

A SOCIOECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE
GREENWOOD DISTRICT OF TULSA,
OKLAHOMA: 1940-1980

By

AMANDA K. COLEMAN

Bachelor of Science

Oklahoma State University

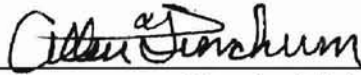
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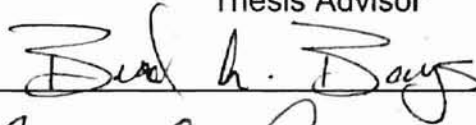
Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTERS OF SCIENCE
August, 2001

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Thesis Approved:



Thesis Advisor









Dean of the Graduate College

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to collectively thank the professors of the Geography Department for all of the financial and emotional support I have received during my graduate studies. Special thanks go to Dr. Brad Bays and Dr. George Carney for serving on my thesis committee. I'd like to express gratitude to Dr. George Arquitt, of the Sociology Department, for also being a member of my committee. I especially want to thank my advisor, Dr. Allen Finchum, whose support and friendship during the last two years have meant so much to me.

I'd also like to express my appreciation to the staff of the Geography Department. Susan and Leann, thank you for always being there to answer my questions, help me fill out forms, and just generally making sure things run smoothly. And Mike. I cannot truly express how much your friendship – and cartographic expertise – have meant to me.

Finally, I'd like to thank my friends and my family for their emotional support throughout my educational career. I share my present and future successes with you all.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Between 1906 and 1915, there were over 20 reported lynchings of African-Americans in Oklahoma (Davis and Donaldson, 1975). The Ku Klux Klan first organized in the state in 1915, and by the early 1920s the Tulsa chapter prospered with a membership of 3,200 (Ellsworth, 1982); the Oklahoma City membership stood at over 2,500 (Johnson, 1998). In 1921, escalating racial tensions in the state reached a climax, when Tulsa's African-American community was burned to the ground in what was, at that time, the worst race riot in United States history. Community leaders and members of the media suppressed the events surrounding the riot, and only recently has public interest in this episode of Tulsa's past been rekindled. Local and national press reports have made the general population aware of the 1921 tragedy; unfortunately, the media usually tells little of the neighborhood, the Greenwood District, after the riot. Much of the public may be unaware of the post-riot rebuilding that took place there in the 1920s and 1930s, and of the economic success that followed.

Problem Statement

The research presented here examines socioeconomic changes and alterations to the physical landscape in the Greenwood District from the 1940s to the 1980s. Little academic work concerning the neighborhood during this time period has been conducted; however, several local histories of the area have

been published. These studies detail the post-riot revitalization of Greenwood and discuss the decline of the neighborhood in the 1960s and 1970s. A seemingly common perception is that urban renewal was the primary causal factor in the demise of the Greenwood District. One author writes: "In the late 1950s and 1960s the enterprises of the once proud district began to suffer because blacks won the right to spend their money freely anywhere in Tulsa. But the community suffered its destruction at the hands of urban renewal" (Butler, 1991). Echoing this sentiment, another writer, quoting one of Greenwood's business and community leaders, states: "What was characteristic of urban renewal authorities across the country was that right through the core of the black business community, like an arrow through the heart, came expressways. Tulsa was no exception" (Johnson, 1998).

While urban renewal did affect the landscape of the neighborhood, the economic decline of the Greenwood District began years prior to the removal of homes and businesses for expressway and other construction. The total number of structures in Greenwood declined by only four percent between 1946 and 1970; during the same time period, the total vacancy rate increased by 20 percent. The relatively small change in the total number of structures indicates that the majority of the neighborhood remained physically intact during the Urban Renewal era of the 1960s. The significant increase in the number of vacancies, however, suggests that serious economic and demographic changes were taking place in Greenwood in the 1950s and 1960s.

As mentioned by Butler (1991), desegregation in the late 1950s and the 1960s had a major economic impact upon the Greenwood neighborhood. Still, little has been written about the socioeconomic effects of desegregation upon the area. The repeal of segregation laws led to increased African-American mobility and to the breakdown of the dual economic system that was created and maintained through segregation. The easing of the monopoly on African-American consumerism is an integral part of the deterioration of Greenwood. Local lawyer Hannibal Johnson, who details the impact of desegregation in Greenwood, notes that by the early 1960s, African-Americans were spending over 90% of their income on purchases outside of the Greenwood District (1998).

The purpose of this research is to provide a general overview of the Greenwood District after the 1921 riot. Of specific interest is the assessment of the impact of desegregation upon the neighborhood. The intent is to demonstrate that desegregation was the primary impetus for the physical, social, and economic changes that occurred in Greenwood in the last half of the twentieth century.

Definition of Study Period

The study period for this research spans the years 1940 to 1980. These years were selected for study in order to trace the devolution of Greenwood from a vibrant, functioning neighborhood in the 1940s to one practically abandoned by the 1980s.

After the Great Depression, the Greenwood District experienced an economic boom. Tulsa's industrial sector benefited from America's entry into World War II, and some Greenwood residents gained jobs in war-related production factories. With segregation laws in place, the people of the Greenwood District spent most of their income within the African-American neighborhood, and the District thrived (Goble, 1997).

The economic prosperity of the 1940s carried over into the next decade, but by the end of the 1950s Greenwood had fallen into the first stages of a gradual economic decline. Desegregation allowed African-Americans to spend their money in other parts of the city, and by 1960 the degree of economic reinvestment in Greenwood had declined dramatically.

In addition to economic mobility, desegregation afforded to African-Americans a new degree of residential mobility. Once racial housing barriers had been broken, population movement out of the historic black neighborhood was rapid. Residential relocation increased in the 1960s and 1970s, leaving many parts of the Greenwood District with vacant homes and businesses, making them prime locations for Urban Renewal projects.

Definition of Study Area

The lack of documentation concerning the boundaries of the Greenwood neighborhood made the definition of a study area for this research somewhat difficult. Goble (1997) states that at the time of the 1909 annexation of Greenwood by the city of Tulsa, the district "...ran northward from the Frisco

tracks to Independence Avenue, bounded by the Midland Valley tracks on the east, and Cheyenne Avenue on the west." The area described by Goble was destroyed during the 1921 race riot, and was later usurped by the city and designated as the construction site for a new train depot. As a result, riot survivors were forced to rebuild their neighborhood several blocks east of where it had stood before the riot (see Figure 1).

Most of the work focusing on defining Greenwood's boundaries concerns the location of the neighborhood on the eve of the riot. Scott Ellsworth (1982) utilized racially coded Polk City Directory data from 1917-1921 to establish the extent of black settlement in Tulsa in 1921. Gates (1997) used interviews with riot survivors to generate Greenwood's boundaries at the time of the riot. No documentation could be found concerning neighborhood boundaries after 1921, which is not surprising given that the riot and the history of the neighborhood have come into public interest only recently.

The study area for this research is shown in Figure 2. The boundaries of the study area generally coincide with the 1921 boundaries approximated by other authors, and were formulated in part through the use of housing census data. Residential growth expanded northward from the study area between 1921 and the beginning of the study period (1940), but the part of Greenwood under examination remained the commercial and social center of the community. Thus the analysis of this portion of the neighborhood provides the greatest insight into the impact of economic change upon the community.

Figure 1. Greenwood District Boundaries, circa 1921

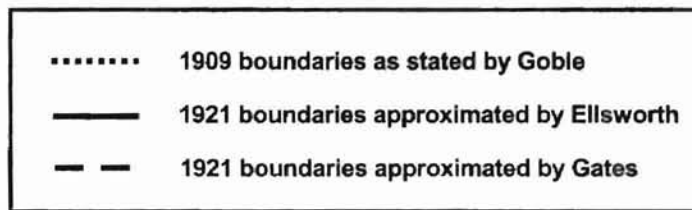
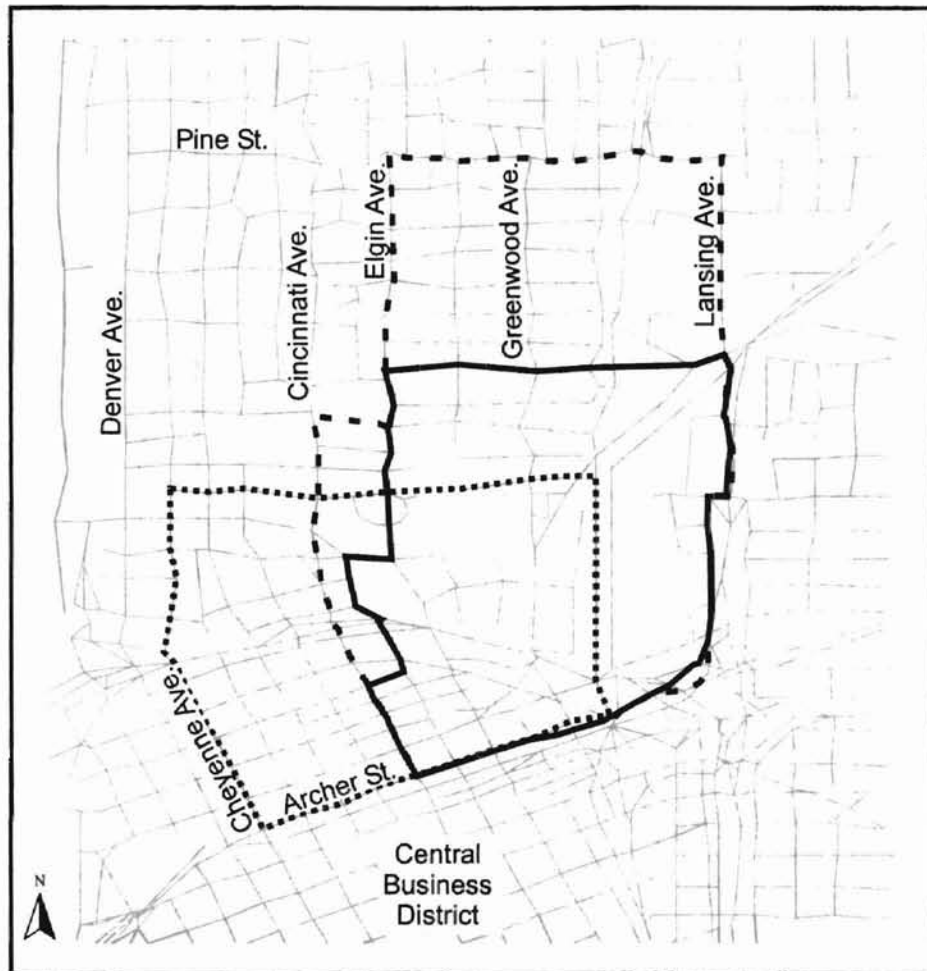
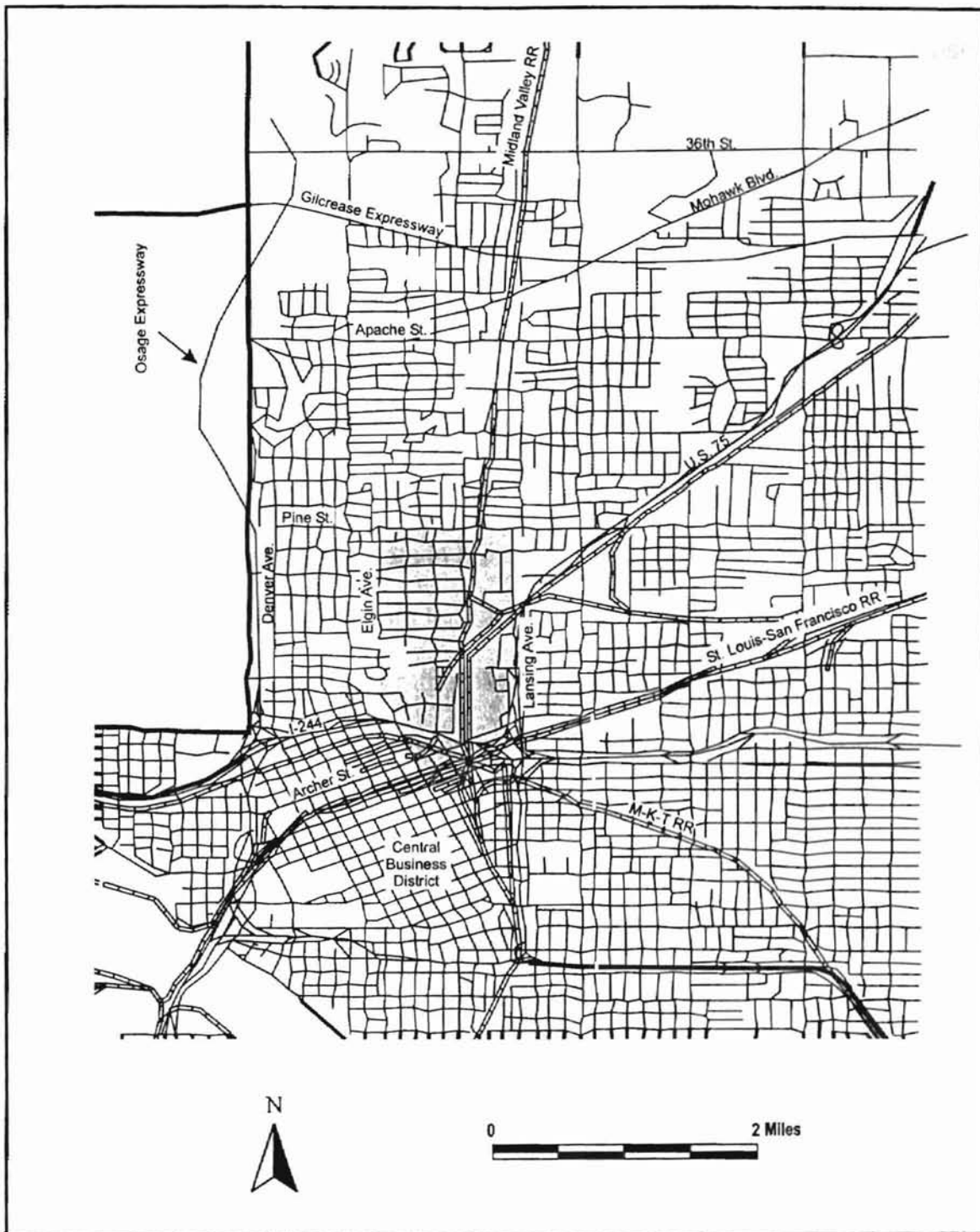


Figure 2. Study Area



Big University Library

Methodology

Several methods are employed to recreate business and residential patterns in the study area during the study period. One method involves the use of Polk City Directory data. Polk Directories are reverse directories in which street names are organized alphabetically and numeric addresses, followed by the name of the occupant, are then listed. This is in contrast to modern telephone books in which occupant names are organized alphabetically and are followed by street address. Polk Directory data are utilized for every fourth year of the study period, starting in 1942. The occupants on each street are classified using a coding system (Table I) that will be uniformly employed, allowing for direct comparisons between years in the study period.

Once classified, street data for each year are aggregated, and the results are reported by number of units rather than number of structures. The counting of structures presented several issues that made the unit-counting system preferable. First, employing a structural counting system would tend to underestimate the economic condition of the neighborhood since this would leave no mechanism to account for residentially-based businesses. Second, if home-based businesses were counted as individual structures, the total number of structures would be overestimated. Due to the misleading results that would be produced under a structural counting system, each home and business was counted separately, and total counts refer to the number of "residential units", "apartment units", "industrial units", and so forth.

Directories is intended only to show patterns within the
 be taken to be an absolute count of all residences and
 the collection of Polk Directory information is
 collected through efforts to count every

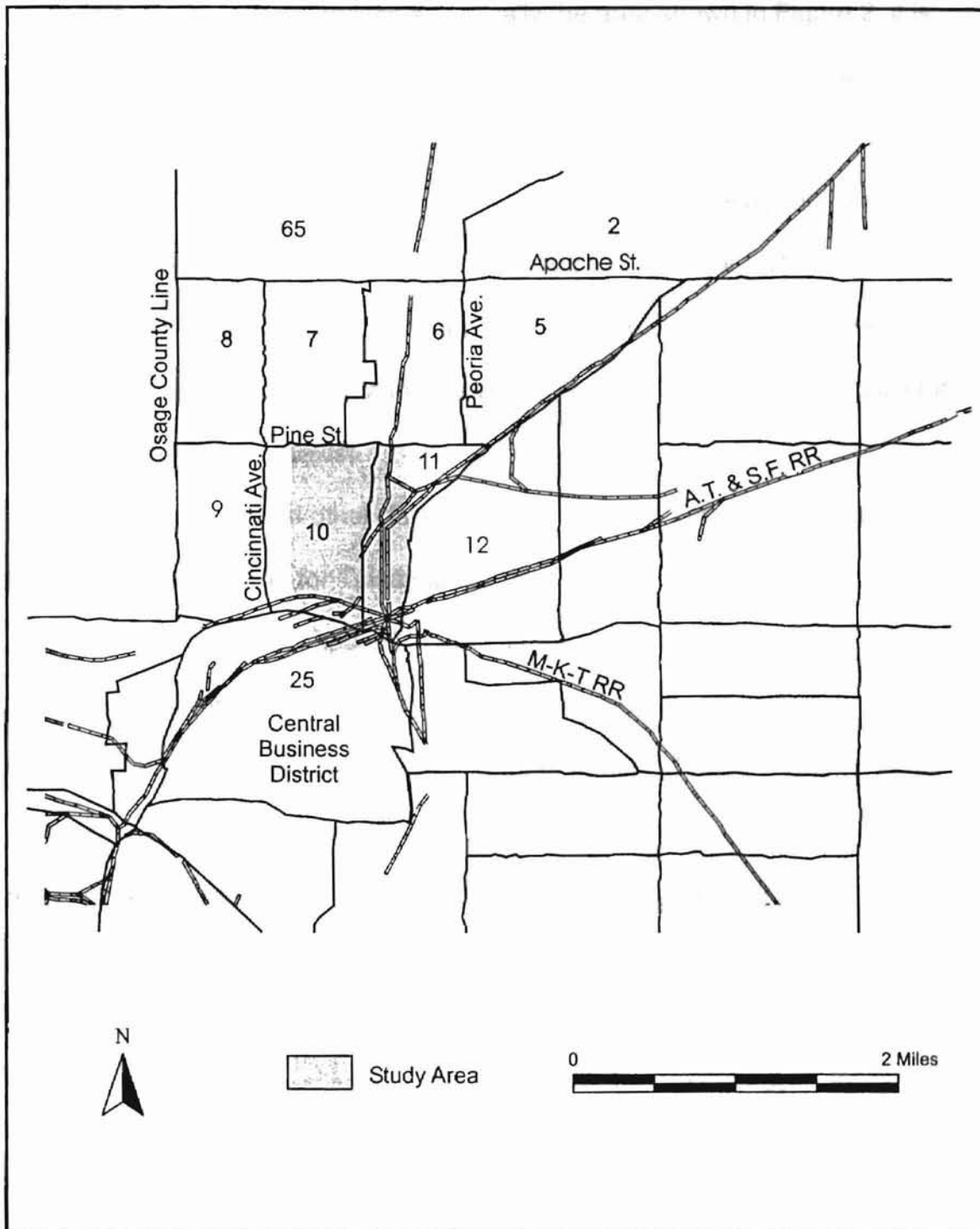
Table I. Polk City Directory Data Classification System

Classification	Description
R	Single-family Residential Unit
RM	Multi-residential Unit (i.e. apartment buildings)
OA	Occupied Apartment
UA	Unoccupied Apartment
V	Vacant
Sch	School
Chur	Church
Rt	Retail Business
S	Service-oriented Business
I	Industrial Business
G	Government Building
C	Community Buildings (lodges, libraries, etc.)
T	Transportation Facilities (train stations, bus depots, etc.)
NR	No Return (survey was not returned to data collectors)

Data from the Polk Directories is intended only to show patterns within the community and should not be taken to be an absolute count of all residences and businesses. Participation in the collection of Polk Directory information is voluntary and while the survey collectors make reasonable efforts to count every home and business, occasionally surveys are not returned.

In addition to information from Polk Directories, data from the housing and population censuses of the United States Census Bureau are also employed to reconstruct patterns within the community. The primary purpose of the census data is to monitor residential changes in the area over the length of the study period. Data from the housing censuses are reported at the block level, while only tract-level data are available from the population censuses. Due to the small size of the study area, block data are more applicable and are used whenever possible; however, some pertinent information is only available at the larger census tract level. As shown in Figure 3, the study area primarily lies within two census tracts, but data from surrounding tracts are discussed in demonstrating areas of population growth and relocation. Fortunately, the census tract boundaries remained relatively constant during the years of the study period, allowing for direct comparison of data among census years.

Figure 3. Census Tract Boundaries



Scope and Limitations

While this study examines specifically the area shown in Figure 2, it is difficult to separate this neighborhood from the larger African-American community in Tulsa. Therefore, general trends among the African-American population of the city are often discussed, the supposition being that such conditions are representative of the Greenwood District. For instance, in subsequent chapters, unemployment figures are usually provided for the city's entire African-American population, as employment information specifically for the study area does not exist.

There are several other data related issues that deserve mention. Population census data for Tulsa did not become available at units below city-level until 1960, making impossible the analysis of population and demographic characteristics within the study area in the 1940s and 1950s. Fortunately, the housing census for 1950 provided the number of non-white residences on each census block, allowing for an approximation of the racial composition of the study area and surrounding neighborhoods for that year. In other censuses, data reported at the block level in one census year may be reported in aggregate form at the tract level in the next census year, hampering the analysis of changes during the decade. A similar lack of consistency occurs when data are reported at city level in one census and at SMSA level in the following census. While more uniform in content and format than census data, the Polk City Directories also have discrepancies that can impair data analysis. In addition to the voluntary nature of data collection, data sometimes is not available for every

street for every year. Streets were occasionally closed or under construction, preventing a completely accurate count of the number of and types of structures on those routes. Also, apartment unit data is provided in some, but not all years, thus hindering the comparison of multi-residential figures between years in the study period. These are two additional reasons that the city directory data should be interpreted as revealing socioeconomic patterns in the neighborhood and not as an absolute count of total structures.

Organization of Study

This study is organized as follows:

- Chapter I - Introduction
- Chapter II - Literature Review
- Chapter III - The 1940s
- Chapter IV - The 1950s
- Chapter V - The 1960s
- Chapter VI - The 1970s
- Chapter VII - Conclusions, and Recommendations

Chapter II contains a review of literature pertinent to the research topic, including a section on African-American neighborhood formation and expansion. Also included in the literature review is an examination of works on African-Americans in Oklahoma and in Tulsa. Chapters III through VI each contain an analysis section describing the demographic and socioeconomic patterns and

changes during the indicated portion of the study period. Chapter VII summarizes the completed study suggests directions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction to literature review

2. Literature review

3. List

4. Literature review

5. List

6.

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8.

9. Literature review

10. List

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is an abundance of academic literature concerning the spatial and socioeconomic characteristics of African-Americans. Much of the published research focuses on the formation, expansion, and perseverance of African-American ghettos in America's large cities; thus the bulk of this literature review will center on the characteristics of ghetto areas. First, however, there is a brief description of work written concerning the dynamic geographic distribution of African-Americans, since this knowledge is integral to understanding the development of the ghettos present today. This literature review concludes with a summarization of works and research detailing the history of African-Americans in Oklahoma, and specifically in the city of Tulsa. Please note that hereafter the terms "African-American" and "black" are used interchangeably as a means of avoiding redundancy. Also note that unless otherwise stated, the authors of the works discussed herein are professional geographers.

Literature on the Spatial Distribution of African-Americans

In 1938, Richard Hartshorne conducted one of the first geographic studies on African-Americans. Hartshorne utilized census data from 1930 to describe the racial characteristics of the United States, calculating the proportion of African-Americans in the total population.

In 1960, John Fraser Hart followed up on Hartshorne's work by describing distributional changes in the African-American population from 1910 to 1950. Hart found that, despite massive black out-migration from the South, the core area of black population in the southern United States remained relatively stable during the study period.

In 1972, Richard Morrill and O. Fred Donaldson added to Hartshorne's 1930 research by analyzing 1970 census data. The authors separated the United States into four regions, and employed this regional scheme in the calculation of African-American population changes from the beginning of the nineteenth century to 1970. Morrill and Donaldson also date the first black settlement in the United States to 1619 in Jamestown, Virginia.

In 1975 Donaldson teamed with fellow geographer George Davis to publish a comprehensive work on the dynamic distribution of blacks in America. Davis and Donaldson described the massive African-American population shift from the rural South to northern cities in the first half of the twentieth century. The authors described the "push" and "pull" factors associated with this migration. The push factors included the invasion of the boll weevil, agricultural mechanization, and racially motivated persecution, while the north held the pull factors of better employment opportunities and higher living standards.

Additional information concerning the changing distribution of American blacks is often included as part of more comprehensive research. Two of the best examples of this come from the field of sociology. Sociologists Karl and Alma Taeuber published the monumental work Negroes in Cities: Residential

Segregation and Neighborhood Change in 1965. This book traced the development of urban black populations and looked at the process of neighborhood change. In a similar vein, sociologists Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton produced American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass in 1993. American Apartheid updated the Taeubers' research to include data on recent trends in the presence of African-Americans in urban areas.

Literature on Ghettos and Ghetto Characteristics

Definitions of "Ghetto"

As reported by Louis Seig (1971), the term "ghetto" is a vague concept, one for which scholars are, "...lacking a meaningful generalization to give us a useful picture of what ghetto really means." Seig noted that the contemporary ghettos of the United States hold many similarities to the Jewish ghettos of medieval Europe. He concluded that an important determinant of whether or not a neighborhood is a ghetto is the amount of freedom in residential mobility held by an area's residents.

Harold Rose (1969) succinctly defined a ghetto as, "...a social area or community chiefly occupied by persons of a single race and somewhat similar subcultural characteristics. Rose noted, however, that the ghetto is not entirely homogeneous and that within ghetto communities a "...spatial stratification based on income differences" often develops.

Sociologists Massey and Denton (1993) defined ghetto as "a set of neighborhoods exclusively inhabited by members of one group, within which virtually all members of that group live." The authors stated that the ethnic enclaves established in the early 1900s by European immigrants in most large cities of the northern United States fit this description of ghetto, but contend that the immigrant neighborhoods differed from black ghettos in three important ways. First, although associated with one particular ethnic group, immigrant neighborhoods actually contained a great deal of ethnic diversity. Second, most immigrants did not live in neighborhoods associated with their particular ethnicity, whereas the majority of African-Americans lived in the predominately black neighborhoods. Finally, while immigrant enclaves were a transitional stage in neighborhood development in urban areas, black ghettos became a permanent feature of the city landscape.

The Development and Growth of the Ghetto

While one line of thinking might attribute ghetto formation to segregation laws, Taeuber and Taeuber (1965) suggested that the spatial isolation of blacks has resulted from a more complex process than the institution of one set of legal codes. The Taeubers showed that segregation patterns varied between northern and southern states and that historically, southern cities displayed a lower degree of overall segregation than cities in the North. The Taeubers linked mid-to-late twentieth century segregation patterns to other legal and socioeconomic factors. One of these factors is the creation of zoning laws, as discussed by

urbanologist Christopher Silver (1997). Silver noted that southern states utilized zoning laws to maintain segregation between the races and to prohibit black residential expansion, and that eventually this practice was adopted in northern states as well.

After race-based zoning laws were declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court, other means of maintaining residential segregation were formulated. Robert Weaver (1971) wrote on the formation of race restrictive covenants, which were common in many cities in the North and the South before being declared unconstitutional in 1948. Under a race restrictive covenant, residents of a neighborhood agree not to rent or sell their property to African-Americans for a certain period of time; once a given percentage of residents have concurred, the covenant becomes binding on the entire neighborhood. Also party to race restrictive covenants, albeit covertly, was the real estate industry. Herman Long and Charles Johnston (1947) explained the role of real estate agents in the maintenance of residential segregation and ghetto areas. The authors asserted that real estate agencies employed several tactics to maintain the racial status quo. First, real estate agents often kept separate lists so that African-American clients were never informed of available housing in predominantly white areas. Another method was that of refusing to do business with African-Americans entirely. Long and Johnston also discussed the role of financial institutions in the persistence of racial segregation; in this case, banks would either charge blacks higher interest rates, deny them mortgages, or, again, refuse to do business with them at all.

Despite the intentions of zoning laws and racially motivated housing and lending policies, African-American neighborhoods did eventually expand. Donald Deskins (1981) outlined three stages of ghetto evolution: delineation, coalescence, and expansion. He wrote that delineation occurred when a few African-Americans moved into previously all-white neighborhoods. Coalescence occurred when more African-Americans took up residence in the area, occupying homes left vacant by whites who relocated. Deskins argued that increasing numbers of African-Americans would move into the neighborhood, raising population density and eventually resulting in the expansion of the black population into areas adjacent to the ghetto. Morrill (1965) concurs with the idea of "ghettoization" being a spatial diffusion process.

Taeuber and Taeuber (1965) also discussed the idea of residential succession but noted that the commonly accepted model of residential succession has primarily been based on studies conducted in large northern cities, which have a substantial stock of older housing. They stated that the residential succession model often holds true for these areas, but that in newer cities, the model sometimes does not provide an accurate depiction of the processes of racial change or the formation of segregated neighborhoods.

U.S. Census Bureau official Larry Long's 1975 study seems to support the idea of ghetto expansion into areas vacated by whites. He found that the increasing spatial concentration of minorities, particularly African-Americans, displayed in large North American cities in the 1960s could be attributed to changes in racial composition. Long stated specifically that, "...these cities are

becoming increasingly black primarily as a result of white migration patterns," that the black population of central cities appeared to be increasing in part because of the decrease in the white population of those areas. On a related note, Harold Connolly (1973) examined black migration to the suburbs in the 1960s. He concluded that the suburbanization of African-Americans during that decade could be linked to the increased socioeconomic status of some black Americans. He also noted, though, that often the process of black suburbanization was merely an expansion of previously existing ghetto areas into suburban areas.

Regarding the continuance of inner city spatial isolation of black Americans, Massey and Denton (1993) argue that ghetto preservation is a function of segregation and that lower-income blacks cannot relocate from these areas due to limited residential options resulting from discrimination. Massey and Denton also discuss the practice of "redlining", in which poorer areas of cities are labeled unsuitable for mortgage purposes. Redlined areas generally include black neighborhoods and areas likely to see black residential expansion; as a result, African-Americans have difficulty attaining the economic means to relocate from the ghetto. Economist Geoffrey Tootell looked at this issue in his study of redlining in Boston (1996). Tootell found that the traditional redlining of census tracts based on racial composition was not a prevalent practice among the city's lending institutions, but that race did play some role in loan rejection, stating that, "...the race of the applicant, not the racial composition of the neighborhood, is important in the mortgage lending decision."

Massey and Denton contrast with fellow sociologist William Julius Wilson, (1987) believes that the perseverance of inner city black neighborhoods can be attributed to changes in the economic structure and the flight of the black middle class out of such areas beginning in the 1960s. Larry Ford and Ernst Griffin's 1979 study discusses black suburbanization in the 1960s and 1970s, looking specifically at the city of San Diego. The authors found that blacks there had begun to inhabit low-crime areas with a good housing supply; but, because the neighborhoods were predominantly African-American, outsiders classified them as being just another ghetto.

Finally, Joseph Darden (1987) noted that three theories have been advanced to explain African-American residential segregation. First, "class theory" states that the factors of education, income, and occupational skills are distributed unequally among racial groups; since quality of housing is often determined by these factors, the racial groups themselves are unevenly distributed in metropolitan areas. Second, "discrimination theory" asserts that non-whites are prevented from moving into white neighborhoods due to discriminatory practices among real estate brokers and financial institutions, as well as governmental agencies. Third, "preference theory" states that whites and non-whites prefer to live with members of their own race and as a result, voluntarily group themselves into homogenous living areas. Darden concluded that residential segregation of African-Americans is a matter of discrimination, and that economic factors and the role of voluntary segregation contribute only minimally to the isolation of blacks into specific neighborhoods.

Unique Characteristics of the Ghetto

While much has been written about the formation and persistence of the ghetto, less work has been published concerning the unique spatial and socioeconomic characteristics of ghetto neighborhoods. Herbert Hill (1966) noted that ghetto areas occupy a unique space within the urban area, located near the downtown business district and surrounded by zones of mixed population.

Ralph Sanders and John Adams (1971) studied the internal and external forces affecting the morphology of the ghetto in Cleveland, Ohio. The authors stated that external forces worked to spatially confine the black population, while internal forces led to differentiation of the ghetto population. Sanders and Adams also found that the expansion of the ghetto led to a pattern in which older residents were found in the core of the ghetto, surrounded by younger residents on the periphery of the ghetto and in adjacent black neighborhoods.

The legal segregation of African-Americans created a dual economic system in which blacks were prohibited from significant participation in the mainstream economy. This led to certain, unique features in the economics of the ghetto. In the 1940s, sociologist E. Franklin Frazier (1947) noted that some members of the African-American community benefited from and had a "vested interest" in segregation. Frazier also stated that African-Americans often paid higher prices for lower-quality goods. Phyllis Groom, of The Bureau of Labor Statistics, echoed this sentiment in a study twenty years later. The 1966 study was conducted to discover whether merchants charged higher prices in low-

income areas than in economically better-off neighborhoods. The study found that the poor paid more for food because they generally shopped at smaller stores where prices were higher, since cost-lowering chain stores do not locate in low-income areas.

Rose (1970) also undertook a study concerning ghetto economics; he looked specifically at the business patterns of racially changing areas. Rose found that, "...race tends to serve as a catalyst which accelerates...commercial transition." Rose also concluded that the evolution of a unique African-American business district usually involves a decline in the number of goods-supplying businesses and an increase in businesses dedicated to providing personal services.

Allan Pred conducted a study similar to that of Rose's in 1976. Pred focused on business districts as an expression of urban African-American culture. Pred attempted to identify business landscapes that are unique to black communities in urban areas. He found that businesses in African-American communities could be grouped into four categories. First, there are businesses that he described as being, "...a response to the needs of certain Negro personality types which are in one way or another concerned with personal appearance." He stated that barbershops and dry cleaners would fall into this category. Second, there are businesses that are indicative of a low standard of living, such as independent grocery stores. Third, there are businesses that, "...tends to confirm stereotypes of the Negro held by various segments of the white population...", such as billiard parlors and storefront churches. Finally,

there are businesses that are common in all low-income areas, but that take on a different physical appearance in African-American areas, such as bars, restaurants, and pawn shops.

Literature on African-Americans in Oklahoma

Eugene Richards conducted one of the first studies on the conditions of African-Americans in Oklahoma in 1948. Richards utilized census data to analyze the African-American and Native American populations of Oklahoma. Looking at population trends from 1890-1940 he concluded that the black population of the state would decline relative to the white population, due to a low rate of natural increase and a high death rate.

In 1971 historian Philip Mellinger looked at discrimination in the years immediately preceding and following statehood in Oklahoma. Mellinger explained how the state had been a haven of sorts for African-Americans in the late 1800s and early 1900s, but that within a few years of statehood, blacks had been shut out of the political process, disfranchised through a "grandfather clause" passed by a statewide referendum in 1910.

In 1978, Michael Doran published an account of the African-American slaves of the Five Civilized Tribes. Doran described the circumstances that led the Native Americans to adopt the practice of slavery. This work was a significant contribution to the history of black Oklahomans, as many of the first African-American settlers in the state were slaves of the tribes.

George Carney (1991) discussed the formation of all-black towns in Oklahoma. Carney detailed the work of black "boosters" like Edwin McCabe, who encouraged African-Americans to migrate to the area and advocated the formation of an all-black state in Oklahoma. McCabe's vision never came to fruition, but blacks did migrate, and established over twenty all-black towns. Carney states that these towns were founded for various reasons, including the sense of security that African-Americans derived from living with people of the same race and the opportunity for them to maintain some measure of political and economic independence from the white-dominated state government.

Carney's discussion of all-black towns differs somewhat from Hill's earlier study (1946) of the topic. Hill asserts that these towns formed out of racial animosity between blacks and whites, and that both groups viewed physical separation from one another as preferable. Hill also writes that the all-black towns were generally established as utopian communities by religious or political sects, as "boom towns" or as part of promotional schemes by boosters like McCabe.

Davis and Donaldson (1975) examined African-American migration patterns in Oklahoma as part of a larger study of black migration during the 1950s. The authors noted that during this time, Oklahoma had an "isolated" migration pattern among African-Americans, meaning that more blacks migrated within the state than migrated out of the state. This made Oklahoma a unique case among the states in the research study, as all of the other states exhibited some type of regional focus in black migration.

Several works providing a general history of African-Americans in Oklahoma have also been published. In 1971, Kaye Teall compiled excerpts from books, newspaper articles, and other archival sources to write a resource manual concerning the history of black Oklahomans. The following year Arthur Tolson produced The Black Oklahomans, A History: 1541-1972 (1972). Tolson states that the first blacks to come to the area did so as slaves of the Spaniards during expeditions to the Americas in the 1500s. Tolson also describes how the abolition of slavery led some of the Five Civilized Tribes to ally with the South during the Civil War, noting that some African-Americans in Indian Territory fought in the Union Army. Tolson also writes on more often discussed topics such as the establishment of all-black towns, segregation, and desegregation in Oklahoma.

Jimmie Lewis Franklin (1980) wrote of African-Americans in Oklahoma as part of a series of books describing the histories of various ethnic groups within the state. Franklin discusses the efforts of black boosters during territorial days and the establishment of the all-black towns. Franklin also writes of the formation of Langston University, a black educational facility, and examines the desegregation of Oklahoma's educational institutions. Franklin concludes his work with a discussion of the contributions of famous black Oklahomans, such as historian John Hope Franklin and author Ralph Ellison.

Literature concerning Tulsa, Oklahoma

From a review of the literature it appears that very little academic work concerning the socioeconomic patterns and history of the Greenwood

neighborhood, and indeed the African-American community in Tulsa, has been conducted.

Several histories of Tulsa include specific information about African-Americans in the city. Nina Dunn (1979) discusses the 1921 race riot, detailing the events of the riot, and its aftermath. Danney Goble (1997) provides descriptions of the socioeconomic conditions of Tulsa's African-American population at various times in the city's history. Goble also describes the events of 1921, but writes more on the topics of the regeneration and subsequent life of the Greenwood District than do other authors of general city history books.

Most of the work regarding the Greenwood neighborhood specifically is anecdotal in nature and tends to focus on the settlement of the area and the race riot. Scott Ellsworth (1982) published the first comprehensive book about the riot, titled Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921. A decade and a half later, Eddie Faye Gates, a teacher within the Tulsa Public School system, wrote They Came Searching: How Blacks Sought the Promised Land in Oklahoma (1997); Gates's book deals with the formation of the African-American section of Tulsa, and also deals at length with the race riot.

A more balanced examination of the Greenwood neighborhood is found in local lawyer and author Hannibal Johnson's Black Wall Street: From Riot to Renaissance in Tulsa's Historic Greenwood District (1998), which discusses the establishment of the neighborhood, the riot and post riot rebuilding, and the changing social and economic patterns of the area from World War II to the present. Much of the information contained in these three works is drawn from

the same sources, and therefore these books provide the reader with little the diversity in viewpoint.

The majority of the academic work concerning black Tulsans has focused on the greater African-American community of Tulsa, with very little written about the Greenwood District in particular. In 1936, Francis Burke authored a thesis describing the social characteristics of Tulsa's black community, including demographic data from the 1930 census. Six decades later, Gary Zaepfel (1993) followed this vein and wrote of demographic and social trends in Tulsa's African-American community from 1960 to 1990, again employing data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

In 1962 Karl Thiele wrote his thesis about residential change in the Reservoir Hills neighborhood of Tulsa. The neighborhood bordered the African-American section of town, and at the time of Thiele's research racial turnover was beginning to occur in the area. Thiele examines how the migration of African-Americans into the previously all-white neighborhood was aided through the establishment of a neighborhood association to ease tensions created by racial change. Thiele looks at the affect of racial turnover on the residential patterns of the neighborhood, as well as on the local elementary school.

There are few academic works specifically concerning the Greenwood District, but discussions of the greater African-American community in Tulsa are included in larger academic compilations. In 1965 Karl and Alma Taeuber included Tulsa in their study of African-American urban segregation, titled Negroes in Cities: Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Change. The

Taeubers found that Tulsa ranked as one of the most segregated cities in the country, with a level of segregation higher than that of some cities in the far southern United States. Additionally, a chapter about Tulsa was included in the 1991 book Entrepreneurship and Self-Help Among Black Americans: A Reconsideration of Race and Economics, by sociologist John Sibley Butler; but again, this writing focuses primarily upon black settlement in Tulsa and the circumstances surrounding the race riot. Finally, an essay about spatial mobility of African-Americans in Tulsa, by James Wheeler, was published in the anthology Black America: Geographic Perspectives (1976). Wheeler noted that residential segregation in the city contributed to decreased mobility of African-Americans, and hence reduced their economic opportunities by hindering access to jobs.

CHAPTER III

THE 1940s

In the early years of the 1940s, the socioeconomic condition of Tulsa's African-American population had changed little from the time of the 1921 race riot. African-Americans remained residentially, socially, and economically isolated in the Greenwood District and adjacent areas. Black Tulsans were generally employed in lower-skill occupations, and the unemployment rate among African-Americans in the city was high, much higher than the rate of unemployment among white Tulsans. By the middle of the decade, however, these conditions had begun to change as Greenwood prospered from the economic activity associated with the Second World War (Goble, 1997).

Segregation and Housing in the 1940s

Taeuber and Taeuber conducted a study (1965) which revealed that, at the beginning of the 1940s, Tulsa was a highly segregated city. The Taeubers also found that the degree of residential segregation in Tulsa increased between 1940 and 1950. The index of residential dissimilarity employed by the Taeubers can range in value from 0 (low) to 100 (high). The value represents the percentage of non-whites that would have to move within a city in order to create an unsegregated distribution, one in which each city block contains the same percentage of non-white residents (Taeubers, 1965).

As shown in Table II, Tulsa's dissimilarity score in 1940 was 84.6, meaning over 84% of the city's non-white residents would have to be relocated to bring about an integrated residential pattern. Tulsa was only slightly more segregated than Oklahoma City, and had a level of segregation similar to that of other southern cities such as Austin, Houston, and Savannah. In contrast, Tulsa's segregation measure was lower than that of the northern cities of Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, and St. Louis. The Taeubers attributed the overall lower level of segregation in the South to the fact that some African-Americans in that region lived as domestic workers among white southerners. Domestic live-ins were not common in the North, thus leading to a higher level of residential segregation within cities in that region.

The trend of the 1940s was one of increasing segregation in the South, and by 1950 Tulsa's level of segregation was on par with or exceeded that of the large northern cities. The increase in Tulsa's segregation level can be linked to an increase in the city's African-American population (Table III) and to the restricted growth of black residential areas. Prohibitive residential laws provided African-Americans with few choices in housing. Overcrowding was beginning to take its toll on the housing stock in the Greenwood District, and many homes were of substandard quality. In 1940, nearly 60 percent of all housing units in the neighborhood lacked running water (Goble, 1997). The inability of African-Americans to disperse into other areas of the city forced the

Table II. Dissimilarity Scores, Selected Cities, 1940 and 1950

	1940	1950	Change, 1940-1950
<i>Northern cities</i>			
Philadelphia	88.0	89.0	1.0
Boston	86.3	86.5	0.2
Chicago	95.0	92.1	-2.9
Detroit	89.9	88.8	-1.1
St. Louis	92.6	92.9	0.3
<i>Southern cities</i>			
Austin	84.8	92.0	7.2
Houston	84.5	91.5	7.0
Tulsa	84.6	91.2	6.6
Oklahoma City	84.3	88.6	4.3
Savannah	84.2	88.8	4.6
<i>Western cities</i>			
Seattle	82.2	83.3	1.1
Los Angeles	84.2	84.6	0.4

Source: Taeuber and Taeuber, 1965

Table III. African-American Population Growth, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1900-1950

Year	Total City Population	African-American Population	Percentage African-American
1900	1,390	less than 100	< 7.0%
1910	18,182	1,959	10.80%
1920	72,025	8,878	12.30%
1930	141,258	15,203	10.80%
1940	142,157	15,151	10.70%
1950	182,740	20,987	8.10%

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

neighborhood to expand into subdivisions that were being constructed to the north, just outside the city limits. Although this new housing was an improvement over the aging housing in Greenwood, its location outside of the city meant that the homes were still lacking power and sewer lines (Goble, 1997).

Socioeconomic Conditions in the 1940s

Segregation laws generally prevented African-American participation in the mainstream economy in 1940s Tulsa. Unemployment among black Tulsans was high at this time. Tables IV and V show employment data for 1940. The unemployment rate for each racial group was calculated as the number of unemployed workers (defined in the 1940 census as those without jobs but seeking work) divided by the number of persons aged 15 to 64 years. As shown in Table V, the unemployment rate for African-American males was nearly 16%, over twice the rate for white males in Tulsa. The unemployment rate for African-American females was over four times higher than the rate for white female workers.

African-Americans who did hold jobs were generally employed in lower-skill, lower-wage occupations. Blacks primarily held service jobs, particularly domestic service jobs (Table V). The domestic worker category accounted for over 42% of all employed African-Americans; approximately three of every four employed African-American females worked as domestics. The majority of remaining blacks held jobs in other service sectors and as laborers. African-Americans were underrepresented in professional and skilled occupations.

Table IV. Unemployment Rates, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1940

	White Males	African- American Males	White Females	African- American Females
Aged 15-64 yrs.	43,197	5,080	47,542	6,314
Employed	35,835	3,251	13,809	3,397
Unemployed	3,213	807	1,042	573
Unemployment Rate	7.23%	15.89%	2.19%	9.08%

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Table V. Occupational Patterns, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1940

Job Classification	Total Male	White Male	African-American Male	Total Female	White Female	African-American Female
Professional/Semiprofessional	3,999	3,681	138	13,928	13,803	125
Proprietors and Managers	6,081	5,974	107	930	882	48
Clerical and Sales	10,012	9,947	65	6,273	6,208	65
Craftsmen	6,302	6,085	217	147	137	10
Operatives and Kindred Workers	6,099	5,667	432	1,081	1,003	78
Domestic Service Workers	420	61	359	3,842	1,366	2,476
Protective Service Workers	537	516	21	9	8	1
Other Service Workers	2,844	1,408	1,436	2,898	2,340	558
Non-farm and Mine Laborers	1,990	1,576	414	45	10	5
Occupation Not Reported	279	240	39	135	104	31

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

The city directory data for the 1940s (Table VI) reveals a state of economic stability in the Greenwood District during that time. The number of residential units in the study area increased between 1942 and 1946, with the growth in residential units far exceeding the rise in the number of vacancies. There was variability among the three commercial categories (retail, service, and industrial). From 1942-1946, the number of retail and service businesses grew slightly, while there was a significant decline in the number of industrial businesses. The drop in industrial units coincides with the end of World War II, when war-related production facilities were either being converted to domestic production or were closed. While losses in the industrial sector undoubtedly affected the Greenwood District, the neighborhood remained economically vital in the 1940s.

Commentary

The segregation faced by African-Americans in Tulsa in the 1940s was no different than that faced by African-Americans across the United States at the time. Tulsa's level of racial residential segregation was similar to that found in southern cities, where some whites and African-Americans lived in the same areas. In such cases, however, blacks were usually relegated to living in servants' quarters located in alleyways behind the homes of wealthy whites. This pattern of segregation served the obvious purpose of convenience for the employer, but also worked to deter the formation of a cohesive black community in southern cities (Davis and Donaldson, 1976).

plan pattern in Tulsa actually resembled that of

other areas in the area-wide with blacks

in 1968. This

was 11)

Table VI. Polk City Directory Data, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1940s

Classification	1942	1946	Net Change
R	1614	1668	54
RM	32	25	-7
OA	607	695	88
UA	46	49	3
V	77	84	7
Sch	2	3	1
Chur	31	38	7
Rt	41	43	2
S	99	110	11
I	26	17	-9
G	4	6	2
C	10	9	-1
T	2	2	0

Source: R.L. Polk & Co.'s, Tulsa (Tulsa County) City Directory

The physical segregation pattern in Tulsa actually resembled that of the northern cities. Segregation in northern cities was area-wide, with blacks concentrated in zones around the central business districts (Hill, 1966). This pattern evolved through a series of spatial and temporal processes. The beginning of the modern American black ghetto is traced to the great migration of African-Americans from the South to large northern urban areas from 1915 to 1918 (Davis and Donaldson 1976). Industrial growth in the North and the disruption of the immigrant labor supply from Europe during World War I acted as “pull” factors for southern blacks. Coincident with these events were the mechanization of agriculture and the invasion of the Mexican boll weevil in the South, which acted as “push” factors for black migrants. Upon arrival in northern cities, blacks settled in pre-existing African-American areas, and as migration continued these neighborhoods became overcrowded and run-down. A common feature of ghetto areas was their delineation based on structural features within the city – railroad tracks, rivers, main thoroughfares, etc. – which often acted as barriers to black residential expansion (Davis and Donaldson 1976). Associated with African-American population increases was an upsurge in racial violence in the 1910s and 1920s, with race riots occurring in cities such as East St. Louis and Chicago.

In discussions of residential segregation, Tulsa is linked to southern cities (see specifically Taeuber and Taeuber, 1965), but the processes at work in producing Tulsa’s ghetto area seem to mimic those at work in the North. Northern cities experienced African-American migration due to industrialization in

the 1910s; Tulsa became a destination for migrating blacks during the rise of the oil industry. As the number of African-Americans in the city increased, so did racial hostility, leading to the race riot of 1921. The increasing settlement of blacks and the race riot in Tulsa mirror events taking place in northern cities at the time. Also, typical of northern ghettos was their location in respect to structural barriers, and a similar geographic pattern evolved in Tulsa with the establishment of Greenwood north of the central business district, across from the St. Louis-San Francisco railroad tracks. The presence of the tracks prevented black expansion to the south, towards the downtown district and white neighborhoods.

According to sociologist Charles Johnson (1943), the relegation of African-Americans into lower-skill jobs can be traced back to stereotypes established during slavery, when African-Americans performed the most menial tasks. Johnson writes that the skill level of certain jobs determined their acceptability to white employees. In the 1940s, work once done by slaves still carried a social stigma and was generally unacceptable to whites, especially those in the South. Johnson notes that, "Scrubbing floors in public buildings is not acceptable to white women in the South, although it is the North." This same race-based division of labor existed in Tulsa in the 1930s and 1940s. Goble (1997) writes that the city employed eight black police officers that patrolled the Greenwood District. Aside from the eight patrolmen, the city had no other black employees. Goble also states that only eight African-Americans were on the payroll in the downtown federal building: four black men who swept the floors during the day,

and four black women who cleaned them at night. While the spatial pattern of segregation in Tulsa in the 1940s mirrored that of the North, Tulsa was very similar to southern cities in terms of occupational and economic segregation.

This socioeconomic pattern began to change in the early-to-mid 1940s, with America's participation in World War II. The oil industry, which had historically precluded involvement from blacks, began to hire African-Americans. Tulsa's industrial district prospered through war-related production, and due to the sudden shortage of white workers, African-Americans filled factory jobs. The majority of African-Americans held the lower-skill positions within the booming factories, though.

The impact of the war on the Greenwood District was mostly indirect. Although now permitted to work in downtown factories, African-Americans were still prohibited from patronizing white-owned businesses and so much of their income was spent within Greenwood. This reinvestment in the community fueled economic growth, and by the end of the war Greenwood contained over 240 black-owned businesses, employing nearly 800 of the neighborhood's residents (Goble, 1997).

Conclusion

As the 1940s drew to a close, Greenwood was a thriving community. In the face of segregation, Tulsa's African-American citizens had created a viable neighborhood out of the ashes of a devastating race riot. This economic vitality would carry Greenwood into the next decade, but circumstances in the 1950s

would serve to undermine the economic structure, and indeed the social fabric, of the community.

CHAPTER IV

THE 1950s

Increasing segregation levels in the 1940s meant that by 1950, Tulsa was more segregated than some northern cities that contained much larger African-American populations. Overall socioeconomic conditions for African-Americans in Tulsa improved slightly during the 1940s; by 1950 the unemployment rate among blacks had declined, but continued to remain higher than the rate for white Tulsans. America's involvement in World War II led to new economic avenues for African-Americans in Tulsa, and more dramatic changes were on the horizon at the start of the 1950s.

Segregation and Housing in the 1950s

After increasing in the 1940s, the degree of housing segregation in Tulsa declined during the decades of the 1950s (Table VII). While the level of segregation in 1960 remained high, Tulsa ranked lower on the dissimilarity index than any of the other selected southern cities. During the ten-year period from 1950-1960, Tulsa saw the largest decline in residential segregation among all of the cities listed.

Beginning in 1950, housing census data for Tulsa became available at the block level, making possible the spatial analysis of residential patterns within the city. At the time, Tulsa's African-American residents were clustered in

Table VII. Dissimilarity Scores, Selected Cities, 1940-1960

	1940	1950	1960	Change, 1950-1960
<i>Northern cities</i>				
Philadelphia	88.0	89.0	87.1	-1.9
Boston	86.3	86.5	83.9	-2.6
Chicago	95.0	92.1	92.6	0.5
Detroit	89.9	88.8	84.5	-4.3
St. Louis	92.6	92.9	90.5	-2.4
<i>Southern cities</i>				
Austin	84.8	92.0	93.1	1.1
Houston	84.5	91.5	93.7	2.2
Tulsa	84.6	91.2	86.3	-4.9
Oklahoma City	84.3	88.6	87.1	-1.5
Savannah	84.2	88.8	92.3	3.5
<i>Western cities</i>				
Seattle	82.2	83.3	79.7	-3.6
Los Angeles	84.2	84.6	81.8	-2.8

Source: Taeuber and Taeuber, 1965

an area north/northeast of the downtown district. The block level data for this area was aggregated to provide census tract-level figures for 1950. Table VIII and Figure 4 detail the racial composition of the census tracts in 1950; as shown, African-Americans were highly segregated into tracts 6, 10, and 11, and adjacent tracts had very few African-American residents.

Segregation laws historically prevented the movement of African-Americans out of the area shown in Figure 4. As seen in Table IX, living conditions in Greenwood had not improved much since the 1940s. In 1950, many of the housing units in the predominantly-black census tracts still lacked complete plumbing facilities and these tracts generally had much lower rates of home ownership than the predominantly-white neighboring tracts. The deteriorating quality of housing in the Greenwood District and the city's increasing African-American population (Table X) inevitably led to the expansion of the black neighborhood into nearby white areas.

In the early 1950s, Cincinnati Avenue served as the racial dividing line in the city of Tulsa (see Figure 4). This racial barrier was broken in 1957 when a black family moved to the white neighborhood just east of Cincinnati (Thiele, 1962). More African-Americans soon followed, and by 1960 the racial barrier had disappeared.

The expansion of the black community during the latter part of the 1950s was rapid, as demonstrated in Table XI and Figure 5. Particularly affected during this decade was census tract 7, which saw an increase of nearly 60% in the total number of housing units occupied by non-white residents. In contrast,

Figure 4. Percentage of Non-White Housing Units, by Census Tract, 1950

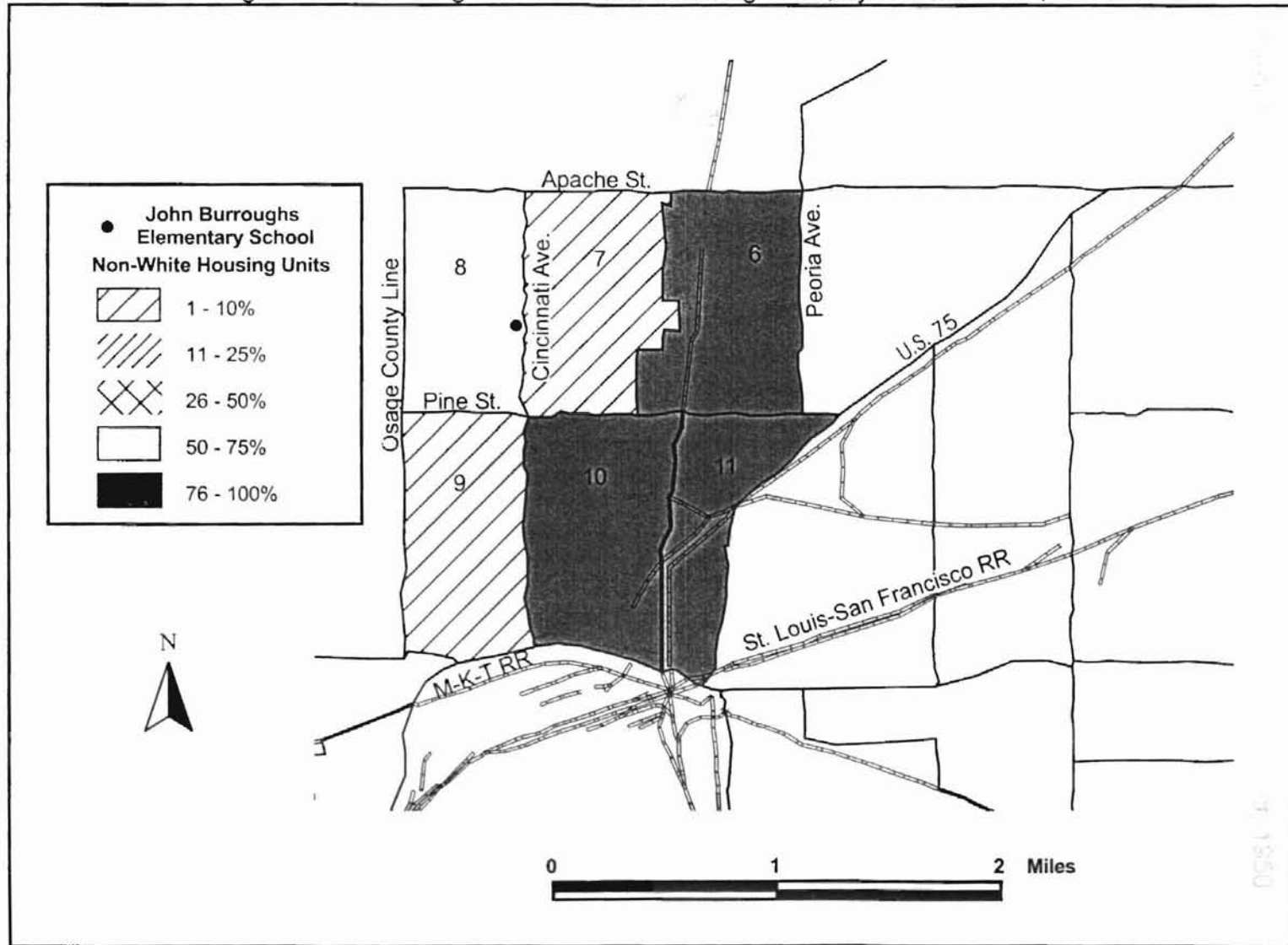


Table VIII. Percentage of Non-White Residents by Census Tract, 1950

Tract Number	Total Housing Units	Non-white Housing Units	Percent Non-white
6	1,280	1,127	88.05%
7	1,075	78	7.26%
8	804	3	0.37%
9	2,757	69	2.50%
10	1,920	1,830	95.31%
11	979	794	81.10%

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Table IX. Housing Conditions by Census Tract, 1950

Tract Number	Total Housing Units	Lacking Complete Plumbing	Units Rented	Percent of Units Rented
6	1,280	619	488	38.13%
7	1,075	103	252	23.44%
8	804	11	136	16.92%
9	2,757	556	1,420	51.51%
10	1,920	1,069	1,285	66.93%
11	979	509	456	46.58%

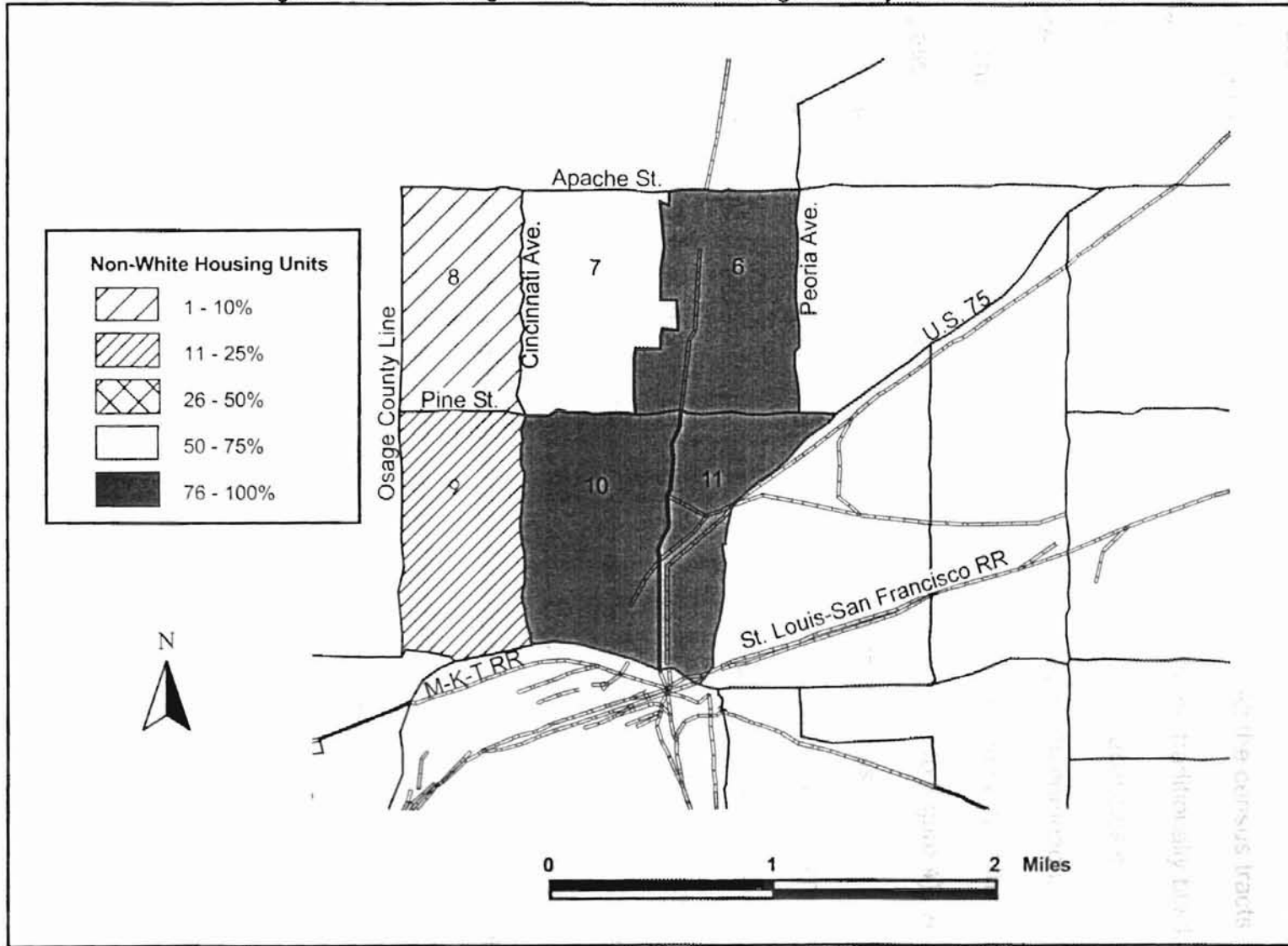
Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Table X. African-American Population Growth, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1940-1960

Year	Total City Population	African-American Population	Percentage African-American
1940	142,157	15,151	10.70%
1950	182,740	20,987	8.10%
1960	258,271	22,489	8.70%

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Figure 5. Percentage of Non-White Housing Units by Census Tract, 1960



... rates (Table XII) is approximately 8%

tract 10, the core of the historic black neighborhood, saw an approximately 8% decrease in this number. The change in residential vacancy rates (Table XII) is also suggestive of the racial turnover occurring at this time. All the census tracts show an increase in housing vacancies from 1950-1960. In the traditionally black tracts this is attributable to relocation to white areas; increased vacancies in adjacent tracts are most likely symptomatic of the "white flight" phenomenon.

The rapid racial change in this area is best portrayed by the story of the integration of the local school, John Burroughs Elementary (refer to Figure 4). At the beginning of the 1956 school year, enrollment at Burroughs was approximately 1,000 students, of which only seven were African-American (Table XIII). There was little change in black enrollment in the following academic year, but by the fall of 1958 African-American students comprised over 30% of the total enrollment. By 1960, Burroughs's student body was 90% African-American. The drastic change in the racial composition of the school can be attributed to two factors. First, the increasing number of African-American families moving west of Cincinnati Avenue led to an increase in the number of African-American pupils. Second, beginning in 1956, the school system established a policy allowing students to transfer out of schools in which they were the minority racial group (Thiele, 1962). As Burroughs became more African-American, white parents either transferred their children to other schools or moved out the neighborhood entirely. This made available more homes for black families, and thus African-American enrollment in the local elementary school accelerated.

Table XI. Change in Non-White Housing Units by Census Tracts, 1950-1960

Tract Number	1950 Non-white Housing Units	1950 Percent Non-white	1960 Non-white Housing Units	1960 Percent Non-white
6	1,127	88.05%	1,293	92.23%
7	78	7.26%	802	66.94%
8	3	0.37%	14	1.68%
9	69	2.50%	349	13.30%
10	1,830	95.31%	2,006	87.94%
11	794	81.10%	969	91.85%

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Table XII. Change in Vacant Housing Units by Census Tract, 1950-1960

Tract Number	1950 Vacant Units	1950 Percent Vacant	1960 Vacant Units	1960 Percent Vacant
6	11	0.86%	102	7.28%
7	15	1.40%	65	5.43%
8	8	1.00%	46	5.51%
9	65	2.36%	247	9.41%
10	9	0.47%	269	11.79%
11	13	1.33%	83	7.87%

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Table XIII. Enrollment at Burroughs Elementary School, 1956-1961

Academic Year	Total Enrollment	White Enrollment	Percentage White	African-American Enrollment	Percentage African-American
1956 - 1957	1,000	993	99.30%	7	0.01%
1957 - 1958	1,000	935	93.50%	65	0.07%
1958 - 1959	1,000	690	69%	310	31%
1959 - 1960	750	285	38%	465	62%
1960 - 1961	750	75	10%	675	90%

Source: Thiele, 1962

1960s

1950s

1940s

1930s

1920s

1910s

1900s

Socioeconomic Conditions in the 1950s

Unemployment among African-Americans in Tulsa remained high in the 1950s, as shown in Table XIV. The unemployment rate (again defined as the number of unemployed divided by the number of people aged 15-64) for African-American men was approximately 8.0%, over twice the rate for white males in Tulsa. Unemployment among women in Tulsa had declined by 1950 so that only 1.22% of white females and 3.50% of black females were classified as unemployed.

African-Americans in Tulsa remained primarily in lower-skill jobs. This is particularly true for African-American females, the majority of whom continued to work as private domestics and in other service fields (Table XV). African-American males fared little better in terms of economic opportunity. In the 1950s, 56% of black men were employed as service workers and laborers, and blacks remained underrepresented in the professional fields.

The city directory data for the 1950s reveals that there was little overall change in socioeconomic patterns in the neighborhood during that decade (Table XVI). Despite variability among some categories, net change for most categories was minor. However, two significant trends are seen in the residential and vacancy categories. While other classifications show decline and then growth, the residential category exhibits continual decline while the number of vacancies continually rises. These figures show the beginning of trends that continued into the 1960s.

Table XIV. Unemployment Rates in Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1950

	White Males	African- American Males	White Females	African- American Females
Age 15-64 yrs.	53,767	5,481	59,965	6,897
Employed	53,199	4,531	24,020	3,749
Unemployed	1,999	448	731	242
Unemployment Rate	3.72%	8.03%	1.22%	6.51%

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Table XV. Occupational Patterns, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1950

	Total Male	White Male	African- American Male	Total Female	White Female	African- American Female
Professional/Semiprofessional	8,986	8,799	187	3,523	3,327	196
Farmers and Farm Managers	1,311	1,214	97	59	54	4
Proprietors and Managers	1,001	9,993	208	1,783	1,672	111
Clerical and Sales	12,331	12,099	232	13,896	13,675	221
Craftsmen	15,116	14,541	575	437	416	21
Operatives and Kindred Workers	11,131	10,279	852	2,530	2,290	240
Domestic Service Workers	150	42	108	3,061	951	2,110
Other Service Workers	4,020	2,429	1,591	4,508	32,532	986
Farm Laborers	733	660	73	128	116	12
Non-farm and Mine Laborers	4,223	3,073	1,150	166	92	74
Occupation Not Reported	800	669	131	439	390	49

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

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Table XVI. Polk Directory Data, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1950s

Classification	1950	1954	1958	Net Change
R	1425	1389	1271	-154
RM	37	84	72	35
OA	883	n/a	n/a	n/a
UA	33	n/a	n/a	n/a
V	60	75	128	68
Sch	3	2	2	-1
Chur	35	29	31	-3
Rt	64	68	59	-5
S	184	156	183	-1
I	11	8	12	1
G	3	2	4	1
C	11	7	6	-5
T	3	2	1	-2

Source: R.L. Polk & Co.'s Tulsa (Tulsa County) City Directory

Commentary

At the beginning of the 1950s, many African-American neighborhoods across the United States had become overcrowded, and expansion of these neighborhoods was inevitable. Several factors served to curtail this expansion, one of which was the use of race restrictive covenants. These covenants prevented African-Americans from buying homes in white neighborhoods, and were implemented in many northern cities as a means of containing black ghettos. The United States Supreme Court declared restrictive covenants unenforceable in 1948 (*Shelley v. Kramer*), but by then the segregated housing patterns in many cities had already been cemented.

Another factor inhibiting the expansion of African-American neighborhoods was the discriminatory business practices of real estate companies and banks. Studies conducted in the 1950s proved that real estate companies routinely discriminated against black clients (Massey and Denton, 1993). Methods of discrimination included refusing to show African-Americans properties in predominantly white areas, charging higher rents to African-Americans, and simply refusing to conduct business with African-Americans altogether. Additionally, banks created the practice of "redlining" in which poorer areas of the city were declared unsuitable for mortgage purposes. The "redlined" areas invariably included black neighborhoods and those neighborhoods most likely to be the site of black residential expansion (Massey and Denton, 1993). Banks also refused to lend money to African-Americans wishing to purchase homes in white neighborhoods. Other discriminatory financial policies included charging

higher interest rates on loans made to blacks, and again, refusing to do business with African-Americans entirely (Long and Johnston, 1947).

These discriminatory practices were operating nationwide, and Tulsa was no exception. Race restrictive covenants were implemented in most parts of the city, but especially in those areas adjacent to the black community (Goble, 1997). The covenants were an effective deterrent to expansion, but one reason for this is that the black population was able to grow to the north, where space was available outside of the city limits. Black expansion into adjacent white areas did not occur until a decade after restrictive covenants were outlawed.

That it took ten years after the prohibition on restrictive covenants for African-Americans to break the racial housing barrier in Tulsa is a result of discriminatory practices among the city's financial institutions. Banks in Tulsa refused to extend mortgages to African-Americans who wished to purchase homes in white neighborhoods. Indeed, the first African-American family to move into a white neighborhood did so with a mortgage from a bank in Oklahoma City (Thiele, 1962).

Numerous studies concerning the expansion of ghettos in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s have been conducted. These studies generally describe the growth of the ghetto as a spatial diffusion process in which the ghetto expands into neighboring white areas (see specifically Deskins, 1981 and Morrill, 1965). Other scholars argue that this "invasion-succession" model of ghetto growth was formulated from studies conducted in northern cities, and the results may not be applicable to all ghetto areas (Taeuber and Taeuber, 1965). It

is also important to note that a key factor in ghetto expansion was the relocation of whites to the suburbs, which opened up housing opportunities for African-Americans within the city. In his 1975 study, Long found that the most important factor behind the increasing numbers of blacks in central cities was out-migration by whites (Long, 1975).

In the 1950s, Tulsa continued to follow the spatial trends of the large northern cities. The growth of the black neighborhood into adjoining white areas follows the expansion models developed from studies in cities such as Detroit and Chicago. The number of African-Americans in Tulsa continued to increase in the 1950s. The trends of African-American neighborhood expansion and growth as a percentage of the city's total population continued in future decades, aided by the suburbanization of white Tulsans.

While some scholars examined residential changes, others studied socioeconomic conditions associated with ghettos. The occupational structure of the African-American population did not noticeably change in the 1950s, but the economics of the ghetto began to undergo a transition during that time. Rose studied a racially changing area in Milwaukee from 1950-1965. He found that from 1950-1955 the retail structure of the area was stable, which he attributed to residential stability and little change in the residents' income characteristics (Rose, 1970). After 1955 there was a general decline in economic activity, and Rose found that variations in certain retail categories reflected changing social characteristics. Specifically, in African-American neighborhoods, retail

businesses were being replaced by those providing services, like dry cleaning and beauty care.

In this respect Tulsa once again mirrors trends occurring in northern cities in the 1950s. A look back at Table XVI shows that, as in Rose's study, the business categories (Rt, S, I) remained relatively stable between 1950 and 1954, before relocation out of the traditional black neighborhood began in earnest. During this time the largest change is seen in the services category, which shows a significant decline. However, service businesses are often run by a single individual and are the least financially stable type of business. Thus, the decline in the services category need not necessarily imply a decline in the overall economic climate, especially given the increase in the number of retail businesses and the relatively small increase in the number of vacancies from 1950 to 1954.

From 1954 to 1958, as predicted by Rose, the number of retail businesses declined and the number of service-oriented businesses surged, nearly recapturing the loss incurred between 1950 and 1954. The number of vacancies increased, with the gain being much greater than that of the previous four-year period. The increasing number of vacancies and service establishments suggests that by the late 1950s, Greenwood had entered a state of socioeconomic transition spurred by the residential instability associated with the relocation of residents to previously all-white areas.

Conclusion

The 1950s was a period of dramatic change in the Greenwood District. The removal of racial housing barriers led to population losses in the old neighborhood, and to the rapid integration of some adjacent white areas. The residential turnover affected the economic structure of the community, but overall, the District remained relatively stable during the decade. However, this stability would be short-lived, as population migration out of the neighborhood accelerated in the 1960s.

CHAPTER V

THE 1960s

The breakdown of racial barriers in the late-1950s did little to alter physical patterns of segregation in Tulsa. As evidenced by the story of rapid racial change at Burroughs Elementary School, the *de jure* segregation of previous decades was replaced by *de facto* segregation in the late-1950s. In the 1960s, African-Americans in Tulsa remained highly segregated, and the historic black neighborhood continued to decline.

Segregation and Housing in the 1960s

As shown in Table XVII, the 1950s trend of decreasing segregation in Tulsa continued into the 1960s. By the end of that decade, Tulsa's level of white/non-white dissimilarity was the lowest of the selected cities, save Seattle, which historically always had a lower level of segregation. During the period from 1960-1970 Tulsa experienced the second-greatest decline in the level of overall segregation, but the figures implying increasing residential integration within the city are misleading.

A 1970 (Sorenson, et al, 1970) study calculated dissimilarity scores for whites and non-whites, and then for whites and blacks, in some of America's largest cities. The results, shown in Table XVIII, were quite revealing. In 1970, Tulsa's total level of dissimilarity was 76.4, but the white-black dissimilarity score for the city was much greater at 94.5. Despite declines in overall segregation in

Table XVII. Dissimilarity Scores, Selected Cities, 1940-1970

	1940	1950	1960	1970	Change, 1960-1970
<i>Northern cities</i>					
Philadelphia	88.0	89.0	87.1	83.2	-3.9
Boston	86.3	86.5	83.9	79.9	-4.0
Chicago	95.0	92.1	92.6	88.8	-3.8
Detroit	89.9	88.8	84.5	80.9	-3.6
St. Louis	92.6	92.9	90.5	89.3	-2.2
<i>Southern cities</i>					
Austin	84.8	92.0	93.1	84.6	-8.5
Houston	84.5	91.5	93.7	90.0	-0.4
Tulsa	84.6	91.2	86.3	76.4	-9.9
Oklahoma City	84.3	88.6	87.1	81.8	-5.3
Savannah	84.2	88.8	92.3	91.2	-1.1
<i>Western cities</i>					
Seattle	82.2	83.3	79.7	69.2	-10.5
Los Angeles	84.2	84.6	81.8	78.4	-3.4

Source: Taeuber and Taeuber, 1965; Sorenson et al, 1970

Table XVIII. White-Black Dissimilarity Scores, Selected Cities, 1970

	Overall, 1970	White-Black, 1970	Difference
<i>Northern cities</i>			
Philadelphia	83.2	84.4	1.2
Boston	79.9	84.3	4.4
Chicago	88.8	93	4.2
Detroit	80.9	82.1	1.2
St. Louis	89.3	90.1	0.8
<i>Southern cities</i>			
Austin	84.6	90.2	5.6
Houston	90	92.7	2.7
Tulsa	76.4	94.5	18.1
Oklahoma City	81.8	95.6	13.8
Savannah	91.2	91.8	0.6
<i>Western cities</i>			
Seattle	69.2	82.2	13.0
Los Angeles	78.4	90.5	12.1

Source: Sorenson, et al, 1970

the 1960s, African-Americans in Tulsa remained highly segregated. In fact, only Oklahoma City ranked higher than Tulsa in the level of white-black dissimilarity in 1970. The two city's levels of white-black segregation were, on average, 15 points higher than their levels of total segregation. This difference can be attributed to the presence of non-African-American minority groups, primarily Native Americans, who were more integrated with the white population of each city. (For a discussion of Native American settlement in urban areas in the 1950s and 1960s, see Fixico, 1986.) For instance, contrast Tulsa with a city such as Savannah. The difference between the overall dissimilarity and the white-black dissimilarity figures for Savannah is only .6, implying that few minorities besides African-Americans resided in the city. In Tulsa, the difference between the two dissimilarity scores suggests that additional minority groups were present, but that they did not face the kind of intense segregation that was felt by black Tulsans.

As shown in Figure 6, African-Americans remained residentially segregated in the area north of the central business district. Migration out of the traditional African-American neighborhood continued throughout the 1960s. Census tract 8 became the primary site for integration during this decade, seeing a 65% increase in the number of non-white households by 1970 (Table XIX).

Curiously, the percentage of non-white housing units in tracts 10 and 11, the Greenwood area, showed significant decline in the 1960s. This decrease in non-white residences can be attributed to out-migration and the resulting

Figure 6. Percentage of Non-White Housing Units by Census Tract, 1970

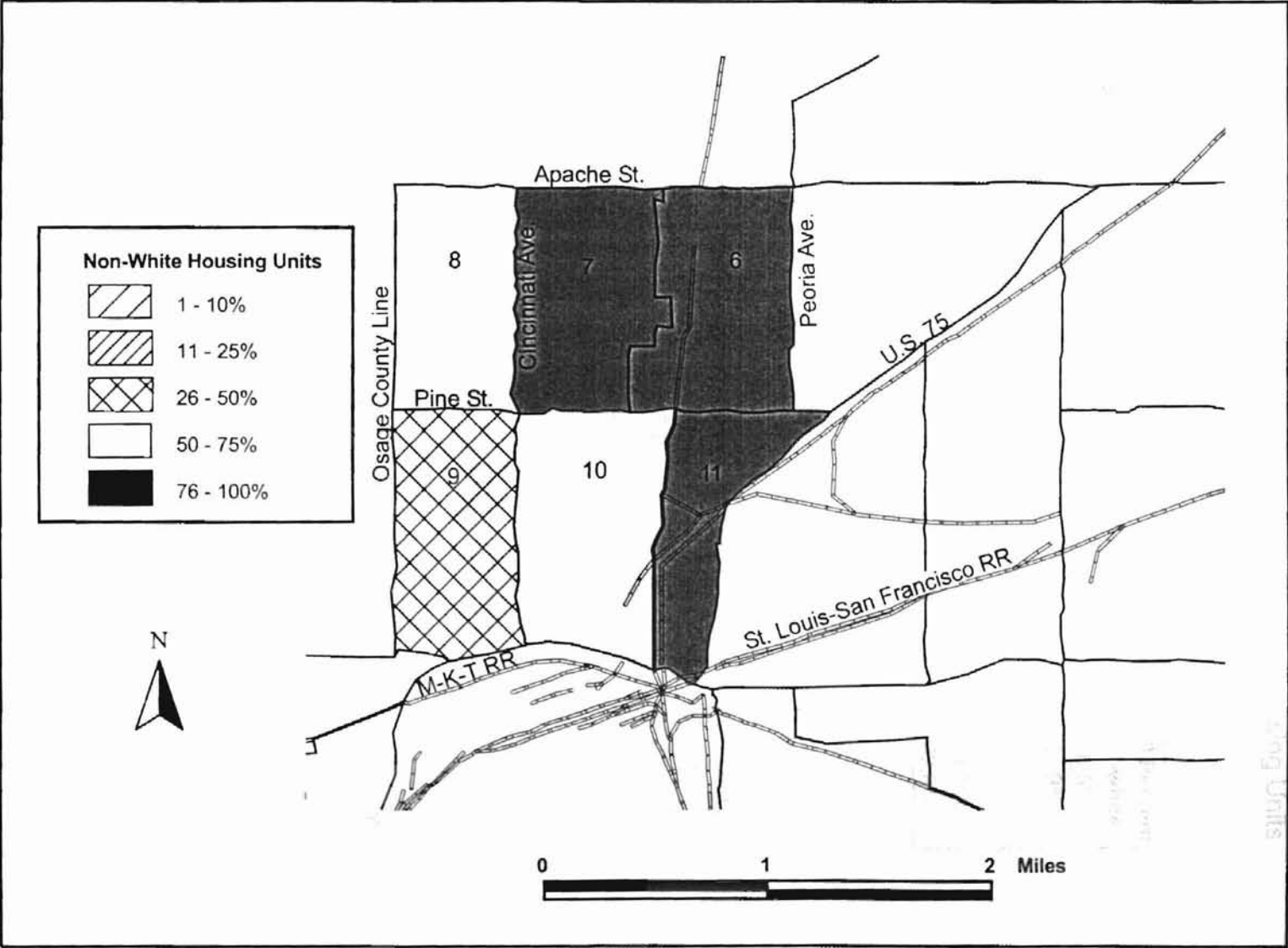


Table XIX. Change in Percentage of Non-White Housing Units
by Census Tract, 1960-1970

Tract Number	1960 Non-white Housing Units	1960 Percent Non-white	1970 Non-white Housing Units	1970 Percent Non-white
6	1293	92.2%	1175	86.5%
7	802	66.9%	1004	84.9%
8	14	1.7%	545	67.0%
9	349	13.3%	612	32.5%
10	2006	88.0%	1457	74.7%
11	969	91.8%	650	82.6%

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Table XX. Change in Vacant Housing Units, by Census Tract, 1960-1970

Tract Number	1960 Vacant Units	1960 Percent Vacant	1970 Vacant Units	1970 Percent Vacant
6	102	7.28%	173	12.73%
7	65	5.43%	101	8.54%
8	46	5.51%	53	6.52%
9	247	9.41%	312	16.56%
10	269	11.79%	324	16.61%
11	83	7.87%	128	16.26%

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Table XXI. Population Change by Census Tract, 1960-1970

Tract Number	1960 Population	1970 Population	Net Change, 1960-1970
6	4127	3225	-902
7	3946	3534	-412
8	2252	2524	272
9	6822	4724	-2098
10	5147	3869	-1278
11	3024	1650	-1374

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

increase in the number of vacant homes (Table XX). Population census figures (Table XXI) show that over 2,600 people vacated the two tracts between 1960 and 1970, a total population decline of 32% in just ten years. Tract 11 was particularly affected, losing 45% of its 1960 population by 1970. Some of the relocation was undoubtedly voluntary, to escape declining housing standards in the old neighborhood (Table XXII). Other relocation may have been forced, due to losses in the housing stock. A look at Table XXIII reveals that tracts 10 and 11 lost a total of approximately 600 housing units between 1960 and 1970, an 8% loss of the total units in 1960.

Socioeconomic Conditions in the 1960s

Although exact unemployment figures for Tulsa in the 1960s are not available, the historical trend of higher unemployment rates among African-Americans presumably held true during that time. As Table XIV shows, the desegregation period does not appear to have opened many economic doors for African-Americans living in the city. In 1960 the majority of black Tulsans remained employed in lower-wage occupations. Nearly 66% of African-American women were employed in the services sector, the majority working as private domestics. Approximately 30% of African-American men worked in the services sector, and the majority of the rest were laborers and operatives. Thus in 1960 the employment patterns for blacks in Tulsa were little changed from those of the 1940s.

Table XXII. Housing Conditions by Census Tract, 1960

Tract Number	Total Units	Percent Rented	Sound	Deteriorating	Dilapidated	Without Complete Plumbing
6	1359	44.23%	489	651	262	222
7	1183	29.92%	951	226	21	16
8	813	21.01%	818	16	1	5
9	1884	52.84%	1645	791	188	229
10	1951	75.25%	1173	778	331	614
11	787	57.51%	456	374	225	189

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Table XXIII. Change in Total Housing Units by Census Tract, 1960-1970

Tract Number	Total Units, 1960	Total Units, 1970	Net Change, 1960-1970
6	1402	1359	-43
7	1198	1183	-15
8	835	813	-22
9	2624	1884	-740
10	2281	1951	-330
11	1055	787	-268

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Table XIV. Occupational Patterns, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1960

Job Classification	Total Male	White Male	African-American Male	Total Female	White Female	African-American Female
Professional/Technical	11955	11720	235	4994	4711	283
Proprietors/Managers	10392	10202	190	1640	1576	64
Clerical and Sales	14410	14076	334	18398	18034	364
Craftsmen and Operatives	26924	25604	1500	3148	2855	293
Service Workers, non-private	4460	2903	1557	5745	4758	987
Service Workers, private	153	56	97	3170	1077	2093
Farmer Laborers/Managers	251	215	36	25	25	0
Non-Farm Laborers	3439	2475	964	69	45	24
Not Reported	4627	3928	699	3055	2491	564

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

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The city directory information for the 1960s shows the continuation of trends that began in the latter part of the previous decade (Table XXV). The number of single-family residential units continued to decline, while the number of vacancies increased. The three commercial categories (retail, service, and industrial) all showed declines between 1963 and 1966, with the largest decrease being in the services category. Nonetheless, service-oriented businesses comprised the majority of enterprises in the study area during this time period.

Commentary

Major race riots occurred in some American cities in the 1960s; among these, Los Angeles (1965), Newark (1967), and Detroit (1967) were the most destructive (Goldberg, 1968). These riots differed in character from those of the earlier decades of the 20th century, such as the riot in Tulsa in 1921. Earlier riot activity involved the invasion of African-American areas by white mobs, and usually took place during periods of rapid social and demographic change (Silver, 1968). By the 1960s, urban riots had transformed into events in which collective violence was initiated by African-Americans and anger was directed against white authority (Goldberg, 1968).

At the time, some scholars attributed the cause of the riots to discrimination, while others stated that issues such as poverty were the impetus for rioting. A study conducted in 1996 examining the 1960s riots in retrospect found that factors like poverty, unemployment, and crime rates did not contribute to racial violence. The research instead indicated that residential segregation

and a few more significant factors in urban rioting during the 1960s, and that riots were more common in cities which had a high level of residential contact between whites and blacks (see also Johnson et al. 1966). In addition, the study found that cities with a high level of residential contact had a higher level of urban riots in the future.

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Table XXV. Polk Directory Data, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1960s

Classification	1963	1966	Net Change
R	1155	1093	-62
RM	32	27	-5
OA	n/a	n/a	n/a
UA	n/a	n/a	n/a
V	225	320	95
Sch	4	3	-1
Chur	30	27	-3
Rt	49	34	-15
S	180	133	-47
I	17	15	-2
G	4	4	0
C	6	6	0
T	1	3	2

Source: R.L. Polk & Co.'s Tulsa (Tulsa County) City Directory

was the most significant factor in urban rioting during the 1960s, and that riots were more common in cities in which increasing residential contact between races was occurring (Olzak et al, 1996). In addition the study found that cities with a history of racial violence were more prone to have riots in the future.

While rioting in the 1960s left large sections of some African-American neighborhoods in ruin, Urban Renewal programs destroyed a significant portion of others. The federal government instituted the Urban Renewal Program in the Housing Act of 1949, as a means to rehabilitate blighted areas in the central cities of the United States. Minority groups were most affected by renewal programs. In his 1962 assessment of the Urban Renewal program, Martin Anderson reported that over 60% of the people forced from their homes due to Urban Renewal were minorities (Anderson, 1964). Anderson also noted that very little of the housing built with Urban Renewal funds was public housing, and that the low-income, who were supposed to be helped by Urban Renewal, were actually the least benefited.

Rioting and Urban Renewal altered many black neighborhoods in America in the 1960s, but Tulsa's Greenwood District was relatively unaffected by these events. Tulsa avoided outbreaks of racial violence like those seen in Detroit and Watts, despite of the city's history of racial hostility. Perpetual housing segregation within the city may have prevented the outbreak of riots, since violence was more prevalent in areas with increasing residential integration.

Construction on a citywide expressway system in Tulsa began in the mid-to-late 1950s (Goble, 1997). Some have attributed the ultimate decline of the

Greenwood District to the siting of an expressway through the neighborhood. A portion of the Interstate-244 Inner Dispersal Loop runs adjacent to the Missouri-Kansas-Texas railroad tracks, near the southern boundary of the study area. United States Highway 75 (Cherokee Expressway) runs roughly parallel to the AT & SF and then the Midland-Valley tracks and abuts Lansing Avenue. While the construction of these transportation routes undoubtedly resulted in the displacement of some homes and businesses, the expressways hardly cut through the center of the Greenwood neighborhood, as is often claimed. In fact, expressway construction was a more physically destructive force in the predominantly-white, working class neighborhood immediately west of the Greenwood District, where the Osage Expressway and the remainder of the I-244 Inner Dispersal Loop were built (refer to Figure 2). The housing census shows that this area (census tract 9) lost over 700 homes between 1960 and 1970 (see Table XXIII), a decline of over 25% in the total number of houses. The expressway system was completed in conjunction with the city plan introduced in 1960. The plan called for improvements in schools and public recreation facilities, and expressed the need for residential urban renewal programs. The report identified 69 residential renewal areas within the city, stating that 40 of these required rehabilitation, 21 were to be redeveloped, and the remaining eight needed remedial treatment (Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, 1960).

The plan also divided Tulsa into 13 residential communities for the purpose of classifying the condition of the city's housing supply. The community

of the Greenwood District had over 50% of its housing designated as being dilapidated. Housing conditions were similar in surrounding areas; in many parts of census tract 9, 30-50% of the housing was classified as dilapidated. Conditions were particularly bad in census tracts north of the Greenwood District, where African-Americans had begun to move in the years before residential integration. These areas became the location for residential Urban Renewal programs. The first Urban Renewal project in Tulsa, indeed in the state of Oklahoma, was the renovation of the Seminole Hills neighborhood in North Tulsa (Community Planning Associates, 1974). Residential renewal programs within Greenwood in the 1960s included the construction of Pioneer Plaza, a 200-apartment public housing complex, on the 900-block of Elgin Street. The construction of this high-rise accounts for some of the loss in housing experienced in census tract 10 between 1960 and 1970.

Conclusion

In the 1960s, African-Americans in Tulsa remained highly segregated residentially, and appear to have gained little economic mobility after the desegregation period of the late-1950s. While many American cities were engulfed in racial violence during this decade, this was not the case in Tulsa. Nor did the historic portion of the African-American community there face destruction at the hands of Urban Renewal programs. Rather than being shaped and changed by these forces, the Greenwood District continued the slow decline

that had begun in the latter part of the 1950s; but the neighborhood would be changed drastically in the coming decade.

CHAPTER VI

THE 1970s

Having survived the often-turbulent 1960s mostly intact, the Greenwood District faced new challenges in the 1970s. Tulsa, like many cities across the United States, was forced to integrate the public school system during this decade. In addition to the divisive issue of school integration, Urban Renewal continued to cast a shadow over the old neighborhood.

Segregation and Housing in the 1970s

In 1970 Tulsa was, for African-Americans, one of the most segregated cities in the entire country, a situation that changed little between 1970 and 1980. While a dissimilarity score for the city in 1980 is not available, an examination of census data reveals that African-Americans remained highly segregated in the northern part of town (Figure 7). African-Americans continued to move into tracts west of Cincinnati Avenue, the original racial dividing line within the city (Table XXVI). During the 1970s, census tract number 9 became the primary site for black neighborhood expansion, increasing from a 49.2% African-American population in 1970 to an over 66% African-American population by 1980.

The level of home ownership in the Greenwood neighborhood remained much lower than that of surrounding areas, but housing conditions had improved by 1970, with a significant decline in the number of units lacking complete plumbing facilities (Table XXVII). In addition, the vacancy rate (Table XXVIII)

Figure 7. Percentage of Population African-American, by Census Tract, 1980

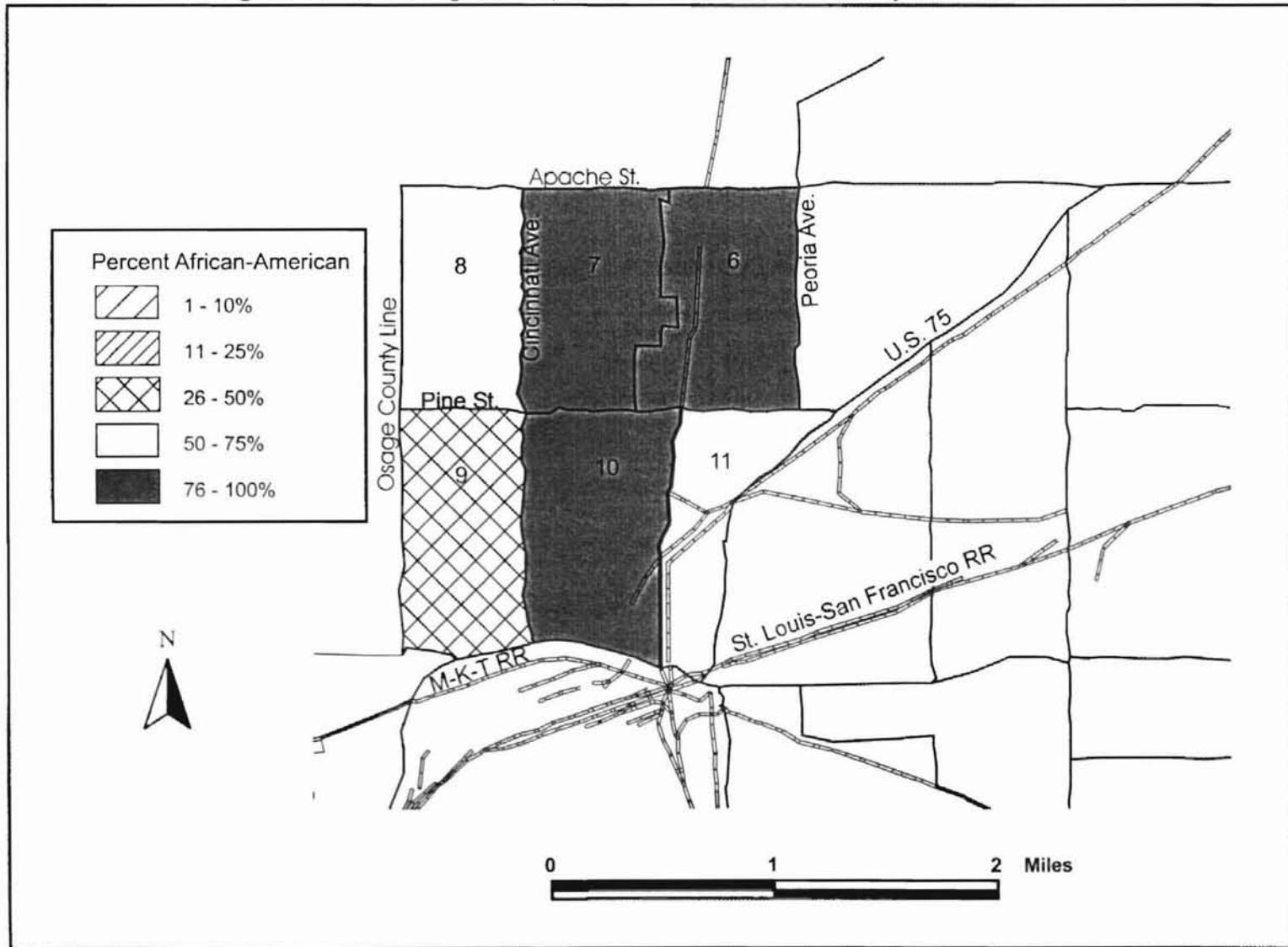


Table XXVI. African-American Population by Census Tract, 1970 and 1980

Tract Number	1970 Total Population	1970 African-American Population	1970 Percent African American	1980 Total Population	1980 African-American Population	1980 Percent African American
6	3,225	3,195	99.10%	1,804	1,772	98.20%
7	3,534	3,361	95.10%	2,293	2,200	95.90%
8	2,524	2,010	79.60%	2,168	1,821	84.0%
9	4,724	2,326	49.20%	3,036	2,021	66.60%
10	3,869	3,589	92.80%	1,270	1,062	83.60%
11	1,650	1,632	98.90%	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

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for census tracts in the center of the study area, dropped by almost 50% during
 1980. (Please note that 1980 census data for
 had been combined with tract 12 for the

Table XXVII. Housing Conditions by Census Tract, 1970

Tract Number	Total Housing Units	Lacking Complete Plumbing	Units Rented	Percent Rented
6	1,359	49	554	46.7%
7	1,183	8	382	35.3%
8	813	5	159	20.9%
9	1,884	60	816	51.9%
10	1,951	208	1,036	63.7%
11	787	55	339	51.4%

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Table XXVIII. Change in Vacant Housing Units by Census Tract, 1970-1980

Tract Number	1970 Vacant Units	1970 Percent Vacant	1980 Vacant Units	1980 Percent Vacant
6	173	12.7	230	22.4%
7	101	8.5	60	5.9%
8	53	6.5	64	7.6%
9	312	16.5	201	15.7%
10	324	16.6	64	8.85%
11	128	16.2	n/a	n/a

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

for census tract 10, the center of the study area, dropped by almost 50% during the ten-year period from 1970 to 1980. [Please note that 1980 census data for tract 11 are not available, as that tract had been combined with tract 12 for the 1980 census.]

The decline in the number of residential vacancies is misleading, which becomes evident through an examination of changes in total housing units. As shown in Table XXIX, most of the census tracts under study lost housing between 1970 and 1980. The loss was particularly dramatic in census tract 10, which experienced a decline of over 1,200 housing units during the decade. Since some of the lost houses were presumably vacant, little is gained by directly comparing vacancy calculations for 1970 and 1980, as they cannot reflect the large number of lost housing units.

The misleading nature of the vacancy figures becomes even more apparent when looking at population data for the area (Table XXX). Census tract 10 experienced a total population decline of nearly 2,600 residents between 1970 and 1980, by far the largest population decrease among any of the census tracts. Given the great losses in population and housing, the decline in vacant housing units in the 1970s should not be interpreted as an improvement in the overall socioeconomic condition of the neighborhood.

Socioeconomic Conditions in the 1970s

Citywide employment data for Tulsa in 1970 is unavailable, but that year the Census Bureau did conduct an employment survey of a portion of Tulsa

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Table XXIX. Change in Total Housing Units by Census Tract, 1970-1980

Tract Number	1970 Total Housing Units	1980 Total Housing Units	Net Change 1970-1980
6	1,359	1,026	-333
7	1,183	1,014	-169
8	813	844	31
9	1,884	1,279	-605
10	1,951	722	-1,229
11	787	n/a	n/a

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Table XXX. Change in Total Population by Census Tract, 1970-1980

Tract Number	1970	1980	Net Change
6	3,225	1,804	-1,421
7	3,534	2,293	-1,241
8	2,524	2,168	-356
9	4,724	3,036	-1,688
10	3,869	1,270	-2,599
11	1,650	n/a	n/a

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

County. The survey area (Figure 8) for the profile report included 65% of the African-American population of Tulsa County in 1970, and also included all of the census tracts examined in this study. Thus the employment profile is a good representation of employment patterns among African-Americans in Tulsa, especially those within the Greenwood District.

The survey found that within the report's study area, the unemployment rate among African-American males was much higher than that for white males (Table XXXI). The unemployment rate for African-American females, however, was lower than that for their white counterparts. This is a reversal of historical trends in which the unemployment rate for African-Americans of both genders was always higher than that for whites. But it should be kept in mind that these results are only for the population of the report's study area; if unemployment rates based on race and gender for the entire city/county were calculated, it is possible that African-American females would have a higher rate of unemployment than white females.

The 1970 report also shows that employment patterns among men were similar for both racial groups (Table XXXII). The majority of men within the study area were employed in the services sector or as craftsmen/operatives. Employment patterns varied along racial lines for women. The clerical and sales category predominated among white females, while private service worker was the dominant occupational category among African-American women. Ninety-two percent of the 1,375 women employed as domestic workers in 1970 were African-American. The occupational disparity between black and white females

Figure 8. 1970 Employment Survey Study Area

TULSA, OKLA.

Portion of City Including Census Employment Survey Area

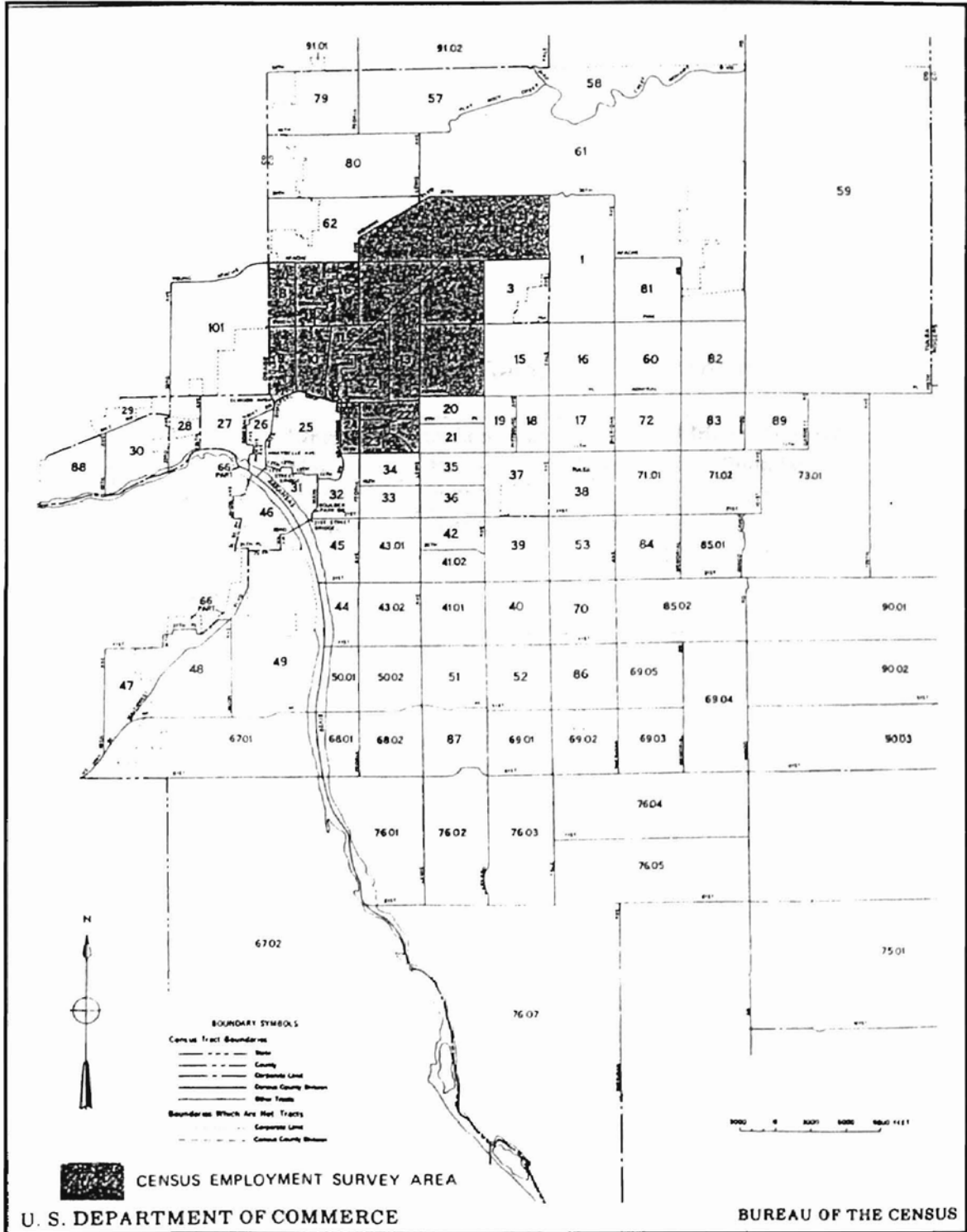


Table XXXI. Unemployment Rates, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1970

	White Males	African-American Males	White Females	African-American Females
Total	5,859	3,753	3,500	3,817
Employed	5,449	3,178	2,990	3,375
Unemployed	410	575	510	442
Unemployment Rate	7.0%	15.32%	14.57%	11.58%

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

Table XXXII. Occupational Patterns, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1970

Job Classification	Total Male	White Male	African-American Male	Total Female	White Female	African-American Female
Professional/Technical	490	293	197	512	183	329
Proprietors/Managers	513	363	150	199	118	81
Clerical and Sales	879	622	257	1719	1146	573
Craftsmen and Operatives	4608	3201	1407	736	467	269
Service Workers, non-private	1063	457	606	1777	934	843
Service Workers, private	0	0	0	1375	110	1265
Farmer Laborers/Managers	38	23	15	16	8	8
Non-Farm Laborers	1036	490	546	31	24	7

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census

may hearken back to old attitudes regarding the division of labor, when private service work was generally reserved for African-Americans.

The city directory data for the 1970s reveals the continuation of trends present since the late-1950s (Table XXXIII). The number of single-family residential units experienced a net decline during the decade, expected given the extreme losses in population and housing within the study area. All three commercial categories showed a decline in absolute numbers, with the largest drop being in the services category. The number of vacancies also declined, a reversal of the pattern of previous decades. Again, however, many structures in the neighborhood were razed by 1980; therefore, the actual vacancy rate may have remained constant or possibly have increased during the 1970s.

Commentary

By 1970 much of the old Greenwood District was gone. Many of the neighborhood's businesses had closed, many residents had relocated, and many more would do so within the next decade. The sweeping changes visited on some African-American communities in the 1960s were late in coming to Greenwood – but they did come.

Urban Renewal had a major impact in the Greenwood District during the 1970s. The housing and population losses in census tract 10 can be attributed to Urban Renewal programs, primarily the construction of the University Center at Tulsa (now Oklahoma State University-Tulsa) and the Greenwood Cultural Center. The Cultural Center was part of a \$3.5 million grant from the federal

Table XXXIII. Polk Directory Data, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1970s

Classification	1970	1974	1978	Net Change
R	946	596	404	-542
RM	26	10	6	-20
OA	533	407	n/a	n/a
UA	334	187	n/a	n/a
V	373	330	131	-242
Sch	2	2	2	0
Chur	35	19	18	-17
Rt	36	8	13	-23
S	114	71	50	-64
I	6	6	4	-2
G	6	4	5	-1
C	8	7	3	-5
T	1	2	2	1

Source: R.L. Polk & Co.'s Tulsa (Tulsa County) City Directory

Model Cities Program (Greenwood Cultural Center), and was built on two-and-a-half acres of land provided by the city (Johnson, 1998). The 80-acre university campus abuts the Cultural Center and sits where Booker T. Washington High School once stood. The construction of this complex required the removal of over 400 housing units, nearly one-third of all housing lost in tract 10 between 1970 and 1980.

While Urban Renewal changed the physical landscape of the neighborhood, social changes in the 1970s also left a mark on the Greenwood District. In the late 1960s, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that a state of *de facto* segregation existed within the Tulsa Public School system and ordered the city to desegregate the schools (Oklahoma Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1976). The level of school segregation in Tulsa was extreme; a study measuring the degree of segregation in elementary schools in the U.S.'s sixty largest school districts in the late 1960s found that Tulsa had the most segregated school system in the entire country (Lord, 1977).

In 1975 the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights requested a report on the progress made in desegregating Tulsa's schools. The report showed that the city's elementary schools remained segregated, with 8 of the 76 schools having a minority enrollment of over 85 percent. Conversely, 35 of the 76 had minority enrollments of less than ten percent. Minority students were more evenly distributed at the middle and high school levels. Among the elementary schools, Burroughs, the school that experienced rapid integration in the late-1950s, had a student body that was over 85% black. Johnson Elementary, the local school in

the Greenwood District, had a 51% African-American enrollment (Oklahoma Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1976).

The report also found that the initial desegregation plans implemented by the school board generally worked to preserve the racial status quo within the school system. In December of 1970 the school district stated that 46 of the elementary schools were integrated, but enrollment statistics show that in nine of the schools, 88% or more of the students were African-American, while 31 schools had a student body that was less than 3% African-American. Proposed changes served to increase the African-American enrollment at highly-segregated Hawthorne Elementary, and other plans were lax in bringing about real integration. In addition, the school board faced accusations of failing to involve the public in decision-making processes regarding desegregation.

In 1971 the Supreme Court issued the *Swann vs. Mecklenberg Board of Education* ruling, which established busing as a legal means toward school integration. This decision drastically altered desegregation policies in Tulsa, as the school board sought to avoid the unpopular action of busing white students to predominantly black schools. A new desegregation plan, judicially approved in July of 1971, called for the closing of Greenwood's all-black Carver Junior High and for the busing of Carver's students to nearby predominantly-white schools. The board also ordered the closing of a predominantly-black elementary school. The closing of both schools provoked anger within the African-American community, and among other citizens who thought it unfair to place the burden of desegregation upon young African-American students.

Conclusion

While upholding the desegregation plan, the courts also found that *de jure* segregation did exist in some of Tulsa's elementary schools. An additional desegregation plan for these elementary schools involved the closing of a predominantly-white school and the reassignment of those students to predominantly-black Johnson Elementary in Greenwood.

In the face of public pressure, the school board decided to reopen Carver Junior High on the basis of voluntary integration in 1973. The same year, Washington High School was also desegregated via voluntary integration. Two years later the courts ordered the closing of Johnson Elementary, with former-Johnson students being bused to the new, integrated Emerson Elementary School.

Although having maintained the most segregated school systems in the country, Tulsa did not employ widespread busing to implement desegregation plans (Oklahoma Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1976). Anti-busing groups did organize in Tulsa, but the city did not experience the violent anti-busing protests seen in cities such as Boston during this time. The issue of school desegregation had a profound impact upon the Greenwood District, resulting in the integration of the local junior high, and in the closing of the neighborhood's elementary school.

Conclusion XVII

The 1970s were a period of major upheaval in the Greenwood District. The socioeconomic decline that had begun decades earlier continued in full force, as more businesses in the neighborhood closed. Population loss also increased, with over 2,500 residents moving out of the area in the ten years between 1970 and 1980. Preliminary construction on the Cultural Center and the university campus had the most direct physical impact on the District. In making room for these facilities, hundreds of structures were demolished, putting an end to the old Greenwood District.

CHAPTER XVII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research provides a chronological analysis of change in the Greenwood District that is generally lacking in other works concerning the area. In researching the neighborhood, several discoveries were made regarding the physical characteristics of and changes within the District.

The African-American neighborhood of Tulsa came to reflect qualities of both the North and the South. Spatially, the Greenwood District was like the African-American ghettos of northern cities, but socially, race relations within Tulsa were conducted in the same manner as those in the South, guided by segregation laws. Once physical and social segregation barriers were removed, the African-American community began to expand. The physical growth of the neighborhood into adjacent white areas follows the invasion-succession models formulated from studies in northern cities.

A primary focus of this study was to assess the impacts of desegregation and Urban Renewal upon the Greenwood District. The research showed that Urban Renewal became a major agent of physical change in the neighborhood in the 1970s. The destructive nature of these programs is evidenced by the city directory data for the 1980s (see Table XXXIV), which shows few, if any, residential or commercial units on many of the streets in the study area by 1982.

Table XXXIV. Polk Directory Data, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1980s

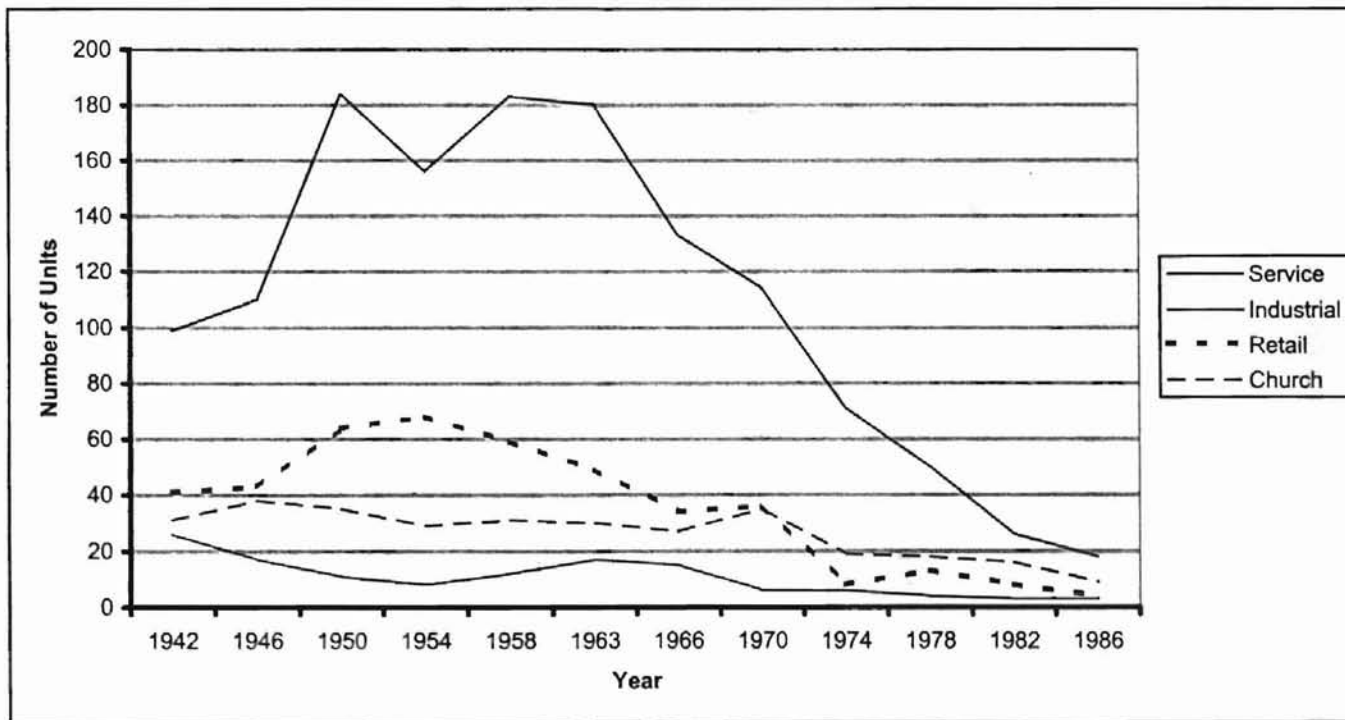
Classification	1982	1986	Net Change
R	238	201	-37
RM	3	1	-2
OA	231	196	-35
UA	22	19	-3
V	58	62	4
Sch	1	1	0
Chur	16	9	-7
Rt	8	4	-4
S	26	18	-8
I	3	3	0
G	5	3	-2
C	2	3	1
T	2	0	-2

Source: R.L. Polk & Co.'s Tulsa (Tulsa County) City Directory

Although Urban Renewal had a major impact upon the area, the primary cause for socioeconomic change in the Greenwood District in the last half of the 20th century was desegregation. The relocation of residents out of the neighborhood, beginning in the late-1950s and accelerating in the 1960s and 1970s, led to economic instability in Greenwood. Figure 9 illustrates this fact quite well. The number of retail businesses began to decline in the late-1950s, approximately the same time that African-American families first began to move to nearby white areas. Service businesses held stable for several more years, but also started an irreversible decline in the early-1960s. The closing of businesses and the vacating of homes left parts of Greenwood nearly abandoned, making the area an attractive site for Urban Renewal programs in the 1970s.

The demise of the Greenwood District is often blamed on the construction of Tulsa's automobile transportation system, but expressways generally had an indirect impact upon the neighborhood. An elevated portion of the Inner Dispersal Loop was built in the southern part of Greenwood, and U.S. Highway 75 was constructed parallel to Lansing Avenue; but, expressway construction was a greater physical force in the areas to the west and north of Greenwood. The placement of the Osage Expressway to the west served to stem the tide of African-American residential expansion, forcing movement to the north, away from the neighborhoods near the Tulsa Country Club. The Gilcrease and Cherokee Expressways (U.S. Highway 75) were built in predominantly-black areas, but these routes did not traverse the historic Greenwood District.

Figure 9. Selected Polk Directory Trends, 1942-1986



Perhaps the greatest impact of the expressway system on the Greenwood District was economic. The expressways allowed retail and service enterprises to move away from the downtown to suburban areas, and with the new-found mobility associated with desegregation, African-Americans began to shop outside of Greenwood. Thus, the trafficway system furthered the economic decline of the District, which was perhaps as detrimental to Greenwood as if the expressway really had cut through the center of the neighborhood.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on the Greenwood District should focus on the dynamic physical and economic change occurring there. The OSU/A&M Board of Regents has approved a plan to expand the OSU-Tulsa campus from its current 80 acres to at least 200 acres (OSU-Tulsa Press Release, March 7, 2000). The master plan calls for the construction of a new library, student housing, a student union, and a conference center, with campus expansion taking place to the north and west of the university's current location. The school has a stated goal of increasing enrollment from the current 4,300 students to 20,000 students by the year 2020. The physical expansion of the university, as well as the increased number of students, would certainly have a major impact on the surrounding community.

Another interesting course of research would be the study of social stratification in the District. Northern ghettos generally exhibited some type of stratification based on income, and in later decades, upon age, with older residents being clustered in the center, surrounding by rings of younger

residents. Preliminary research into residential patterns in the Greenwood neighborhood indicate that the socioeconomic decline of the area, and the resulting population relocation, led to a type of hyper-segregation in which older, residents became isolated in the neighborhood. This situation maybe attributed to lower incomes, and thus less mobility, among the elderly, and/or to a hesitation to relocate on the part of older residents, due to sentimental attachment to the old neighborhood.

Another possible study involves future racial change that might occur in the old Greenwood area. In the invasion-succession models formed during studies of northern ghettos, black neighborhoods in racial transition often became the settlement site for new minority groups moving into the city. Tulsa's Hispanic population grew by nearly 200% between 1990 and 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). An interesting study would examine the residential patterns of the city's Hispanic residents, and assess what impact, if any, their presence has upon the areas near the old Greenwood neighborhood.

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VITA

Amanda K. Coleman

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A SOCIOECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE GREENWOOD DISTRICT
OF TULSA, OKLAHOMA: 1940-1980

Major Field: Geography

Biographical:

Personal: Born in Blytheville, Arkansas, January 26, 1975.

Education: Graduated from Bartlesville High School, Bartlesville, Oklahoma, in May, 1993; received Bachelor of Science degree in Geography at from Oklahoma State University in May, 1999; completed requirements for the Master of Science degree in Geography at Oklahoma State University in August, 2001.

Experience: Employed by Oklahoma State University, Department of Geography as a research assistant, January, 1999 to July, 2000; employed by Oklahoma State University, Department of Geography as a teaching assistant, January, 2000 to May, 2000; employed by Oklahoma State University, Department of Geography as a teaching associate, August, 2000 to May, 2001.