79.

freeway.”²⁶⁰ Through the Colson-Briscoe Act of 1949, the City of Dallas and the Texas Highway Department shared construction costs that reached \$25 million by 1949.²⁶¹

Right-of-way acquisitions for the northern portion of Central Expressway, which began in 1943, were completed quickly because the area consisted of many poor black renters.²⁶² Construction commenced with a groundbreaking ceremony on March 3, 1947.²⁶³ The first section, which spanned from Fitzhugh Avenue on the north to San Jacinto Street on the south, opened on August 19, 1949 to extensive fanfare.²⁶⁴ Work on the northern leg progressed rapidly and by the spring of 1955 the roadway stretched roughly thirteen miles from San Jacinto Street on the south to Richardson, Texas on the north.²⁶⁵

Because the northern portion of Central Expressway took precedent, the southern section did not reach completion until August 1956.²⁶⁶ Construction of South Central Expressway faced delay due to the removal of the H&TC tracks, a process which took roughly a year to complete, because negotiations between railway executives and city

²⁶⁰ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 82.; “Texas Highway Department,” Texas Archival Resources Online, Texas State Library and Archives Division. The Texas Highway Department was established in 1916 to build and maintain roadways within the state. In 1975 the organization was absorbed by the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation. In 1991 it became part of the Texas Department of Transportation.

²⁶¹ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 82.

²⁶² “Road Body Promises Action on Dallas Central Boulevard,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 23, 1945, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁶³ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 82.

²⁶⁴ “38-Year Dream Becomes Reality,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 20, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁶⁵ “Expressway Link Will Open Soon,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 5, 1955, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁶⁶ “Central Expressway Open Through County,” News Script, WBAP-TV, Fort Worth, August 15, 1956, NBC News Scripts, KXAS-NBC 5 News Collection, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas.

officials proved complicated. Per the agreement with Southern Pacific Railways, the city needed to provide an alternate route along the Santa Fe rail line so that H&TC could access stations before construction on the southern leg could begin.²⁶⁷ Because city leaders prioritized the northern portion of Central Expressway for its role in traffic management and clearing blight in North Dallas, they had neglected to provide an alternate route for the railway in a timely manner, thereby stalling progress on the southern portion. Meanwhile, white South Dallas leaders who “feared their own neighborhoods being left behind in the northward push of affluent whites” continued to put pressure on city officials to complete the southern section of Central Expressway as quickly as possible.²⁶⁸ South Dallas Councilman C. G. Stubbs, for instance, “criticized slowness of Central [Expressway] work...in South Dallas.”²⁶⁹ Similarly, Mayor Woodall Rodgers advocated to speedy completion of South Central Expressway as the roadway stood to “help clear a slum area of the city.”²⁷⁰

The first leg of South Central Expressway, from San Jacinto Street on the north to Grand Avenue on the south, opened to traffic in 1950.²⁷¹ This section crossed through downtown and connected the two sections of the roadway. On August 15, 1956, the final portion of South Central Expressway, from Grand Avenue on the north to State Highway

²⁶⁷ “Agreement with Santa Fe to Speed Expressway Work,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 22, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁶⁸ Pask, “Deep Ellum Blues.”

²⁶⁹ “Allotment Told on Street Fund,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 30, 1948, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁷⁰ “Route for Parkway Ordered Bought,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 29, 1946, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁷¹ “Central Extension due by September,” *Dallas Morning News*, February 14, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

310 on the south, opened to traffic and signaled the completion of one of the city's primary postwar goals.²⁷² Upon completion, Central Expressway provided Dallasites with a modern thirty-two-mile thoroughfare which allowed for smooth travel across the entire county of Dallas.²⁷³ Dallas officials looked upon the successful completion of Central Expressway as "an effective slum-clearance project" as it cleared out hundreds of homes and businesses in the black communities of North Dallas, Stringtown, Deep Ellum, and Bon Ton.²⁷⁴

Initiated at a time when commercial aviation was just beginning to flourish and airports were being built in cities across the nation, the expansion of Dallas Love Field Airport between 1953 and 1955 reflected the city's desires to mold the facility into a major airport and to clear blight in the Elm Thicket neighborhood.²⁷⁵ The Love Field expansion seized several thousand square feet of the western and southwestern portions of Elm Thicket, an area that contained more than 300 black-owned homes and several black-owned businesses (see Appendix F.3).

Under the Bartholomew Plan, Love Field was set to become the city's major airport. Although Bartholomew warned against excessive geographic expansion due to

²⁷² "Expressway Ceremonies to be Held," *Dallas Morning News*, August 15, 1956, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁷³ "Central Expressway Open Through County," News Script, WBAP-TV, Fort Worth, August 15, 1956, NBC News Scripts, KXAS-NBC 5 News Collection, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas.

²⁷⁴ "Before and After Central Expressway," *Dallas Morning News*, November 17, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁷⁵ Janet R. Bednarek, *Airports, Cities, and the Jet Age: US Airports Since 1945*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). What has been dubbed "the jet age" in aviation began shortly after World War II when prosperity and technology spurred the exponential growth of commercial aviation in the United States.

the proximity of black homes and suggested that use of the airport be confined to “non-scheduled commercial flights, private flying, and to industrial and service activities,” Dallas city officials, who viewed the project as “essential to the industry and business advancement of Dallas,” put forth a plan to extend the existing runways to accommodate larger airlines.²⁷⁶

The Love Field Master Plan, completed in 1947, called for the purchase of additional property in the Elm Thicket area, the erection of a new terminal building, the relocation of Lemmon Avenue by 1,000 feet to the east, the construction of a new instrument runway, and the extension of the northwest-southeast runway by 1,000 feet.²⁷⁷ The city began purchasing right-of-way tracts the same year.²⁷⁸ The improvements would raise Love Field from a Class IV to a Class V facility, making it more attractive to large commercial airlines.²⁷⁹ Chance Vought Aircraft, Braniff International Airways, Pioneer Airlines, and Southwest Airmotive promised permanent bases at Love Field if city officials followed through with the proposed developments.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁶ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *A Master Plan for Dallas, Texas, Report 6: Transportation Facilities, Rail-Air-Highways-Water*, Dallas, July 1944, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 44.; “Airport Plan OK'd by Labor Council,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 4, 1953, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁷⁷ “Airport Plan OK'd by Labor Council,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 4, 1953.; “CAA Tentatively Approves Love Field Development,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 8, 1947, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁷⁸ “Surplus Airport Buildings to Become City Property,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 19, 1947, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁷⁹ “First-Rate Airport,” *Dallas Morning News*, November 10, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁸⁰ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 35.; “Airport Plan OK'd by Labor Council,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 4, 1953.

Dallas leaders wanted Love Field to be the region's preeminent air transport facility. In March 1952, New York transportation consultant James C. Buckley surveyed Dallas' air transport industry and concluded that Dallas should expand Love Field to "maintain its position as one of the nation's great air traffic centers."²⁸¹ City leaders initially agreed to cooperate with Fort Worth in building a large super airport between the two cities, a plan supported by the Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA). However, Dallas city officials ultimately rejected the plan, arguing that the location and design of the proposed airport would prove more beneficial to Fort Worth despite Dallas supplying four-fifths of the region's air travel patronage.²⁸² In April 1953, Fort Worth opened the Greater Fort Worth International Airport at the site of the proposed mid-cities airport.²⁸³ Fearing that the CAA might divert passengers and major commercial airlines to the new airport, Dallas officials strengthened their resolve to improve Love Field.²⁸⁴ Using funds provided through municipal bonds and federal grants, construction began in November 1953 and was completed within roughly two years.²⁸⁵

²⁸¹ "Airport Plan OK'd by Labor Council," *Dallas Morning News*, January 4, 1953

²⁸² Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 28.; "First-Rate Airport," *Dallas Morning News*, November 10, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁸³ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 33.

²⁸⁴ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 33.; "City to Fight If Air Lines Eye Midway," *Dallas Morning News*, November 5, 1947, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁸⁵ "Love Field Begins Expansion Program," *Dallas Morning News*, November 25, 1953, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Dallas Airport Expansion Starts," News Script, WBAP-TV, Fort Worth, May 18, 1954, NBC News Scripts, KXAS-NBC 5 News Collection, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas.; "Love Field Loses Fund Sought of Government," *Dallas Morning News*, March 27, 1953, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985. In January 1953, voters approved a \$10,500,000 bond program for Love Field expansion.

Just months after completing the Love Field expansion, city officials initiated construction of South R. L. Thornton Freeway. While officially intended to provide quick travel between Dallas and Fort Worth, the roadway also cleared at least 175 black-owned homes and numerous businesses in the Tenth Street neighborhood (see Appendix C.3). First conceptualized in the 1940s as Dallas' segment of the proposed East-West Expressway meant to link Dallas and Fort Worth, South R. L. Thornton Freeway served to connect Oak Cliff with the downtown business district.²⁸⁶ City leaders prioritized the construction of R. L. Thornton Freeway, then called the Oak Cliff Freeway, to alleviate mounting traffic congestion in Oak Cliff and to "provide a means of safe travel" between "large residential and business areas" of Oak Cliff with the "remainder of the city on the other side of the Trinity [River]."²⁸⁷

In September 1953, the Dallas City Council approved the final alignment of South R. L. Thornton freeway into Oak Cliff.²⁸⁸ From downtown, the freeway would carry southbound traffic across the Trinity by means of the newly constructed Trinity River Viaduct while Cadiz Street, made one-way and tied into the freeway, would carry traffic northbound. Traversing Oak Cliff along the path of Fleming Street, the freeway would

²⁸⁶ "New Road Link Seen by Fall," *Dallas Morning News*, January 4, 1947, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁸⁷ "Trinity Channel Called Nucleus of Road System," *Dallas Morning News*, February 21, 1954, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Hampton Program due Completion this Fall," *Dallas Morning News*, February 7, 1957, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "East-West Expressway Now Thornton Freeway," *Dallas Morning News*, April 28, 1959, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985. In April 1959, Dallas City Council officially designated the Oak Cliff Freeway as R.L. Thornton Freeway in honor of four-term Dallas Mayor Robert L. Thornton.

²⁸⁸ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 277.

curve to the southwest after Tenth Street and follow US Highways 67 and 77 “to the edge of the urban area.”²⁸⁹

Construction of South R. L. Thornton Freeway began in December 1955 with the City of Dallas handling right-of-way acquisitions while State and Federal Highway Departments completed construction.²⁹⁰ With an estimated cost of \$2,500,000, the project was considered the “largest engineering project in Oak Cliff since the building of the levees in the late 1920s.”²⁹¹ The first section of South R.L. Thornton Freeway, from Marsalis Avenue on the south to Commerce Street on the north, opened May 11, 1959.²⁹² The second completed portion, from Clarendon on the south to Marsalis on the north, opened in January 1962 following a ceremony during which former mayor Robert Thornton—the roadway’s namesake—“obliterated” the ceremonial ribbon with a small jet rocket.²⁹³ Upon completion in September 1965, the ninety-six-foot wide roadway featured four eight-foot lanes on either side of a concrete barrier and spanned more than twenty miles from the southern county line to downtown Dallas.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁹ “Trinity Channel Called Nucleus of Road System,” *Dallas Morning News*, February 21, 1954.

²⁹⁰ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 277.; “Oak Cliff Freeway Completion due by Late Summer,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 24, 1957, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁹¹ “Hampton Program due Completion this Fall,” *Dallas Morning News*, February 7, 1957.; “Oak Cliff Freeway Completion due by Late Summer,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 24, 1957.

²⁹² Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 278.

²⁹³ “Freeway Opening,” News Script, WBAP-TV, Fort Worth, January 31, 1962, NBC News Scripts, KXAS-NBC 5 News Collection, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas.

²⁹⁴ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 278; “Hampton Program due Completion this Fall,” *Dallas Morning News*, February 7, 1957.

City officials directed the construction and expansion of Fair Park's southeast auxiliary parking lot, which occurred in two separate stages between 1956 and the early 1980s, for two primary reasons: to make the fairgrounds more attractive and more capable of accommodating growing patronage and to clear out black homes in the Fair Park neighborhood (see Appendix H). Shortly after completing the Love Field extension, Dallas city leaders embarked on the expansion of Fair Park which faced "critical overcrowding" due to the "recent enlargement of the Cotton Bowl and the growing patronage of football games and other events."²⁹⁵ Because the State Fair of Texas, held annually at Fair Park, served as "one of Dallas' greatest assets," city officials heeded Bartholomew's suggestion that Fair Park be expanded to accommodate the park's growing number of visitors.²⁹⁶

Lack of adequate parking space was a primary concern; thus, city leaders formulated a plan to increase parking capacity through the construction of an auxiliary parking lot. In January 1956, Dallas voters approved a \$600,000 bond program for the purchase of 10.1 acres southeast of the fairgrounds.²⁹⁷ The expansion project came at no cost to taxpayers as bonds used to fund the new parking lot would be recovered through

²⁹⁵ "Expanding Fair Park," *Dallas Morning News*, April 15, 1956, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁹⁶ Harland Bartholomew and Associates, *Your Dallas of Tomorrow: A Master Plan for a Greater Dallas*, Dallas, September 1943, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas, 49.

²⁹⁷ "Dallas Progress up to Citizens," *Dallas Morning News*, January 29, 1956, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Expansion of Fair Park Underway," *Dallas Morning News*, April 14, 1956, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News.

parking fees.²⁹⁸ In April, the city began purchasing and clearing a two-block wide strip bounded by Pennsylvania Avenue on the north, Birmingham Avenue on the south, Lagow on the east, and Rice on the west, an area that contained approximately fifty black-owned homes.²⁹⁹ The new southeast auxiliary parking lot, which increased parking capacity from 6,000 to 8,500, opened in time for the State Fair of Texas in October 1957.³⁰⁰

Two years later, Dallas leaders again turned their focus to Fair Park after city planners suggested that the southeast auxiliary parking lot be expanded further.³⁰¹ Shortly after initial completion of the southeast parking lot, city officials and State Fair executives hired a private consultant to study the needs of Fair Park. The report, entitled “Redevelopment Program for the State Fair of Texas,” claimed that the proximity of black homes in relation to the fairgrounds made white fairgoers uneasy and tarnished the “image of prosperous, progressive, and pleasant Dallas.”³⁰² To remedy this dilemma, the report suggested acquiring and clearing all land occupied by blacks in the Fair Park area, claiming that, “if the poor Negroes in their shacks cannot be seen, all the guilt feeling...will disappear, or at least be removed from primary consideration.”³⁰³ In turn,

²⁹⁸ “Expanding Fair Park,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 15, 1956, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

²⁹⁹ “Expansion of Fair Park Underway,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 14, 1956.

³⁰⁰ “Lots Bought at Fair Park,” *Dallas Morning News*, February 1, 1957, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Youth Sponsors Seek Use of White Rock Bath House,” *Dallas Morning News*, February 24, 1958, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁰¹ Davies, “Fair Park Expansion,” 16.

³⁰² Jim Schutze, “New Report Tells Sordid Past of Fair Park, State Fair of Texas — but Offers Hope,” *Dallas Observer*, August 3, 2017.; Davies, “Fair Park Expansion,” 17.

³⁰³ Jim Schutze, “New Report,” *Dallas Observer*, August 3, 2017.

Mayor Erik Jonsson, who initially considered expanding the park westward, decided that adding on to the existing southwest parking lot would save white-owned homes to the west of the fairgrounds from destruction and would serve as the most economically feasible strategy.³⁰⁴

In 1967, Dallas voters approved the Crossroads Bond Program which allotted \$12.6 million for the improvement of Fair Park. This sum included \$2.8 million in funds to expand the southeast parking lot by an additional fifty-one acres thereby increasing the parking capacity by 4,000.³⁰⁵ Although announced in 1959, land acquisition did not begin for another nine years and did not conclude until April 1981.³⁰⁶ By 1989, the entire area bounded by Fitzhugh, Gaisford, Pennsylvania, and Second Avenue--an area that once contained over 350 black-owned homes--had been transformed into auxiliary parking for the fairgrounds (see Appendix H).³⁰⁷ In expanding the fairground's southeast auxiliary parking lot further into the Fair Park neighborhood, officials "replaced apartments, houses and small commercial buildings with a sea of parking lots behind high iron fences" in an effort to make the fairgrounds and the surrounding area more appealing to whites.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁴ "Fair Park Expansion OK'd," *Dallas Morning News*, July 30, 1958, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁰⁵ "Dislocated Families: City to Aid Those Ousted by Fair Project," *Dallas Morning News*, August 2, 1968, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Fair Park Expansion OK'd," *Dallas Morning News*, July 30, 1958.

³⁰⁶ "Park Residents Finally Get the Boot," *Dallas Morning News*, August 3, 1979, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁰⁷ *Historic Aerials*, Netronline, Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC. <https://www.historicaerials.com>. This section also features the Dos Equis Pavilion, built in 1988 and originally called the Coca-Cola Starplex Amphitheatre.

³⁰⁸ Jim Schutze, "New Report," *Dallas Observer*, August 3, 2017.

In 1958, shortly after completion of the first phase of Fair Park’s auxiliary parking lot, city officials initiated their second assault on the North Dallas community with the construction of Woodall Rodgers Freeway, also known as Spur 366, which continued until 1983. Intended to alleviate mounting downtown traffic by connecting Interstate 35E with Central Expressway, Woodall Rodgers Freeway leveled roughly 200 black homes in North Dallas (see Appendix B.2). Although construction began in 1958, inadequate financing and design complications delayed the roadway’s opening until the 1980s.

In 1952, Dallas city traffic engineer Lloyd Braff proposed an “inner traffic loop” to encircle downtown and ease mounting traffic congestion in the area.³⁰⁹ Originally called the Cochran-Munger Expressway, Woodall Rodgers Freeway was intended to serve as the northern segment of the freeway loop set to include Stemmons Freeway on the west, Central Expressway on the east, and East R.L. Thornton Freeway on the south.³¹⁰ However, state officials had reservations about designating Woodall Rodgers Freeway as part of the state highway system until Dallas pledged full responsibility for right-of-way costs.³¹¹ The freeway received approval from the Texas Transportation Commission in 1958 and, shortly after, Dallas voters approved \$8 million in bond funds for the construction of Woodall Rodgers Freeway. By 1966, construction crews had cleared the “eastern two-thirds of the corridor, from Field Street to Central Expressway,”

³⁰⁹ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 246; “Thornton to Lead Road Delegation,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 1, 1958, NewsBank/Readex, *The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985*.

³¹⁰ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 246.

³¹¹ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 246.

and had begun building frontage roads.³¹² Officials faced few complications in acquiring and clearing land in this section as it contained shotgun houses inhabited by poor black renters.

By 1967, however, right-of-way acquisition proved much costlier than anticipated. The city had exhausted the available \$8 million and both Dallas City Council and Dallas County refused to provide additional funding, putting a halt to property acquisitions in 1968.³¹³ The project only resumed after Dallas County and the City of Dallas reached an agreement, brokered by Mayor Erik Jonsson, to equally share the \$10 million cost of completing the roadway.³¹⁴ Although right-of-way acquisitions and clearings recommenced in May 1969, construction did not begin for some time, leaving the roadway in “an embarrassing state of half completion.”³¹⁵ The section spanning from Field Street to Stemmons Freeway sat essentially abandoned for several years, used primarily by parking lot owners who utilized the cleared area “to sell spaces to motorists.”³¹⁶ Financial hurdles continued to delay construction which progressed slowly for over a decade until the freeway’s opening in May 1983.³¹⁷

³¹² Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 247.

³¹³ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 248-249.

³¹⁴ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 249.; “Battle on Costs of Freeway Ends,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 5, 1968, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³¹⁵ “Freeway Land Buying to Resume,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 21, 1969, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “There’s Work to Do,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 24, 1968, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³¹⁶ “The Crosstown Freeway That Never Was,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 3, 1970, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³¹⁷ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 251.

The construction of C. F. Hawn Freeway, which took place between 1960 and 1964, provided speedy travel between Dallas and Kaufman and brought further destruction to the Bon Ton neighborhood through the clearing hundreds of black-owned homes (see Appendix G). In addition to making travel within the city easier for Dallasites, Dallas officials sought to make the city more accessible to those living beyond the county line. C. F. Hawn Freeway, which now connects Dallas and Kaufman counties, materialized after residents of both counties advocated the establishment of a freeway that would allow quick travel between the two. United States Highway 175 spanned the distance between Dallas and Kaufman counties but proved increasingly inadequate as traffic in the area grew.³¹⁸ Arguing that the “tremendous traffic carried” on the roadway had “created an emergency,” proponents of the new freeway suggested that US Highway 175 be officially designated a freeway and widened from 120 feet to 300 feet to handle a larger traffic load.³¹⁹

The proposal to improve US Highway 175 garnered impressive support throughout the region. Representatives from Dallas, Rylie, Seagoville, Pleasant Grove, Kaufman, and other communities located along or near the roadway organized the Dallas-to-Kaufman Freeway Association through which they pressured city, county, and

³¹⁸ “CC Head Appoints Committee to Boost Tyler Expressway,” *Dallas Morning News*, March 28, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³¹⁹ “Path Cleared for County to Purchase Right of Way,” *Dallas Morning News*, November 11, 1955, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Seagoville Meeting Set,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 23, 1955, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

state officials to approve the roadway expansion project.³²⁰ Dallas East Incorporated, an all-white non-profit corporation established in 1956 to “promote the interests of East Dallas,” considered the improvement of US Highway 175 as their top priority.³²¹ Seagoville News publisher Rex Putman and Kaufman County Judge Fred W. Bankhead also voiced strong support for the freeway project.³²² Possibly the most significant backing came from businessman and Texas Transportation Commissioner Charles F. Hawn who wanted a “first-class highway between his hometown [of Athens, Texas] and Dallas.”³²³

The Texas Transportation Commission designated US Highway 175 as a freeway in 1953 and officials released plans for the new freeway at a public hearing in April 1958.³²⁴ Two years later, construction began in Dallas County. Although state and county agencies agreed to equally share the cost of right-of-way acquisitions, Dallas and Kaufman counties covered the state’s share until 1961.³²⁵ That same year, officials voted

³²⁰ “Delegation Will Urge Work on Highway 175,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 15, 1956, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³²¹ “East Dallas Group Plans Corporation,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 27, 1956, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985. The organization operated as a “sort of citizens council” to represent the interests of East Dallas and its membership included several wealthy merchants from East Dallas and the surrounding area. The group chided city leaders for not prioritizing the improvement of US Highway 75, arguing that East Dallas possessed far greater buying power than other parts of Dallas, namely North Dallas and South Dallas, and therefore deserved better access to and from the area.

³²² “Seagoville Meeting Set,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 23, 1955.; “Dallas, State Argue Carrollton Route,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 2, 1953, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³²³ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 300.

³²⁴ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 300.

³²⁵ “Bond Sale Approved for County,” *Dallas Morning News*, March 13, 1959, NewsBank/Readex. The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Right-of-Way Check for \$21,960 Given,” *Dallas Morning News*, March 7, 1961, NewsBank/Readex. The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

unanimously to rename the roadway C. F. Hawn Freeway as a show of appreciation for Hawn's efforts in improving the region's roadways during his tenure with the Texas Transportation Commission.³²⁶ Despite a brief dispute between the City of Dallas and Dallas County regarding right-of-way funding, the project progressed smoothly.³²⁷ The first section, a three-mile stretch of "full controlled-access expressway" comprised of six lanes and frontage roads between South Central Expressway and Lake June Road in South Dallas, opened on January 6, 1964.³²⁸ By June 24, 1964, C. F. Hawn Freeway spanned sixteen miles from South Dallas to Kaufman County.

Conclusion

Aware of growing blight in black communities since the 1930s, Dallas city officials struggled to find equitable and economical solutions to manage the worsening situation. Like most urban centers in the nation, Dallas entered a period of economic surplus following the war and aimed to use that prosperity to create a more attractive, lucrative, and accessible urban center. Also like most American cities in the postwar years, Dallas found itself faced with growing slum conditions that threatened the progress and prosperity that city officials sought to secure. Thus, the clearance of urban slums and

³²⁶ "Hawn Freeway' Urged as Name for 175 Strip," *Dallas Morning News*, July 20, 1961, NewsBank/Readex. The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Hawn Freeway' Vote Unanimous," *Dallas Morning News*, August 3, 1961, NewsBank/Readex. The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Sterrett, Too," *Dallas Morning News*, August 6, 1961, NewsBank/Readex. The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³²⁷ Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 300.

³²⁸ "Pacts due on 3 Links in Road Net," *Dallas Morning News*, May 18, 1961, NewsBank/Readex. The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; Slotboom, *Dallas-Fort Worth Freeways*, 300.; "Gateway to East Texas Takes Shape," *Dallas Morning News*, June 9, 1963, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

blighted areas became imperative for city leaders in the years following World War II. Because the city did not qualify for aid through the Federal Housing Act of 1949 due to a lack of statewide urban redevelopment legislation and because civic rehabilitation efforts had proven unworkable, due in large part to governmental indifference, city officials opted to use the power of eminent domain along with state and federal enabling and funding legislation to clear Dallas' black communities through the construction of public works projects. By expanding Love Field, extending Fair Park, and constructing several major roadways, Dallas city leaders managed to clear large portions of each of Dallas' black communities within just a few years.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONSEQUENCES OF POSTWAR REDEVELOPMENT

Because social and psychological inconstancy, economic stagnation, and overcrowding contribute to urban blight, Dallas' postwar redevelopment projects, coupled with stringent residential segregation, exacerbated slum conditions in the city's black communities by undermining their stability and exacerbating the black housing crisis.³²⁹ These projects impacted each of the city's black communities in rapid succession and left them in a state of disarray. The destruction of businesses and churches—institutions that served as cohesive bonds that held neighborhoods together—destabilized the economic and social centers of Dallas' black communities. Those institutions that escaped the bulldozer suffered from the loss of patronage essential to their function. Meanwhile, freeways built through black neighborhoods created physical barriers between once unified communities thus disrupting the communal unity upon which most black Dallasites depended for their security and well-being. In many cases, residents attempted to save their homes and communities through organized protests and legal action. These attempts, however, proved unsuccessful.

³²⁹ The Federal Housing Act of 1937 defined a slum as “any area where dwellings predominate which, by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangements or design, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities, or any combination of these factors, are detrimental to safety, health or morals”.; “Slum Clearance: 1932–1952,” In *Editorial Research Reports 1952*, vol. II, 801-20, Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1952. The physical characteristics of urban slums include “decayed housing structures, inadequate hygienic facilities, and congestion of inhabitants.” Social and psychological trappings of slums include “a lack of social organization among its inhabitants and an individual acceptance of squalor as the norm of existence.”

In addition to unsettling the economic and social cohesion of Dallas' black communities, the city's postwar renewal projects also amplified the black housing crisis by displacing thousands of black Dallasites. Because city officials failed to provide for their relocation and because racially discriminatory policies and attitudes prevented blacks from living beyond the borders of established black areas, those displaced by the city's renewal projects became forced to either remain in their neighborhoods and live doubled-up with friends or family or relocate to another overcrowded black community that also faced destruction. Hence, these projects added further strain to already distressed communities by forcing them to accommodate additional people in the face of a rapidly diminishing housing supply.

Central Expressway, constructed between 1947 and 1956, cut through North Dallas, Deep Ellum, Stringtown, and Bon Ton with devastating consequences for these communities. The first completed portion of Central Expressway—the two-mile stretch between San Jacinto Street and Fitzhugh Avenue—ran straight through the heart of North Dallas, bisecting the community and destroying at least 300 hundred homes and businesses in its path (see Appendix B.2). In doing so, it displaced over 1,000 black Dallasites and forced many to relocate to other black enclaves within the city.³³⁰ Some, for instance, moved to the Bon Ton neighborhood.³³¹ Others, like the family of Elm Thicket resident Thomas Buffin who settled in North Dallas in the early 1940s, relocated

³³⁰ Lucy Sosa, "Freedman's Cemetery Has a History as Complicated as its Buried Members," *The Daily Campus*, Southern Methodist University, March 4, 2013.

³³¹ Payne, "Oral History," 66.

to Elm Thicket after the city purchased their property for the construction of Central Expressway.³³² In addition to displacing hundreds of black Dallasites, North Central Expressway drove away nearby whites and, upon their departure, the community fell further into disrepair as city officials increasingly neglected the area.³³³ By 1955, slum conditions in North Dallas had become so severe that nearby white homeowners and merchants formed the Uptown Improvement League to prevent blight in North Dallas from spreading into adjacent areas.³³⁴

Along with leveling black homes, the thoroughfare destroyed the commercial center of North Dallas, located around the intersection of Hall and Cochran, and thwarted future development by making the area undesirable for the establishment of new businesses.³³⁵ The Little Gem Drug Store, located at 2602 Bryan Street, was one of the many businesses demolished to make way for Central Expressway.³³⁶ Bisecting the community into eastern and western portions, North Central Expressway created a physical barrier between “friends, associates, and patrons of African-American businesses” and left residents with “no easy access from one side to the other.”³³⁷

In the process of constructing Central Expressway, crews paved over approximately half of the Freedman’s Cemetery, an area that contained roughly 1,500

³³² *Neighborhood Stories: Elm Thicket*, 2017.

³³³ Prior and Kemper, “From Freedman’s Town to Uptown,” 193-194.

³³⁴ “League Organized for Promotion of Uptown District,” *Dallas Morning News*, March 23, 1955, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³³⁵ Prior and Kemper, “From Freedman’s Town to Uptown,” 192.

³³⁶ *The Dallas Express*, Vol. 26, No. 13. Ed. 1, January 18, 1919, Texas Digital Newspaper Program, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas.

³³⁷ Prior and Kemper, “From Freedman’s Town to Uptown,” 192.

graves.³³⁸ Because many residents could not afford proper tombstones, families of the deceased marked graves with “crosses and small meaningful objects.”³³⁹ Crews used these makeshift grave-markers, along with the few tombstones that did exist, as road fill.³⁴⁰ The state offered ten dollars per grave to families who could prove that the graves of their relatives had been destroyed during construction of the roadway.³⁴¹

Prior to construction, several North Dallas residents and business owners protested the path of the roadway, arguing that they could not relocate because “no housing construction for negroes was underway.”³⁴² However, “federal transit laws...left owners with little recourse except to challenge the appraised value of their property.”³⁴³ Still, few received fair prices.³⁴⁴ One North Dallas resident, for instance, received a meager \$262.50 for his home and land.³⁴⁵ In February 1947, the city purchased the entire block between Munger Avenue and Flora Street, an area that contained at least thirty

³³⁸ Belkin, “Unearthing of Freed-Slave Cemetery May Put Dallas Road Project on Hold.”

³³⁹ Lucy Sosa, “Freedman’s Cemetery Has a History as Complicated as its Buried Members,” *The Daily Campus*, Southern Methodist University, March 4, 2013.

³⁴⁰ Pask, “Deep Ellum Blues.”

³⁴¹ Belkin, “Unearthing of Freed-Slave Cemetery May Put Dallas Road Project on Hold.”

³⁴² “OPA to Set Ouster Dates,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 4, 1946, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; Lucy Sosa, “Freedman’s Cemetery Has a History as Complicated as its Buried Members,” *The Daily Campus*, Southern Methodist University, March 4, 2013. North Dallas Freedman’s Cemetery was rediscovered in the 1990s during the expansion of the roadway when crews discovered skeletal remains and realized that they had paved over roughly half of the cemetery. When Francis James, known locally as “the cemetery lady,” and Donald Payton, president of the African American Genealogy Interest Group, got word of the crews’ discovery, they launched their own investigation. James and Payton found a small headstone near the construction site and took it to the Texas Highway Department who agreed to put the roadway on hold pending results of an archeological survey. The survey, which lasted roughly two years, confirmed that crews had paved over approximately half of the Freedmen’s Cemetery during the original construction of Central Expressway. The expansion of Central Expressway commenced following the relocation of over 1,000 graves.

³⁴³ Prior and Kemper, “From Freedman’s Town to Uptown,” 191.

³⁴⁴ Prior and Kemper, “From Freedman’s Town to Uptown,” 191.

³⁴⁵ “City to Buy More Acreage for Airports,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 28, 1944, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

black-owned homes, for \$109,790, a mere \$9,000 more than the city paid for one commercial building occupied by Macatee Incorporated in the same month.³⁴⁶ Meanwhile, nearby white-owned homes sold for between \$20,000 and \$40,000.³⁴⁷ For those North Dallas residents that refused the city's purchase offer, city officials initiated "blanket condemnations" with eviction notices ranging from sixty days to six months.³⁴⁸ Left with no place to go, those who faced eviction simply held out as long as possible, hoping to convince the city to delay evictions.³⁴⁹ Mayor Woodall Rodgers, relaying the city council's decision on the matter, stated that there would be no halt to evictions for North Dallas residents who had been "negligent" in finding alternative housing.³⁵⁰ In the same session, however, city council voted to delay evictions for white veterans in nearby neighborhoods.³⁵¹

Not every North Dallas property purchased by the city faced demolition. In some cases the city sold properties to private individuals or companies who relocated the homes, intact, to another area.³⁵² Sam Rutherford, for example, purchased and moved several homes, including a duplex and a four-bedroom house, from the path of Central

³⁴⁶ "City Gets Land for Boulevard," *Dallas Morning News*, February 27, 1947, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁴⁷ "City Okays 4 Projects," *Dallas Morning News*, July 2, 1946, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁴⁸ "City Pushes Purchase of Pass Rights," *Dallas Morning News*, January 1, 1946, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Central Boulevard Evictions Planned," *Dallas Morning News*, August 31, 1946, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁴⁹ "Eviction Halt Refused for Master Plan," *Dallas Morning News*, April 19, 1946, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁵⁰ "Eviction Halt Refused for Master Plan," *Dallas Morning News*, April 19, 1946.

³⁵¹ "Eviction Halt Refused for Master Plan," *Dallas Morning News*, April 19, 1946.

³⁵² "City Gets Land for Boulevard," *Dallas Morning News*, February 27, 1947, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

Expressway to his hometown of Mesquite, Texas.³⁵³ In other cases, the city purchased the property from black homeowners then rented it back to them at exorbitant prices.³⁵⁴ The problem of high rents became so severe that in October 1946 the Office of Price Administration (OPA) ordered the City of Dallas to reduce rents on several properties and refund thousands in overcharges.³⁵⁵ To make matters worse, some of the funds generated by these rental properties lined the pockets of city officials. In April 1947, for instance, Dallas Police Captain A. C. Cantrell filed embezzlement charges against former city property manager Hal R. Juergens for the misappropriation of funds generated by city-owned rental properties that had been acquired for Central Expressway.³⁵⁶

The northward extension of Central Expressway also destroyed a small black community called Spring Valley located roughly nine miles north of downtown around the intersection of Coit Road and Forest Lane. The “tiny settlement of one-story houses, two churches, and a schoolhouse” was first established one mile to the east near the intersection of Forest Lane and Hillcrest Road where it remained until the arrival of whites forced residents to relocate in the 1930s.³⁵⁷ A decade later, residents were again asked to move. City officials gave residents three months to move to make way for North

³⁵³ “County Roundup,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 1, 1947, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁵⁴ “City Attorney to Battle OPA in Washington,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 12, 1945, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁵⁵ “City Must Dig up for Fight on OPA,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 16, 1946, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁵⁶ “Former City Aid Charged,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 19, 1947, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁵⁷ “Central Work to Doom Tiny Negro Settlement,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 3, 1948, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

Central Expressway.³⁵⁸ Many residents, such as John Grant, stayed put, hoping to convince city officials to reroute the freeway and spare their community. Grant, who had recently sent three of his daughters to college and had eight young children living at home, wrote a letter to the *Dallas Morning News* in April 1948 in which he expounded on the plight of residents.

Now we are told that we are in the path of the Central Boulevard. What we want to know is, when and where will we be secure? It is so cruel to wreck our homes when the boulevard can go east of us. There is no room in the city for us. It is not right to wreck our homes when we have no place to go. We hope after looking into this situation, it will be reconsidered. Our homes, our church, and our school mean so much to us.³⁵⁹

Despite Grant's pleading, North Central Expressway plowed through the settlement, destroying every house. Although the school and one church evaded demolition, the roadway "[left] no settlers to use them."³⁶⁰

As Central Expressway extended southward, it critically wounded Deep Ellum, destroyed the remains of Stringtown, and cut a devastating path through Bon Ton (see Appendix E.2). Because Stringtown linked Deep Ellum and North Dallas, the construction of Central Expressway essentially severed the connection between the city's largest black business district and the city's most prominent black community.³⁶¹ It also

³⁵⁸ "Central Work to Doom Tiny Negro Settlement," *Dallas Morning News*, May 3, 1948, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁵⁹ "Central Work to Doom Tiny Negro Settlement," *Dallas Morning News*, May 3, 1948, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; John Grant, "Letters From Readers: Negro Community Would Wander No More," *Dallas Morning News*, April 30, 1948, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁶⁰ "Central Work to Doom Tiny Negro Settlement," *Dallas Morning News*, May 3, 1948, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁶¹ Pask, "Deep Ellum Blues."

cut off Deep Ellum from the rest of downtown, making it less accessible to blacks across the city.³⁶² The destruction of numerous black businesses hampered Deep Ellum's ability to serve as the "black downtown." Hence, black and Jewish business owners began to abandon the area which by the 1960s, "seemed to have no name or history."³⁶³ As Central Expressway stretched into South Dallas, it plowed through Bon Ton, destroying dozens more black homes and disconnecting a large portion of the western half from the rest of the neighborhood.

In 1953, while construction crews continued to clear land and pour asphalt for Central Expressway, city officials initiated the expansion of Love Field that continued until 1955. The expansion of Love Field's northwest-southeast runway, and the relocation of Lemmon Avenue to make room for the runway, required the clearance of several thousand square feet of Elm Thicket, an area that contained roughly three-hundred black-owned homes (see Appendix F.3). Extending the runway by 2,000 feet in width and over 1,000 feet in length, the airport expansion consumed most of the western and southwestern portions of Elm Thicket, "land occupied by several thousand negroes."³⁶⁴ The expansion took land intended to be used for the Elm Thicket Park for Negroes and destroyed the Hilliard Memorial Golf Park, a golf course for black

³⁶² Pask, "Deep Ellum Blues."

³⁶³ Alan B. Govanar and Jay F. Brakefield, *Deep Ellum and Central Track: Where the Black and White Worlds of Dallas Converged*, (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1998), 50.; Pask, "Deep Ellum Blues."

³⁶⁴ "City Plans Two Sets of Parallel Runways for Super Airport," *Dallas Morning News*, December 8, 1943, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Council Firm on Airport Bid," *Dallas Morning News*, January 14, 1953, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

Dallasites built in 1950.³⁶⁵ Hill Grocery and Eltee O. Dave's BBQ, along with many other businesses located along Lemmon Avenue, fell with the expansion.³⁶⁶

Residents of Elm Thicket protested the airport expansion, arguing that the project required "the almost complete clearance of Elm Thicket" and would make the area both dangerous and unpleasant.³⁶⁷ In an "emotion-charged protest," more than two-hundred Elm Thicket residents crowded City Hall to request that the city build a new airport elsewhere and leave Love Field in its present state.³⁶⁸ Protestors called the expansion a "menace" that would not only displace thousands of residents but would also spread the "threat of death over thousands who live there."³⁶⁹ Dr. John Chisum, Elm Thicket pastor and one of the group's leaders, argued that the expansion stood to endanger "the lives of children in eight schools which lie in the path of planes taking off and landing."³⁷⁰ The group charged that the civil and property rights of Elm Thicket residents had been violated by the city and threatened to take the issue to court.³⁷¹

³⁶⁵ "Council Again Expands Love Field Area for Airport Improvement," *Dallas Morning News*, December 14, 1944, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Swiss Avenue Group Seeking Landscape Job for Parkway," *Dallas Morning News*, April 11, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Dallas Airport Expansion Starts," News Script, WBAP-TV, Fort Worth, May 18, 1954, NBC News Scripts, KXAS-NBC 5 News Collection, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas.

³⁶⁶ *Neighborhood Stories: Elm Thicket*, 2017.

³⁶⁷ "City Plans Two Sets of Parallel Runways for Super Airport," *Dallas Morning News*, December 8, 1943.

³⁶⁸ "Council Firm on Airport Bid," *Dallas Morning News*, January 14, 1953.

³⁶⁹ "Council Firm on Airport Bid," *Dallas Morning News*, January 14, 1953.

³⁷⁰ "Council Firm on Airport Bid," *Dallas Morning News*, January 14, 1953.; "Negroes Ask Relief from Airport Plans," *Dallas Morning News*, January 18, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁷¹ "Negroes Assail Airport Plans," *Dallas Morning News*, July 9, 1953, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

In September 1953, fifteen Elm Thicket homeowners filed a 30-page injunction and damage suit against the city, charging that city officials conspired to remove Elm Thicket residents “on account of race and color.”³⁷² Arguing that the city had prevented them from improving their properties, Elm Thicket residents requested that the city pay fair market value and nearly \$87,000 in damages.³⁷³ Although Judge Sarah T. Hughes granted a jury trial for the suit in November, it sat relatively dormant until its dismissal in January 1955.³⁷⁴ Ruling in favor of the City of Dallas, District Judge Dallas A. Blankenship stated that Elm Thicket plaintiffs “show[ed] an absence of genuine issue of any material fact.”³⁷⁵ In an effort to placate residents and remedy the destruction of homes, city officials rezoned a large section of Elm Thicket from single-family to duplex. Residents, however, opposed the action on grounds that duplex zoning might bring “undesirable transient renters into a neighborhood of single-family homeowners.”³⁷⁶

In addition to displacing hundreds of black families, the expansion had serious economic consequences for Elm Thicket--consequences which began to materialize long before construction began. After the city announced plans to expand Love Field, several businesses moved out of the area. For instance, the Dallas branch of Texas Textile Mills, which employed many Elm Thicket residents, closed in 1945 on the supposition that the

³⁷² “Negroes Ask Damages, Injunction,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 23, 1953, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁷³ “Negroes Ask Damages, Injunction,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 23, 1953.

³⁷⁴ “Jury Trial Granted in Negroes' Suit,” *Dallas Morning News*, November 17, 1953, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Land for Love Field,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 29, 1955, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁷⁵ “Home Owners Lose Suit Against City,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 28, 1955, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁷⁶ “Negroes Assail Airport Plans,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 9, 1953.

expansion of Love Field “would take over many of the houses of the workers and force them to move,” thereby making the plant’s operation economically infeasible.³⁷⁷ The loss of numerous businesses with the relocation of Lemmon Avenue further destabilized the community's economy. In turn, Elm Thicket began to rapidly deteriorate. According to Elm Thicket resident Alice Ferguson, the community “just went down, down, down” following the expansion.³⁷⁸ Neglect led to dilapidation while crime rates increased and the neighborhood became “infested with drugs.”³⁷⁹

Within months of completing the Love Field expansion and as construction of Central Expressway was nearing an end, crews began erecting South R. L. Thornton Freeway in December 1955. The first section, which spanned from Marsalis Avenue on the south to Commerce Street on the north, opened to traffic on May 11, 1959. As the freeway crept into Oak Cliff, it cut a path through the Tenth Street neighborhood, destroying homes and businesses, disconnecting neighbors, and destabilizing economic and social milieus (see Appendix C.3). The roadway cleared at least 175 black-owned homes and several businesses, including Sim’s Cleaners and Son’s New Deal Cafe.³⁸⁰ The Antioch Baptist Church also became a casualty of the project.³⁸¹ Many of those who

³⁷⁷ “Textile Mill Dismantling Gets Approval of WPB,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 20, 1945, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Negroes Assail Airport Plans,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 9, 1953.

³⁷⁸ *Neighborhood Stories: Elm Thicket*, 2017.

³⁷⁹ *Neighborhood Stories: Elm Thicket*, 2017.

³⁸⁰ *Neighborhood Stories: Tenth Street*, June 15, 2013.

³⁸¹ *Neighborhood Stories: Tenth Street*, June 15, 2013.; 1930 Fairchild Survey, Dallas Historic Aerial Photographs, Central University Libraries, Southern Methodist University.; 1945 USDA Survey, Dallas Aerial Photographs, Central University Libraries, Southern Methodist University.; *Historic Aerials*, Netronline, Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC, <https://www.historicaerials.com>.

lost homes or businesses relocated to other areas. Businesses left intact suffered from the loss of patronage caused by the displacement of residents, and many failed as a result. Churches suffered as well as the roadway “busted the area that the church relied on.”³⁸² Because South R. L. Thornton “literally split the neighborhood and cordoned it off from the rest of Oak Cliff,” the project not only impacted Tenth Street residents but those of the Heights and the Bottom as well who depended on the Tenth Street community for an array of goods, services, and community institutions.³⁸³ Slowly, the remaining residents began to abandon the area which steadily declined over the following years, becoming afflicted by dilapidated housing, crime, and drugs. By 1962, Tenth Street, along with the Heights and the Bottom, constituted one of the largest slum areas in Dallas.³⁸⁴

In April 1956, four months after construction of South R. L. Thornton Freeway commenced, the city began acquiring and clearing homes in the Fair Park neighborhood to make way for the fairground’s southeast auxiliary parking lot. The parking lot cleared several blocks of the Fair Park neighborhood, “an area that contained roughly ninety-three lots” and more than fifty black-owned homes (see Appendix H.4).³⁸⁵ Voters approved the project in January 1956; property acquisitions began in April.³⁸⁶ The city

³⁸² Craig Weflen, *Tenth Street: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2015.

³⁸³ Craig Weflen, *Tenth Street: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2015.

³⁸⁴ Dennis Hoover, “City’s Slung Ring Typical,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 16, 1962, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁸⁵ 1930 Fairchild Survey, Dallas Historic Aerial Photographs, Central University Libraries, Southern Methodist University.; *Historic Aerials*, Netronline, Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC, <https://www.historicaerials.com>.; “Park Land Purchase Due,” *Dallas Morning News*, June 2, 1956, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁸⁶ “Club Activities,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 4, 1956, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Dallas Progress up to Citizens,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 29, 1956, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

condemned properties of those that refused to sell.³⁸⁷ Completed by October 1957, the project took less than two years to complete, leaving residents with little time to relocate.³⁸⁸

In 1958, just months after the completion of Fair Park's southeast parking lot, construction began on Woodall Rodgers Freeway. Nine years after Central Expressway split North Dallas into eastern and western halves, the construction of Woodall Rodgers Freeway disconnected the southwestern portion of North Dallas from the rest of the community and leveled roughly 200 hundred black homes in the process (see Appendix B.3).³⁸⁹ The first portion of land acquired and cleared for Woodall Rodgers Freeway, from Field Street to Central Expressway, belonged to the North Dallas community. City officials managed to quickly complete property acquisitions in this section because the area consisted of old shotgun houses inhabited by poor black renters.³⁹⁰ Right-of-way acquisitions for the remaining segment proved both costly and complicated as the area contained several large commercial buildings including the Sidran Company, El Fenix Mexican restaurant, and a three-story masonry building owned by Vickery &

³⁸⁷ "New Recreation Center Will Serve Large Area," *Dallas Morning News*, February 28, 1957, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁸⁸ "Youth Sponsors Seek Use of White Rock Bath House," *Dallas Morning News*, February 24, 1958, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁸⁹ Eric Nicholson, "There Goes the Neighborhood: The Ups and Downs of Gentrification in Dallas," *The Dallas Observer*, October 28, 2015. Woodall Rodgers Freeway also tore through a small portion of Little Mexico, the city's primary Mexican-American community, located to the west of North Dallas. Little Mexico was founded in the early 1900s by refugees who fled to Dallas after the Mexican Revolution in 1910.

³⁹⁰ "Inner Loop Proposal Draws Strong Support," *Dallas Morning News*, August 12, 1965, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

Company.³⁹¹ While city officials negotiated purchasing agreements for the remaining land and bickered over the freeway's design and funding, the cleared portion sat empty and unused with the exception of serving occasionally as a makeshift parking facility.³⁹² For decades it seemed as though city officials had cleared a large portion of North Dallas and displaced hundreds of black residents for a roadway that might never reach completion (see Appendix B.11).

While crews continued clearing land for Woodall Rodgers Freeway in North Dallas, construction of the Dallas County portion of C. F. Hawn Freeway began in Bon Ton. Constructed between 1960 and 1964, C. F. Hawn Freeway tore through the center of Bon Ton, destroying homes, uprooting community institutions, and bisecting the community into northern and southern sections (see Appendix G.2). The destruction of hundreds of black-owned homes in the Lincoln Manor, Lincoln Manor No 2, and Ideal additions displaced hundreds of black families.³⁹³ The roadway forced Mount Horeb Missionary Baptist Church, one of the community's most prominent churches, to relocate several blocks away to Carpenter Avenue.³⁹⁴ Plowing across Bexar Street, the freeway annihilated several of the community's business establishments.

³⁹¹ "Sidran Acquires Young Street Journal Building," *Dallas Morning News*, June 20, 1965, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Old Mexican Restaurant to Move Across Street," *Dallas Morning News*, September 14, 1965, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "Free' Day Slated for Bus Riders," *Dallas Morning News*, February 8, 1966, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁹² "Difference Clouds Rodgers Freeway," *Dallas Morning News*, June 21, 1967, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; "There's Work to Do," *Dallas Morning News*, April 24, 1968, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

³⁹³ Payne, "Oral History," 19.; Weflen, *Bonton + Ideal: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2016.

³⁹⁴ Payne, "Oral History," 23.

Splitting the community in two, C. F. Hawn Freeway became a physical divider that disrupted the decades-old “cohesiveness [of] the neighborhood” with severe social and economic consequences for Bon Ton residents.³⁹⁵ Separated by a six-lane expressway, residents of the once-unified community began to interact with and perceive one another differently, initiating the formation of two distinct neighborhoods--Ideal in the North and Bon Ton in the South.³⁹⁶ While Ideal suffered its own set of hardships caused by the roadway, it fared better than its southern counterpart. Economic division materialized as Bon Ton, severed from Ideal and the rest of the city, became increasingly isolated. The roadway left Bexar Street as the only route in or out of the community, diminishing the area’s appeal and limiting residents’ access to resources.³⁹⁷ Hence, Bon Ton began to deteriorate rapidly; rates of crime, poverty, drug use, and dilapidated housing increased.³⁹⁸ In 1962, a Dallas city official warned that, “If South Dallas continues to deteriorate, it will be the worst problem we have.”³⁹⁹ The area’s decline spurred feelings of contempt among Ideal residents toward those of Bon Ton.⁴⁰⁰ The construction of public housing complexes in Bon Ton further stigmatized the area and its residents.⁴⁰¹ By the late 1960s, the once vibrant, well-established, unified community of Bon Ton had been severed in two, leaving one of its parts to slowly decay.

³⁹⁵ Weflen, *Bonton + Ideal: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2016.

³⁹⁶ Payne, “Oral History,” 23-24.

³⁹⁷ Weflen, *Bonton + Ideal: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2016.

³⁹⁸ Weflen, *Bonton + Ideal: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2016.

³⁹⁹ Dennis Hoover, “City’s Slung Ring Typical,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 16, 1962, NewsBank/Readex, *The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985*.

⁴⁰⁰ Weflen, *Bonton + Ideal: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2016.

⁴⁰¹ Weflen, *Bonton + Ideal: A Dallas Neighborhood Stories Film*, 2016.

In 1962, with construction of Woodall Rodgers Freeway and C. F. Hawn Freeway still underway, private developers purchased the whole of Little Egypt and relocated each of the community's residents to make way for a shopping center (see Appendix D). While postwar urban renewal injured other black communities, it annihilated Little Egypt. By 1960, the small, relatively undeveloped community had become completely surrounded by newly constructed "\$40,000 homes" and businesses.⁴⁰² An island of undeveloped land in a sea of modern construction, Little Egypt quickly caught the eye of private developers. In November 1961, Dallas city officials granted a request by the McFarland & Cash Real Estate Firm to rezone the land belonging to Little Egypt from residential to commercial in order to build a shopping center.⁴⁰³

Fearing that they would not receive enough money to relocate if the city condemned their properties, Little Egypt residents agreed to sell.⁴⁰⁴ The firm paid each family a minimum of \$6,500 dollars to relocate.⁴⁰⁵ Using trucks provided by the Great Southwest Warehouse, the firm moved all two-hundred residents--roughly twenty-eight families--in one day in May 1962.⁴⁰⁶ Some residents moved to Elm Thicket and Bon Ton.⁴⁰⁷ Most, however, relocated together to Oak Cliff near the Tenth Street

⁴⁰² "200 Little Egypt Residents to Leave 'Bondage' Today," *Dallas Morning News*, May 15, 1962, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴⁰³ "Little Egypt May Fade with Times," *Dallas Morning News*, November 1, 1961, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴⁰⁴ "200 Little Egypt Residents to Leave 'Bondage' Today," *Dallas Morning News*, May 15, 1962.

⁴⁰⁵ "200 Little Egypt Residents to Leave 'Bondage' Today," *Dallas Morning News*, May 15, 1962.

⁴⁰⁶ "200 Little Egypt Residents to Leave 'Bondage' Today," *Dallas Morning News*, May 15, 1962.

⁴⁰⁷ "200 Little Egypt Residents to Leave 'Bondage' Today," *Dallas Morning News*, May 15, 1962.

neighborhood so they might “continue their settlement.”⁴⁰⁸ There they constructed a new building to house the Little Egypt Baptist Church, an institution that had served as cornerstone of the community since the 1870s.⁴⁰⁹ By 1968, six years after being purchased by the firm, there remained scant evidence of Little Egypt.⁴¹⁰ All of the community’s structures had been demolished and replaced with apartment homes, shopping centers, and parking lots.⁴¹¹ Shoreview Road, which follows the path of Little Egypt’s main dirt road, serves as the only remnant of the community.⁴¹²

The fate of Little Egypt serves as a point of comparison between public and private property acquisition. Because the community was acquired through purchase by a private developer rather than through eminent domain, Little Egypt residents escaped many of the hardships faced by other black Dallasites affected by postwar renewal. Unlike residents of other black communities whose properties were acquired by the city, Little Egypt residents received adequate compensation and assistance in finding alternative housing. Because the firm relocated most residents to the same location, the element of communal unity remained relatively intact. Similarly, the complete clearing of Little Egypt spared residents the element of slow, painful decay that occurred in other

⁴⁰⁸ “Little Egypt May Fade with Times,” *Dallas Morning News*, November 1, 1961, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴⁰⁹ Michael E. Young, “Life Was Hard in Freedman’s Town Called Little Egypt,” *Dallas Morning News*, February 24, 2003.

⁴¹⁰ *Historic Aerials*, Netronline, Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC, <https://www.historicaerials.com>.

⁴¹¹ *Historic Aerials*, Netronline, Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC, <https://www.historicaerials.com>.

⁴¹² *Historic Aerials*, Netronline, Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC, <https://www.historicaerials.com>.

black communities impacted by postwar redevelopment projects. Nonetheless, Little Egypt residents shared one painful similarity with their counterparts across the city-- postwar urban renewal changed forever the community in which they had lived, worked, worshipped, and raised families for decades.

Six years after private developers purchased Little Egypt, the Fair Park community faced further destruction when crews began the process of expanding the fairground's southeast auxiliary parking lot (see Appendix H). The expansion, which took place between 1968 and the early 1980s, dragged on for over a decade and cleared roughly 350 black-owned homes.⁴¹³ City officials announced plans for the expansion in 1959 but did not begin property acquisitions for another nine years. Rather than providing ample time for residents to find alternative housing, the extended time span presented a series of hardships for residents of the Fair Park neighborhood. Destined for demolition, homes in the neighborhood dropped in value, making it difficult for residents to sell their homes and relocate.⁴¹⁴ In addition, city officials prevented residents from making any major repairs or improvements to their properties by refusing to issue permits other than those for "wrecking and moving purposes."⁴¹⁵ Meanwhile, public and private institutions began to neglect the community. The city collected garbage less frequently and utility companies, such as Dallas Power and Light and Lone Star Gas, reduced services in the

⁴¹³ "They didn't offer nothing,' says man facing ouster," *Dallas Morning News*, March 23, 1978, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴¹⁴ Davies, "Fair Park Expansion," 17-18.

⁴¹⁵ "Answers Demanded by Allen," *Dallas Morning News*, March 4, 1969, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

area.⁴¹⁶ As the physical and psychological trappings of neglect became more apparent, rates of vandalism increased, thereby creating an even less pleasant living environment.⁴¹⁷

When city officials appraised Fair Park properties, they did so according to the neighborhood's present condition, an act that resulted in controversy. Fair Park residents, arguing that property appraisals should reflect future use, charged that the city intentionally undervalued their properties and offered low, unfair prices. The city initially offered residents a mere sixty-five cents per square foot, at least sixty cents less than fair market value and roughly ten times less than the amount whites in the area received.⁴¹⁸ Because efforts to negotiate with city officials proved fruitless, thirty Fair Park homeowners partnered with eleven white members of the University Park Methodist Church to organize the Fair Park Block Partnership.⁴¹⁹ Established in 1968, the partnership sought to improve communication between Fair Park residents and city officials to ensure that residents "receive[d] a fair market price for their property value."⁴²⁰

The group first attempted to negotiate with those responsible for land acquisition but meetings proved "unproductive."⁴²¹ City officials continued to deny that the land had

⁴¹⁶ Davies, "Fair Park Expansion," 19.

⁴¹⁷ Davies, "Fair Park Expansion," 19.

⁴¹⁸ Davies, "Fair Park Expansion," 18.; *A Great Park for a Great City: The Case to Restore Fair Park, Reform the State Fair Corporation, and Transform Dallas into a Whole City*, The Foundation for Community Empowerment, July 31, 2017.

⁴¹⁹ Davies, "Fair Park Expansion," 21-22.

⁴²⁰ Davies, "Fair Park Expansion," 21-22.

⁴²¹ Davies, "Fair Park Expansion," 22.

been undervalued despite a study performed by the Urban Research Group of Austin that valued the land at \$4.04 per square foot.⁴²² The Partnership found an ally in black councilman George P. Allen who insisted that his colleagues reassess Fair Park land appraisals.⁴²³ Nevertheless, the park board refused to “deviate from the present purchasing agreement.”⁴²⁴ With a representative from the Community Relations Service of the Justice Department acting as mediator and members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference advocating for Fair Park residents, the city eventually raised their offer to \$1 per square foot.⁴²⁵ Most residents rejected the offer, however, and the city proceeded with condemnation proceedings.⁴²⁶ Those who chose not to appeal the court’s decision received sixty cents per square foot, an amount five cents lower than the city’s original offer.⁴²⁷

⁴²² Davies, “Fair Park Expansion,” 23, 36.

⁴²³ Davies, “Fair Park Expansion,” 27.; “Fair Park,” News Script, WBAP-TV, Fort Worth, June 3, 1969, NBC News Scripts, KXAS-NBC 5 News Collection, The Portal to Texas History, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton, Texas.

⁴²⁴ Davies, “Fair Park Expansion,” 27.

⁴²⁵ Davies, “Fair Park Expansion,” 28, 37.; Michael L. Gillette, “The Rise of the NAACP in Texas,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (April 1978), 393-416. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Congress on Racial Equality all had chapters in Dallas. The Dallas Chapter of the NAACP, like most Texas branches, sat relatively dormant—experiencing short bursts of activity followed by long periods of stagnation—until unified under the Texas State Conference of Chapters in 1937 under the leadership of A. Maceo Smith. Dallas’ black churches maintained close ties to the local NAACP; many church leaders held leadership positions in the organization. During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the Dallas NAACP organized local protests, sit-ins, and marches—much like their counterparts across the nation.; Coshandra Dillard, “Two Little-Known Events in Texas that Threatened the Progression of the Civil Rights Movement,” *Timeline*, Medium, December 30, 2017. However, in October 1956, a Texas judge placed a temporary restraining order on all NAACP chapters within the state. The restraining order was followed by a permanent injunction which severely restricted NAACP activity within the state.

⁴²⁶ Davies, “Fair Park Expansion,” 37

⁴²⁷ Davies, “Fair Park Expansion,” 37

In November 1970, with only twenty-three families still in possession of their property, the Fair Park Block Partnership filed suit in federal court to “test the constitutionality of city procedures in acquiring the Fair Park property.”⁴²⁸ After being dismissed by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, the case made it to the Supreme Court in October 1971 where it remained for two years before being sent back to the Appellate Court.⁴²⁹ On February 22, 1974, the court denied a rehearing and in August a three-judge federal panel reviewed the case and determined that the city could carry on with condemnation proceedings.⁴³⁰ After acquiring the final two properties in April 1981, the city proceeded with construction, completing the expansion within a few years and “laying waste to a once-vibrant area” in the process.⁴³¹



Unyielding residential segregation, propagated by hostile whites and implemented by ineffectual city leaders, left the thousands of black Dallasites displaced by the city’s postwar renewal projects with few options. Because city officials and private builders failed to provide replacement housing, due in large part to white opposition, many of those displaced by the city’s renewal projects became forced to move in with family or

⁴²⁸ Davies, “Fair Park Expansion,” 37

⁴²⁹ Davies, “Fair Park Expansion,” 38.; “Fair Park Suit Revived,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 23, 1975, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴³⁰ Fred and Dorothy Joiner et al., Plaintiffs-appellants, v. City of Dallas, Texas, et al., Defendants-appellees, 488 F.2d 519 (5th Cir. 1974).; “Fair Park Rehearing Denied,” *Dallas Morning News*, February 27, 1974, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Condemnation Laws Upheld in Suit,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 20, 1974, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴³¹ “Board finally approves purchase of property at Fair Park,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 7, 1981, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

friends. Consequently, many black Dallasites found themselves living “two, three, and four families in small dwellings” after postwar projects swept through their communities.⁴³² Meanwhile, the city’s black population continued to swell. By 1962 the number of black Dallasites had risen to over 130,000, an increase of 50,000 since 1950.⁴³³ By 1970, black Dallasites constituted nearly one-quarter of the city’s total population, numbering over 210,000.⁴³⁴ While each redevelopment project left the city with fewer homes available to blacks, Dallas’ black communities became forced to accommodate growing numbers of people.

The city’s shortage of black housing should not be attributed to an overall abatement in homebuilding within the city. On the contrary, the construction of single-family homes in Dallas boomed after the war. Few of those, however, were intended for black occupation. Between 1940 and 1950, private builders constructed 60,368 single-family homes within the city.⁴³⁵ Only 1,000 of those were available to blacks.⁴³⁶ In 1949, the City of Dallas issues 5,062 permits for the construction of single-family homes in four all-white housing developments.⁴³⁷ Within the same year, private builders

⁴³² “Public Housing Demanded for Dallas Negroes,” *Dallas Morning News*, February 10, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Annexing Urged for West Dallas,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 28, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴³³ “Negro C of C Backs Cabell Slum Plan,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 5, 1962, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴³⁴ Eric Nicholson, “Mapping Race, Poverty and a Half Century of Change in Dallas,” *The Dallas Observer*, March 31, 2016.; “City Population History from 1850–2000,” *Texas Almanac*, Texas State Historical Association, 2000.

⁴³⁵ “60,368 Homes Built by Dallas in Decade,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 31, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴³⁶ “Annexing Urged for West Dallas,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 28, 1950.

⁴³⁷ “More Building Permits Issued but 1949 Values Show Decline,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 2, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

constructed more than 500 apartment units in white areas.⁴³⁸ Between January and September of 1950, private builders constructed 9,238 single-family homes for whites.⁴³⁹

While thousands of modern, white-only homes sprang up across the city, Dallas officials attempted to study and address the depth and severity of the black housing shortage. In 1950, President of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, John W. Carpenter, appointed a five-man committee to study the housing needs of black Dallasites.⁴⁴⁰ Working in conjunction with the Dallas Citizens Council, the Dallas Negro Chamber of Commerce, and the Dallas Housing Authority, the committee issued a seven-page report that labeled the black housing shortage “acute and critical” and “fraught with dangers” for the entire city.⁴⁴¹ The report called for the immediate construction of at least 4,000 dwellings.⁴⁴² To placate whites and prevent the future development of slum conditions, the report urged that new black housing be segregated and built within the city limits.⁴⁴³ Because many black Dallasites could not afford to buy homes, the report argued, the city needed to expand public housing.⁴⁴⁴

Although city officials recognized the need to remedy the black housing shortage, they struggled to provide solutions in the face of white antagonism. White Dallasites

⁴³⁸ “Housing Center Plans Revealed,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 9, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Apartments to be Built in Lakewood,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 11, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴³⁹ “Dallas Chalks up Housing Record,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 14, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴⁴⁰ “Annexing Urged for West Dallas,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 28, 1950.

⁴⁴¹ “Annexing Urged for West Dallas,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 28, 1950.

⁴⁴² “Annexing Urged for West Dallas,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 28, 1950.

⁴⁴³ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 40.

⁴⁴⁴ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 36.

clearly demonstrated their aversion to additional black residential areas by thwarting nearly every attempt to establish new black enclaves within the city. Arguing that blacks living nearby would deflate land values and create the potential for racial unrest, white Dallasites successfully obstructed several black housing proposals.⁴⁴⁵ In many cases, outraged whites managed to use their collective influence to convince local and federal officials to reject black housing propositions.

Persuading Dallas city officials to reject black housing proposals proved relatively easy for hostile whites. In 1949, developer J. Hub Hill proposed a \$14 million black housing development seven miles southwest of downtown near the Cockrell Hill area.⁴⁴⁶ Hill's plan involved the construction of 2,000 homes, a school, churches, five parks, and three shopping centers on a 576-acre tract of land.⁴⁴⁷ The Dallas City Plan Commission, the Veterans Administration, and the FHA voiced their support for the plan.⁴⁴⁸ However, nearby whites, led by minister and Cockrell Hill Mayor George Owens, managed to convince Dallas City Council to refuse to supply water to the development, effectively halting the project.⁴⁴⁹

Similarly, in December 1952, the Dallas City Plan Commission denied a special permit request by James Foster of the Alpha Corporation.⁴⁵⁰ Foster wanted to build a

⁴⁴⁵ "Mesquite Negro Housing Site Turned down by Dallas FHA," *Dallas Morning News*, May 23, 1948, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴⁴⁶ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 19.

⁴⁴⁷ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 19.

⁴⁴⁸ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 19.

⁴⁴⁹ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 19.

⁴⁵⁰ "Clearance Denied for Apartments," *Dallas Morning News*, December 11, 1952, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

black housing complex consisting of “four 13-story apartment buildings,” capable of housing 1,200 families, along with a shopping center, a theater, a motel, and recreational facilities.⁴⁵¹ Local whites, represented by attorney Robert W. Finklea, pressured city council to deny the permit, which they did on grounds that the development would create congestion in the area and “cut off light and air from nearby residences.”⁴⁵²

White Dallasites also succeeded in prompting federal housing officials to deny several black housing initiatives. In 1948, Edward T. Dicker of the Dallas Home Builders Association proposed the establishment of a six-thousand-unit black subdivision ten miles southeast of downtown.⁴⁵³ Nearby whites organized in opposition and threatened to sue. In turn, citing distance from downtown and inadequate transportation, the FHA rejected the plan.⁴⁵⁴ In July of the same year, the FHA rejected a proposal by Tom Lively and Ira L. Ripley to build a black subdivision of 247 homes roughly one mile southeast of downtown.⁴⁵⁵ Whites in the area established the Cedar Crest-Skyline Improvement League and collected 614 signatures of those who opposed the subdivision.⁴⁵⁶ The FHA, in turn, refused to approve the project “in the face of significant opposition.”⁴⁵⁷ The following month, John J. Stuart proposed building 500-800 black homes and duplexes several miles northwest of downtown near the Trinity River, a plan supported by the

⁴⁵¹ “Clearance Denied for Apartments,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 11, 1952, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴⁵² “Clearance Denied for Apartments,” *Dallas Morning News*, December 11, 1952, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴⁵³ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 15-16.

⁴⁵⁴ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 15-16.

⁴⁵⁵ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 17.

⁴⁵⁶ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 17.

⁴⁵⁷ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 17.

Dallas Negro Chamber of Commerce.⁴⁵⁸ However, citing the potential for flooding in the area, the FHA rejected the proposal despite a survey completed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers that certified that the area would be protected from flooding from the nearby levee.⁴⁵⁹

In some instances, whites did not require government involvement to circumvent black housing proposals, but rather did so on their own accord. In 1949, Joseph B. Martin purchased eighty-seven acres of black-owned farmland near White Rock Lake in hopes of establishing a black subdivision.⁴⁶⁰ Because several blacks already lived in the area, Martin assumed that white opposition would be minimal.⁴⁶¹ However, a nearby white landowner managed to close the road to the property, thereby denying access and forcing Martin to abandon his plan.⁴⁶²

While most whites demonstrated their aversion to having black neighbors by planting “For Whites Only” signs in their front yard, others resorted to violence to keep blacks out of historically white neighborhoods.⁴⁶³ As Dallas’ black communities began to burst at the seams, some wealthier blacks moved beyond established neighborhood boundaries and into nearby white areas. Beginning in the 1940s, several black Dallas families relocated from Bon Ton to the area north of Hatcher Street, a neighborhood

⁴⁵⁸ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 18.

⁴⁵⁹ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 18.

⁴⁶⁰ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 19.

⁴⁶¹ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 19.

⁴⁶² Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 19.

⁴⁶³ Melissa Repko, “Hamilton Park, North Dallas’ Historically Black Neighborhood, Celebrates 60th Anniversary,” *The Dallas Morning News*, August 2015.

considered off-limits to blacks. Local whites responded by attacking the homes purchased by these families in an effort to frighten them away and deter other blacks from moving into the neighborhood. Between 1940 and 1941, angry whites bombed nearly twenty black-owned homes in South Dallas.

Outraged whites resurrected the bombing campaign a decade later by dynamiting eleven black-owned homes between February 1950 and the summer of 1951. The Dallas Chamber of Commerce and the Dallas chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) offered rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrators.⁴⁶⁴ With police investigations offering scant results, city and community leaders reached out to Texas Governor Allan Shivers and the Federal Bureau of Investigations for assistance, both of whom opted to leave the issue to local authorities.⁴⁶⁵ Meanwhile, the bombings continued. Black and white community leaders alike urged city officials to take action before the bombings sparked a larger racial conflict and created a “strife that could blacken the name of Dallas for the next thirty years.”⁴⁶⁶ In response, the DCC assembled a blue-ribbon grand jury to investigate

⁴⁶⁴ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 40.; “Bomb Conviction Reward Announced,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 12, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴⁶⁵ “State Patrolmen Leave Bomb Cases to Dallas,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 11, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Bombing Aid Bid Going to Washington,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 5, 1951, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; Coshandra Dillard, “Two Little-Known Events in Texas that Threatened the Progression of the Civil Rights Movement,” *Timeline*, Medium, December 30, 2017. While Governor Shivers hesitated to take an active role in ending the bombing of black homes in South Dallas, he proved willing to get involved in local affairs when he deployed the Texas Rangers to prevent blacks from attending Mansfield High in 1956. Shivers publicly espoused his opposition to *Brown v. Board* (1954), the Supreme Court case that ended racial segregation in public schools, and played a pivotal role in the state’s injunction against the NAACP.

⁴⁶⁶ Lynn Landrum, “Thinking Out Loud,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 6, 1950, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

the attacks.⁴⁶⁷ With the aid of the Texas Rangers, the grand jury completed its investigation and arrested ten suspects.⁴⁶⁸ After some initial stalling, the grand jury released a report of their findings which indicated that the plot “reached into unbelievable places” and cited evidence that “lay and religious and community groups” had participated in the bombing campaign.⁴⁶⁹ Nonetheless, the report failed to identify individuals due to a “lack of sufficient evidence” and none of those arrested--who proved to be mere “underlings” in the plot--faced conviction.⁴⁷⁰

Due, in part, to intense and unwavering opposition on the part of indignant whites, Dallas city officials sought to remedy the black housing crisis through public housing projects. Erecting black public housing complexes within or adjacent to existing black communities abated white outrage and allowed city officials to house hundreds of black Dallasites in relatively small areas. In addition, federal funding made public housing complexes economically attractive.⁴⁷¹ By 1960, Dallas had 3,522 units within six black

⁴⁶⁷ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 40.

⁴⁶⁸ Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 40.

⁴⁶⁹ “Bomb Jury Fails to Make Report,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 22, 1951, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.; “Bomb Jury Bills 3 More, Urges Continued Probe,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 23, 1951, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴⁷⁰ “Bomb Jury Bills 3 More, Urges Continued Probe,” *Dallas Morning News*, September 23, 1951.; Payne, *Dallas Citizens Council*, 40.

⁴⁷¹ Title III of the Housing Act of 1949 provided federal funding for the construction of more than 800,000 public housing units. The law limited the cost of each unit to a maximum of \$1750 per room and set a maximum income requirement of \$1700 for Dallas families. The law also required the number of units constructed must equal the number of dwellings cleared.; “City Pledged 2,800 Public Housing Units,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 18, 1949, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985. In 1949, for example, the City of Dallas received \$430,000 from the National Public Housing Administration for the construction of 2,800 public housing units within the city.

public housing facilities, including Brackins Village, Edgar Ward Place, Frazier Courts, Rhoads Terrace, Roseland Homes, and Turner Courts.⁴⁷²

Although public housing did help alleviate the black housing shortage and provided many poor blacks with improved living conditions, it possessed its own set of shortcomings. By building public housing projects within existing black communities, city officials crammed more blacks into already overcrowded areas. The removal of homes to make way for public housing projects replaced middle-income property owners with low-income renters. The construction of Roseland Homes in North Dallas, for example, came at a cost of 266 homes and one church.⁴⁷³ Displaced homeowners found little benefit in public housing as many did not wish to live in cramped rental complexes. Even if willing to do so, low-income requirements disqualified all but the poorest blacks.⁴⁷⁴ Because new black subdivisions of single-family homes proved elusive, middle-income blacks displaced by urban renewal initiatives became faced with even fewer options than their lower-income counterparts. Black leaders and housing contractors attempted to work together to suburbanize black housing, but they lacked the political and financial resources to achieve any palpable results.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷² “Only 2.8% of Population Live in Public Housing,” *Dallas Morning News*, October 2, 1960, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴⁷³ Graff, *The Dallas Myth*, 174.; Prior and Kemper, “From Freedman’s Town to Uptown,” 189.

⁴⁷⁴ “Blight--8: Razing Slums Would Leave Many Homeless,” *Dallas Morning News*, January 21, 1962, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985. The Dallas Housing Authority determined eligibility and rental rates according to family income. To be eligible for public housing, a family of five, for instance, had to have an income less than \$69 per week.

⁴⁷⁵ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 13.

The establishment of Hamilton Park in 1953 proved the only successful attempt to provide a subdivision of single-family homes for middle-income black Dallasites.⁴⁷⁶ Following the South Dallas bombings in 1950-1951, founder and president of the Dallas Citizens' Interracial Association (DCIA), Jerome Crossman, began searching for a nonprofit corporation to buy and improve a piece of land in order to construct a black housing development to alleviate the housing shortage.⁴⁷⁷ Crossman explained that the development would "take care of many of those who must move to make way for the expansion of Love Field."⁴⁷⁸ The Hoblitzelle Foundation, founded in 1942 by theater owner and DCC leader Karl Hoblitzelle and his wife Esther, proved willing to help. The organization lent \$216,872.93 to the DCIA for the purchase of 233 acres of land ten miles north of downtown in an area surrounded by natural barriers and far removed from whites.⁴⁷⁹ Three Dallas banks lent \$432,619.99 for the construction of water and sewer lines.⁴⁸⁰

Construction began in the summer of 1953 and the subdivision opened in May 1954 with fifty newly constructed homes.⁴⁸¹ Upon final completion in 1961, Hamilton

⁴⁷⁶ Hamilton Park is named for Dr. Richard T. Hamilton, a black Dallas physician and civic leader. The neighborhood contains streets named for prominent blacks, including musician Harry Belafonte and baseball player Roy Campanella.

⁴⁷⁷ Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 144.; "Interracial Group Asks Annexation for Negro Area," *Dallas Morning News*, July 18, 1953, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴⁷⁸ "New Negro Housing," *Dallas Morning News*, July 24, 1953, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴⁷⁹ "Group Tells Home Plans for Negroes," *Dallas Morning News*, March 1, 1953, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

⁴⁸⁰ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 50.

⁴⁸¹ "Sunday Ceremonies to Open Housing Project for Negroes," *Dallas Morning News*, April 28, 1954, NewsBank/Readex, The Historical Dallas Morning News, 1885-1985.

Park consisted of 742 houses, an apartment complex, a shopping center, a drive-in movie theater, an ice cream shop, a barbershop, an auto repair shop, a park, several churches, and one school (see Appendix A.3).⁴⁸² For many black Dallasites, Hamilton Park was “one straw in the wind bringing sweeping changes in many areas of life.”⁴⁸³ Myra Christian, who moved with her husband and young children to Hamilton Park in 1954, explained that the neighborhood “gave [them] a sense of being wanted and needed.”⁴⁸⁴ However, while Hamilton Park provided much-needed housing for middle-income black Dallasites and allowed residents a degree of protection from pervasive racism, the development’s “contribution to the ongoing struggle for racial equality in Dallas was more symbolic than material.”⁴⁸⁵

Hamilton Park managed to evade the fate of other black housing developments because its conception and execution did not breach the confines of discriminatory policies and attitudes toward black housing; the development’s location and funding minimized white opposition. Built in a sparsely populated area far removed from the urban center of Dallas—an area where several blacks already lived—and funded privately, Hamilton Park posed little social or financial threat to white Dallasites.⁴⁸⁶ Similarly, because planners designed Hamilton Park as a single-family housing addition

⁴⁸² Phillips, *White Metropolis*, 144.; Melissa Repko, “Hamilton Park, North Dallas’ Historically Black Neighborhood, Celebrates 60th Anniversary,” *The Dallas Morning News*, August 2015.

⁴⁸³ Wilson, *Hamilton Park*, 53.

⁴⁸⁴ Repko, “Hamilton Park.”

⁴⁸⁵ Graff, *The Dallas Myth*, 176.

⁴⁸⁶ Hamilton Park sits only blocks from the former location of John Grant’s small black settlement of Spring Valley.

for middle-income black families, the social and economic taboos associated with poor blacks did not mar white Dallas' perception of the development. Finally, unlike other black housing proposals, Hamilton Park had the backing of a well-organized interracial organization and a prominent and wealthy white city leader. Together, the organizers and sponsors of Hamilton Park formed a powerful and influential alliance that managed to effectively navigate the development through the tempestuous waters of racial segregation in Dallas. In doing so, they achieved something that Dallas officials and private developers could not: provide adequate housing for at least some of the thousands of black Dallasites displaced by the city's postwar urban renewal and slum clearance projects.⁴⁸⁷

Conclusion

Dallas' urban redevelopment projects, intended to clear out blighted areas, only exacerbated slum conditions in the city's black neighborhoods by upsetting the stability of these communities and by worsening the black housing crisis. The destruction of businesses and churches, and the erection of physical barriers, disrupted the economic and social stability and cohesion of black communities. Likewise, the destruction of homes and the displacement of thousands of black Dallasites exacerbated the black housing crisis. Meanwhile, residential segregation, driven by hostile whites and maintained by city officials, prevented the establishment of new black housing developments within the city. Existing black communities, already suffering from severe

⁴⁸⁷ "Hamilton Park Community Becomes Historical Marker," *The Dallas Examiner*, May 15, 2017. In July 2016, the Texas Historical Commission designated Hamilton Park as an Official Texas Historical Marker.

overcrowding, became the only option for those displaced by renewal projects until the city began building public housing complexes that provided housing for low-income blacks. Hamilton Park served as the only housing subdivision established for middle-income black Dallasites.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

As this research has demonstrated, residential segregation, which forced the formation and growth of Dallas' black communities, led to the development of slum conditions in these communities as the city's black population swelled. In the immediate postwar years, Dallas city officials targeted the city's black communities for slum clearance through the construction of massive public works projects. Although intended to clear out blighted areas, these projects, coupled with pervasive residential segregation, only served to exacerbate slum condition in the city's black communities by upsetting their social and economic stability and by contributing to their overcrowding by intensifying the black housing crisis.

Dallas' slum clearance initiatives adversely impacted black communities across the city through the destruction of homes, businesses, schools, and churches and through the disruption of communal unity, a facet upon which most black Dallasites depended for safety, security, education, healthcare, employment, shopping, entertainment, religious and spiritual practices, and socialization. Those who lost homes often ended up living with other families, either in their own neighborhood or another black area of Dallas where overcrowding and the threat of demolition persisted. Due to unrelenting white opposition, little effort was made to help those who had been displaced by the city's

urban redevelopment initiatives other than the construction of public housing projects and the establishment of Hamilton Park.

Black-owned businesses demolished to make way for roadways or other projects had to relocate and reestablish themselves in new locations. Businesses that escaped the bulldozers had to adjust to diminished accessibility and losses in their client base. Perhaps the most significant consequence of the city's urban redevelopment projects was the disruption of community cohesiveness. When highways rolled through these communities, they not only destroyed property and scattered families and neighbors, they also created both physical and psychological barriers, splitting once interconnected neighborhoods into segments and fashioning an environment in which people who had once belonged to close-knit communities began to lose contact and to perceive one another differently based on the new geography of their landscape.

Many of Dallas' black communities continue to reel from the wave of urban renewal that swept the city in the postwar decades. Redevelopment wiped Little Egypt off the map in one swoop; upscale apartments and retail establishments now occupy the land. Similarly, postwar urban redevelopment has left scant evidence of North Dallas. In the years following the construction of North Central Expressway, new construction gradually replaced the remains of Dallas' largest and most prominent black community. Today the area is known as Uptown and is occupied by high-end apartment complexes and businesses. The State-Thomas Historic District, a 115-acre tract on the southwestern

corner of what was North Dallas, and the Freedman's Cemetery, designated as a historic landmark in 1992, serve as the only surviving pieces of North Dallas.⁴⁸⁸

When city and state officials proposed the expansion of Central Expressway in the 1990s, Donald Payton, president of the African American Genealogy Interest Group, and Frances James, cemetery preservationist, urged leaders to protect the cemetery. The Texas Highway Department agreed to an archeological survey led by archaeologist Jerry Henderson. Working with both the Texas and Dallas County Historical Commissions for over two years, the archeological team discovered roughly 2,000 unmarked graves. After relocating 1,500 graves, the Dallas County Historical Commission sponsored a memorial for the cemetery. Designed by sculptor David Newtown, the Freedman's Cemetery memorial features two bronze statues--one man and one woman--standing on either side of a large archway, seemingly guarding the entrance to the 150-year-old black cemetery.⁴⁸⁹

After the construction of Central Expressway, Deep Ellum lost much of its identity and vitality. When officials elevated Central Expressway in the late 1960s, more Deep Ellum structures faced demolition. The neighborhood sat relatively abandoned for decades. In the 1980s, the music scene--an element that played a pivotal role in original Deep Ellum--sparked the flame that revived the neighborhood. In recent years, Deep

⁴⁸⁸ Dallas City Code, Article 225, PD 225, *State-Thomas Special Purpose District*. A small segment of the southwest portion of North Dallas--bounded by Fairmont Street, Colby Street, McKinney Avenue, and Worthington Street--was designated the State-Thomas Historic District in 1986.; Dallas City Code, Chapter 51A, Ordinance #21203, *Freedman's Cemetery*.

⁴⁸⁹ The Freedman's Cemetery is located on the southwestern corner of the intersection of Lemmon Avenue and North Central Expressway.

Ellum has been resurrected with a new identity, one that is very much reflective of its past. Today, a plethora of music venues, restaurants, and shops occupy the surviving structures, many of which are adorned with large, vividly-colored murals.

In contrast, the Tenth Street, Fair Park, and Bon Ton communities continue to struggle, battling poverty, dilapidated housing, and crime for decades. Dilapidated homes and empty lots dot the landscape. Rather than stepping in to aid residents who cannot afford to keep homes in good repair and up-to-code, city officials often opt to demolish homes, leaving these neighborhoods scattered with empty lots that serve as painful reminders of what once was and what is to come. Despite being designated a historic district in 1993, Tenth Street features almost as many empty lots as it does homes, and several of those homes are adorned with boarded windows as they await the bulldozer. Most structures in these communities feature bars on doors and windows, reflecting an epidemic of crime that city officials and law enforcement have yet to curb.

Elm Thicket, now known as North Park, has fared slightly better than its counterparts across the city. Although it too has suffered crime, poverty, and neglect following the expansion of Love Field, the severity of these elements has proven less grave than that of Tenth Street, Fair Park, and Bon Ton. The area struggled for several years after the expansion before finding its footing when several of the original families formed neighborhood groups to address the community's woes. The successful resurgence of Elm Thicket can be attributed, in part, to a few factors: Elm Thicket was historically less congested than other black communities; residents had higher incomes

than other black Dallasites; and the neighborhood has experienced an influx of young, ethnically diverse people in recent years who brought with them a renewed vitality. Additionally, the proximity of Love Field has enticed new businesses to the area. Today the neighborhood is clean and well-kept; homes, many of them original to the neighborhood, are well-maintained and lawns are neatly manicured. Nevertheless, Elm Thicket continues to suffer from a relatively high crime rate.

Despite these ailments, residents of Dallas' black communities continue to take pride in their neighborhoods and have yet to abandon efforts to revive them. Operation 10th Street, for instance, is a nonprofit community-building organization formed by residents and allies that works to preserve, beautify, and safeguard the Tenth Street neighborhood. In Bon Ton, residents organized the Bon Ton Neighborhood Association that works toward revitalizing the community. Bon Ton Farms, a community-based urban agricultural cooperative, grows produce and raises livestock for consumption or sale with goods and profits going back to the community. Elm Thicket and Fair Park have also formed various neighborhood associations to assist residents, thwart crime, and maintain homes. With the aid of organizations like Preservation Dallas, a nonprofit organization that works to protect the history and culture of Dallas neighborhoods and buildings, these groups continue to fight to save their communities.

Although a case study in nature, this research expands our understanding of urban history, African American history, and postwar race relations in Dallas and beyond. It also demonstrates that progress in the form of urban renewal has sometimes had highly

detrimental impacts on poor and minority communities and, in doing so, allows us to better understand black urban communities that continue to struggle. For those communities, like North Dallas, that have been nearly erased by urban growth, this research helps ensure that their histories are not forgotten. We should remember that many Dallas roadways, parking lots, airports, and skyscrapers now sit upon land that once was home to black Dallasites who, in the face of unyielding oppression, managed to build thriving, self-sufficient communities.

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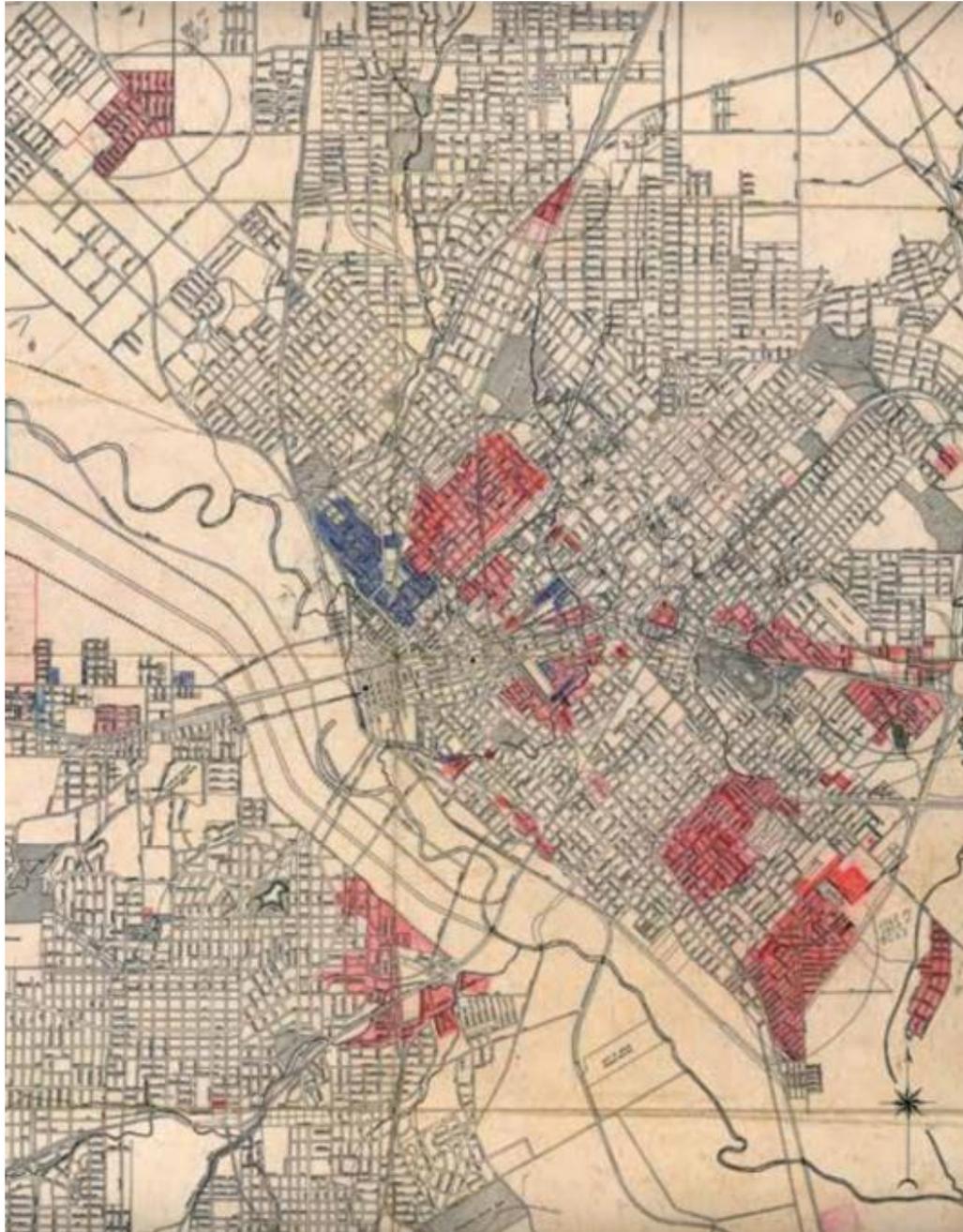
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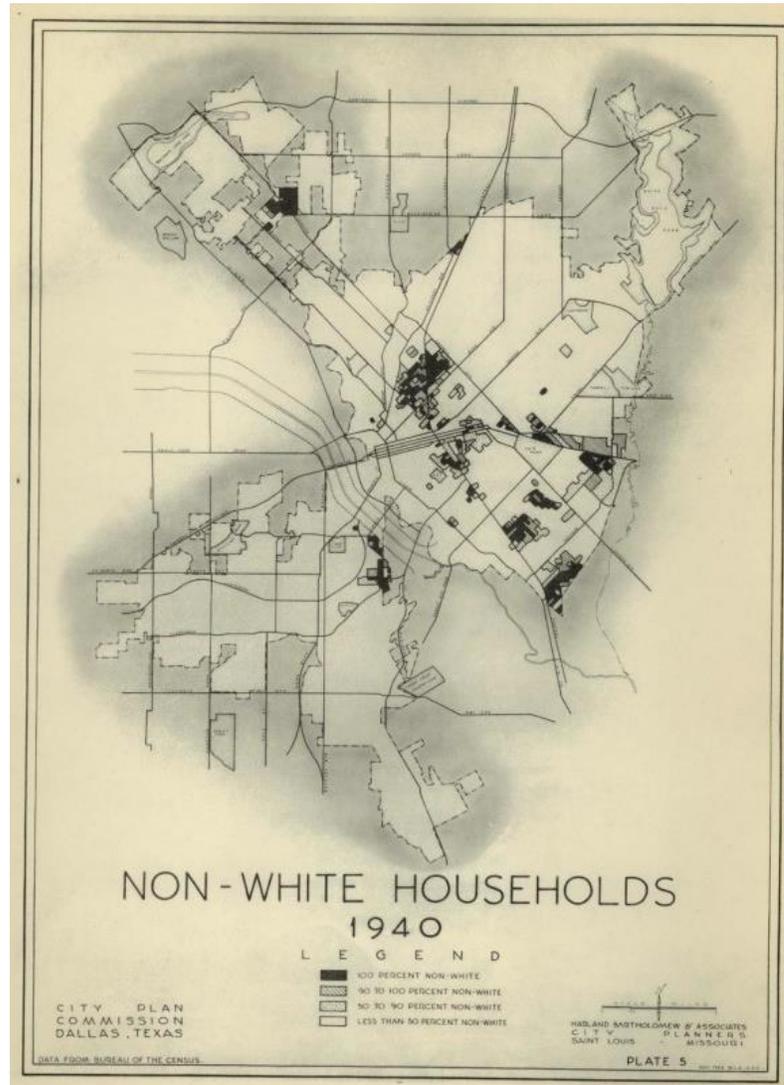
APPENDIX A
Miscellaneous Images

A.1



1945 map of Dallas created by the City of Dallas Public Works Department showing Mexican (blue) and African-American (red) neighborhoods.

A.2



1940 map created by the Dallas City Plan Commission showing non-white neighborhoods.

A.3



September 1962 aerial of Hamilton Park.
UTA Libraries Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington

APPENDIX B

Images Related to North Dallas

B.1



1930: North Dallas marked in red.
Dallas Historic Aerial Photographs, 1930 Fairchild Survey, Central University Libraries,
Southern Methodist University

B.2



1945: North Dallas marked in red with paths of Central Expressway and Woodall Rodgers Freeway marked in blue.
Dallas Aerial Photographs, 1945 USDA Survey, Central University Libraries, Southern Methodist University

B.3



1995: North Dallas marked in red with Central Expressway and Woodall Rodgers Freeway marked in blue.
Google Satellite Images

B.4



October 1947: North Central Expressway under construction.
UTA Libraries Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington

B.5



1947: North Central Expressway under construction.
UTA Libraries Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington

B.6



1947: Workers move a house at Ross Avenue to make way for Central Expressway.
Dallas Morning News

B.7



September 19, 1949: North Central Expressway shortly after completion.
UTA Libraries Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington

B.8



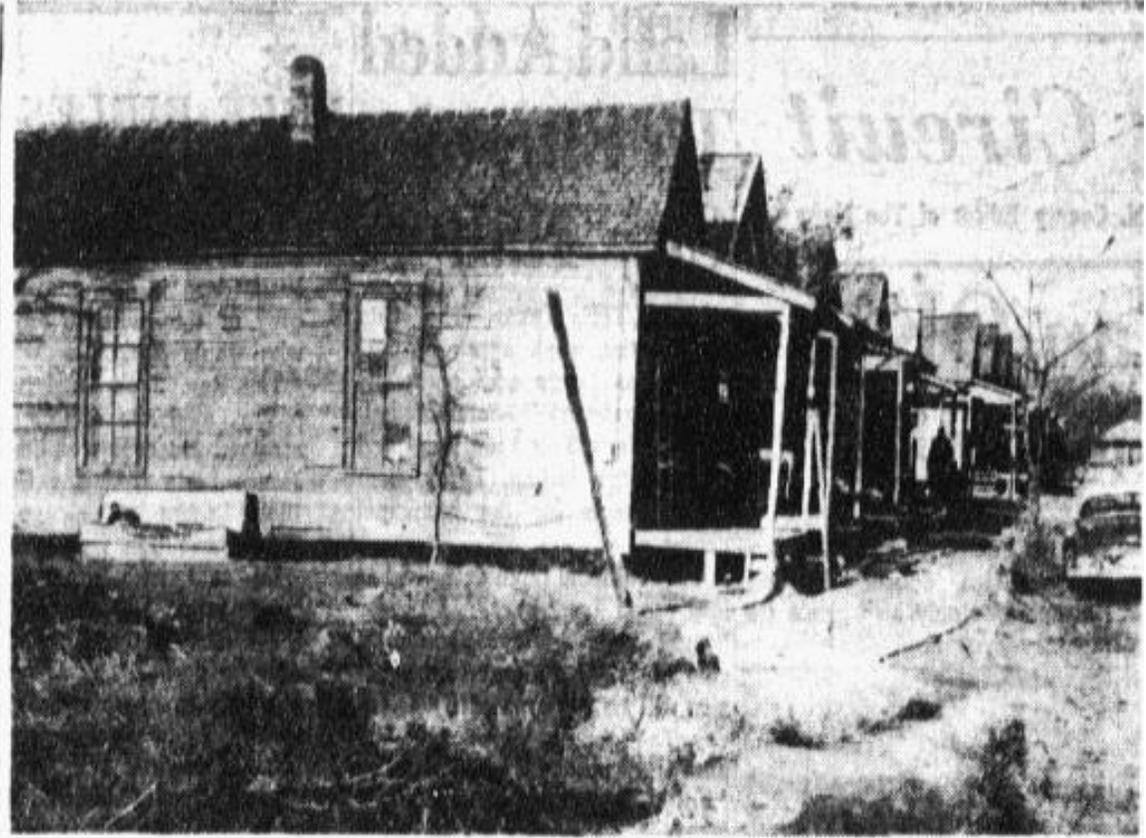
August 19, 1949: Thousands of Dallasites gather at the newly constructed overpass at Ross Avenue to celebrate the opening of the first leg of Central Expressway. Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

B.9



Shotgun houses in North Dallas, 1914

B.9



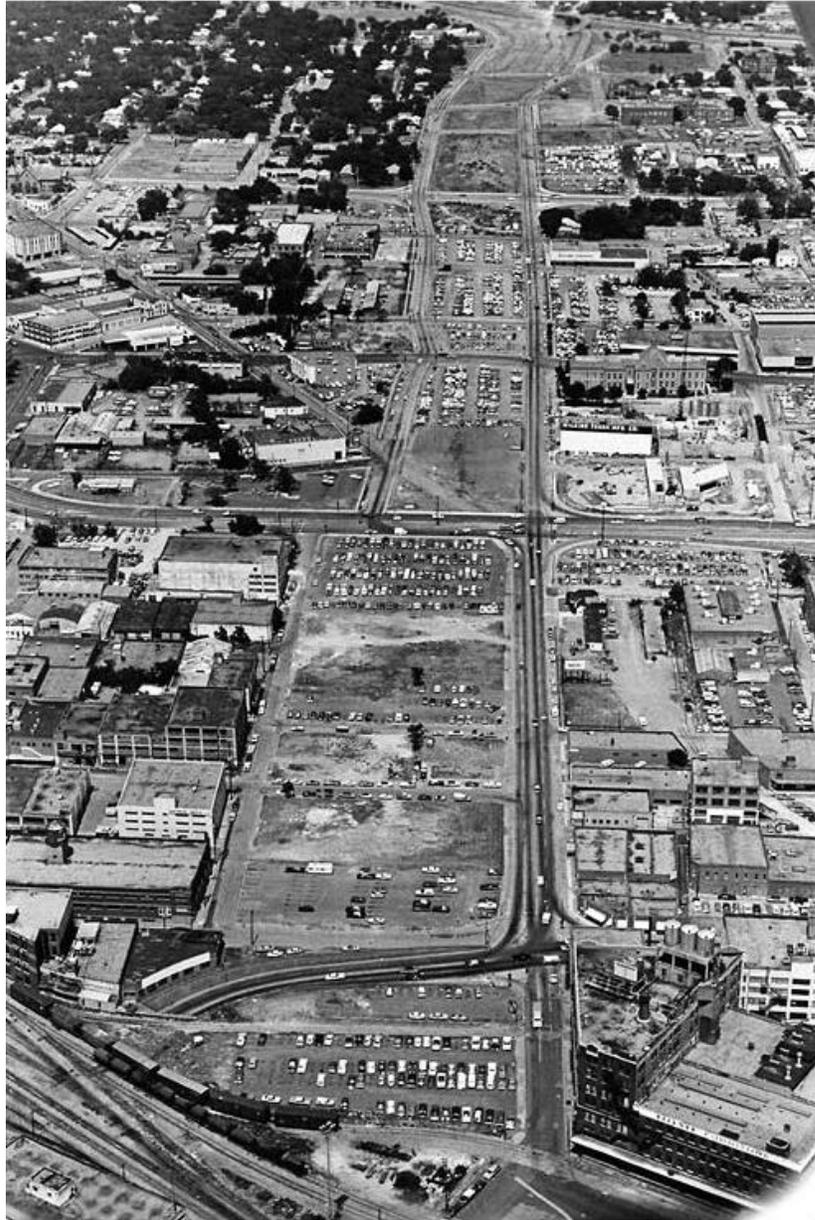
1959: Shotgun houses in North Dallas, shortly before being demolished to make way for Woodall Rodgers Freeway.
Dallas Morning News

B.10



Woodall Rodgers Freeway under construction.
UTA Libraries Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington

B.11



This 1976 aerial shows the cleared portion of Woodall Rodgers Freeway being used as a parking lot.

Dallas Public Library

APPENDIX C

Images Related to the Tenth Street Neighborhood

C.1



1930: The Tenth Street neighborhood marked in red.
Dallas Historic Aerial Photographs, 1930 Fairchild Survey, Central University Library
Digital Collections, Southern Methodist University

C.2



1964: The Tenth Street neighborhood highlighted in red.
USDA-SCS Aerial Collection, Digital Collections, Dallas Public Library

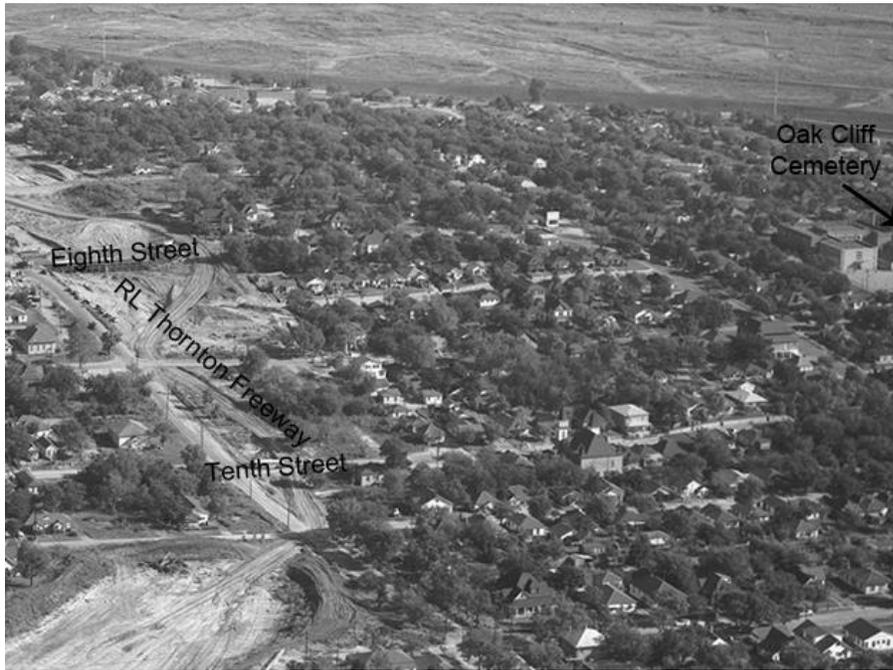
C.3



1930: The Tenth Street neighborhood (red) with the path of South R. L. Thornton Freeway (blue).

Dallas Historic Aerial Photographs, 1930 Fairchild Survey, Central University Libraries Digital Collection, Southern Methodist University

C.4



1957: South R. L. Thornton Freeway under construction.
UTA Libraries Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington

C.5



1959: South R. L. Thornton freeway under construction.
UTA Libraries Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington

APPENDIX D
Images Related to Little Egypt

D.1



1930: Little Egypt highlighted in red.
Dallas Historic Aerial Photographs, 1930 Fairchild Survey, Central University Libraries,
Southern Methodist University

D.2



1945: Little Egypt highlighted in red.
Dallas Aerial Photographs, 1945 USDA Survey, Central University Libraries,
Southern Methodist University

D.3



1962: Little Egypt highlighted in red.
Advocate: Lake Highlands

D.4



1995: Little Egypt highlighted in red.
Google Satellite Images

D.5



Jeff and Hannah Hill, original settlers of Little Egypt.
Dallas Morning News

APPENDIX E

Images Related to Deep Ellum and Stringtown

E.1



1930: Deep Ellum, Stringtown, and North Dallas shown in red.
Dallas Historic Aerial Photographs, 1930 Fairchild Survey, Central University Libraries,
Southern Methodist University

E.2



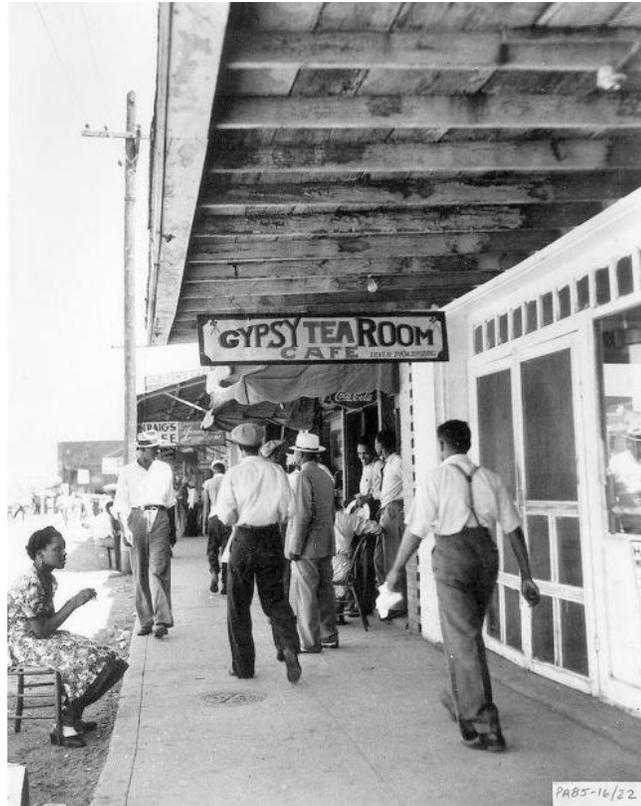
1995: Deep Ellum, Stringtown, and North Dallas highlighted in red with Central Expressway highlighted in blue.
Google Satellite Images

E.3



Shotgun houses located in Deep Ellum, circa 1920s.
D Magazine

E.4



Circa 1937: The Gypsy Tea Room Café, located on the 200 block of Central Avenue in Deep Ellum. The establishment was demolished to make way for Central Expressway. Texas/Dallas History and Archives Division, Dallas Public Library

E.5



1947: Stringtown, before the construction of Central Expressway.
Texas/Dallas History and Archives Division, Dallas Public Library

E.6



1922: Deep Ellum
Texas/Dallas History and Archives Division, Dallas Public Library

E.7



Present-day view of Central Expressway looking east on Main Street in Deep Ellum featuring an overlay of a photograph from 1922.

DeepEllumHistory.com

Texas/Dallas History and Archives Division, Dallas Public Library

APPENDIX F
Images Related to Elm Thicket

F.1



1930: The Elm Thicket neighborhood highlighted in red.
Dallas Historic Aerial Photographs, 1930 Fairchild Survey, Central University Libraries,
Southern Methodist University

F.2



1945: The Elm Thicket neighborhood highlighted in red.
Dallas Historic Aerial Photographs, 1945 USDA Survey, Central University Libraries,
Southern Methodist University

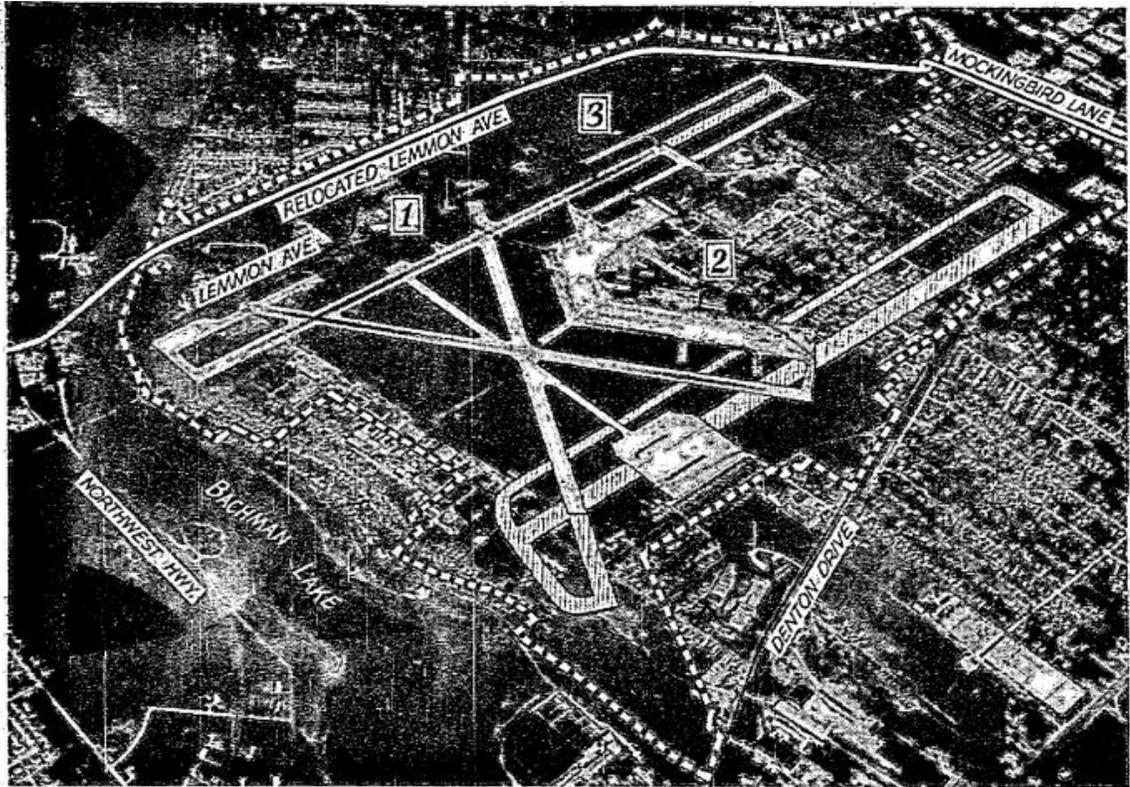
F.3



1995: The Elm Thicket neighborhood highlighted in red with Love Field highlighted in blue.

Google Satellite Images

F.4



Plans for the expansion of Love Field, published in the *Dallas Morning News*, January 1953.

APPENDIX G
Images Related to Bon Ton

G.1



1945 aerial showing Bon Ton highlighted in red.
Dallas Aerial Photographs, 1945 USDA Survey, Central University Libraries, Southern
Methodist University

G.2



Aerial of Bon Ton (circa 1940s) showing the paths of South Central Expressway and C. F. Hawn Freeway.
Bonton + Ideal

G.3



1995: Bon Ton highlighted in red with South Central Expressway and C. F. Hawn Freeway highlighted in blue.
Google Satellite Images

G.4

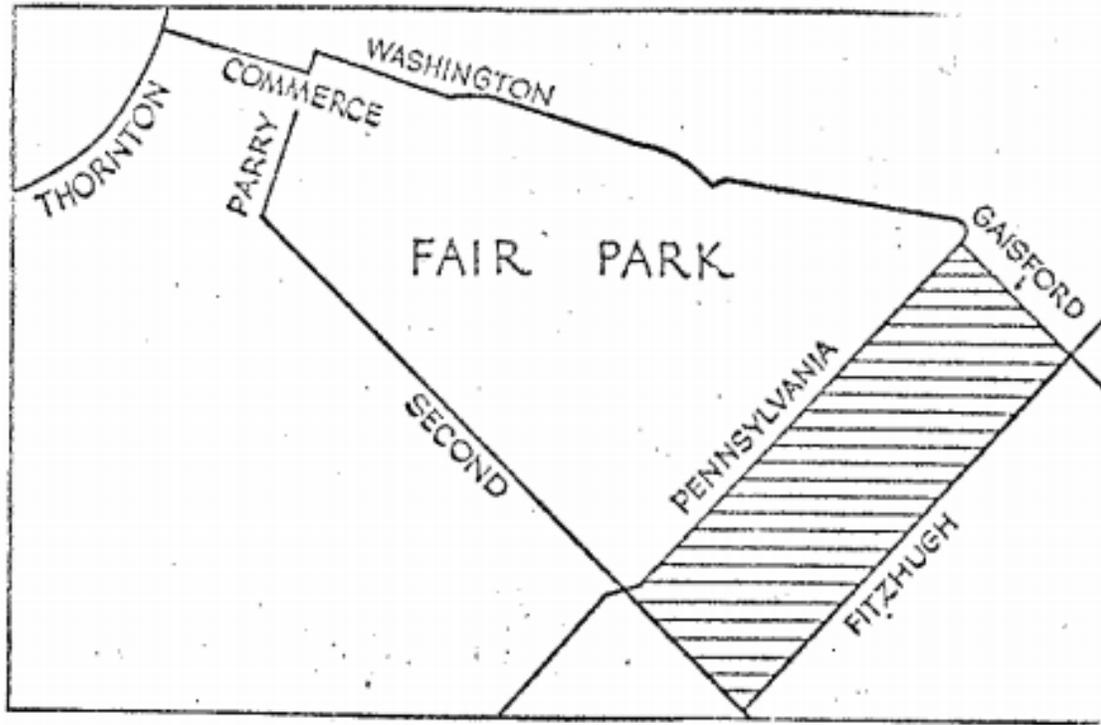


September 29, 1955: View of South Central Expressway under construction, looking south from Forest Avenue (now Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard). UTA Libraries Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington

APPENDIX H

Images Related to the Fair Park Neighborhood

H.1



This graphic shows the Texas State Fairgrounds and the portion of the Fair Park neighborhood that was replaced with a parking facility in 1956-1957 and again in 1968-1980s.

Davies, *Fair Park Expansion*, 15.

H.2



1930: The Fair Park neighborhood highlighted in red.
Dallas Historic Aerial Photographs, 1930 Fairchild Survey, Central University Libraries,
Southern Methodist University

H.3



1945: The Fair Park neighborhood highlighted in red.
Dallas Aerial Photographs, 1945 USDA Survey, Central University Libraries,
Southern Methodist University

H.4



1995: The Fair Park neighborhood highlighted in red with the Texas State Fairgrounds highlighted in blue.

Google Satellite Images