

“Everybody Was Looking for a Good Government Job”: Occupational Choice during Segregation in Arlington, Virginia

Journal of Urban History
2014, Vol. 40(4) 719–741
© 2014 SAGE Publications
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/0096144214524341
juh.sagepub.com



Nancy Perry¹, L. Earle Reybold¹, and Nigel Waters¹

Abstract

During the period from childhood through young adulthood individuals select the occupation that best satisfies their needs based on their values, interests, education, and environment. Arlington County, Virginia, provides an opportunity to study the impact that geography played on occupational choice for one black community during segregation. Using qualitative methods, this article explores the occupational choices of Arlington’s African Americans as Arlington grew from a scattering of farm settlements to a prosperous white suburb of Washington, D.C. Washington’s black high schools offered excellent career training and the government offered Civil Service employment. The arrival in Arlington of the Pentagon building and large numbers of white federal workers provided new sources of employment but obliterated existing farm and factory work. The article concludes that Arlington’s geography, that is, its proximity to the federal government in Washington, had both a positive and a negative influence on Arlington’s African Americans when choosing their occupations.

Keywords

Arlington, Virginia, Racial segregation, African American, Washington, D.C., occupation

Ruth’s mother ran a tight ship—she had to. She worked six days a week as a domestic,¹ cleaning other people’s houses while Ruth waited at home for her. Her mother, Ruth said, “was no nonsense. When I grew up I thought . . . it was so hard. I couldn’t do anything. But it saved me.” Ruth’s birth mother died when Ruth was an infant and her father, too young for the responsibility of raising a small child, gave Ruth to her great aunt for safe keeping. Ruth and her great aunt, whom she referred to as her mother, lived in the tight-knit black community of Johnson’s Hill in Arlington County, Virginia (the County). Almost everyone in Ruth’s world worked. The men worked as custodians or laborers in the brickyards; the women worked as babysitters, domestics, beauticians, and teachers. She was born in the mid-1930s when no one had any money and African Americans had even less. Every morning her mother left Ruth with one or another of the neighbor ladies, took the bus to a white neighborhood, cleaned a family’s house, collected her \$5 and bus fare, and returned to Johnson’s Hill. When Ruth got a little older, she accompanied her

¹Department of Geography, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

Corresponding Author:

Nancy Perry, 1520 North Randolph Street, Arlington, VA 22207, USA.

Email: perryrna1@verizon.net

mother to work and entertained the white children while her mother cleaned their house. By the time she reached high school Ruth could stay home alone after school, with a list of chores so long that there was no time left to get into trouble. She remembered those days: "We stayed busy, they kept us busy." Ruth got an early taste of domestic work. Her free time during high school—after school, on the weekends, during summer vacations—was spent ironing, babysitting, and cleaning for white families. Asked what she planned to do after high school she said, "I don't plan to keep washing clothes and doing this kind of work." Ruth was lucky. By the time she was born, black girls had some choices about their occupations. Domestic work was one occupational choice, but not the only choice. Her mother was able to send Ruth to college for one year to study business, and when she came home she went to work for the government.²

The history of occupational choice for the African Americans living in Arlington is similar in many respects to the history of occupational choice in other southern black communities. In 1870, 80 percent of all African Americans lived in the rural South.³ After the Civil War, former field slaves, knowing no other profession, were caught in the endless cycle of sharecropping.⁴ Arlington's earliest African Americans were slaves working on tobacco farms in the County.⁵ Some black Arlingtonians are descendants of those slaves, living on land their ancestors purchased from their masters. Until early in the twentieth century, Arlington was largely covered with farms; many of the laborers on those farms were black.⁶ The last farms disappeared in the 1940s.

After passage of the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act of 1883, establishing the classified Civil Service with its merit system based on competitive examinations, African Americans found work with the federal government. As a result of this legislation, the proportion of African Americans in federal service rose from 0.06 percent in 1881, to 5.9 percent in 1910, to 11.9 percent in 1944.⁷ Being so close to the federal government, many of Arlington's African Americans worked for the Civil Service.

During the Great Migration (1910–1970) more than six million southern African Americans turned their backs on agricultural work, migrated to northern cities, and sought employment in industrial plants and factories.⁸ Washington, D.C. (the District), was also a destination city, though the number of in-migrants fell far short of the number migrating to large industrial cities like Chicago, Cleveland, and Detroit.⁹ Black migrants largely bypassed Arlington during the Great Migration, perhaps because of the lack of industry. Instead, Arlington was subject to a different migration. Before 1900, Arlington's whites were in the minority. Beginning with the buildup of the government workforce during World War I, many white federal workers moved out of the District, creating suburbs in outlying areas of Maryland and Virginia.¹⁰ The influx of white federal workers into Arlington, similar to other migrations of whites to the suburbs, intensified during the New Deal and World War II, altering the complexion of the once rural County.

African Americans suffered disproportionately during the Depression. They were often the first to lose their jobs when a company experienced a downturn.¹¹ The response of many African Americans was to become what Boyd called survivalist entrepreneurs, "persons who become self-employed in response to a desperate need to find an independent means of livelihood."¹² Women did housework for white families or worked in their own homes as dressmakers and laundresses. Some opened home-based hair care salons, convenience stores, or restaurants.¹³ Arlington's entrepreneurial African Americans supported themselves by running small businesses catering to other African Americans in their neighborhood. A few individuals worked in the building trades, a few opened repair shops, a few ran small groceries and retail shops, but most provided barbering, babysitting, or cleaning services. Most of Arlington's African Americans did their shopping at black-owned stores in the District.¹⁴

When the United States was drawn into World War II, almost no African Americans were among the 1,400,000 additional workers accepted to training programs and defense contracts to build ships, aircraft, ordnance, and other infrastructure required to conduct a war.¹⁵ After black

leaders threatened to march on Washington, D.C., President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, forcing government agencies and defense contractors to open up opportunities for African Americans to serve their country in industry as well as on the battlefield.¹⁶ There were no defense industries in Arlington. The only industry was brick making, taking advantage of rich clay deposits lining the Potomac River. This work employed many black men until the last brickyard disappeared in the early 1940s.¹⁷

Choosing an Occupation

For years, social scientists have analyzed the process of occupational choice. While theories abound and each theory is unique, all agree that selecting an occupation is a long process beginning in childhood and extending through young adulthood or even later. Each theory emphasizes the role that social constraints such as racial segregation play in informing the individual choice.

For example, Ginzberg¹⁸ describes the process as a series of age-specific stages, beginning in early childhood where children consider any/every occupation, continuing in early adolescence where they narrow down their choices, until young adulthood where they take action to make their occupational choice a reality. Their final choice is determined by (1) their level of educational achievement, (2) their emotional response to the environment, (3) their individual value system determining the “value” they place on various occupations, and (4) reality—the limitations imposed by the environment. Racial segregation was a limitation on the occupational choices of everyone Ruth knew in Johnson’s Hill.

Like other black children, Ruth began her childhood having no understanding of the limitations that segregation would put on her adult career. Gottfredson¹⁹ says that small children accept all occupations as possible choices. Over time they become aware of their gender, social class, intelligence, interests, competencies, and values. As they mature they focus on occupations they deem most appropriate based on their maturing self-concept. Where occupational requirements conflict with the child’s self concept, a compromise takes place “largely as a natural process of learning what is typical and acceptable within one’s surroundings long before youngsters enter the job market” (1981:564). Seeing the occupational choices of the adults in her environment helped Ruth understand the occupations she too could aspire to, but also the occupations she wanted to avoid.

When she went off to college, Ruth dreamt of earning a college degree and going into business. Returning home the first summer and seeing how sick her mother was, she realized she had to begin working. Blau²⁰ describes occupational choice as a series of crossroads in the individual’s life, decision points that winnow the occupational alternatives. The final career choice reflects a compromise between the individual’s estimation of the value of the work and his/her ability to do the work. The winnowing process is influenced by factors within the individual’s control (education, personality, values, social standing) and factors outside his/her control (racial prejudice, market demand, job requirements). Ruth knew firsthand how to do domestic work, but it was not her choice of occupation. She had increased her choices by going to college for a year, but those choices were still limited by poverty born of racial prejudice.

Cultural values and work values guide individuals when they are making an occupational choice. Ruth learned the cultural value of responsibility from her mother, who took Ruth in as a baby. She also learned the work value of diligence from her mother, who worked six days a week. Brown²¹ said that cultural and work values combine with other factors in our environment to either limit or encourage occupational choice. Ruth took over responsibility for the family when her mother could no longer work. A white couple who had befriended Ruth and her mother helped Ruth find work with the Marine Corps, using the skills she learned during her one year of college. She worked for the Marines for the rest of her career.

Work is done within a work environment. When choosing an occupation, the individual is also choosing that environment. Holland²² defined six major work environments and the occupations within each environment. Within their preferred environment, individuals select an occupation that they are familiar with, and that satisfies their assessment of themselves. Their choice is constrained by limitations imposed by society. Occupation seekers targeted by racial segregation choose from the subset of occupations open to their race. Ruth knew that she was not interested in working in homes of white employers as a domestic, so she prepared herself in high school and college to work in an office environment in another field that society deemed acceptable for a black girl, clerical work.

All of the above theories recognize the role that societal constraints play in occupational choice. Segregation was a deciding factor in the occupational choices of Ruth and her neighbors. Arlington was unlike almost every other segregated town. While it was once part of the Confederacy, it lies directly across the Potomac River from the District and the federal government. Our research explored the limitations on occupational choice within the black community living in Arlington during segregation, and the impact that Arlington's proximity to the District had on those choices. Aspects of Arlington's black occupational history are shared by the other counties surrounding the District, including Alexandria, Montgomery County, and Prince Georges County. While we recognize that race remains to this day significant to occupational choice, we limited our focus for this paper to the period of segregation, which we defined as 1900–1970. We chose to focus on Arlington during this time period for several reasons. First, the city itself represents a unique case because of its location; blacks in Arlington had more access to opportunities in the District. Second, Arlington had very specific black communities that were impacted by that location. Third, Virginia's Constitution of 1902 (which disenfranchised most African Americans) and the Civil Rights legislation passed during the 1960s are appropriate bookends to the segregation period.

To explore the occupational choices made by members of Arlington's black community during a particularly difficult period in their history, and to explore the impact that proximity to the District had on those choices, we conducted semistructured interviews with fifteen participants—eight women and seven men—who ranged in age from seventy-seven through ninety-three years, with an average age of eighty-four.²³ The women needed more encouragement to take part in the study than the men. Several women expressed the belief that they had nothing to tell us that would be of interest. However, once the interview began both the men and the women participated openly in the process.

We used snowball sampling, also referred to by Patton as chain sampling,²⁴ to identify study participants, asking each participant for referrals to other potential participants. This technique is particularly useful for gaining access through the use of “well situated people” (p. 237) to facilitate entrée into the field. “The chain of recommended informants would typically diverge initially as many possible sources are recommended, then converge as a few key names get mentioned over and over.” Our study included four chains of participants—one from each of the three black neighborhoods, and a fourth participant who approached the authors to ask to be included in the study, and then offered the names of several elderly relatives. Every potential participant approached agreed to take part in the study.

The interviews were conducted in each participant's home, and the participants were interviewed at least twice; most interviews lasted an hour or more. Interviews were recorded and participants were subsequently given a transcript of each interview to read and correct for technical errors. This process of allowing the participants to edit their transcripts, referred to as “member checking,” also allowed the interviewer to review certain stories for more detail.²⁵ In qualitative research, the logic of participant selection is grounded in the value of information-rich cases and emergent themes.

All our interview participants were employed in the Arlington area during their adult years. This represents a subset of the small pool of surviving African Americans who worked in

Table 1. Created by the Author from Data Gathered in Interviews with Participants.

Name	Age	Sex	Occupation
Anita	89	F	Civil Service secretary for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, worked on several Presidential Commissions
Ruby	82	F	Waitress, school crossing guard, Civil Service key punch operator for National Security Administration, key punch operator for private industry, census enumerator for Census Bureau, administrator of substitute teacher program for public school system
Hattie	71	F	Clerk in department store, receptionist, Civil Rights activist, liaison between police department and black community
Vincion	80	M	Laborer (kitchen helper, golf caddy, short order cook, laborer in dry cleaners, laborer at car dealer), custodian in public school system
Martin	82	M	High-level career officer in Marine Corps
James	89	M	Served in Navy, Civil Service clerk for Veterans Administration, Transportation Department, Treasury Department
Orze	93	M	Served in Army, laborer (caddy, custodian, carpenter's helper, machinist helper), Civil Service machinist
Mary	90	F	School cafeteria helper, Civil Service clerk, nurse's aide
Susan	80	F	Civil Service typist, retired as executive secretary to a high-level officer in a large government agency
Ruth	77	F	Civil Service typist for Marine Corps
Isaiah	87	M	Served in Coast Guard, Civil Service messenger for War Department, butler for a caterer, retired as head of promotion records for generals at Defense Department
Florence	82	F	Domestic, self-employed baby sitter
Albert	78	M	Printer in private industry, Civil Service printer for Government Printing Office, retired as a dean at University of the District of Columbia
George	87	M	TV repairman
Ann	92	F	Teacher, Civil Service clerk, retired as assistant branch chief of a Marine Corps administrative branch

Arlington during segregation, perhaps as few as fifty individuals. Members of the sample came from each of the three larger black neighborhoods as well as three of the smaller enclaves. The oldest participant went to work after graduating high school in 1939; most participants entered the workforce in the 1940s. The participants, identified only by pseudonyms selected by the authors, are listed in Table 1.

We supplemented the interviews with thirty-five oral histories of African Americans who are no longer alive. The oral histories, twenty of which are publicly available at Arlington Central Library in the Virginia Room and fifteen of which are publicly available in the archive at the Langston-Brown Community Center in Halls Hill, were included as a data source because (1) the pool of participants is small, (2) the oral histories supplement and complement the interviews, (3) the oral histories were collected between ten and forty years ago, making the participants a generation older than our participants, and (4) the oral histories increased the variety of occupations represented. The Arlington Central Library has collected oral histories of the County's elderly citizens since 1970 as an ongoing project. The Halls Hill oral histories were collected in 2000–2001 as part of a project funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

The oral histories did not have a particular theme. Instead, the interviewer simply encouraged the oral history subject to reminisce about his/her life in Arlington. The subject spoke about whatever he/she chose. Work was a common theme in most of the oral histories. In this article, where we refer to our interview participants we call them “participants.” Where we refer to the oral history participants we refer to them as “oral history subjects.”

[illegible]

Figure 1. Page from the 1940 manuscript census schedule.
Source: Created by the U.S. Government.

Census data, both manuscript census data from 1900 to 1940 and aggregate census data from 1950 to 1970 were incorporated into the study. The manuscript data came from the publicly available website Ancestry.com.²⁶ The manuscript data are formatted as images of the original hand-written schedules filled out by the census enumerator when taking the census, with one line in the schedule for each individual being enumerated. Figure 1 is a page from the 1940 manuscript census schedule.

¹ We manually copied a subset of the data columns from the schedule, one line at a time, into an Excel spreadsheet. The data columns preserved include the age, gender, birth state, family status, occupation, and workplace of the individual. Figure 2 is a portion of the Excel spreadsheet for the 1940 manuscript census.

The aggregate census data come from the publicly available website, NHGIS, maintained by the Minnesota Population Center.²⁷ Aggregate census data identify total counts—the total number of African Americans and total number of whites per census tract living in Arlington each census year and the total number of residents per census tract working in each of the occupational categories each census year. By 1950, the black community was largely segregated in three of the County's 38 tracts. The aggregate data are specific to an entire census tract whereas the manuscript data are specific to an individual. The aggregate data from the 1950–1970 censuses were used only because manuscript data are not available. Aggregate data lack the specificity of the manuscript data.

We used the aggregate data to calculate the percentage of African Americans living in each census tract, and the percentage of black and white residents per census tract working in each of

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	Sort	MySort	Year	ED	Page	Line	HH	M-F	Race	Age	Born	Occupation	Where	Own?
163	154	1700	1940	7.07	1	1	H	M	B	58	NJ	none		O
164	155	1701	1940	7.07	1	2		F	B	53	VA	none		
165	156	1702	1940	7.07	1	3		M	B	33	VA	laborer	florist shop	
166	157	1703	1940	7.07	1	4		F	B	40	VA	servant	family	
167	158	1704	1940	7.07	1	5		F	B	14	VA	none		
168	159	1705	1940	7.07	1	6	H	F	B	90	VA	none		O
169	160	1706	1940	7.07	1	7		F	B	58	DC	none		
170	161	1707	1940	7.07	1	8		F	B	40	DC	servant	family	
171	162	1708	1940	7.07	1	9	H	M	B	61	DC	none		O
172	163	1709	1940	7.07	1	10	B	M	B	27	VA	plumber	plumber	
173	164	1710	1940	7.07	1	11		F	B	27	VA	none		
174	165	1711	1940	7.07	1	13	H	M	B	53	VA	laborer	contractor	R
175	166	1712	1940	7.07	1	14		F	B	48	VA	none		
176	167	1713	1940	7.07	1	15		M	B	32	VA	laborer	contractor	
177	168	1714	1940	7.07	1	16		M	B	38	VA	laborer	contractor	
178	169	1715	1940	7.07	1	17		F	B	28	VA	servant	family	
179	170	1716	1940	7.07	1	18		F	B	9	VA	none		
180	171	1717	1940	7.07	1	19		M	B	6	VA	none		
181	172	1718	1940	7.07	1	20		F	B	5	VA	none		
182	173	1719	1940	7.07	1	21		M	B	32	VA	laborer	contractor	
183	174	1720	1940	7.07	1	22		F	B	26	VA	none		
184	175	1721	1940	7.07	1	23	B	F	B	18	VA	none		
185	176	1722	1940	7.07	1	24		F	B	0	DC	none		
186	177	1723	1940	7.07	1	25	B	F	B	37	VA	none		
187	178	1724	1940	7.07	1	26	B	M	B	42	VA	laborer	contractor	

Figure 2. Excel spreadsheet for the 1940 manuscript census.

Source: Created by the authors based on census data from the U.S. Government.

the occupational categories identified by the Census Bureau. This could only be done for 1950, 1960, and 1970 censuses as 1950 is the first year when the Census Bureau used census tracts as Arlington's area of enumeration.

White In-Migration to Arlington

Arlington is 26 square miles in area. In 1900, the County was lightly populated and the black and white communities were approximately the same size. C.B. Rose, an Arlington historian, described the County at the beginning of the study period:

Arlington County in 1900 had much open area and many farms but it was evolving from a strictly rural area to a suburban community. However, many of the amenities of life were still to come. 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.²⁸

Rose listed sixteen village-like settlements in the County in 1900, separated by farms. Eleven of those were black settlements, including three large black neighborhoods (Halls Hill, Johnson's Hill, and Green Valley), two large settlements (twenty to hundred households), and at least six

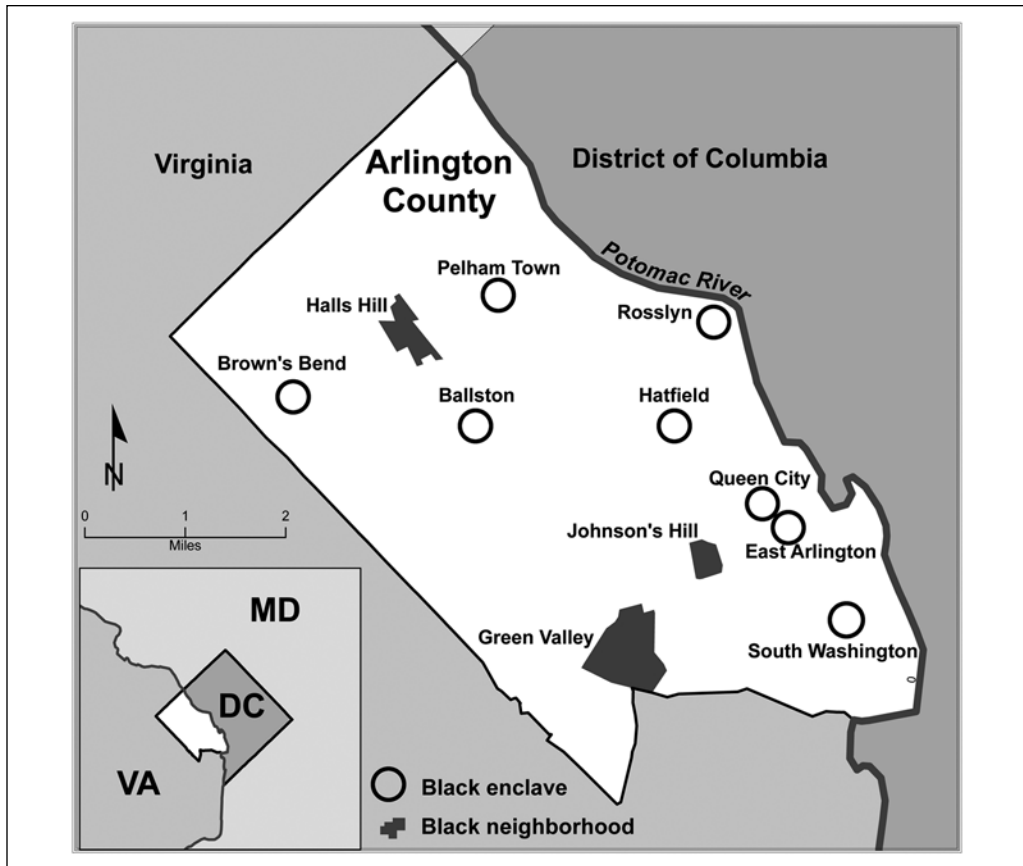


Figure 3. Map of Arlington County showing black enclaves and neighborhoods in 1900.

Source: Created by the authors based on census data from the U.S. Government.

small enclaves of five to ten families. The neighborhoods remain but almost all of the enclaves and settlements have since disappeared. Figure 3 is a map of the County and the black neighborhoods (each an entire census tract) and small enclaves and settlements in 1900.

The black community was well established by the beginning of the twentieth century. However, the County was on the brink of becoming a white suburb. New roads and electric rail lines connected Arlington with itself and with the District. Developers bought up farms and platted the fields for residential development.²⁹

The state adopted a new constitution in 1902 that disadvantaged the black community, including literacy tests, poll taxes, and segregated schools, theaters, and transportation.³⁰ No provisions in the new constitution forbade African Americans from working with whites. They were unnecessary; society enforced separation of the races, limiting black occupational choice.

Figure 4 illustrates the growth in the County's population during the study period, with the white population increasing dramatically and the black population increasing slowly. By 1940, whites outnumbered African Americans by ten to one.

The manuscript census schedules list the occupation of each enumerated individual. In 1900 most workers held jobs on farms, in the brickyards, or as general laborers and domestic workers. As white federal workers settled in Arlington, the variety of jobs available to African Americans increased until the ten years between the 1930 and the 1940 censuses, when the population of the County increased 114 percent and the types of jobs worked by African Americans increased by

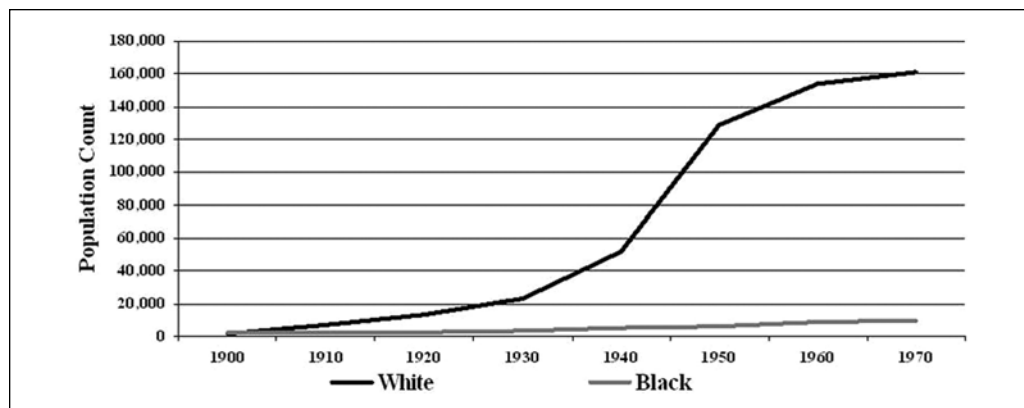


Figure 4. Graph showing population growth in Arlington County, with the white population increasing dramatically and the black population increasing slowly.

Source: Created by the authors based on census data from the U.S. Government.

56 percent. An expanding population spelled the need for more shops, services, and industries, which in turn spelled an increase in types of occupation. This meant that Ruth had many more choices of occupation than her mother's generation had. It does not necessarily mean that she had better choices than her mother's generation. In 1900 African Americans were working the least desirable jobs from a small pool of job types. By 1940 they were working the least desirable jobs from a much larger pool of job types. In 1900 no African Americans were working at the country clubs. By 1940 the clubs hired African Americans to work as caddies, as servers in the club dining room, as short order cooks in the snack bar. They did not hire them to work as accountants in the office, as the business manager, as the club "pro."

By 1940 the farms were replaced by ever-expanding white residential neighborhoods, the last remaining brickyard was on the verge of being closed, a much smaller proportion of African Americans were filling jobs as general laborers, and African Americans were working in jobs that did not even exist in 1900, including Civil Service jobs. Figure 5 shows the correlation between the total County population and the number of job types available to black workers. An Appendix of the job types worked by Arlington's African Americans on the 1900–1940 manuscript censuses is available on request from the authors. The Appendix shows how limited the occupational opportunities were for the black community while the number of job types grew with every census. The 1940 list includes the gas station attendant but not the gas station owner. The grave digger is there but not the funeral home director. Nurse's aides made the list but no nurses.

Preparing for Work—Career Training Opportunities

Holland stated that an individual's occupational choice is constrained by his environment, including the schools where the individual receives his career training.³¹ Arlington's segregated schools were inferior, leaving their graduates ill prepared for their eventual careers. The only black high school in the County, Hoffman-Boston School of Negroes, opened in 1930.³² Black Hoffman-Boston teachers were paid less than their white counterparts. Johnson said that it was typical in the south for black teachers to receive lower wages than whites. He posited that this was based on the assumption that African Americans have lower living standards and requirements.³³ When asked how they would rewrite their careers if they could do so, many of our participants mentioned that they would have liked to teach, but said that black teachers were paid so little at the time that they could not afford to do so.

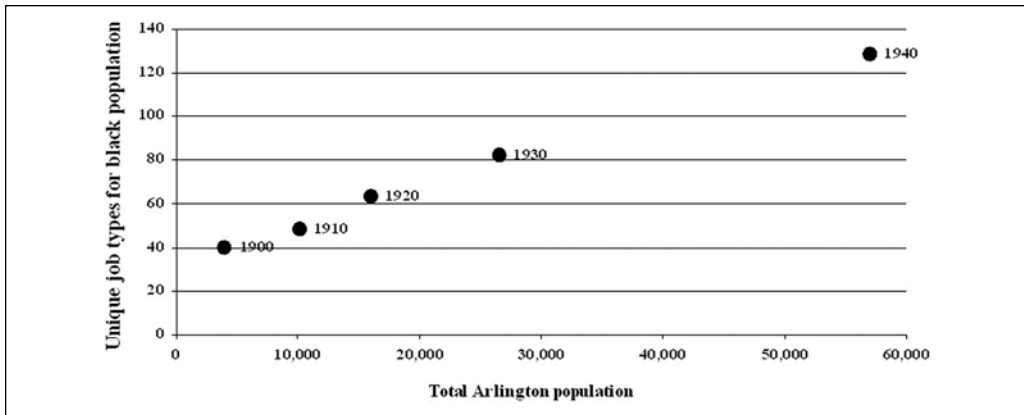


Figure 5. Correlation between the total county population and the number of job types available to the black population, 1900–1940.

Source: Created by the authors based on census data from the U.S. Government.

The County also spent less on black school buildings and supplies. Susan, who graduated from Hoffman-Boston in 1940, told about her teacher's trips to white Washington-Lee High School to collect discarded books for use by the children at Hoffman-Boston:

It was "separate but equal" they called it. We got the books from North Arlington. The teachers would go get the books and bring them and we would clean them up. We would have to erase all the junk out of them and everything.³⁴

The high school's physical plant was substandard. Ironically, informal training keeping the decrepit heating system operational at Hoffman-Boston probably led to Vincion's future career as a custodian in the Arlington Public School System:

During some of the winter months when we were going to school there was no heat in the building. . . . So instead of me staying in class I went down and learned about the furnace. And I got that junker going and I got heat in the building. So part of my day was shot.³⁵

Hoffman-Boston provided little career training. According to Susan, the school offered "shop" classes for boys, home economics classes for girls, and typing classes for anyone who could provide their own typewriter; the typing classrooms at Hoffman-Boston had no typewriters until the early 1950s.³⁶

However, proximity to the District enabled most of our participants to avoid Hoffman-Boston. Ten of our participants attended the District black schools, funded by Congress, and considered the best black school system in the nation.³⁷ Students who attended one of the District's black high schools received career training superior to that available at Hoffman-Boston and superior to the career training that black children living in other cities could get from their local black high schools. Because of their excellent reputation and because black teachers in the District by law were paid the same as white teachers, black teachers from all over the country competed to teach in District black schools.³⁸ An oral history subject, a teacher from Halls Hill who began her career in 1938 said,

I always said I wanted to be a teacher but I will not teach in Virginia because you don't make any money. So I taught in Washington. Now that's one area where black and white teachers made the same money . . . [my] salary was the same to begin with as a white teacher would have been.³⁹

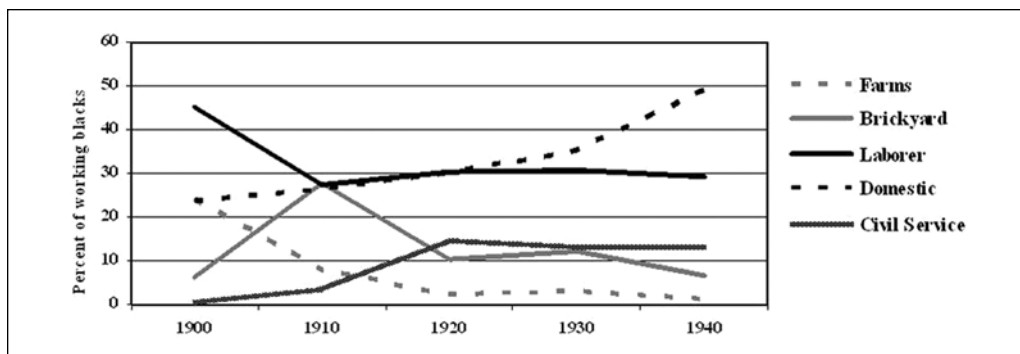


Figure 6. Black employment in 1900–1940, based on occupational titles used by the manuscript census. Source: Created by the author based on census data from the U.S. Government.

Technically, Arlington’s black students were not allowed to attend District schools although an exception was made for children whose parents worked for the federal government. However, many of our participants had relatives living in the District and their parents enrolled them in District schools using the relative’s address. An oral history subject from Halls Hill whose father was a laborer for the Department of the Interior said,

When your parents worked in the federal government, you didn’t have to pay to go to school in the District, you know. But a whole lot of kids out here went; they just gave an address in Washington.⁴⁰

Most of our participants attended Armstrong Technical High School, studying fields such as printing, engineering, drafting, and architecture as well as the usual high school subjects. Students who were destined for college also took college preparatory subjects. One of our participants who went through Armstrong’s printing program was so skilled by graduation in 1952 that he was hired by a white printing shop immediately upon graduating. In time he was the highest ranked printer at the Government Printing Office, printing the Congressional Record and the Warren Report.

Two of our participants attended Cardozo Business High School, focusing on business, accounting, secretarial, and college preparatory classes. One of our participants attended Cardozo’s college prep business courses, graduated with a scholarship to Howard University, and earned a degree in business administration.

Working in the Five Main Occupation Groups, 1900–1940

Farming

Black employment in the first quarter of the twentieth century reflects Arlington’s farming roots. Figure 6 was created based on occupational titles used by the manuscript census. Farmers and farm laborers are included in the “Farms” totals. Over half of the farm workers were black in the 1900 census, and almost all were male. Farm laborers were counted in all parts of the County in early censuses; later censuses found them only in northern census districts. Anita, born in 1923, recalled how her grandfather supported his family with a truck farm near his home.

My grandfather had every kind of farming thing in that little space that he had. We had three kinds of cherry trees, we had pears, and not many apples but I think he had one apple tree called crab apple which you couldn’t eat because they are so sour. But we had good grapes. Oh, we had grapes. . . . My grandfather used to take that produce down to Washington Circle in the District and sell it. That was in Georgetown. That is how he supported himself and his family.⁴¹

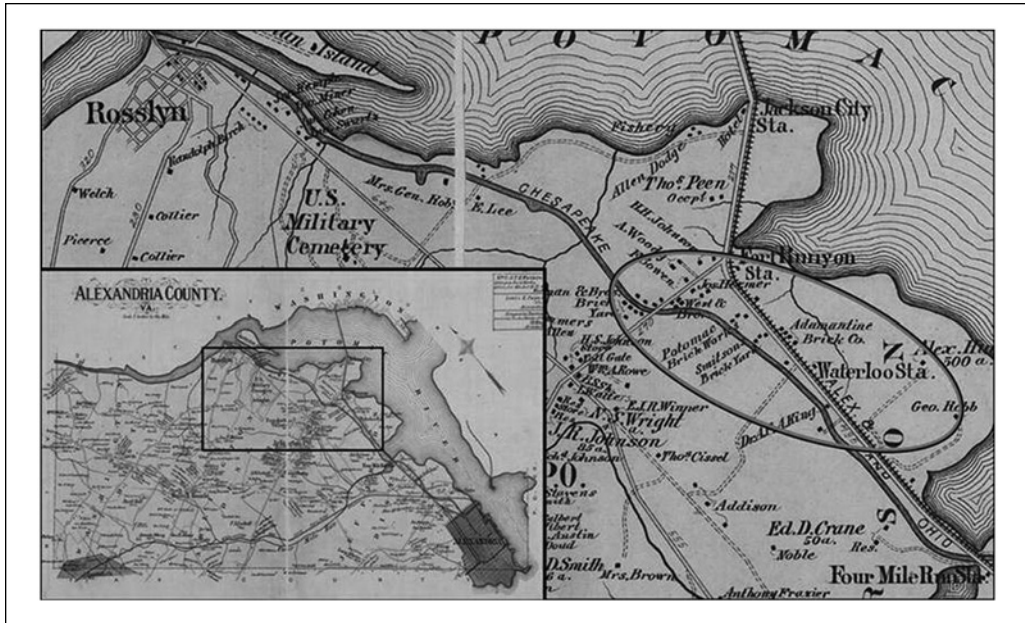


Figure 7. Arlington brickyards.
Source: Original map created in 1878.

The proportion of black workers who labored on farms gradually fell, from 24 percent in 1900 to 1 percent in 1940. By 1950 the decennial census records no farms within the boundaries of the County. Black farm employment evaporated as farms were consumed by housing developments for the new white residents, many of them federal employees. Because of growing residential segregation, the black community was constrained to living in the existing black neighborhoods, which grew progressively more crowded, while the small black enclaves and settlements gradually disappeared.

Brickyards

A number of brickyards were established parallel to the Potomac River taking advantage of rich clay deposits located along the river. As early as the 1870 census, 4 percent of Arlington's African Americans were listed as brickyard laborers. In the 1900 census, 80 percent of the brickyard laborers were black men. Figure 7, a fragment of an 1878 map of Arlington (inset), shows (in ellipse) five brickyards: Appleman & Bros, West Bros, Potomac Brick Works, Smitson Brick Yard, and Adamantine Brick Co. One of the largest was West Bros (Figure 8). Bricks from West Bros are found in the White House, the Pentagon, the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Capitol.⁴² Brickyard laborers appeared in southern census districts through the 1940 census. Figure 6 shows that the proportion of African Americans laboring in the brickyards peaked in the 1910 census and gradually fell off.⁴³

Work in the brickyards was unpleasant. Vincion, born in 1932, described his memories of the yards, saying,

I visited the brickyard as a kid. I remember it being really hot in those places. The kilns that they used were like Eskimo huts. . . . You could go inside and go down a little ways—a lot of heat. I don't know how people could stay down in there. They had to go in to place the bricks and they had to go in to get them out. [The bricks] were still hot when they took them out. They didn't let them cool down first because they were making them so fast. It was a really hard job.⁴⁴



Figure 8. West Bros brickyard.

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Virginia Room, Arlington Public Library.

The brickyards offered work not only to Arlington African Americans, but also to African Americans from nearby cities, who commuted to Arlington to work. Vincion grew up in Queen City. He recalled,

A lot of people from Queen City worked for the brickyards. A lot of people came from all over to work there. I know a gentleman . . . and he lived all the way outside of Charlottesville, and he would come up to work in the brickyard. There wasn't much work down there, it was all farms, so he would come up [to Arlington] to work and then he went back home. A lot of people came up here to work, worked all week, and then went home for the weekends.⁴⁵

Other employment opportunities arose in support of the brickyard laborers. Florence, born in East Arlington in 1930, reminisced,

I knew people who used to prepare meals and take to the people who worked in the brickyards. I wouldn't say it was catering, but they would prepare meals and carry it down, lunch or dinner. I think they got paid at the end of the week, when the people that worked there got paid.⁴⁶

This employment source ended abruptly in 1941 when the federal government, in its buildup prior to entering World War II, exercised its right of eminent domain, condemning the land occupied by West Bros brickyard and the two adjoining black enclaves, East Arlington and Queen City, in order to build the Pentagon. The black community lost both housing for over one hundred fifty families and brick yard employment for well over one hundred workers.⁴⁷ While jobs in the brickyards were lost with the building of the Pentagon, other work opportunities eventually replaced them. Our participants mentioned their neighbors, uprooted by the closure of the brickyards, finding work constructing the Pentagon. Vincion described his father's role in preparing the land so the Pentagon could be built:

Lots of people were building the Pentagon. My father was driving [truck] then. . . . He was hauling all the sludge. It was a swamp. They had to dig that out and haul it away. And they dumped that waste up on Johnson's Hill, in this area [Hatfield], Rosslyn, anywhere they found a place to dump; that is what they did. And then they filled it in with dirt, brick, slag, whatever. They dug down as far as they could go to get all the loose matter, and then they filled it in.⁴⁸

Once the Pentagon was complete in January of 1943, it provided jobs for many Arlington African Americans. Martin, whose mother worked there, said,

After the Pentagon and the Navy Annex buildings were built she, as well as some of the other ladies in Green Valley, were able to get custodial jobs either at the Pentagon or Navy Annex. She was at the Navy Annex and my grandmother was on the custodial staff at the Pentagon.⁴⁹

Some felt that leveling East Arlington and Queen City to make way for the Pentagon was an improvement. Ruth said,

Building that Pentagon was progress. We talked about Queen City being torn down, leveled, but as years went on it made progress for this area.⁵⁰

Not all of our participants agreed. Arlington's black neighborhoods exhibited a strong sense of community, forged during the trials of segregation.⁵¹ Our participants who lived in the two enclaves lamented the loss of their old neighborhood. Florence, whose family was forced to move from East Arlington, said,

Do you know one thing, all of my friends that I went to school with, they are gone. I have two friends that used to live in my neighborhood. They live in DC. When we had to move from [East Arlington], that's when they went to DC. They never came back to this area. When East Arlington got leveled, that really broke that community up.⁵²

General Laborers and Domestic Workers

All enumeration districts were home to general laborers and domestic workers. Figure 6 includes general laborers and day laborers in the 'Laborers' totals while all servants, butlers, nannies, laundresses, and cooks who said they worked for private families are included in the 'Domestic' totals. Over time the number of general laborers leveled off, but during the ten-year period between the 1930 and 1940 census there was a sharp increase in the proportion of domestic workers. This may reflect the adverse effect of the Great Depression. Virtually all the oral history subjects and our participants mentioned the poverty their families experienced. The proportion of the black community that was employed grew from 47 percent in 1930 to 53 percent in the 1940 census. Perhaps this explains the increase in the number of domestic workers, as girls and young women went to work as maids and domestics to help their families make ends meet. Vincion discussed the lengths his parents went to provide for their children during the Depression:

They worked hard to try to keep us together, to feed us and clothe us. My dad was driving truck, and my mother worked. She took in ironing clothes for people and she was working over at Fort Myer at the laundry or dry cleaners over there. . . . She ironed clothes for people and she made beautiful hot rolls every weekend. That helped us to survive—she ironed and she made hot rolls for people.⁵³

Career ambitions were truncated as students dropped out of college to support themselves and their families. Orze reminisced:

At [the time that I got out of high school] jobs were hard to find. When I first came out of high school [in 1937] I went to Miner Teachers College for one semester. But I couldn't afford to buy clothes to wear to school. I had to keep wearing the same clothes day after day. My father was dead at the time.⁵⁴

An oral history subject who was the son of a sharecropper, explained why his family left the farm and moved to Halls Hill.

We didn't have nothing to eat half the time when we first came here, wasn't much to eat. During the Depression, between '29 and '30, '31 we didn't have much to eat. [My father] didn't have much of a



Figure 9. Arlington Civil Service employee.

Source: Photo courtesy of Florence Ross.

job. [My mother] stayed in Leesburg because she was working as a maid in a kitchen, so she stayed there. But my father came because there was no work or nothing like that. One of my older brothers, he would find something so we could have something to eat. We went hungry many days because we didn't have much to eat. He'd pick up something just to tide us over until my father got a real job.⁵⁵

Civil Service

African Americans who did not choose to labor in the brickyards or on a farm, or who were not interested in ironing a white family's laundry, had another option—working for the government. The Civil Service provided employment in trades and professions as well as in clerical and administrative work. There are Civil Service positions nationwide, but they are most abundant in the nation's capital. Figure 6 illustrates the popularity of the Civil Service career choice for Arlington's black workers. Eleven of our fifteen participants worked in the classified Civil Service, many in clerical positions, for at least some portion of their careers (Figure 9). The three who never worked a Civil Service job left school before graduation to go to work.

Civil Service jobs were, in theory, available to African Americans in federal offices nationwide. While the Civil Service Commission encouraged all federal hiring offices to treat job seekers equally, until the Ramspeck Act of 1940 was passed, prohibiting discrimination in federal employment, many regional offices discriminated on the basis of race.⁵⁶ One Halls Hill resident, an oral history subject who lived in Texas during the Depression, described the problems he had finding Civil Service employment in Texas:

I was a messenger for the Veterans Administration and when I found out they had electricians a fella told me "You go down to see Mr. Mann, the fella on the first floor." So I went down and said "Mr. Mann, I'm a graduate electrician and I notice you have electricians." He said "Son, wait a minute. I'll save your time and my time. It's not the policy of the United States government to hire Negroes as electricians." And I said "Now that ain't right. This is supposed to be Civil Service." I went to Civil Service. Civil Service people said "They can hire whomever they please."⁵⁷

The greatest progress in hiring African Americans in the Civil Service was made in the District.⁵⁸ During segregation, such positions were not open to African Americans in many regions, but in

the District that was not the case. Not all of the jobs required a high school diploma, and others only required the applicant to demonstrate the ability to type. Compared to the general labor and domestic work available to African Americans in Arlington, the Civil Service positions paid well and offered the security of a pension. Many of Arlington's black workers chose to stay in the Civil Service until they retired.

Getting hired by the Civil Service did not guarantee that black employees would be treated equitably. Ann, a former civilian employee of the Marine Corps who was hired in 1946, recalled that advancement beyond clerical positions was very slow for African Americans in the Marine Corps. She remembered being passed over several times in favor of white employees when applying for supervisory and administrative positions, saying "the Marine Corps was slow to accept the concept of integration." Her persistence was eventually rewarded, so that by retirement she was assistant branch chief of an administrative branch.⁵⁹

Most of our participants entered the Civil Service on the bottom rung as messengers, clerks, and typists. In 1938, 5 percent of the District's black population worked for the Civil Service. Of those, 90 percent held custodial jobs, 9.5 percent held clerical jobs, and only 0.5 percent held sub-professional rank jobs.⁶⁰ At the same time, 12.8 percent of Arlington's African Americans were Civil Service workers. The existence of a large group of African Americans who were willing to accept a low-level job and a government looking for workers to fill low-level jobs was a happy coincidence. The African Americans got steady employment, received what they considered a good salary, and earned a pension. The government got employees who valued their job and worked to keep it because there were so few other employment opportunities. Isaiah, who worked for Civil Service after serving in the Coast Guard during World War II, said,

Of course the blacks didn't have the big jobs. I went in as a messenger. Back in those days they had messengers carrying things around. They didn't have computers and everything, you know. So I went in as a messenger and worked in the post office where mail would come in at the War Department . . . That was a good job.⁶¹

James, who was drafted into the Navy during World War II, and returned home to work for the Department of Veterans Affairs as a clerk for the rest of his career said,

It was a good job working for the government. They had a pension. That is what I am living on now.⁶²

Anita's father was a trained pharmacist who could not find work in any white-owned pharmacies. He too turned to Civil Service to support his family:

Anyway, [my father] went to work as a messenger in the State Department, which was a good job for them then. It was a good job. Everybody was looking for a good government job.⁶³

Three of our participants held Civil Service jobs when they were drafted to serve in World War II (Figure 10). Thanks to the Veterans' Preference Act, they resumed their jobs on returning from the war. Prior to the draft, one of our participants from Halls Hill was turned down by the Civil Service for an apprenticeship as a machinist because he was two years older than the cutoff age of 21, so he took a Civil Service job as a machinist helper instead. The Veterans' Preference Act lifted the apprenticeship age restrictions for returning veterans; on his return from the War the participant began his apprenticeship and enjoyed a long career as a machinist for the federal government.

Many of our participants entered the Civil Service not by choice but by necessity. Anita, who dreamed of studying fashion design, got her first taste of secretarial work in a New Deal program for young adults in 1939:

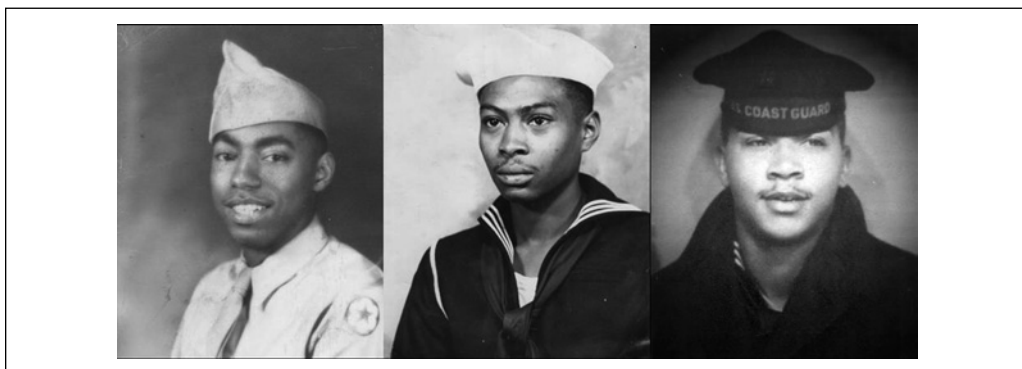


Figure 10. Black Arlington World War II servicemen. After service in World War II, black soldiers, sailors, and coastguardsmen returned to Arlington and the Civil Service jobs they left behind. Source: Photos courtesy of George M. Jones, Melvin Green, and Milton Rowe.

They had a program for young people in high school. My mother got me in the National Youth Administration program; it was a program nationwide and I worked in an office at Howard University in the School of Religion. I will never forget it. . . . So this was my introduction to office work. . . . So when I took the [Civil Service] typing examination I was ready.⁶⁴

Opportunities for African Americans in private industry were so scarce that Civil Service positions were often the only choice. Ruby told why she took a government job in 1948:

I always wanted to be a secretary so I went to Cardozo Business High School in D.C. After I graduated it was funny because you could look in the paper and it was saying 'high school education' and the first thing they would ask you [when you called to apply for the job] was "What school did you graduate from?" and as soon as you said one of the black schools they would say "Oh I'm sorry, that's been filled." . . . It was kind of hard to find employment even after you came out of high school unless you went into the federal government.⁶⁵

Working in Arlington, 1950–1970

Figures 11, 12, and 13 were created using aggregate data from the 1950–1970 censuses. The data used in this section compare census totals for workers living in the three largely black census tracts with workers living in the thirty-five largely white census tracts. In 1950, the black tracts were 81 percent black while the white tracts were 99 percent white. The figures depict the percentage, not the count, of all African Americans and all whites working in each particular occupation group. For example, in 1950 only 5 percent of Arlington's residents were black; 10 percent of African Americans worked as craftsmen while 11 percent of whites worked as craftsmen.

In 1960 the thirty-five white census tracts were 98 percent white. The three black tracts were 96 percent black. The percentage of African Americans in the County rose to almost 6.

In 1970 the thirty-five white census tracts were 96 percent white. The three black tracts were 92 percent black. The percentage of African Americans in the County rose to slightly over 6.

By 1950 farmers, farm laborers, and brickyard workers no longer appeared in Arlington's census totals. The last farm was lost to residential development prior to the 1950 census; the last brickyard was lost to Pentagon construction in 1941. The authors were unable to locate participants who had worked as farmers or brickyard laborers. Ruby explained:

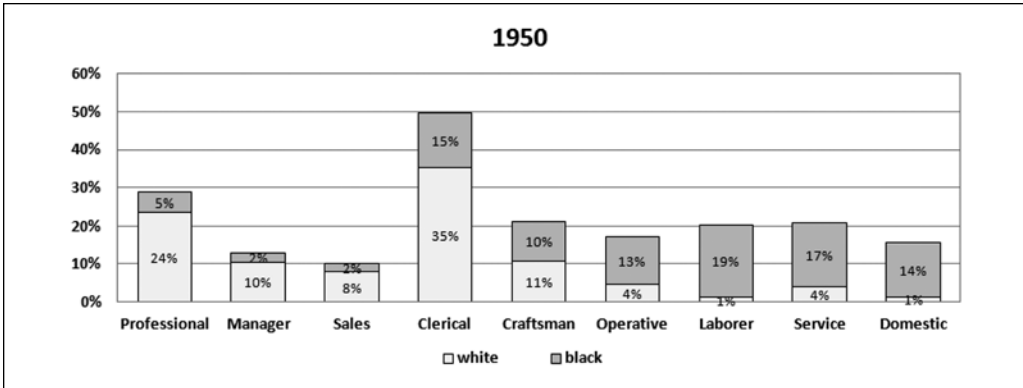


Figure 11. African Americans and whites in various occupation groups in 1950.

Source: Created by the authors based on census data from the U.S. Government.

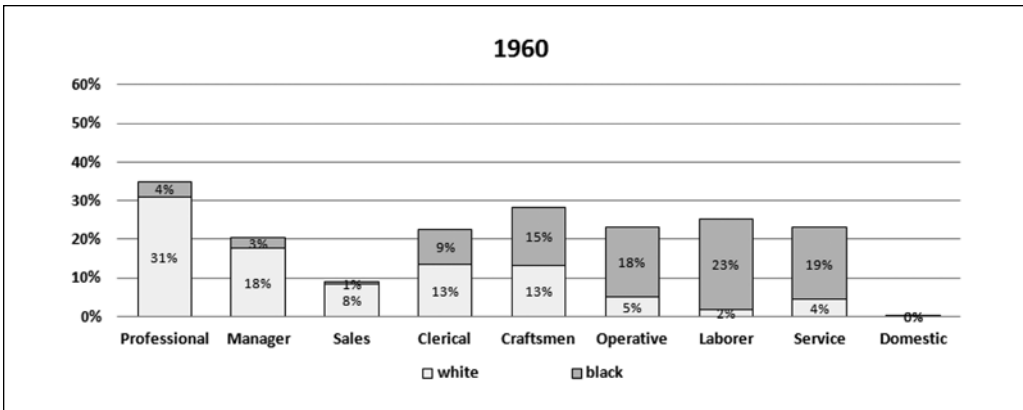


Figure 12. African Americans and whites in various occupation groups in 1960.

Source: Created by the authors based on census data from the U.S. Government.

A lot of them from my mother's and my father's generation worked those [farmer and brickyard] jobs. But as we came along there were more opportunities. When my children came along there were just so many other things they could do.⁶⁶

Comparison of the 1950 census totals in Figure 11 with Figure 6, and comparisons of Figures 11, 12, and 13 with each other reveal a gradual improvement in the types of occupations worked by Arlington's black community in the waning years of de jure segregation. The percentage of workers in laborer positions gradually fell as the farm and brickyard laborer positions disappeared and as other opportunities opened up. The number of clerical and "office" jobs increased. In 1940 the Civil Service employed 13 percent of Arlington's workers. This total included all Civil Service workers, including printers, soldiers, clerks, machinists, and laborers. By 1950, 15 percent of Arlington's workers were doing clerical work, mostly working for the Civil Service, and that number continued to increase in the succeeding censuses. The percentage of black domestic workers fell from an all-time high of 50 percent in 1940. Other than ministers and a few teachers and doctors (all of whose students or patients were black), African Americans in 1940 held almost no jobs in professional, managerial, and sales positions. Totals in those fields increased with succeeding censuses.

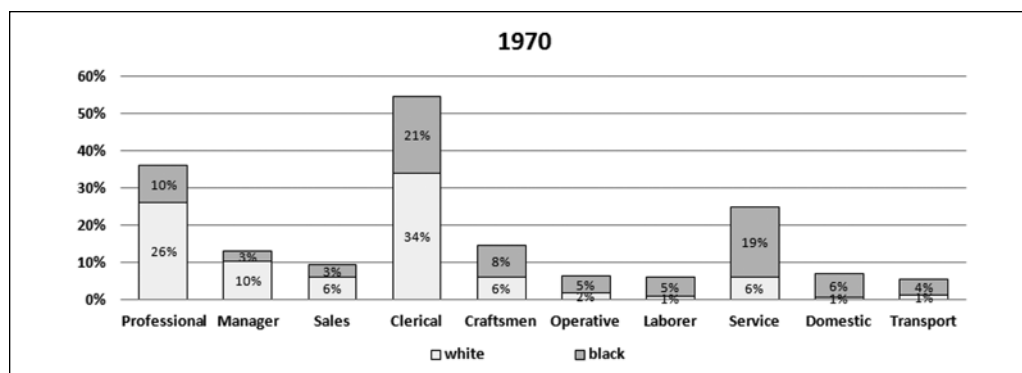


Figure 13. African Americans and whites in various occupation groups in 1970.

Source: Created by the authors based on census data from the U.S. Government.

The participants spoke with satisfaction about how their children and grandchildren, often college educated, had more occupational opportunities than they had. George, who ran a TV repair shop, said of his sons, both successful businessmen:

My kids are on a different level than I am in terms of education. [My youngest son] is very, very good at what he does. He has four or five people who work for him.⁶⁷

Conclusions

The theories of occupational choice describe the process an individual experiences while selecting a career. Variables peculiar to the individual, including environmental factors, rule out many of the possible occupations. One such environmental factor is segregation. As all the theories of occupational choice suggest, segregation informed the occupational choices of Arlington's black community. Another environmental factor, proximity to the District, had both positive and negative influences on the community's occupational choices during Segregation.

The story of Ruth and her neighbors during this trying period would have been so different if Arlington were not next door to Washington, D.C. Proximity to the District gave many young Arlington African Americans the opportunity to attend excellent District black high schools where they learned saleable job skills, rather than attend the inadequate black high school in Arlington—a school so poorly equipped that the typing classes had no typewriters. Once they graduated from District schools, Arlington African Americans had the opportunity to market those job skills to the federal government rather than trying to find work with a white Arlington employer who had little to offer but low-paying, low-status service jobs.

Proximity to the District came at a price, however. Arlington was a magnet for white federal workers fleeing the congestion of the District. The white workers required new residential developments where there was once farm land, pushing the African Americans out of their small settlements and enclaves into the larger black neighborhoods, thus segregating them residentially. The arrival of the whites forced the African American community to trade farm work for a variety of service jobs to support the new white residents. The occupational choices increased, but the status of the work did not.

The federal government also migrated across the Potomac River, destroying enclaves where African Americans had long lived and brickyards where they had long worked, and replacing them with the new Pentagon. The African American community was forced to trade brick yard jobs for low-level service jobs to support Pentagon workers. Again, the occupational choices

increased, but the status of the work did not. The participants' work lives were easier than the work lives of their parents. They remembered their mothers working as domestics for private families six days a week and taking in laundry to wash on the seventh day. They remembered their fathers coming home after a day of carrying bricks out of a baking hot brick kiln at West Bros brickyard. As their parents had done before them, the participants chose from the limited occupational options available to them, and worked hard so their children would do even better than they had.

Our participants were philosophical about the impact that segregation had on their occupational choices. Segregation was all they had known throughout their working lives. We asked each person to talk about the limitations they experienced when entering the job market but no one accepted the invitation to complain. Instead, they described how hard their parents had worked, how supportive their neighbors were, what an inspiration their teachers had been, how proud they were to send their children to college—an opportunity that most of the participants themselves lacked. Many of those children have gone on to professional careers, doing their parents proud.

The story of Arlington and the story of Arlington's black community during segregation is a story of change. In 1900 the County was rural. The total population was less than 4,000, with African Americans slightly outnumbering whites. Most of the African Americans at the turn of the century were uneducated; some were illiterate. By 1970 Arlington was a prosperous suburb of the District. A significant majority of the population was white and a significant employer was the federal government. Jobs at the farms and brickyards were long gone, and work in the Civil Service had taken their place. Many of the grandchildren and great grandchildren of the early African Americans were college educated, some working in professional fields. While all of the African Americans alive in 1900 are gone, many of their descendants still live in Arlington. Thus ends this very difficult, but pivotal, period in the history of the community.

Study Limitations

The timing of the study limits the findings. The period covered by the study began 113 years ago and ended 43 years ago. All of the people who were working adults in 1900 passed from this earth many years ago, and most of the people who were working adults in 1970 are either gone or extremely old. Of the small cohort still alive, only a fraction have clear memories. We could find no former brickyard workers, no former farm workers, and no former domestics. Instead, we relied on the memories of their children. The authors felt a real urgency in documenting our participants' stories while the principals are still available to tell them. To overcome the limitations of timing, we used multiple data sources, including manuscript census data, aggregate census data, and oral histories to supplement the interviews.

The potential exists for race to also be a limitation in this study. Interviewers and interviewees bring their own personal experiences to interviews. The author doing the interviewing grew up in a western state with virtually no black population. In an effort to hear an unvarnished version of the participants' lives, she took steps to minimize the distance between herself and the participants. At the beginning of the first interview with each participant she acknowledged her race and her lack of experience with segregation. She visited each participant at least twice. At the end of the analysis stage, she visited a number of the original participants to discuss her findings with them. After the paper was written, she visited participants with whom she had developed a particularly open relationship and discussed the possibility of their self-censoring. Based on those discussions we believe that there was some self-censorship with participants whose life trajectories included little contact with whites, but less with participants who experienced considerable contact with whites. Because Arlington's African American community was greatly outnumbered by the white community, and because most of the participants worked at least a portion of their careers in the Civil Service, the majority of the participants belong in the latter group.

Ultimately, the reader's understanding of this story is filtered through the participants', the authors', and the readers' own racial experiences.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. Of Arlington's 1044 African American women who reported an occupation on the 1940 census, 88 percent performed "domestic" work (cooking, cleaning, laundry, child care), usually with a private family.
2. Ruth, interview with authors, June 11, 2012. (We assigned the participants pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality.) Ruth, like our other participants referred to her race as "black." The authors are aware that the more accepted usage now is "African American." For this paper, we use "African American" when using the word as a noun, and "black" for all other purposes.
3. Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
4. Charles S. Johnson, *Backgrounds to Patterns of Negro Segregation* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970).
5. C. B. Rose Jr., *Arlington County Virginia, A History* (Baltimore: Port City Press, Inc., 2009).
6. Nan Netherton and Ross Netherton, *Arlington County in Virginia: A Pictorial History* (Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1987).
7. Samuel Krislov, *The Negro in Federal Employment: The Quest for Equal Opportunity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967).
8. Harold M. Rose, "Social Processes in the City: Race and Urban Residential Choice," *Association of American Geographers, Resource Paper* 6 (1969): 1–34.
9. Constance McLaughlin Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967).
10. Matthew D. Lassiter and Christopher Niedt, "Suburban Diversity in Postwar America," *Journal of Urban History* 39, no. 1 (2013).
11. William K. Tabb, "Race Relations Models and Social Change," *Social Problems* 18, no. 4 (1971).
12. Robert L. Boyd, "Race, Labor Market Disadvantage, and Survivalist Entrepreneurship: Black Women in the Urban North During the Great Depression," *Sociological Forum* 15 (2000).
13. I. H. Light and C. N. Rosenstein, *Race, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship in Urban America* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995); Adia M. Harvey, "Becoming Entrepreneurs: Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender at the Black Beauty Salon," *Gender & Society* 19, no. 6 (2005); Patricia Burke Wood and Rod K. Brunson, "Geographies of Resilient Social Networks: The role of African American Barbershops," *Urban Geography* 32, no. 2 (2011).
14. Nancy Perry and Nigel M. Waters, "Southern Suburb/Northern City: Black Entrepreneurship in Segregated Arlington County, Virginia," *Urban Geography* 33, no. 2 (2012).
15. Johnson, *Backgrounds to Patterns of Negro Segregation*.
16. Krislov, *The Negro in Federal Employment*.
17. Rose, *Arlington County Virginia*, 33.
18. Eli Ginzberg, "Toward a Theory of Occupational Choice," *The Career Development Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (1988).
19. Linda S. Gottfredson, "Circumscription and Compromise: A Developmental Theory of Occupational Aspirations," *Journal of Counseling Psychology Monograph* 28, no. 6 (1981).
20. Peter M. Blau, John W. Gustad, Richard Jesso, Herbert S. Parnes, and Richard C. Wilcock, "Occupational Choice: A Conceptual Framework," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 9, no. 4 (1956).

21. Duane Brown, "The Role of Work and Cultural Values in Occupational Choice, Satisfaction, and Success: A Theoretical Statement," *Journal of Counseling & Development* 80, no. 1 (2002).
22. John L. Holland, *Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments*, 2nd edition (Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1985).
23. Michael Q. Patton, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002).
24. Ibid.
25. We identified participants using snowball sampling. The interviews were conducted in the participant's home. At the beginning of the interview, participants reviewed pages from the 1920, 1930, and/or 1940 manuscript census listing the participant's family. Participants were interviewed at least twice, and were given a typed transcript of each interview to read and correct. Each interview lasted between one and two hours.
26. Ancestry.com, www.ancestry.com (accessed January 3, 2013). Manuscript census data more recent than 1940 are not available. 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 (92 Stat. 915; Public Law 95-416; October 5, 1978).
27. NHGIS, Minnesota Population Center, *National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 2.0* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota 2011), <https://www.nhgis.org/>, accessed 1/3/2013.
28. Rose, *Arlington County Virginia, A History*, 145.
29. Ibid.
30. June Purcell Guild, *Black Laws of Virginia: A Summary of the Legislative Acts of Virginia Concerning Negroes from the Earliest Times to the Present* (New York, NY: Negro Universities Press, 1969).
31. Holland, *Making Vocational Choices*.
32. Rose, *Arlington County Virginia, A History*.
33. Johnson, *Backgrounds to Patterns of Negro Segregation*.
34. Susan, interview with authors, date.
35. Vincion, interview with authors, date.
36. Lucy Hicks Coates, Arlington County Library, Oral History Program Series 3, no. 32 (1991)
37. Green, *The Secret City*.
38. Steven Birmingham, *Certain People: America's Black Elite* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1977).
39. Mignon Bolden Johnson, *High View Park Community Project, Arlington County, Virginia, Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources, Cultural Affairs Division* 3:18 (2000)
40. Welbe Riley Deskins, *High View Park Community Project, Arlington County, Virginia, Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources, Cultural Affairs Division* 2:10 (2001). All of the participants attended elementary school in Arlington. Each of the large neighborhoods had a black elementary school. The participants all expressed the opinion that the education offered in the elementary schools was as good as that offered in white elementary schools.
41. Anita, interview with authors, June 26, 2012.
42. *1878 Alexandria County Virginia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1878_Alexandria_County_Virginia.jpg (accessed 17 July 2012).
43. Alexandria County (Va) Board of Supervisors, *Brief History of Alexandria County, Virginia* (Falls Church, VA: The Newell Printing Co., 1907).
44. Vincion, interview with authors, June 29, 2012.
45. Ibid.
46. Florence, interview with authors, June 21, 2012.
47. Alfred Goldberg, *The Pentagon: The First Fifty Years* (Washington, DC: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1992).
48. Vincion, interview with authors, June 29, 2012.
49. Martin, interview with authors, June 18, 2012.
50. Ruth, interview with authors, June 11, 2012.
51. Masked author, reference to be added later.
52. Florence, interview with authors, June 21, 2012.
53. Vincion, interview with authors, June 29, 2012.

54. Orze, interview with authors, July 12, 2012.
55. Mervin Williams, *High View Park Community Project, Arlington County, Virginia, Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources, Cultural Affairs Division*, 5:7 (2001).
56. Paul P. Van Riper, *History of the United States Civil Service* (Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson, 1958).
57. James E. Browne, *High View Park Community Project, Arlington County, Virginia, Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Resources, Cultural Affairs Division* 1:11 (2001).
58. Krislov, *The Negro in Federal Employment*.
59. Ann, interview with authors, June 27, 2012.
60. Green, *The Secret City*.
61. Isaiah, interview with authors, July 10, 2012.
62. James, interview with authors, July 18, 2012.
63. Anita, interview with authors, June 26, 2012.
64. Anita, interview with authors, June 26, 2012.
65. Ruby, interview with authors, June 13, 2012. Ruby suspected that the receptionist she was talking to was instructed to avoid giving interviews to applicants from black high schools. After she was told that the position had been filled she called back, disguising her voice, and named a white high school. As she suspected, the position had not yet been filled and the receptionist offered her an interview.
66. Ruby, interview with authors, June 13, 2012.
67. George, interview with authors, July 15, 2010.

Author Biographies

Nancy Perry is a recent graduate of the Department of Geography and Geoinformation Science at George Mason University. Her dissertation focused on the geographical aspects of segregation for the African American community in Arlington, VA. Her research interests include Geoinformation Science, human geography, physical geography, and network analysis.

L. Earle Reybold, PhD, is an associate professor of qualitative research at George Mason University. Also she serves as affiliate faculty in the higher education and women and gender studies programs. Her research interests include faculty identity, professional epistemology, career development, academic culture, and qualitative research methods.

Nigel Waters, PhD, is professor of geography and geoinformation science and director of the GIS Center of Excellence, George Mason University. His research focuses on GIS and social media and is supported by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the National Institutes of Health. He is the Editor of *Cartographica*.