

“We didn’t have any other place to live”: Residential Patterns in Segregated Arlington County, Virginia

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“We didn’t have any other place to live”

Residential Patterns in Segregated

Arlington County, Virginia

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Using established theories of neighborhood selection as a theoretical framework, as well as qualitative and quantitative methods and mixed data sources, this paper documents a study exploring the residential patterns of African Americans living in Arlington, Virginia, during Segregation (1900–1970). A southern town bordering Washington, D.C., Arlington has been home to African Americans since slaves first worked the tobacco farms in the 1600s. During the period when black neighborhoods in Northern cities were inundated by southern, black migrants during the Great Migration, Arlington’s farms and settlements, many of them integrated, were similarly inundated by white federal workers from across the Potomac River. Developers, the County, and the federal government each played a role in accelerating Arlington’s transition from a collection of farms into a bustling white suburb with three highly segregated black neighborhoods. The study introduces a new procedure for aggregating manuscript census data for use with segregation indexes.

Utilizando teorías establecidas sobre la selección de vecindarios como marco teórico, así como métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos y fuentes de datos mixtos, el presente trabajo documenta un

estudio que explora los patrones residenciales de los afroamericanos viviendo en Arlington, Virginia, durante la segregación (1900–1970). Una ciudad del sur, colindante con Washington, DC, Arlington ha sido hogar de afroamericanos desde que los esclavos trabajaron en un inicio las plantaciones de tabaco en la década de 1600. Durante el período en que los vecindarios negros de las ciudades del norte fueron inundados por sureños, migrantes negros durante la Gran Migración, las granjas y asentamientos de Arlington, muchos de ellos integrados, fueron inundados de manera similar por trabajadores federales blancos del otro lado del río Potomac. Tanto los desarrolladores, el Condado y el gobierno federal jugaron un papel en la aceleración de la transición de Arlington de una colección de granjas a un populoso suburbio blanco con tres vecindarios negros altamente segregados. El estudio presenta un nuevo procedimiento para la agregación de datos del censo para su uso con índices de segregación.

KEY WORDS: residential pattern, segregation, Arlington, Washington, D.C., segregation index

PALABRAS CLAVE: Patrones residenciales, segregación, Arlington, Washington, DC, índice de segregación

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James had happy memories of his childhood. He was the baby in a family of seven boys and one girl. He was also the baby of his neighborhood, the small black settlement of Ballston in Arlington County, Virginia. He reminisced, "I remember now, thank God, how people treated me. They all treated me like I was their child . . . [I]t was just like the twenty-five families there, it was just like we were one family and they treated me like I was the baby of that family." His father was the minister at the nearby Mt. Zion Baptist Church. He said, "[with] my dad being a minister . . . people expect more of you coming out of a family like that." James did not disappoint them.

Ballston was a very stable community. All of the families living in the settlement in 1920 owned their homes. More than seventy-five percent of those same families appeared on the 1930 and 1940 censuses. The settlement was entirely residential, with no retail or services available. Many of the families were related; next to James lived an aunt and a cousin, down the road were more cousins, and behind James' house lived his grandfather.

The settlement was surrounded by white families and vacant lots. Relations with their white neighbors were distant but cordial. James remembered "They had their place and we had our place. Hardly the two met except they had the store and we had to go to the store. As far as I'm concerned they treated us alright." Now and then, James's white neighbors dressed up in Ku Klux Klan robes, marched down the road in front of Ballston, the little black children excitedly running be-

hind them, and burned a cross on the ball field. Said James, "I didn't know what the fire was all about. I didn't know what they were all about. I just knew they were the Ku Klux Klan." Presumably the adults in Ballston got the message.

When James returned from service in the U.S. Navy during World War II, housing construction, which stopped during the war, had resumed. Builders were buying up properties for white residential development and the Ballston settlement attracted their attention. James' parents were besieged by offers to buy. Almost all of the Ballston families sold their homes and scattered in all directions. James' parents sold their property and built themselves a fine home in Green Valley, much closer to his father's church. Not long afterwards James married his childhood sweetheart and purchased a home in Green Valley too. He lives in that house to this day.¹ The land once occupied by the Ballston settlement is now host to a prosperous shopping center. The county values the land alone at \$12,000,000.

BACKGROUND

Sociologists, geographers, and others have long studied residential patterns in cities.² Woofter (1928, p 37) says about residential patterns that:

Each city has a pattern of its own determined by the percentage of Negroes in the total, the distribution of Negro employment, the distribution of the areas where property is within the means of colored families, the attitude

of the people toward segregation, and the rate of expansion of business and manufacturing sections.

While each residential pattern is unique, it is an instance of one of a limited number of general patterns. Segregation evolved differently in the North and South, so some residential patterns are peculiar to either Southern or Northern cities, as discussed below. After the Civil War, twenty percent of Southern rural African Americans moved to cities. The residential patterns of those cities reflect their age. Older cities like Charleston, South Carolina, found African Americans in wealthy as well as poor sections, living near their employers in alley dwellings or on nearby side streets (Groves and Muller 1975; Massey and Denton 1993), a remnant of earlier times when slaves lived near their masters. As more African Americans arrived, the dispersed pattern blurred and black urban clusters formed, both within the city and along the boundaries, often on the least desirable land (Ingham 2003). Younger Southern cities like Birmingham, Alabama, lacking the tradition of slaves living near their owners, exhibited a segregated pattern from the beginning (Groves and Muller 1975; Wilson 2000).

During this same period, Northern cities displayed a residential pattern of small black settlements and alley residences dispersed within larger white neighborhoods, giving residents access to employment (Massey and Denton 1993). Northern African Americans were segregated more by economics than by race (Johnson 1970); most African Americans worked in menial, low paying jobs and lived in relatively integrated poor neighborhoods (Massey and Denton 1993). Pro-

fessional blacks—doctors, lawyers, ministers—sometimes lived in predominantly white areas. Black servants often lived with their white employer, giving a further impression of integration (Groves and Muller 1975). African Americans who migrated to Northern cities moved into existing black neighborhoods, which gradually expanded into adjoining white neighborhoods as white home owners moved up to better housing (Massey and Denton 1993).

In the South, with the outbreak of World War I, the trickle of rural African Americans moving to cities became a flood. At the same time, whites began relocating to suburbs, resulting in a new Southern residential pattern—large black districts in the center of some cities (Taeuber and Taeuber 1965; Groves and Muller 1975). Meanwhile, many European immigrants who had kept the wheels in Northern factories turning during the nineteenth century returned home. A series of legislative acts, including the National Origins Act of 1924 (Sixty-Eighth Congress 1925), made migration to America difficult and reduced the number of immigrant laborers in Northern factories. Needing a new source of cheap labor, the factories actively recruited Southern African Americans (Massey and Denton 1993), resulting in the Great Migration (1910–1970) (Rose 1969; Crew 1987; Tolnay 2003; Gregory 2005). The arrival of so many black in-migrants threatened the white population. Prejudice, racial violence, and segregation spawned a new Northern residential pattern, the ghetto. Unable to absorb all the migrants, black neighborhoods expanded into one large, dense, very black city within a city (Wilkinson 2010).

World War II restrictions on housing

construction made the market tight for both African Americans and whites, but after the war Southern cities built new housing for segregated occupation. Particularly in smaller cities where vacant land was still available, African Americans often moved into new homes rather than into the older homes of upward bound white families (Taeuber and Taeuber 1965). Northern whites fled to the suburbs, leaving behind older housing for African Americans. In both North and South, *de jure* residential segregation existed until passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, and *de facto* residential segregation exists in some localities even today.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

While theories of neighborhood selection abound and each theory is unique, all agree that the process of selecting a house, thereby selecting a neighborhood, has many variables. Coleman (1990) maintains that neighborhood selection has actors and resources, where each actor controls some resources. A household with a given amount of resources (social, cultural, monetary, earning ability) exchanges those resources to purchase housing in a neighborhood they like. The black family of William Green purchased the land later called Ballston in 1880 from a white farmer, had it platted, and sold individual lots to other black families.³ When James' grandfather purchased his lot from the Greens and built his house, Arlington was still sparsely settled and land was cheap. James's mother inherited the land and when she married, she and her new husband built a house in front of her father's house.

Residential patterns reflect supply and

demand in the housing market (Logan and Molotch 1987). Each neighborhood offers packages of amenities (schools, public transit, affordable housing). Households make their choice of neighborhood based on their ability to pay for the location and the neighborhood's amenities, weighing the location and amenities most important to them. Ballston was over a mile away from black-owned stores, black schools, and the church where James' father pastored, but it offered James' family safety, stability, and welcoming black relatives and neighbors.

Once a household invests their resources in their home, they take steps to protect the value of that investment from perceived threats. During Segregation white neighborhoods erected racial barriers, fearing that in-migration of African Americans might lower their house value (Farley et al. 1993). James' family lived on the edge of the Ballston settlement. Their next door neighbor, a white man, grew a tall, thick hedge along the boundary he shared with James' family. From the neighbor's yard, the black Ballston settlement was out of sight.

Schelling (1971) identifies three types of residential segregation: 1) organizationally enforced segregation, 2) segregation resulting from individual behavior, and 3) economically induced segregation. Organizationally enforced segregation results from practices that are legal or illegal, coercive or exclusionary, open or covert, kindly or malicious. For example, restrictive covenants on houses in Arlington's new white residential developments left black families with few neighborhoods where they could live. Individually motivated segregation occurs when households allow habit, tradition, prejudice,

fear, hostility, or alienation to inform their residential choices. Expressions of prejudice and racism from their white neighbors, reinforced by the Ku Klux Klan marches, further encouraged the Ballston residents to remain in their black neighborhood. Economically induced segregation results in the poor living separate from the rich. This type of segregation was less apparent in Arlington. There were no wealthy black settlements. The doctor, lawyer, and minister lived in the same neighborhood as their patients, clients, or flock. As Karl Taeuber (1975) points out, poor whites are rarely integrated with poor blacks, nor wealthy whites integrated with wealthy blacks. He maintains that residential segregation is systemic racial discrimination by whites against blacks.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Using a mixed qualitative and quantitative case study method (Stake 1995), this paper explores the residential patterns of Arlington County, Virginia, during Segregation, which we defined as 1900–1970. The patterns of segregation that develop in a community reflect the community's context. Arlington has a unique context—a community in a border state with roots in the South but influenced by the North and the nearby federal government. Some aspects of Arlington's residential patterns are shared by the other municipalities surrounding Washington, D.C. (the District), including Alexandria, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County. We focused on Arlington County during this time period because 1) the city itself represents a unique case due to its location, 2) Arlington had very specific black communities that were impacted by that location, and

3) Virginia's Constitution of 1902 (which disenfranchised most of Virginia's African Americans and disadvantaged the community with segregated schools, theaters, and transportation [Guild 1969]) and the Civil Rights legislation passed during the 1960s are appropriate bookends to the segregation period.

Our research questions are:

1. What were the residential patterns of Arlington, Virginia, during Segregation?
2. What aspects of Arlington's unique geography influenced those patterns?

METHODOLOGY

The study used multiple data sources including semi-structured interviews, oral histories, land records, and census data. In this section we describe the data and the methods used for data collection and analysis.

Census data

We used two census data formats—manuscript census schedules (1900–1940) (see Figure 1) and aggregate census data (1950–1970). The census data were used with segregation indexes to measure the level of segregation during the study period. The manuscript data, images of the handwritten schedules filled out by the census enumerator, come from a publicly available website, Ancestry.com. Manuscript data more recent than 1940 are not available because the U.S. government cannot release personally identifiable information about an individual to anyone other than that individual until 72 years after it is collected, as stipulated by law.⁴

The manuscript data were aggregated

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Annie P. Belcher Enumerator.

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Virginia
Baltimore

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0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

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60	14	70	8	Virginia	74	Somerset				39

FOR PERSONS 14 YEARS OLD AND OVER

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Figure 1. Page from the Arlington 1940 decennial manuscript census schedule.

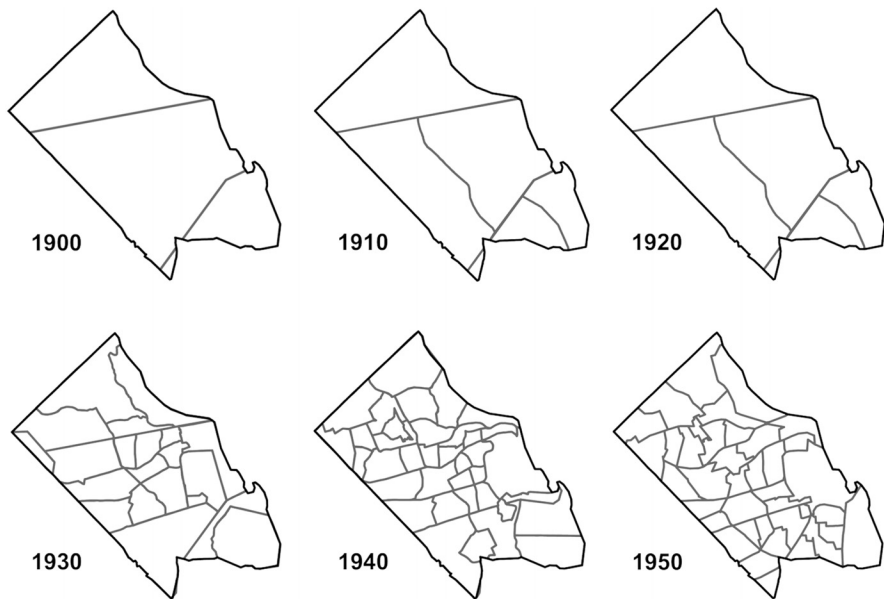


Figure 2. Arlington enumeration districts.

by the authors prior to use with the segregation indexes. Until census tracts were defined in 1950, enumeration districts (ED) were the Census Bureau's units of enumeration for Arlington. As the county's population grew, the original ED were subdivided and reconfigured. Figure 2 depicts the ED from 1900–1940, and the 1950 census tracts.

Because the quantity and configuration of the ED changed with almost every census, they were inappropriate area units to use when aggregating the manuscript data for use with the indexes. Instead, we defined small, consistent area units, 'virtual blocks,' using a three-step procedure developed by the authors:

First, we manually copied all the rows, but only a subset of the data columns (household status [head of household or family member] and race) into an Excel

spreadsheet. The rows were stored in the order that they appear in the manuscript schedule—the order of enumeration. We assume that the census enumerators followed the instructions from the Census Bureau in 1900 (U.S. Dept. of Interior 1900, p 17): "If your district is in a town having a system of house numbers, the enumeration must be made by blocks or squares. Begin at one corner of some block, and proceed entirely around and through it before leaving it for another."

Second, we sorted the Excel database by household status, grouped the 'heads of household' in the order that the households were enumerated, and assigned a block number to groups of contiguous households. The block size is arbitrary; for this paper we defined blocks of 20 households and 40 households.

Third, we counted the white house-

holds and black households that comprised each block. Note that while census tracts are a collection of individuals, virtual blocks are a collection of households.

The aggregate census data come from the publicly available website maintained by the Minnesota Population Center (NHGIS 2011). Aggregate census data identify the total number of black persons and white persons per census tract. Arlington's 38 tracts have not changed since they were first defined.

Selection of participants

While census data reveal Arlington's residential patterns, interviews reveal events in the community's history that explain those patterns. Interviewing was prompted by "an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman 2006, p 9). We conducted interviews during the summer and fall of 2012, interviewing each participant at least twice, recording the interviews, and giving the participant a transcript of each interview to read and correct. Interviews lasted between one and two hours.

We used snowball sampling to identify interview participants (Weiss 1994). The fourteen participants represent three large black neighborhoods and five small settlements. They ranged in age from 65 to 92, with an average age of 81. All the participants grew up in Arlington. They were drawn from a very small pool of surviving African Americans who lived in Arlington during Segregation.

Oral histories

Because black residents of the county living during the early portion of the study period are no longer alive, we augmented

our interviews with oral histories of early residents. Fifteen of these oral histories came from the archive at the Langston-Brown Community Center in Halls Hill; an additional twenty oral histories came from the Arlington Central Library. The oral histories, some of which were collected up to forty years ago, documented life in black settlements that have since disappeared.

Land records

Land deeds are physical records maintained by the Arlington County Office of Land Records. They record the sale of all real property, and contain the date, the seller, the buyer, the price, and a description of the property. We used land deeds to verify events the participants described.

Data analysis methods

We analyzed the interviews using grounded theory techniques (Strauss and Corbin 1998). These techniques included assigning conceptual labels to blocks of text, sorting the labels into categories, and integrating the categories into emerging themes to arrive at theories, grounded in the interview data, that answer our research questions.

We read and analyzed the oral histories as if they were transcripts of interviews we had conducted ourselves, allowing us to test the adequacy of our themes. This type of validation of results is referred to as "referential adequacy" (Baxter and Eyles 1997, p 515).

We measured segregation on the evenness dimension (Dissimilarity Index) and the exposure dimension (Isolation Index). One author wrote a computer program to calculate the index values. We then compared the results for Arlington with equivalent results for other cities.

FINDINGS

This section begins by describing the residential pattern of Arlington's black community in 1900, and explaining the forces that set that pattern. The section then measures segregation during the study period (1900–1970), using two widely respected segregation indexes. Lastly, findings from the interviews and oral histories are discussed to understand the segregation index scores and the changing residential patterns.

*Black residential patterns
in 1900*

In 1900 Arlington was largely farm land with a sprinkling of small settlements. Some black Arlingtonians are descendants of the original farm slaves, living on land their ancestors purchased from their masters after the Civil War (Netherton and Netherton 1987; Rose 2009). Several of the participants trace their roots back to Virginia slaves.

During the Civil War, runaway slaves fled to the District seeking safety. The government built villages for them, including Freedmen's Village, built in 1863 on the grounds of the former Robert E. Lee plantation in Arlington (Green 1967). When Freedmen's Village closed in 1888 many former residents moved further into Arlington to live. A few of the participants are descendants of those residents.

After the Civil War some former slaves from Georgia and the Carolinas migrated north along the Atlantic coast (Rose 1969). Some migrants settled in Arlington (Green 1967). In 1900, 2.6 percent of Arlington's African Americans had roots in this migration including a few of the participants.

By 1900, Arlington was transforming from farmland to a nascent suburb. Roads were built, and two new electric railroads connected Arlington County to itself and to the District. On the heels of the railroads came developers promoting subdivisions for residential development. Thirty-eight percent of the 6482 county residents were black. Sixteen settlements emerged, twelve of them containing black households (Rose 2009). Figure 3 illustrates the location of the black settlements. The three settlements on the map not represented by circles are three larger black neighborhoods that were eventually defined as census tracts. The settlement boundaries on the map are the census tract boundaries. Those black neighborhoods exist to this day. Where we use the word 'neighborhood,' we refer to the three large black neighborhoods. The settlements represented by circles were much smaller and their exact boundaries not known. Where we use the word 'settlement,' we refer to the smaller settlements, sometimes consisting of only five to ten households.

An Arlington County historian describes the county at the beginning of the study period in this way (Rose 2009, p 145):

Arlington County in 1900 had much open area and many farms but it was evolving from a strictly rural area to a suburban community . . . Wells were still the source of water and outhouses or septic tanks took care of sanitation. There was no water or sewer system in the county. Gas might be used for illumination in the cities, but not in Arlington where kerosene lamps were still the rule.

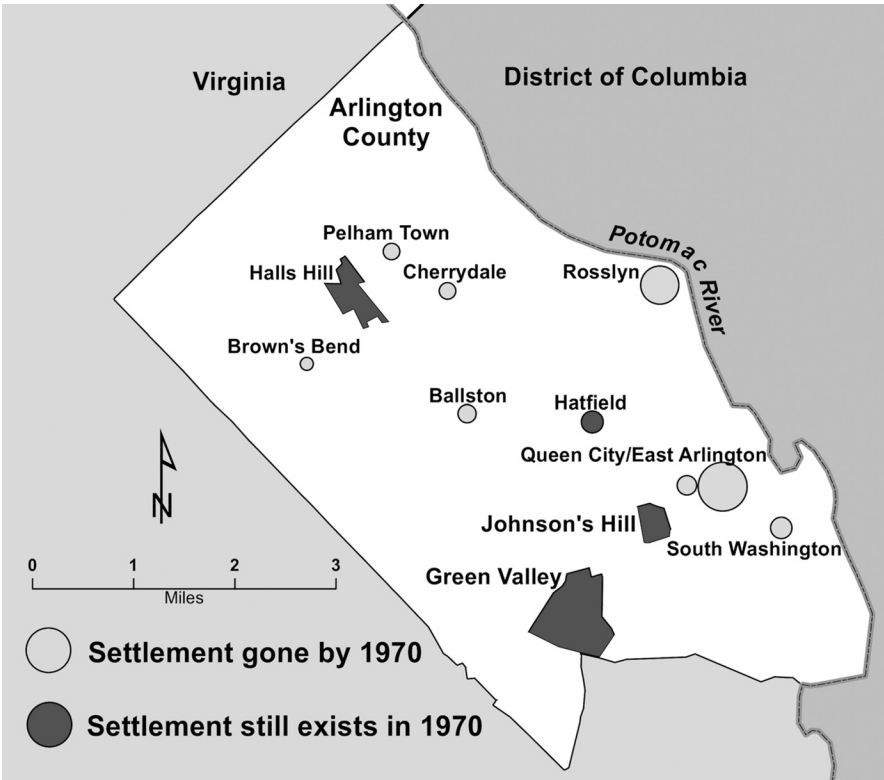


Figure 3. Black settlements in Arlington in 1900. Map by Nancy Perry, projection NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.

Johnson (1970, p 8) described a residential pattern he labeled “small Southern towns.” He could have been describing Arlington in 1900, although Figure 3 shows that Arlington’s black neighborhoods were not located on the edge of town:

It is an interesting fact that practically all the Negro neighborhoods in the small towns are located on the edge of town. . . . They are separated from one another by intervening white neighborhoods which have paved streets, street lights, water and sewerage con-

nections which seldom reach the Negro residential areas. These areas, unlike those in the larger cities, are not “inherited” from white residents who have moved on to better areas, but were developed as Negro residential areas, or “quarters.”

The Segregation Indexes

Residential segregation is “. . . a measure of the degree to which two or more groups live separately from one another in different parts of the urban environment” (Massey and Denton 1988, p 282). Segregation indexes, using aggregate census

Table 1. Definitions for segregation index equation variables.

Variable	Definition
n	Number of tracts
P	Proportion of African Americans in County
P _i	Proportion of African Americans in tract i
T	Number of people in County
t _i	Number of people in tract i
X	Number of African Americans in County
x _i	Number of African Americans in tract i

Table 2. Dissimilarity Index scores for Arlington County, Virginia, 1900–1970.

Index	Dissimilarity (D)
Range	0.0–1.0
Units	20 households / 40 households Tract
1900	0.601/0.568
1910	0.756/0.684
1920	0.861/0.770
1930	0.912/0.891
1940	0.961/0.946
1950	0.803
1960	0.811
1970	0.734

data, measure residential patterns—artifacts of events that occurred well before the measuring.

We measured Arlington's degree of segregation on the evenness and exposure dimensions using virtual block data for the 1900–1940 censuses and tract data for the 1950–1970 censuses. Variable definitions for the equations in this section are found in Table 1.

Evenness dimension

The evenness dimension expresses the differential distribution of two groups within the total space. Unevenness is detected if the proportion of African Americans and whites in each tract is not the same as the proportion in the entire county. Of the many indexes that have been developed to measure evenness, we chose the Dissimilarity Index (D) (James and Taeuber 1985). The index has a long history of use in racial studies (Farley 1977; Massey 1979, Massey and Denton 1987; Darden 1995; DeFina and Hannon 2009). Index scores are compared with scores from other cities or scores from the

same city in different time periods. Lieberman (1963, p 34) explains the relationship between the size of the tracts and the index value: “[T]he smaller the spatial units the greater the possible index of segregation. . . . If tracts were broken down into blocks, then the index based on blocks would be at least as high as that obtained for tracts . . .” To test Lieberman's assertion we used 20 household and 40 household virtual blocks.

$$D = \frac{\sum_i t_i |p_i - P|}{2TP(1 - P)} \quad (1)$$

Index values can range between 0.0 (total evenness) to 1.0 (total unevenness). An index value of 0.3 or less is low and a value greater than 0.6 indicates high segregation (Massey and Denton 1993). Arlington's D scores are found in Table 2.

This index discovered significant unevenness in the distribution of African Americans in Arlington during Segregation, with higher scores for each succeeding census. As Lieberman predicted, the 40

Table 3. Dissimilarity Index scores for selected cities.

City	1940 ¹ (blocks)	1950 ² (tracts)	1960 ² (tracts)	1970 ³ (tract)
Arlington	94.6	80.3	81.1	73.4
Baltimore	90.1		89.6	81.9
Boston	86.3	82.5	83.9	81.2
Charleston, SC	60.0		79.5	
Chicago	95.0	89.0	89.8	91.9
Cleveland	92.0	85.3	84.8	90.8
Dayton	91.5	86.9	88.0	86.9
Detroit	89.9	80.4	79.9	88.4
Greensboro, NC	93.1	77.7	83.4	65.4
Indianapolis	90.4	75.2	76.2	81.7
Milwaukee	92.9	85.8	85.0	90.5
Philadelphia	88.0	73.3	78.5	79.5
Pittsburgh	82.0	68.6	74.3	75.0
San Diego, CA	84.4	65.8	68.9	83.4
Seattle	82.2		79.7	81.9
Washington, D.C.	81.0		79.7	81.1

¹Taeuber and Taeuber 1965:39–40; ²Taeuber and Taeuber 1965:54; ³Massey and Denton 1987:815–816.

household block scores are slightly lower than the 20 household block scores. Table 3 compares Arlington’s dissimilarity results with other cities. Note that the 1940 values, based on city blocks are higher than the 1950 tract values. The drop in Arlington’s values when using tracts instead of virtual blocks has several explanations: 1) the dividing line between two otherwise white tracts bisects the black settlement called Hatfield, putting half its residents in one tract and half in the other, 2) seven percent of the black community lived as servants in otherwise white tracts, 3) the black tracts were slightly larger than the black neighborhoods, causing whites to be included in the black tracts, and 4) tracts are larger than 40 household blocks.

Exposure dimension

The exposure dimension expresses the potential for contact within or between members of the racial groups. The Isolation Index (xP_x) (Massey and Denton 1988) measures the exposure of African Americans to other African Americans, e.g., the percent of African Americans in the census tract of the average black resident. The amount of exposure an African American experiences to other African Americans depends not only on the concentration of African Americans, but also on the number of African Americans relative to the number of whites in the community, e.g., if the same proportion of African Americans live in every census tract but the city is fifty percent black, then the average black resident will be exposed to

more African Americans than if the city is five percent black.

$${}_xP_x = \sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{x_i}{X} \frac{x_i}{t_i} \right) \quad (2)$$

Isolation Index values can range from 0.0 (no probability of exposure to another African American) to 1.0 (100 percent probability of exposure to another African American). Arlington's ${}_xP_x$ scores are found in Table 4.

Arlington's scores indicate a fairly high exposure of African Americans to other African Americans. The scores do not consistently increase or decrease from one census to the next. Table 5 compares Arlington's ${}_xP_x$ score of 0.640 with those of fifteen other cities with large black populations. The average of those 15 scores is 0.666.

Black residential patterns in 1900–1970

The three black neighborhoods grew in parallel but in isolation from one another during this period. Until the 1940s there was no cross-county bus service to connect them but each was connected by bus to the District. In 1900 each neighborhood was integrated, but with a good-sized black population, each had a black elementary school, one or more black churches, and a small collection of businesses (Perry and Waters 2012). By 1970 Halls Hill was 84 percent black and the other two neighborhoods were almost 100 percent black. When census tracts were defined in 1950, each of the neighborhoods became a tract.

Perhaps because it lacked any industry, Arlington was not a destination city during the Great Migration. However, some mi-

Table 4. Isolation Index scores for Arlington County, Virginia, 1900–1970.

Index	Isolation (${}_xP_x$)
Range	0.0 – 1.0
Units	20 households / 40 households Tract
1900	0.620/0.626
1910	0.627/0.614
1920	0.616/0.611
1930	0.623/0.672
1940	0.507/0.637
1950	0.664
1960	0.765
1970	0.640

Table 5. Isolation Index scores for selected cities.

City	1970 (tract)
Arlington	.640
Baltimore	.772
Boston	.567
Chicago	.855
Cleveland	.819
Dayton	.733
Detroit	.759
Greensboro, NC	.561
Indianapolis	.645
Milwaukee	.739
Norfolk/Virginia Beach	.735
Philadelphia	.682
Pittsburgh	.535
San Diego, CA	.419
Seattle	.427
Washington, D.C.	.772

The figures in this table come from Massey and Denton (1987:815–816). The Arlington figure was calculated using 1970 aggregate census data.

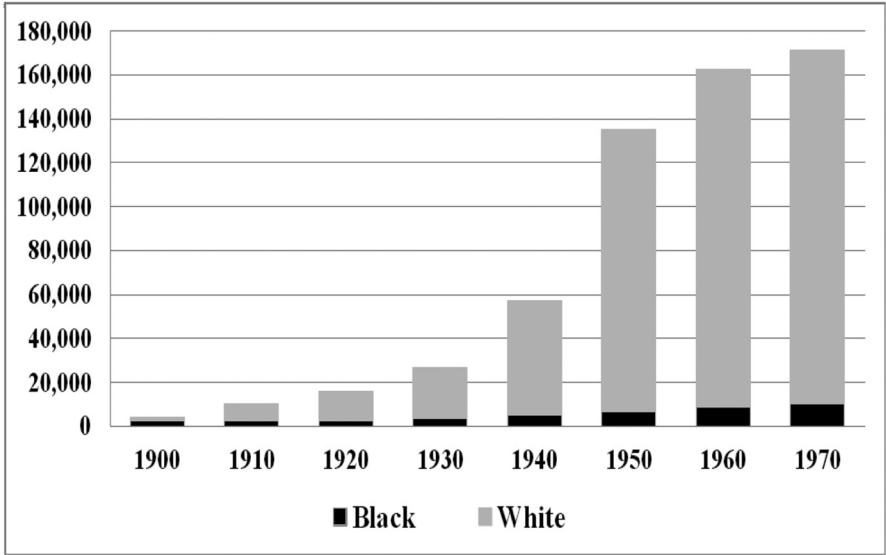


Figure 4. Growth in population in Arlington in 1900–1970.

grants did arrive during that period from Southern states, including the parents of one of the participants. In 1900 three percent of Arlington’s black community originated in states south of Virginia. By 1940 twelve percent of the black community originated in states south of Virginia.

Beginning with the buildup of the government workforce during World War I, many whites fled the congestion of the District, creating suburbs in outlying areas of Maryland and Virginia. Arlington was one area to which they fled. The immigration of white federal workers intensified during the New Deal and World War II, completely changing the complexion of the county. Figure 4 shows the dramatic increase in white population during the study period.

Arlington’s black community was already well established when the immigration of white federal workers began.

In this respect Arlington’s pattern matches the Southern pattern described by Taeuber and Taeuber (1965, p 56):

In the North, there has never been any significant amount of rural and village settlement by Negroes, and they have been excluded from nearly all new housing developments in the suburbs. In the South, by contrast, Negroes have long resided in many rural and village places that have been brought in to the metropolitan sphere as urban settlement expanded outward.

Developers were quick to provide homes for the new white residents. Existing farms and several of the black settlements, such as Ballston, where James lived, were bought and cleared. While Arlington’s three black neighborhoods grew denser as African Americans moved there from the small black settlements, they were never

as crowded as the ghettos found in large northern cities such as Chicago or New York. None of the neighborhoods contained buildings more than two stories tall, and most families lived in garden apartments or single family homes such as the house in Figure 5.

The county provided motivation, where necessary, to residents of black settlements who were reluctant to sell their properties to the developers. An example is Pelham Town. The Pelhams were a black family with roots in Virginia. In the 1890s Burrell Pelham⁶ and his brother Moses Pelham⁷ bought adjoining plots of land in North Arlington. Moses Pelham platted his land, built houses on the lots, and rented the houses to other black families, most of them Pelham relatives. The 1930 census of Pelham Town lists four Pelham home owners and four other black renters. Figure 6, painted in 1949, depicts Burrell Pelham's portion of Pelham Town.

Living in Pelham Town was Spartan by today's standards. Pearl, a participant who spent her early years in Pelham Town described it in this way:

Each house had a well, and we had no sewer—we had an outhouse. There was a dirt road running down to our house. So we didn't have sidewalks or curbs or anything. There were no street lights so it was really dark at night. There was no electricity. We used a kerosene lamp. My mom cooked on a wood stove . . . That stove was the main source of heat . . . it kept the whole house warm.⁸

There was no commerce in Pelham Town. Residents shopped, worshiped, and attended school ten blocks away in Halls Hill. In the 1940s when the Pelhams re-

fused to sell to a white developer, the county ran water and sewer into their neighborhood. Unwilling or unable to undergo the expense of hooking up to the new utilities, the Pelhams sold their property to a developer and moved to Halls Hill.

Residential segregation was an established fact by this time. Once they sold their homes, black families had few housing choices. They were barred from the new white developments, sometimes by restrictive covenants. This contractual agreement between property owners was effected by inserting the following words into the deed: ". . . nor shall said property or any portion thereof be sold, leased, or bequeathed to any person not of the Caucasian Race."⁹ Persons violating a covenant could be taken to court until a 1948 Supreme Court decision, *Shelly v. Kraemer*, made covenants unenforceable by the courts (Ruble 2010). Restrictive covenants were common in Arlington until passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 made them illegal. Blacks were limited to buying homes from other blacks; over time the only homes owned by African Americans were located in the three black neighborhoods. Note on Figure 3 the black settlements that disappeared during the study period.

The in-migration of white residents, the move to push black residents out of their small settlements, and the restrictive covenants that kept African Americans out of the new residential developments, all caused a growing unevenness in the distribution of African Americans in Arlington during Segregation, helping to explain the increasingly higher scores on the Dissimilarity Index for each succeeding census. The scores on the Isolation Index,



Figure 5. House in the black settlement of Rosslyn, 1937.⁵



Figure 6. *Pelham Town* by W. Palmer (1949). Reproduced with permission of Edith Pelham Moore.

however, while they are fairly high for every census, indicate no trend over time. This suggests that two phenomena are at work. Arlington's black neighborhoods grew denser and the black population slowly increased as African Americans were pushed out of the small settlements into the three black neighborhoods, which would cause the scores to *increase* from one census to the next. However, with the huge influx of new white residents to the county, the proportion of African Americans decreased with each census, which would cause the scores to *decrease* from one census to the next. The result of these countervailing trends was to produce a stasis.

A new principal arrived in 1941—the federal government (Goldberg 1992).

During World War II the War Department outgrew its buildings and prepared to build the Pentagon in Arlington, partially on land occupied by the black settlements of Queen City and East Arlington (Figure 7). Exercising eminent domain, the government condemned all the houses in the settlements, gave the residents less than thirty days to move, paid each household \$2,050 for their property (Vogel 2007), and leveled the two settlements, evicting over 220 black families. Eunice, a participant who was 12 on the day her family moved, reminisced:

It was just such a sad story because so many people had nowhere to go . . . no idea of what to do. All the government was thinking about was building the



Figure 7. This 1910 photo of East Arlington shows unpaved streets, no gutters, no sidewalks. By 1942 when it was leveled to make way for the Pentagon, Arlington County had still not run water or sewer to East Arlington. Photo reproduced with permission of the Virginia Room, Arlington Public Library.

Pentagon, and running us off. And it worked that way too. It was sad, a sad situation . . . you could see people standing outside with their few belongings . . . and some of those people had no place to go.¹⁰

Housing during the War was extremely limited, both for blacks and whites. In 1942 Arlington's Housing Registry Office received 4,300 applications. They were able to fill just 650 of them (Rose 2009). The newly homeless residents of Queen City and East Arlington moved wherever they could find room. Eunice and nine family members moved into a wooden shed with a dirt floor in her grandmother's

back yard. Vincion's family moved into a government supplied trailer (Figure 8). He remembered:

We were from Queen City. We had to move because we were where they were going to put the Pentagon. They put us out. After we moved from there, when they started building the Pentagon, we lived in a [government supplied] trailer in Green Valley for two years. . . . Then we moved to Johnson's Hill and we lived in a military style home there, like barracks that [the government] had built, because we didn't have any other place to live.¹¹



Figure 8. FSA (Farm Security Administration) trailer camp in Johnson's Hill, 1944.¹²

CONCLUSIONS

Our first research question asked what Arlington's residential patterns were during Segregation. That Arlington grew from a relatively integrated collection of farm settlements in 1900 to an extremely segregated, majority white suburb in 1970 is reflected in Arlington's scores on the evenness dimension and the exposure dimen-

sion. In 1900 half the black families lived in settlements of thirteen households or fewer. They were able to select a neighborhood for what Logan and Molotch (1987) referred to as its 'amenities.' By 1940 half the black families lived in settlements of 140 households or more. They had only three neighborhoods from which to choose, so amenities were less important than an available dwelling or land on which to

build. Taeuber's theory of racial discrimination (1975) was borne out, as everyone in the community—the doctor, the minister, the laborer, and the domestic worker—lived in the same neighborhood, segregated by color, not income.

Giving proof to Coleman's theory (1990), African Americans in Arlington appreciated the efficacy of owning property and sacrificing to buy it. Even African Americans who worked humble jobs as farm laborers, servants, and railroad porters owned their own homes. In 1900, fifty-nine percent of the black families were homeowners and by 1920, sixty-four percent of the families were homeowners.

While it was very segregated Arlington did not faithfully mimic either the Northern or Southern residential patterns. Not evident was the Southern pattern of small black communities around the periphery of the city, particularly built on land deemed undesirable by whites. Arlington's black neighborhoods were found rather evenly dispersed all though the county on land that is now considered very desirable. The black neighborhoods (Halls Hill, Johnson's Hill, and Green Valley) are built on hills with a view of the District. Also not evident was the densely populated black ghetto typical of Northern cities. Very few members of Arlington's black community arrived as part of the Great Migration so there was no trace of the slow expansion of black neighborhoods under the weight of thousands and thousands of in-migrating African Americans. Arlington's three black neighborhoods simply experienced infill as additional African Americans arrived, both from outside the county and from the small settlements within the county. Because the black community never grew very large, there was enough land for ev-

eryone to live in little frame houses. The three neighborhoods contained no apartment buildings, no high rise projects.

Our second research question asked how Arlington's geography influenced the residential patterns. In many ways geography—Arlington's location on the boundary between North and South—influenced the trajectory of her residential development. Arlington's black community has its roots in the South. Almost all the participants could trace their families back to an ancestor who lived in slavery. The white community has more complicated roots. The original whites were Southern with Southern attitudes about African Americans, but that community was soon eclipsed by an in-migration of whites whose roots would require a much broader study to understand. Certainly they were not all Southern.

Another aspect of Arlington's geography, its proximity to the District and the federal government, also influenced her residential patterns. A huge influx of federal workers, many of them whites from Northern states with Northern values, tempered the Southern orientation of the once bucolic community. Over time the county grew whiter, denser, and more urban. While the whites coveted the land African Americans lived on, and while they were eventually successful in pushing African Americans out of the small settlements, it was accomplished with county regulations and residential developers' money rather than with physical violence. The contours of the three large black neighborhoods remained unchanged.

Some black communities might have disappeared under the weight of the white in-migration. Arlington's did not. When developers began scooping up land to

build housing for the whites, the blacks were not pushed aside. Because most of the families owned their homes and land, and because most of them had roots in Arlington going back many, many generations, they were loath to leave the county.

Schelling's (1971) three types of segregation: organizational, economic, and individual, all worked to nudge African Americans out of the small settlements into the neighborhoods. Forces outside the black community—residential developers, the county, the federal government—coveted land African Americans owned and occupied. One by one they persuaded or coerced black families to sell their land and move; because of residential segregation the only place they could move was a black neighborhood. As a consequence, by 1950 almost all the settlements were gone. Aiken (1987) referred to this phenomenon, typical of the South, as the 'nucleation' of a dispersed black population. Aiken examined white controlled municipalities that refuse to incorporate nucleated black populations lying directly outside their boundaries, not wanting to add a large number of African Americans to the municipality's rolls. Arlington differs from Aiken's example in that the three neighborhoods were not located on the fringes of the municipality, just beyond the corporate boundaries. As shown on Figure 3, the three neighborhoods are all located well within the center of the county.

While residential patterns are slow to change, Arlington is a much more integrated city than it was in 1970. The three neighborhoods are now home to all races. In the 2010 census, less than one third of the residents of the black neighborhoods were African American. In no small part because of its proximity to the District,

Arlington has become an expensive place to live. The average county assessment on land occupied by the participants increased almost 500 percent in the last fifteen years, and the real estate taxes on that land also increased. Eventually the black neighborhoods could become so expensive that the very families who were forced to live there during Segregation will no longer be able to afford to live there. One oral histories subject expressed it well (Pelham 2001, p 24):

[I]t makes me kind of sad to see what's happening now because as the people move in, as the whites move in, the property value is going to go up and the blacks who are left here are going to have to pay a lot of money that a lot of them will not be able to afford or not want to pay.

During Segregation, African Americans lived in the three black neighborhoods because that was the only land available to them. They made their lives there, raised their children there, and established churches there. After passage of the Civil Rights legislation they could have moved out of those neighborhoods, but for most, the lives they had built were too precious to trade for the opportunity to live in a white neighborhood that was obligated to allow them to move in but was not obligated to welcome them. As Uhlenberg's hypothesis of migration predicts (1973), most are living out their lives in their old neighborhoods, near their church, their neighbors, and in most cases near one or more of their children. The children, having grown up in a racially integrated environment, have less reason to remain in the old neighborhoods. Whether they stay once their parents pass on, only time will

tell. Thus ends this chapter in the history of the community.

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NOTES

1. James, interview with authors, June 18, 2012. We assigned the participants pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality.

2. Burgess (1925) envisions concentric socio-economic zones around the city center, with the status of the household directly related to its distance from the city center. Hoyt's variation of Burgess' socio-economic zones (1939) follows lines of transportation and high ground radiating out from the city center in a sectoral pattern, with the household status inversely related to its distance from these lines. Harris and Ullman (1945) describe a pattern found in some cities, of several nuclei, rather than the single city center. Bourne and Murdie (1972), using factor analysis and canonical correlation, unite these three models using data for Toronto.

3. Deed Book F4, p 293, Arlington County Office of Land Records, located at 1425 North Courthouse Road, Room 6200.

4. Stat. 915; Public Law 95-416; October 5, 1978.

5. House in Negro quarter. Rosslyn, Virginia, 1937. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-015608-D. Accessed 10 February 2013 at <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/fsa.8b31475/>.

6. Arlington County Deed Book N4, p 133, Arlington County Office of Land Records.

7. Arlington County Deed Book O4, p 319, Arlington County Office of Land Records.

8. Pearl, interview with authors, November 9, 2012.

9. The authors found these words inserted in many deeds at the Arlington County Office of Land Records.

10. Eunice, interview with authors, 3 October 2012.

11. Vincion, interview with authors, 29 June 2012.

12. Arlington, Virginia. FSA (Farm Security Administration) trailer camp project for Negroes. General view of the project from the roof of the community building, 1944, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection, LC-USF34-100018-E. Accessed 10 January 2013 at <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa2000056506/PP/>.

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