

A Model for America: Racial Integration in South Orange, New Jersey

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“This town is a model for what America should be like. You can live on any block, any part of the town,” declared former South Orange Village President, William Calabrese in an April 13, 2003 *New York Times* article.¹ Living on “any block,” in “any part of the town” in South Orange, New Jersey is a fairly common practice for both white *and* black residents, but it is an uncommon practice in many American suburbs, whose racially homogenous populations are evidence of the United States’ long legacy of racial residential segregation.² In this racially integrated suburb, whites and blacks are often neighbors. Notably absent from this neighborhood are the “For Sale” signs that decorate many suburban homes’ manicured lawns the moment that significant numbers of African-Americans begin to move to the neighborhood. White South Orange residents do not appear to be influenced by the misconception that having ‘too many African-Americans’ in their neighborhood will cause their property values to decline. South Orange’s demographics certainly support this fact: according to the 2010 Census, South Orange has a total population of 16,198. 4,642, or 28.6% of the town’s residents are black and 9,750, or 60.1% of the town’s residents are white.³ Clearly, South Orange has not suffered from the white flight characteristic of other American neighborhoods, as documented by sociologists Douglass Massey and Nancy Denton.⁴

South Orange’s striking statistics are the result of decades of black and white residents’ persistence and strategies to transform this once predominantly white suburb into a stable, integrated community. From 1963 to the late 1990s, South Orange and the neighboring town of Maplewood witnessed the genesis of several community organizations that were dedicated to integrating both communities. They strove to increase both communities’ negligible African-American populations and to create an atmosphere that allowed African-American residents to reside outside of the traditional African-American community in South Orange.⁵ This

neighborhood stretched from First to Third Streets North to South, Church Street to the West, and Valley Street to the East and was largely separate from white residents.⁶ From the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, African-Americans lived in this neighborhood not only because of discriminatory real estate practices, but also because of the neighborhood's proximity to the train station⁷, and African-American residents' practice of passing their homes down to their children.⁸ These community organizations hoped that African-Americans could live beyond the borders of this small neighborhood.

Several factors predisposed the town to creating more housing options for racial minorities, in what came to be known nationally as the Open Housing Movement. Similar to other communities that chose to intentionally integrate, the presence of several liberal religious group denominations inclined South Orange to create a local version of the Open Housing Movement. Additionally, several local influences made South Orange open to integration. Local events such as the Newark Riot of 1967, as well as a rapidly increasing African-American population in the 1990s, convinced white and black South Orange residents, religious leaders, and local activists to spend decades addressing the town's racial issues, and helped to transform South Orange into a community that currently celebrates diversity through its various civic organizations. South Orange is not unique, as there are other integrated communities such as Oak Park, Illinois, Shaker Heights, Ohio, and Freeport, New York. However, South Orange's history is important because it involves black and white residents coming together to improve their community; it is also significant that the community strategy was to preserve property values *through* racial integration, rather than in spite of it. This history is also important in light of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's failure to create a comprehensive plan to integrate communities. As Christopher Bonastia has shown with other communities, some

black and white residents, instead of relying on the Federal Government, use civic associations to integrate their neighborhoods.⁹ Lastly, this narrative of blacks and whites forming alliances is an underexplored narrative in the historiography of suburbanization. This scholarly literature often excludes black suburban actors and emphasizes racial conflict between black and white suburbanites as the dominant black suburban experience. My work extends beyond most literature and, in line with Bonastia's work, examines how black and white South Orange residents used civic associations to intentionally integrate their community.

Historical Context of Suburbanization

Pioneering works on suburban history such as Sam Bass Warner Jr.'s *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (1962) and Kenneth Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (1987) largely excluded African-Americans from their accounts. Warner was primarily concerned with how the electric streetcar facilitated native-born and immigrant whites' exodus from Boston to its suburbs. Jackson disregarded African-American actors from post-World War II suburbs to position middle and upper-middle class whites at the center of his narrative because he believed that "affluent families had the flexibility and the financial resources to move to the urban edges first."¹⁰ Jackson's focus on affluent white suburbanites also stemmed from his argument that housing policies that the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) initiated during the 1930s in order to encourage homeownership among white Americans also intentionally discouraged African-American homeownership. He contended that these policies resulted in African-Americans' complete exclusion from suburbs.¹¹ Yet Warner and Jackson's omission of African-Americans from suburbs did not tell the whole story. As Thomas Sugrue demonstrates in several

chapters of *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (1996), African-Americans with the financial resources to move from inner-city neighborhoods to the city's periphery attempted to reside in predominantly white suburbs, although they often faced resistance and hostility there.

As suburban history has evolved, historians have become increasingly aware of African-Americans' presence in suburbs. Yet, these analyses have had limitations. In *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, Sugrue alternates between charging that middle-class African-Americans who left deteriorating, black, inner-city neighborhoods for white suburbs 'abandoned low-income black communities'¹² and noting the hostility that these middle-class African-American pioneers faced when they tried to move into predominantly white suburbs.¹³ By solely focusing on African-Americans reacting to their white neighbors' hostility, Sugrue represents African-Americans as having limited agency¹⁴ in response to white suburbanites.

Becky Nicolaides' *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965* (2002) displays less of an understanding of the diversity of African-American suburbanites' experiences than Sugrue does in *Origins*. In *My Blue Heaven*, Nicolaides' focus on white, working-class suburbanites complicates Jackson's claim that the only residents of suburbs were affluent whites, but does little to examine the lives and experiences of African-American suburbanites. When Nicolaides transitions from discussing white, working-class suburbanites' notions of homeownership, which were rooted in ideas about hard work and independence, to addressing African-Americans, she mentions them only in the context of white working-class homeowners' fierce opposition to integrated schools, busing, and integrated housing.

More recent scholarship from Andrew Wiese challenges older historiography of suburbanization by restoring agency to African-Americans. In *Places of Their Own: African-American Suburbanization in the Twentieth-Century* (2004), Andrew Wiese embarks on the quest to challenge misconceptions that Kenneth Jackson perpetuated about suburbs as “white territory” and those that Sugrue also perpetuated by portraying African-American suburbanites as “abandoning” their urban black communities.¹⁵ According to Wiese, the First Great Migration stimulated African-American suburbanization: by 1940, more than one million African-Americans of varying socioeconomic backgrounds inhabited suburbs in the Northern United States and represented one-fifth of the black population.¹⁶ Wiese also challenges Sugrue’s focus on African-Americans’ limited agency in their suburban environments. Wiese depicts African-Americans’ daily lives as people in these environments, instead of solely focusing on the racism that they may have endured. Some African-Americans lived in the same wealthy suburbs as whites for whom they worked. Many others lived in blue-collar, geographically isolated neighborhoods, or areas that were largely separate from other communities because they were “cut off by railroad tracks or other physical barriers,” and built their own homes.¹⁷

Wiese’s focus on African-American suburbs and his multifaceted look at middle-class African-Americans’ residence in suburbs challenges Jackson’s assertion that suburbs are havens for affluent whites by demonstrating their hidden racial diversity. He also pushes beyond Sugrue’s narrative that middle-class African-Americans abandoned urban black communities in pursuit of their own success. Overall, Wiese reclaims African-American suburbanization as vital to understanding suburban history.

Karyn Lacy elaborates on Andrew Wiese's narrative by discussing how white and black suburbanites developed a shared identity as suburbanites, and how this identity has allowed them to accomplish mutual goals. *Blue-Chip Black: Race, Class, and Status in the New Black Middle Class* (2007) is largely concerned with another underrepresented group in scholarly literature—middle and upper-middle class African-American suburbanites, specifically those residing in suburbs during the early to mid-2000s. Of particular interest to me is Lacy's analysis of how African-Americans who live in a predominantly white suburb in Fairfax County, Virginia form interracial alliances with white suburbanites in order to resolve shared community problems. Lacy asserts that "shared interests among black and white suburbanites are the basis for the construction of suburban identities"¹⁸ which allow black and white residents to address "concerns about the most urgent problems in their suburban communities."¹⁹ In Lacy's work, this model of black and white residents' "shared interests" impels them to improve the school system. In my work on South Orange, New Jersey, I apply Lacy's model to black and white residents' shared stake in integrating the community as a means to protect their property values. Black and white South Orange residents' shared vision of community integration from 1963 to the late 1990s is important because it restores agency to black suburbanites. This shared desire for community integration to protect property values is also an underexplored topic in scholarly literature. These themes make South Orange unique, especially given that South Orange had a peaceful integration process compared to many other communities that experienced hostile, and at times, violent paths to integration. Therefore, South Orange's relatively smooth integration process combined with black and white residents' resolve to integrate, make South Orange worthy of scholarly attention.

Prologue to the Open Housing Movement: Early African-American Presence in South Orange

Despite the presence of a small African American population in South Orange, white residents were largely unconcerned with their African-American neighbors' affairs and issues pertaining to race until 1963, when had they had their encounter with the Fair Housing Movement. The lack of recorded history about African-American South Orange residents supports this claim. Little exists about African-American South Orange residents before the mid-twentieth century, except for information about early, prominent residents George Timson²⁰ and Mr. and Mrs. Jordan Morgan.²¹

A possible reason that African-Americans were excluded from recorded history may have been because the editors of the local newspaper envisioned the community as insulated from most national events. *The Maplewood-South Orange News Record* heavily focused on local news, citizens' affairs, and happenings about town, with only an occasional turn to national affairs. Issues of *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record* from the 1960s certainly reflect this possibility. Largely absent from issues of the newspaper are details about the early phases of the Civil Rights Movement, such as Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birmingham Campaign. The images from this protest are some of the most iconic and horrifying images of the violence that civil rights activists had to endure, which garnered national and international media coverage.

The few times that *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record* covered the Civil Rights Movement occurred when residents participated in the struggle for racial equality and opinions were expressed about their involvement. In the May 10, 1962 issue of *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, there was a letter from the editor entitled, "The Right to Vote is Now Being Denied and the Denial is Defended." The editor addressed the United States Senate's

debate about how to remove literacy tests as a way of disfranchising African-American voters in Southern states. He questioned many Southern politicians' belief in "state's rights," or the theory that individual state governments can choose to defy federal laws if they believe that they are unconstitutional. Subsequently, the *News-Record's* editor condemned Southern politicians' defense of state's rights as "a practice that contradicts...all that the United States stands for—equal rights for all citizens."²² In spite of the editor's strong support for African-Americans' voting rights, it would be larger events, such as the local open housing movement and the Newark Riot of 1967 that would fully turn white South Orange residents' attention to racial issues and their relationship to the Civil Rights Movement.

The Open Housing Movement in South Orange

The Open Housing Movement forever changed South Orange's insular nature. In 1963, the town's tolerance was tested when several African-American families moved into neighborhoods previously reserved for white families, instead of the African-American neighborhood bounded by First, Second, Third, Valley, and Church Streets. In October 1963, the Board of Realtors of the Oranges and Maplewood sent two letters to brokers and salesmen in response to African-American families moving into formerly all-white blocks in South Orange such as Stanley Road and the predominantly white neighborhoods of Overlook Terrace, Melman Terrace, Northview Terrace, and Broadview Avenue in Maplewood.²³ The letters warned "against real estate blockbusting tactics,"²⁴ informed residents that "the presence of a particular family" would not cause "depreciated property values," and advised that minority homebuyers should be treated no differently than white families.²⁵

The 1963 formation of the Fair Housing Council of South Orange and Maplewood responded to local events in South Orange and was also a reflection of events taking place in the national Civil Rights Movement, such as other open housing groups forming in many other Northern, suburban communities throughout the country in the 1960s.²⁶ The Fair Housing Council was largely composed of white Protestant ministers, rabbis, realtors, white South Orange and Maplewood residents, and a sole black minister, Rev. Edgar Garfield Thomas, pastor of First Baptist Church. Out of possible support for a then recent New Jersey state law that banned racial discrimination in selling apartments or houses, the Council developed its own strategy to ensure that the town did not experience a difficult integration process.²⁷ Specifically, the Council responded to white homeowners' fear of depreciating property values with a commitment to ensuring that racial integration occurred with as little resistance as possible in order to protect South Orange and Maplewood's image and the community's property values. The opening paragraphs of the Fair Housing Council's December 5, 1963 letter to South Orange and Maplewood residents declared:

The Fair Housing Council of South Orange and Maplewood is dedicated to the principle that the long range interests of our community will be best served by fair and open housing. Discrimination in selling or renting homes and apartments because of race, religion or national origin is contrary to the religious, moral and democratic principles upon which our nation was founded. Factual studies have established that when a community accepts people on individual merit, neighborhoods and property values remain stable—and in fact, often rise. These studies prove that neighborhoods do not deteriorate because of decent people who move *in*, but because of those who move *out* under the pressures of prejudice and panic selling (often fostered by those who stand to gain by it).²⁸

The letter's introductory paragraphs are important because they connect the Council's commitment to open housing—which, like many other religious-based Fair Housing organizations, was a commitment rooted in morality—with the nation's ideals of equality, and more importantly, with the community's long-term interests. These interests not only ensured

that a person has “the basic right to live where he chooses” regardless of race, but also the guarantee that property values would remain stable.²⁹ It is no coincidence that the Council dedicated two paragraphs out of its six-paragraph letter to discussing how panic selling, or selling homes below market value, contributed to property values’ decline and neighborhoods’ ensuing deterioration. Clearly, the Council was committed to racial equality for moral reasons, but it was also interested in the way that racial equality instead of racial discrimination would benefit the community through stable, if not higher property values. The last sentence of the letter’s penultimate paragraph was equally important: “We aim to help maintain Maplewood and South Orange as a fine community where the worth and dignity of each individual is appreciated and not distorted by prejudice.”³⁰ This statement could be interpreted as an affirmation of the Council’s commitment to racial equality. However, this phrase can also be interpreted in a radically different manner.

Indeed South Orange and Maplewood shared the desire to be known as a “fine community” with Levittown, New Jersey, a suburban community with a decisively different racial history.³¹ Similar to their plan for quintessential postwar suburb Levittown, New York, which was completed in 1947, Levitt and Sons Inc. intended for Levittown, New Jersey to be a segregated community. However, Levitt and Sons Inc. voluntarily integrated Levittown, New Jersey after a series of racial incidents took place outside of the home of Levittown, Pennsylvania’s first African-American family, the Myers, in 1957. Having witnessed the racial tension escalate in this older Levittown, Levitt and Sons, Inc. was afraid that a riot in Levittown, New Jersey, which was constructed in 1958, “would hurt sales more than desegregation itself.”³² Levitt and Sons Inc. voluntarily integrated Levittown, New Jersey out of a desire for the community to be seen as law abiding and orderly, descriptors that are essential to any “fine

community.” Similar to Levittown, New Jersey, the Fair Housing Council of South Orange and Maplewood may have wanted their suburban community to be known as law abiding and orderly so that a racial disturbance would not impact the community’s home sales and property values. It is plausible that the Council constructed its letter to appeal to many South Orange and Maplewood residents’ genuine pride in their community to ensure that the two towns’ integration was as orderly as possible.

The Fair Housing Council employed an array of methods to help South Orange and Maplewood become an integrated community. The Council used test home buying, or the practice of having white and black prospective homebuyers inquire about a home on separate occasions, to ascertain whether or not realtors or individuals attempting to sell their homes were more willing to sell their homes to one race over another. The Fair Housing Council also tried to educate white South Orange and Maplewood residents to make them more accepting of African-American newcomers. The Fair Housing Council worked with the Maplewood-South Orange Religious Leaders Committee on Fair Housing, an umbrella organization that was comprised of various religious local organizations, to host Good Neighbor weekend in Maplewood and South Orange from Friday, November 15 to Sunday, November 17, 1963.³³ Throughout the weekend, religious leaders asked their congregations to sign pledges to “welcome new residents of good character into their neighbors without regard to race, religion or nationality.”³⁴ The weekend included religious leaders preaching on various topics such as “The Challenge of Integration,” “Housing—Open or Closed,” and “Fair Housing—Lessons from the Past.”³⁵ The Fair Housing Council also attempted to involve white South Orange and Maplewood residents in fair housing by inviting them to open meetings so that they could learn more about Council.³⁶

While the Board of Realtors of the Oranges and Maplewood and the Fair Housing Council of South Orange and Maplewood tried to create an atmosphere of acceptance to prevent white homeowners from selling their homes out of panic, that does not mean that the African-American families who “infiltrated” white neighborhoods did not encounter resistance, and at times, hostility. The experiences of the Verner family, one of the first African-American families to move to Stanley Road³⁷, a street in a predominantly white section of South Orange, provide valuable insight into the tension that some of these African-American newcomers faced. Gwen Verner and Estelle David were children at the time that their father, Dr. Edward Verner, moved their family from East Orange, New Jersey, a nearby city with a relatively diverse population compared to South Orange, a predominantly white suburb. The Verner family moved because Dr. Verner wanted to provide his family with a larger home so that each one of his seven children could have their own bedroom and receive a rigorous education.³⁸ Gwen Verner and Estelle David’s experiences reveal many white South Orange residents’ struggle to accept change in their neighborhood.

Having moved to South Orange in 1963, race did not negatively impact the Verners’ experience on Stanley Road, but Gwen Verner and Estelle David do recall the racism that they encountered in the school system. During an interview, Estelle David recalled a painful incident involving her ninth grade History teacher, when he taught the class about the Civil War. During the lesson, he referred to African-Americans as “darkies.” After class, Estelle confronted her teacher, and informed him that not all African-Americans had dark skin and that “darky” was not the proper term for African-Americans.³⁹ For Estelle, all of these incidents reveal that some white South Orange residents were struggling to pay “proper respect” to African-American newcomers.⁴⁰

Gwen Verner had a similar experience with the school system as her sister. At Marshall Elementary School, Gwen endured racism, but instead of having bigoted teachers, she had bigoted classmates. She recalled being in the fifth grade with her white classmates, who were, “constantly staring...like you’re at a zoo.”⁴¹ She attributed her classmates’ ignorance, quite plausibly, to limited contact with people of different races.⁴² Unfortunately, one of her liberal, white teachers inadvertently made her peers’ acceptance of her more difficult, by trying to transform his classroom into a more accepting space, by frequently repeating the phrase, “regardless of race, creed or color.”⁴³ His efforts to be supportive only made Gwen’s classmates fixate more on her race; they would immediately turn to look at her every time that he spoke those words.⁴⁴

Both sisters offer compelling accounts of how race played out in their daily experiences in South Orange. Their accounts offer insight into the fact that schools are often the first place to reflect demographic shifts in a community, and how some longtime white residents may have reacted poorly to living in communities that were undergoing these shifts. A devastating riot that took place a few years later, in the adjacent city of Newark, would force the community of South Orange to more fully come to terms with its issues surrounding race. The riot would also bring some white residents to the brink and finally decide what it meant to live in a neighborhood that was becoming more racially diverse.

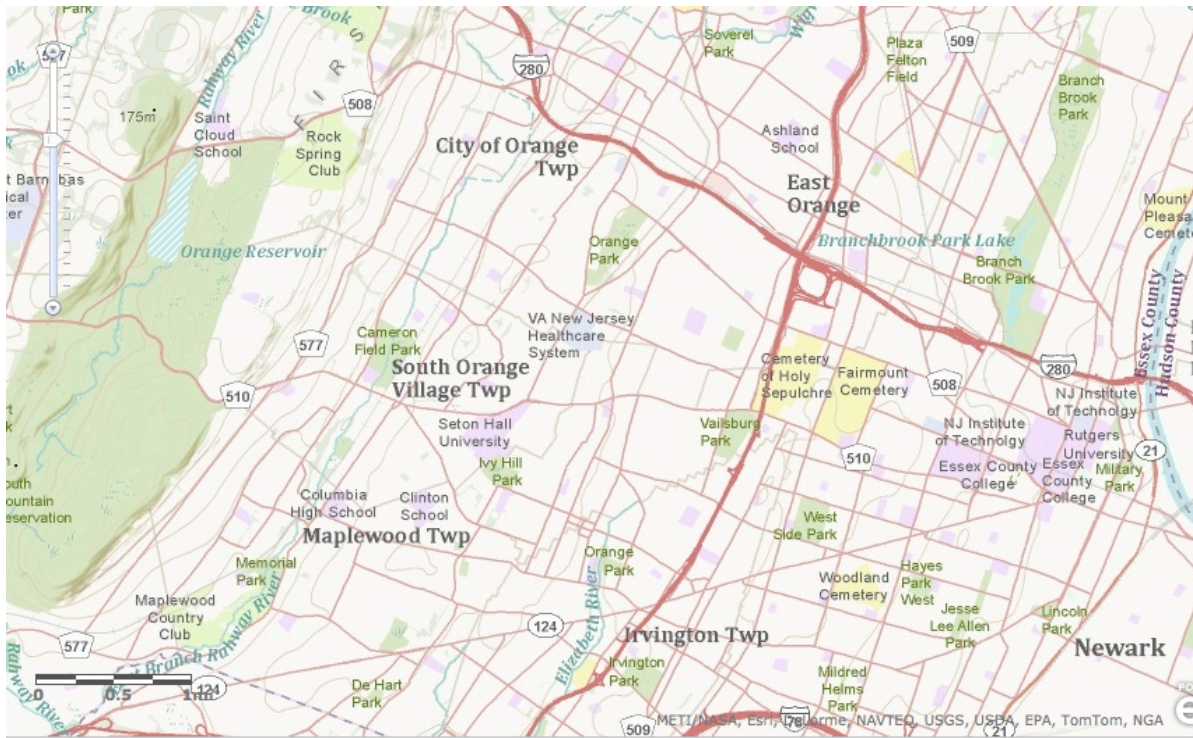
The Newark Riot of 1967 and its Aftermath

Four years prior to the Newark Riot of 1967, two headlines from *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record* serve as ironic harbingers to the ‘urban disorder’ that would later rock this semi-cloistered community. Articles entitled, “Study group topic: ‘Insulated Suburbs’”⁴⁵ and

“Affluent North Jersey,”⁴⁶ depict residents’ awareness that South Orange’s status as an affluent suburb fairly secluded the community from issues related to poverty and race. The article titles also indicate that although residents were aware of issues related to race and poverty, most South Orange residents were largely unconcerned with the affairs of Newark—its poorer, increasingly African-American neighboring community to the East—until this community erupted into violence four years later.

Riots seized Newark from July 12, to July 17, 1967 after white police officers beat and arrested John Smith, an African-American cab driver. Smith’s assault ignited many African-American Newark residents’ long-simmering discontent with the conditions of their community, which resulted from years of “racial disparities in housing, jobs and education” that “plagued Newark’s black community.”⁴⁷ African-American Newark residents, who felt politically powerless, may have used the riot as an outlet to release their pent-up anger due to the inequalities that they faced. The riots can be best summarized as, “[f]ive days of fires, looting and chaos” that consumed the community and caused twenty-six deaths, “millions of dollars in damage and became an enduring symbol of the city’s tortured history of racial discord.”⁴⁸

The Newark Riot of 1967 made some South Orange and Maplewood residents anxious, given the city’s close proximity to South Orange.⁴⁹



This map was generated using Esri ArcGis. A more detailed map can be viewed by visiting this website: <http://vanderbilt.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=05cd0125a32049c9a94c6e3c0a94bede>

In the August 3, 1967 issue of *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, Maplewood resident, Blanche V. Stanford, rejected the idea that the Riot was an expression of black Newark residents' pent-up rage due to decades of inequalities. In fact, Stanford asserted that some white liberal South Orange and Maplewood residents' labeling of the riots as "racial rioting," and inability to condemn the rioters for their "blatant criminality—arson, assault, looting, murder" made these residents accomplices in "the breakdown of law and order by conferring immunity."⁵⁰ Stanford also declared that white residents of the two communities were "[g]uilty of discrimination by absolving the crimes of the rioting Negro while maintaining that the southern White be accountable for his."⁵¹ While Stanford's tone is harsh, it actually represents many white Americans' concerns about the riots of the late 1960s that occurred in many inner-city neighborhoods, and took place against the backdrop of Civil Rights Movement. Most famously, President Richard Nixon was able to capitalize on white Americans' fears in the

aftermath of the riots during the 1968 Presidential Election by asserting that he was a “law and order” presidential candidate. One of his advertisements, entitled, “The First Civil Right,” associated political protests and violence in urban areas with lawlessness and disorder, with clear racial implications. Fleeting images of burning buildings served to remind voters of the burned buildings and looted stores that were the result of the riots in approximately one hundred cities in response to Martin Luther King’s assassination.⁵² While Stanford’s response to the riot was conservative and quite possibly prejudiced, unfortunately, her response was not the only negative reaction that Maplewood and South Orange residents had to the Newark Riot.

Compared to Blanche Stanford, a South Orange resident named Irving Smith Jr., adopted a more moderate tone to express his uneasiness with race following the Riot. In the August 10, 1967 issue of *The News-Record*, Smith articulated his concern that whites aiding African-Americans did not consider the importance of “the Negro pitch[ing] in and do[ing] his share in bringing about his equality.”⁵³ Smith added that whites and the Federal Government aiding African-Americans in order to correct years of inequality would have the undesirable effect of transforming African-Americans into “a special kind of citizen to be looked after, on sort of a Big Brother basis, by the whites.”⁵⁴ Smith’s perspective is troubling because it associates actions taken to redress decades of racial discrimination with welfare. His standpoint is also problematic because it portrays African-American Newark residents as relying on government assistance that is funded by white suburban residents’ taxes. Thus, Smith’s Letter to the Editor expressed a lot of white resentment, and may have represented a section of South Orange and Maplewood’s population that wanted to distance itself from Newark’s affairs.

Even more telling than Irving Smith’s letter is South Orange resident, Dorothy G. Black’s Letter to the Editor in the August 17, 1967 issue of *The News-Record*. Black took issue with a

front-page article that the Editor had written in the August 10, 1967 issue of *The News-Record*, entitled, “Crime Rate Up in Village, Town.”⁵⁵ Black objected to “an article about crime being given “top billing,”” because the article, in the context of the Newark Riot, could create additional alarm for current residents and “very possibly...deter potential residents from coming to our community.”⁵⁶ She also feared that “the desirability of living” in South Orange “could be sufficiently injured by such scare headlines.”⁵⁷ Black concluded her response by asserting that fewer homebuyers in a community would result in an increased tax rate, “as it had in other cities where crime, riot and welfare burdens caused cities to die.”⁵⁸ It is apparent that Black’s concern in the aftermath of the Riot resulted from her desire to protect South Orange’s reputation as a desirable place to live and subsequently, its property values and tax base.

Dorothy Black’s fears were firmly rooted in demographic trends that were taking place throughout the New York metropolitan region. Between 1970 and 1980, approximately “one-third (30%) of New Jersey municipalities showed a pattern of white flight, where the black population grew but the white population declined.”⁵⁹ Newark was part of this trend, having shown a decline in its white population prior to this period. In 1960, Newark had a total white population of 265,889⁶⁰, which dramatically declined to 168,382 in 1970.⁶¹ At the same time, Newark’s black population increased from 138,035 in 1960 to 207,458 in 1970.⁶² In addition to Newark losing its white population, approximately “one-third of (35.6%)...[New Jersey] suburbs experienced white flight.”⁶³

Despite white flight in Newark and many New Jersey suburbs, South Orange actually experienced an increase in its white population from 15,487 in 1960⁶⁴ to 16,300 in 1970.⁶⁵ How was South Orange able to accomplish this feat? Community organizations, such as the Fair

Housing Council, may have helped ease white residents' fears, and subsequently help South Orange avoid a fate that was similar to many other nearby cities and suburbs.

Instead of expressing panic, some residents' initial response to the Newark Riot was to aid the victims of the violence. A few days after the riot, the Fair Housing Council's President, a white Maplewood resident, Martin Bressler, criticized South Orange and Maplewood residents for using their vantage point in suburbia to "sit back and pontificate about the evils of violence and the failure of Negro leadership," while white suburbanites' "lethargy and blindness," caused them to ignore long-standing racially discriminatory federal policies and their possible role in causing the riot.⁶⁶ Bressler encouraged Maplewood and South Orange residents to address Newark's recent misfortune by donating food, medical supplies, and blood to aid Newark residents.⁶⁷ Some residents like African-American South Orange resident Dr. Edward Verner, heeded Bressler's call, and travelled to Newark City Hospital and Martland Medical Center, to treat riot victims' gunshot wounds.⁶⁸ But aid was not all that Bressler wanted residents and the Fair Housing Council to provide in order to address the tragedy in Newark. The Council called for programs to be created, which addressed the "deep-rooted cause of the disturbances," a call for an expedited Grand Jury investigation into "the police action which precipitated the riots," and the establishment of a Civilian Police Review Board.⁶⁹ It is fair to say that in the days and months following the Newark Riot, the Fair Housing Council's goals temporarily shifted from addressing integration in South Orange and Maplewood to addressing the needs of African-American residents in the nearby community of Newark. Perhaps by aiding the victims of the Newark Riot, the Fair Housing Council temporarily abated the "threat" posed by Newark, subsequently easing some white homeowners' fears about their proximity to Newark, and prevented white flight.

Efforts to Diversify in the 1970s and 1980s

As a result of the Fair Housing Council's involvement in aiding Newark residents after the Riot, organizations in South Orange became more receptive to addressing racial matters in Newark and in their own community. The first organization to do so was the South Orange Civic Association. Under the leadership of Dr. Edward Verner, the South Orange Civic Association was founded in 1969 or 1970⁷⁰, after the Fair Housing Council disbanded in 1968 or 1969. African-American resident and South Orange Civic Association founding member Dorothy Pownes believes that the Fair Housing Council disbanded because former Council members felt that they "accomplished" what they "wanted to accomplish": that is, racial residential integration.⁷¹ Instead of continuing the Fair Housing Council's goal of open housing, the South Orange Civic Association may have been inspired by the Council's commitment to aiding riot victims in Newark in its later years and Martin Bressler's criticism of the climate in South Orange and Maplewood that largely ignored race and poverty prior to the riot. This may explain why the South Orange Civic Association focused on performing community work in Newark and re-creating South Orange as an environment that welcomed racial minorities.⁷² The South Orange Civic Association achieved these goals by building a clinic for African-American children in Newark⁷³ and creating programming meant to celebrate diversity and promote dialogue between white and black South Orange residents.⁷⁴ Although subtle, this interaction between white South Orange residents and African-American Newark residents is significant because it may have promoted understanding between the two groups, thus easing some white residents' misconceptions about Newark. White flight in South Orange may have very well been prevented as a result of this interaction. While Dorothy Pownes provides an explanation for the dissolution of the Fair Housing Council and some former Fair Housing Council members'

transition to doing cultural work under the auspices of the South Orange Civic Association, South Orange's long-term goal of racial integration was far from complete.

A 'Neighborly' Approach to Housing Integration

The South Orange Civic Association's focus on cultural work made subsequent organizations receptive to discussing race in South Orange, and compelled these organizations to address the fact that South Orange was still an overwhelmingly white community in the 1970s and 1980s.⁷⁵ Two organizations, South Orange Neighbors and Friends and Neighbors, formed in the 1970s and 1980s respectively, contended with South Orange's racially homogenous population, and their initiatives provided models for the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race to more fully integrate the community in the 1990s.

South Orange Neighbors was an interracial organization that was formed in May 1976, whose main purpose was to "stimulate pride in the village" through community activities such as block parties, an event called "Welcome to South Orange Night," and a village "Beautification Day."⁷⁶ Despite South Orange Neighbors' primary focus on instilling community pride in residents, the organization turned its attention to realtor steering⁷⁷ because residents believed that the town's 'successful integration' relative to many other communities' unsuccessful attempts to integrate was a source of pride, and wanted to ensure that South Orange maintained its reputation as a "nice, integrated town."⁷⁸

In order to preserve the community's image, South Orange Neighbors turned its attention to the housing market by inviting local realtors to one of their meetings.⁷⁹ During the meeting, members of South Orange Neighbors learned from some local realtors that South Orange's close proximity to the lower-income, predominantly African-American neighborhoods of Orange and

Newark, New Jersey deterred potential white homebuyers from residing in the community.⁸⁰ Nearly one decade after the Newark Riot, the fear of residing within a few miles of Newark still loomed prominently in some potential white homebuyers' consciousness, and prevented them from residing in South Orange.⁸¹

Because of this admission of some residents' fears, South Orange Neighbors was concerned that some realtors allowed or even exploited the memory of the Newark Riot to deter some white prospective homebuyers from residing in the community. Racial integration would be difficult to achieve if these realtors' actions went unchecked, and resulted in prospective white homebuyers eschewing South Orange. The other hindrance to creating and maintaining an integrated community was realtors steering potential African-American homebuyers into predominantly African-American sections of South Orange, if not away from South Orange altogether. Because of realtors' actions, South Orange Neighbors decided to "act as a watchdog over local real-estate companies."⁸²

It is difficult to assess how much South Orange Neighbors assuaged prospective white homeowners' fears and to what extent they prevented realtors from steering African-American homebuyers in an effort to achieve their goal of maintaining South Orange's image as a "nice, integrated town."⁸³ What is known is that South Orange Neighbors' efforts to present integration as compatible with a positive image of South Orange helped to stabilize its property values by preventing white flight and a difficult process of integration. The organization that succeeded South Orange Neighbors would take a more formalized approach to realtor steering because of its impact on "the entire community."⁸⁴

Formed sometime in the 1980s, possibly as a successor to South Orange Neighbors⁸⁵, Friends and Neighbors of South Orange & Maplewood was an interracial organization that tried

to create a “positive sense of community” in order to make South Orange “a desirable place to live.”⁸⁶ Although Friends and Neighbors was largely focused on holding a series of events to promote dialogue between white and black residents about race and racism in order to create this “positive sense of community,”⁸⁷ the organization also had a subcommittee, which tackled realtor steering and blockbusting more aggressively than South Orange Neighbors.⁸⁸

In the Friends and Neighbors “Petition to the Board of Trustees of the Township of South Orange Village,” the organization declared its intention to prevent “the destiny” of South Orange from being “shaped by greed and racism.”⁸⁹ Also in its petition, Friends and Neighbors outlined several points to combat unscrupulous real estate practices. Some of these points included creating a Fair Housing Board that could “receive individual complaints against realtors,” “work[ing] with the Board of Realtors to insure all homes are shown to all interested individuals,” and “follow[ing]-up on complaints of unfair or illegal housing practices.”⁹⁰ Additional points included instituting “an Equity Insurance Program to insure that homebuyers receive, at minimum, what was paid for their homes at time of re-sale;” “conducting tours of the area;” to ensure that potential homebuyers became familiar with the community prior to purchasing homes as a potential method of preventing realtor steering, and marketing South Orange “in a manner that attracts home seekers of all races.”⁹¹

The petition underscores Friends and Neighbors’ sophisticated efforts to intentionally integrate the community throughout the 1980s and 1990s by establishing mechanisms to punish realtors who engaged in blockbusting or steering and encouraging potential homebuyers to take community tours in order to become knowledgeable about Maplewood and South Orange prior to purchasing homes. The petition also reveals Friends and Neighbors’ dedication to combatting the effect of homeowners selling homes below market value in response to demographic change

and to creating a diverse community by emphasizing aspects of the community that appealed to all homebuyers. Considering its policies, Friends and Neighbors utilized strategies to ensure stable integration and simultaneously increase South Orange and Maplewood's property values by creating an environment that prevented the community from paying for the cost of white flight in its property values. The group's aggressive efforts to intentionally integrate South Orange were important because they may have contributed to the increase in South Orange's African-American population from 1,593 out of 15,884 or 10% of the total population in 1980⁹² to 3,064 out of 16,390, or 18.6% of the population in 1990.⁹³ Friends and Neighbors' approach to integration was also noteworthy because it provided the groundwork for the organization that would adopt its policies and ultimately do the most to intentionally integrate South Orange: the Maplewood/South Orange Racial Balance Task Force, later the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race.

How South Orange Earned its Reputation as a Diverse Community

Whatever the cause of South Orange's dramatic increase in African-American population from 10% of the total population in 1980 to 18.6% of the population in 1990, Friends and Neighbors realized that South Orange needed a more extensive approach to integration beyond its own efforts to intentionally integrate the community. Friends and Neighbors wanted South Orange to avoid the "tipping point," or the point at which some white homeowners feel uncomfortable with a certain number of African-Americans residing in the community and begin to leave the community in large numbers.⁹⁴ For that reason, Friends and Neighbors dissolved sometime in 1996, and some of its former members initially created an intergovernmental study group in October 1996.⁹⁵ This intergovernmental study group enlisted the help of Donald "Don"

DeMarco, the then Executive Director of Fund for an OPEN Society, an organization that works to create racially and ethnically integrated communities.⁹⁶ This group chose DeMarco because of his prior success with using “integration maintenance” to diversify the communities of Shaker Heights, Ohio and Oak Park, Illinois.⁹⁷ This intergovernmental group of South Orange and Maplewood residents realized that they needed to be able to “take specific actions without delays inherent as part of a governmental body,” “to be able to raise funds to support initiatives,” and “to show that a wide cross-section of citizens were embracing these initiatives.”⁹⁸ Subsequently, this group decided to incorporate as “a private, non-profit organization” called the Maplewood/South Orange Racial Balance Task Force in May 1997.⁹⁹

With Donald DeMarco’s guidance and funding from a variety of sources, including the governments of Maplewood and South Orange Township, the Racial Balance Task Force set objectives to prevent the two towns from succumbing to many integrated communities’ tendency to re-segregate.¹⁰⁰ These goals included marketing “the communities of Maplewood and South Orange, NJ in order to prevent resegregation, i.e., to attract members of an underrepresented race, whether they be white or of color, to buy homes in that portion of town in which they are underrepresented” and promoting “dialogue within the community on race and race related issues.”¹⁰¹ The Racial Balance Task Force almost immediately achieved its goal of promoting dialogue within the community with its first event, a public forum entitled, “Growing Together and Living Together in a Race Conscious Society” on April 2, 1997, which was attended by nearly three hundred residents of South Orange and Maplewood.¹⁰² The event not only continued years of dialogue on race and residence that the South Orange Civic Association, South Orange Neighbors, and Friends and Neighbors initiated years before, but also prepared residents for the changes that the Task Force hoped to bring to the two towns.¹⁰³

One of the many changes that the Racial Balance Task Force prepared the community for, that I have chosen to focus on, possibly referred to the organization's plan to vigorously market South Orange and Maplewood to potential homebuyers of different backgrounds in order to prevent resegregation.¹⁰⁴ The Task Force's Promotions/Marketing Committee expanded the marketing program that Friends and Neighbors had in place in order to attract a wider array of potential homebuyers to South Orange and Maplewood.¹⁰⁵ The Racial Balance Task Force's Promotions/Marketing Committee's marketing campaign raised awareness of South Orange and Maplewood's unique qualities in order to attract potential homebuyers to the adjacent communities. Beginning in the spring and fall of 1997, the Committee placed advertisements in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Star Ledger*, community newspapers throughout the Upper West Side of Manhattan and Brooklyn, as well as the Realtor Board's newsletter.¹⁰⁶

Noticeably absent from these advertisements was a *sole* focus on South Orange and Maplewood's diversity as a selling point to potential homebuyers. In a 1999 article entitled, "Non-Racial Marketing Externally," Donald DeMarco advised the former Racial Balance Task Force, which by that point changed its name the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race, "diversity themes do not work well when the challenge is maintaining schools and housing markets attractive to minorities and non-minorities over time."¹⁰⁷ He closed the article by stating that an emphasis on race would have to be saved "until more people who have grown up in other places know what we do."¹⁰⁸

Founding Director of the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race Barbara Heisler offers an additional rationale for why the Coalition avoided marketing diversity as the community's defining characteristic in its advertisements. During an interview, she

explained, “We never marketed diversity...in our culture, when you market diversity, white people don’t see themselves as an ingredient of diversity.”¹⁰⁹ Both Heisler and DeMarco explain not only why the Coalition emphasized qualities such as excellent schools and the community’s natural beauty to most prospective homeowners, but also why, when diversity was mentioned as merely one of the community’s positive attributes in the Coalition’s advertisements, it was specifically marketed to white homeowners who had previously resided in diverse communities, such as Park Slope, Brooklyn, New York. Whites who already valued diversity, wanted to live in suburbs, and also wanted to continue living in diverse communities were drawn to South Orange and Maplewood. As African-American South Orange resident and one of the founding members of the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race, Carol Barry-Austin explains, the Coalition placed advertisements in newspapers like *The New York Times*, because, of New York City’s racial demographics. New York City residents were more likely to value diversity and want to continue living in areas that could provide them with this same experience.¹¹⁰ For that reason one particular Coalition advertisement placed in *The New York Times* compares aspects of South Orange/Maplewood and Park Slope Brooklyn, with advertisements that say: “What do Maplewood/South Orange, N.J., and Park Slope Have in Common? Fresh mozzarella. 21 breads. Gourmet coffee. Live jazz.”¹¹¹ While this particular advertisement does not explicitly mention race, the decision to compare the South Orange/Maplewood community to Park Slope, Brooklyn when the advertisement could have compared South Orange/Maplewood to another city that may not be diverse, but has similar amenities, speaks volumes. The advertisement subtly hinted at South Orange/Maplewood’s racial diversity to potential white homebuyers who were familiar with Park Slope’s demographics, and implied that diversity was an attribute that both communities more than likely

shared. The South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race rarely mentioned diversity in its advertisements, but when it compared South Orange and Maplewood with other communities, it was certain to market diversity to white homeowners who had prior experience residing in diverse neighborhoods. Essentially, the Coalition's decision to explicitly market the community's diversity to urban whites represents a history that it shares with the Open Housing Movement of the 1960s: an appeal to liberal whites to live in a racially integrated community.

Another strategy that the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race used to intentionally integrate South Orange and Maplewood was by continuing Friends and Neighbors' legacy of providing community tours to potential homebuyers. The tours were led by the two towns' residents to offer prospective homebuyers an understanding of the different neighborhoods in the community before they met with realtors to purchase homes. Although seemingly unrelated to anti-steering measures, the tours were just that: an anti-steering measure. As Barbara Heisler points out, white *and* black realtors whose firms were located outside of South Orange and Maplewood, but were selling homes within the two towns, still engaged in racial steering in the 1990s.¹¹² While accounts of black realtors steering black residents away from predominantly white neighborhoods may seem surprising, sociologist Karyn Lacy explains black and white realtors' different reasons for steering black homebuyers. Lacy writes:

“[W]hite agents who engage in racial steering may do so to prevent black home-seekers from encroaching on stable, white communities, while African-American real estate agents who steer may do so to protect their black clients from predominantly white communities where they could encounter hostile white neighbors.”¹¹³

While South Orange and Maplewood were never hostile to African-Americans to the same degree as other predominantly white communities, this analysis provides an understanding of why some African-American real estate agents prevented African-American homebuyers from residing in predominantly white neighborhoods in South Orange/Maplewood and steered them

towards predominantly black neighborhoods in the two towns. Therefore, providing prospective residents with tours of all of the neighborhoods in the two towns prior to meeting with realtors allowed African-American homebuyers to know if realtors were only showing them homes in certain neighborhoods based on their race.

The last strategy that the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race employed to maintain the two towns' diversity was to encourage black and white residents to join the same civic organizations. The South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race's Neighborhood Association/Civic Life Committee is integral to maintaining diversity because it promotes "diversity and inclusion in the two towns by encouraging interaction among neighborhood residents and increasing participation in civic activities, including township committees."¹¹⁴ On the surface, encouraging residents' interaction through neighborhood associations does not appear to make as great of a contribution to racial integration as the Coalition's efforts to subtly market diversity to white homebuyers and combat realtor steering. Upon closer inspection, the Coalition's plan to ensure that black and white residents regularly interact through these neighborhood associations is just as important as these aforementioned initiatives because it is a method to not just create, but to also *maintain* racial integration. According to Nancy Gangier, the current Executive Director of the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race, neighborhood associations are, "a great way for people to become social and not feel...concerned when a new family moves in if they don't look like you."¹¹⁵ Constant interaction between black and white neighborhood association members over communal issues that are unrelated to race, which arise when "a street light is broken" or when "a sign is knocked down," is an excellent tool to prevent white flight.¹¹⁶ This interracial interaction forces white residents to view African-American residents as equal partners with a

similar stake in the community. In other words, placing black and white residents in constant contact over these issues causes whites to realize that they have a shared identity and shared values with black residents as suburbanites, and makes them focus less on the racial differences that may divide them.

At the heart of the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race's efforts to intentionally integrate South Orange and Maplewood, lies a vision for a diverse community, where residents of different backgrounds take pride in the community, and, because of diversity, this community has stable home values. And, for the most part, this vision has become a reality. Ten years after residents of Maplewood and South Orange formed the Racial Balance Task Force in 1996, a ten-year analysis conducted by the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race was released in 2006. The analysis reveals that "the selling price of a single-family home versus its assessed land value...appreciated 193.5% and 192.9% in Maplewood and South Orange," respectively.¹¹⁷ Based on these data, the town of South Orange, and its neighboring town of Maplewood are exemplars for creating a racially diverse community with property values that increase because of their ability to include people of different backgrounds and create tools that prevent white homeowners from selling their homes below market value and subsequently, causing property values to decline.

Conclusion

Today, South Orange regularly celebrates its diversity. The South Orange Civic Organization¹¹⁸ hosts the Annual Celebration of the Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., where it presents residents who are committed to King's vision of equality with Beloved Community Awards.¹¹⁹ Additionally, the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on

Race has programs such as Integration Through the Arts, which foster diversity and understanding through literature and theater.¹²⁰ As a result of these two and many other organizations' efforts to create a climate that is welcoming of diversity, South Orange is not only home to a population that is 60.1% white and 28.6% African-American, but also 6.1% Latino, 5.1% Asian,¹²¹ and a noticeable percentage of its residents are same-sex couples.

This welcoming climate for diversity is the result of white and African-American South Orange, New Jersey residents forging alliances to protect their community's image and property values through integration. Whites and blacks coming together to protect their property values through integration is the result of a shared suburban identity. The fact that white and black suburbanites can come together to protect property values does not mean that they have transcended race, but instead are protecting their common interests in an unusual way in response *to* race. This interracial alliance around property values is also an overlooked narrative in much of the literature on suburban history. Residents' decision to integrate their community over a nearly forty-year period subverts traditional narratives that completely exclude African-American actors from suburbs, or include African-American suburbanites, but present them as having limited to non-existent agency in response to hostility from their white neighbors. While the ability of community organizations to integrate communities is not new or surprising, given the existence of integrated communities such as Shaker Heights, Ohio, Oak Park, Illinois, and Freeport, New York, the experience of South Orange, New Jersey demonstrates how whites and African-Americans working together to improve their community can be seen as a way of adding another dimension to African-American suburbanites' experiences.

Notes

¹ Hevesi, Dennis. "Selling a Rainbow, and a Pot of Gold." *New York Times*. April 13, 2003. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/13/realestate/selling-a-rainbow-and-a-pot-of-gold.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

² "Evidence suggests that discriminatory behavior was widespread among realtors at least until 1968, when the Fair Housing Act was passed. After this date, outright refusals to rent or sell to blacks became rare, given that overt discrimination could lead to lawsuits and prosecution under the Fair Housing Law. Realtors were no longer free to reject black clients as they walked through the door...Systematic housing discrimination apparently continued into the 1980s. A series of audits carried out in the Chicago metropolitan area, for example, confirmed that realtors still employed a variety of exclusionary tactics to keep blacks out of white neighborhoods." Source: Massey, Douglas S., and Nancy A. Denton *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press), 97, 99.

³ "Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin: 2010" from New Jersey: 2010—Summary Population and Housing Characteristics. 2010 Census of Population and Housing.

⁴ Massey and Denton, 96.

⁵ In 1950, South Orange had a total population of 15,230. Of the total population, 14,537 of South Orange's residents were white, and only 682 of South Orange's residents were African-American. In 1960, South Orange had a total population of 16,175. There were 15,487 white residents and 669 African-American residents. Sources: "General Characteristics of the Population, for Standard Metropolitan Areas, Urbanized Areas, and Urban Places of 10,000 or More: 1950," and "Age by Color and Sex, for Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Urbanized Areas, and Urban Places and Selected Townships of 10,000 or More: 1960."

⁶ Rev. Terry Richardson, pastor of the First Baptist Church of South Orange, interview by Nichole Nelson. March 13, 2013.

⁷ Living near the train station was important because the railroad line allowed African-American residents to travel between their homes in South Orange and jobs in New York City and Newark.

⁸ Passing down homes from parent to child was a common practice for both African-American and white South Orange residents well into the mid to late twentieth-century.

⁹ Bonastia, Christopher. *Knocking on the Door: The Federal Government's Attempt to Desegregate the Suburbs* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press), 3, 151.

¹⁰ Jackson, Kenneth. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 11.

¹¹ During the 1930s, both the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) enacted discriminatory policies that were intended to deny African-Americans the opportunity to own their own homes. HOLC appraised many neighborhoods' risk for home loans based on their age, racial and ethnic composition, and racial homogeneity. Usually, ethnically diverse and predominantly African-American neighborhoods with older housing stock received the lowest ratings. Recently built, racially homogenous white neighborhoods usually received the highest ratings. Banks took these ratings seriously and denied many residents of older, predominantly African-American neighborhoods loans for homes. The FHA also hindered African-Americans' paths to home ownership. The FHA used explicit racial language in its *Underwriting Manual*, recommending that new homes in suburban

subdivisions contain racially restrictive covenants to prevent black occupancy. The National Association for Real Estate Boards (NAREB) subsequently adopted this logic as practice, and made it unethical for realtors to sell homes to African-Americans in all-white neighborhoods. Because many African-Americans were unable to receive loans to purchase new homes, they lived with a shortage of housing, which caused the quality of their housing in central city communities to decline. Thus, many African-Americans remained confined to deteriorating, low-income, inner city neighborhoods. Source: Jackson, 197-199.

¹² Sugrue, Thomas J. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 207.

¹³ Sugrue, *Origins*, chapters 7-9.

¹⁴ I define agency as the ability to make conscious, intentional decisions. I base my definition on the one that Chris Barker provides in *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. In *Cultural Studies*, Barker defines agency as “the socially constructed capacity to act.” It may seem obvious that all human beings have agency, or the ability to make decisions. However, many urban historians have erased African-Americans’ agency by primarily focusing on their encounters with white hostility. In depicting the complexity and diversity of their experiences beyond responding to white racism, historians can restore agency to African-American suburbanites. Source: Barker, Chris and Galasiński, Dariuz. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. (London, New Delhi, and Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Ltd., 2011), 46.

¹⁵ Wiese, Andrew. *Places of Their Own: African-American Suburbanization in the Twentieth-Century* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁸ Lacy, Karyn R. *Blue-Chip Black: Race, Class, and Status in the New Black Middle Class* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 186.

¹⁹ Lacy, 218.

²⁰ George Timson arrived in South Orange circa 1873 and suffered an accident that left him blind in both eyes. Despite his blindness, he managed to earn a living by pumping water from cisterns into tanks in the attics of houses. By 1927, Timson was a fixture on South Orange Avenue playing his accordion. His cheerful demeanor “endeared him to longtime residents,” and allowed him to become “the best-known man in town.” Source: Welk, Naoma. *Images of America: South Orange* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 121.

²¹ The Morgans were successful business owners. On July 13, 1908, the Morgans deeded land at Valley and Second Streets to the congregation that later became the First Baptist Church of South Orange. According to Rev. Richardson, the Morgans were not the only successful African-American business owners in South Orange. In fact, many African-Americans in South Orange from the late nineteenth century until the 1960s were small business owners or domestic workers. African-American businessmen, like their white counterparts, were drawn to South Orange because of the “excellent commuting conditions” that allowed them to easily travel between their homes in South Orange and workplaces in New York City. Naturally, these early residents became very invested in their community and they sent their children to the neighborhood schools and encouraged them to play on local sports teams. Sources: Kimble-Ellis, Sonya. “South Orange Churches: Buildings of Beauty.” In South Orange Patch, October 13, 2010. <http://southorange.patch.com/articles/south-orange-churches->

buildings-of-beauty. First Baptist Church of South Orange. "Our History." <http://fbcso.org/church-history.php>. Rev. Terry Richardson, pastor of the First Baptist Church of South Orange, interview by Nichole Nelson. March 13, 2013. Welk, Naoma. *Images of America: South Orange* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 28; 53; 74-76.

²² "The Right to Vote is Now Being Denied and the Denial is Defended," *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, May 10, 1962.

²³ "Realtors' minority housing steps finding favor," *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, October 17, 1963.

²⁴ Blockbusting is the practice of preying on white homeowners' fears that their neighborhoods are undergoing racial transition, and encouraging them to sell their homes below market value.

²⁵ "Right now, right here in South Orange and Maplewood," *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, December 5, 1963.

²⁶ Sugrue, Thomas J. *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008), 247.

²⁷ "Fair Housing Council backs bill amendments," *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, October 31, 1963.

²⁸ "Right now, right here in South Orange and Maplewood," *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, December 5, 1963.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ A 1959 ballot initiative resulted in Willingboro's name being changed from Willingboro to Levittown, New Jersey. The community was known as Levittown, New Jersey from 1959 until 1963. In 1963, voters cast their ballots to change the community's name back to Willingboro. The community has been known as Willingboro ever since 1963. Source: Gans, Herbert. *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 108, 115.

³² Gans, 375.

³³ "Churches to join in attack on housing bias this weekend," *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, November 14, 1963.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ "Right now, right here in South Orange and Maplewood," *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, November 21, 1963.

³⁷ Stanley Road is located in the Montrose Park Historic District. The fact that the Verners moved to this section of South Orange is significant because the Montrose Park Historic District is heavily white and affluent, especially as it is one of the older sections of South Orange.

³⁸ Gwen Verner, interview by Nichole Nelson. March 10, 2013.

³⁹ Estelle David, interview by Nichole Nelson. March 11, 2013.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Gwen Verner, interview by Nichole Nelson. March 10, 2013.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

- ⁴⁵ “Study group topic: Insulated Suburbs,” *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, December 12, 1963.
- ⁴⁶ “Affluent North Jersey,” *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, May 9, 1963.
- ⁴⁷ St. Martin, Victoria. “45 years after riots tore at heart of Newark, city recalls 5 days of mayhem.” *The Star-Ledger*, July 15, 2012.
http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2012/07/45_years_after_riots_tore_at_h.html
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ I calculated the distance between South Orange and Newark and Maplewood and Newark by entering South Orange, New Jersey, Maplewood, New Jersey, and Newark, New Jersey into Google Maps as destination points. If a person were to travel by car along County Road and Route 510 the distance between South Orange and Newark is exactly 5 miles. If a person were to travel by car along County Road and Route 510 the distance between Maplewood and Newark is 5.8 miles. Source: <https://maps.google.com/>
- ⁵⁰ “Letters to editor: Views vary on a tragedy.” *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, August 3, 1967.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Nixon, Richard M. “The First Civil Right,” *The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials, 1952-2012*. <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1968>.
- ⁵³ “Letters to the Editor: ‘Equality of Opportunity,’” *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, August 10, 1967.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ “Against crime news on Page 1,” *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, August 17, 1967.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ Harrison, Russell S. “Ecological Change Among Urban, Suburban and Rural Municipalities: Black Suburbanization and Residential Segregation in New Jersey,” (Camden: Rutgers University, Camden Forum for Policy Research and Public Service, 1982), 6.
- ⁶⁰ “Age by Color and Sex, for Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Urbanized Areas, and Urban Places and Selected Townships of 10,000 or More: 1960.”
- ⁶¹ “Race by Sex, for Areas and Places: 1970—Urbanized places of 50,000 or More.”
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ Harrison, 6.
- ⁶⁴ “Characteristics of the Population, for Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Urbanized Areas, and Urban Places and Selected Townships of 10,000 or More: 1960.”
- ⁶⁵ “Age by Race and Sex, for Places of 10,000 to 50,000: 1970.”
- ⁶⁶ Ibid.
- ⁶⁷ “Aid for riot area rushed to Newark by Fair Housing,” *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, July 20, 1967.
- ⁶⁸ Estelle David, interview by Nichole Nelson. March 11, 2013.
- ⁶⁹ “Aid for riot area rushed to Newark by Fair Housing,” *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*, July 20, 1967.
- ⁷⁰ Today, the South Orange Civic Association is known as the South Orange Civic Organization.

⁷¹ Dr. Phylis Peterman, Dorothy Pownes, and Edwina Verner, “SO Civic Organization,” interview by Nancy Heins-Glaser. SOMA TV Special Presentation, December 10, 2009, 4:00-4:30. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3KyWKSbgPUE>

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Over the years, the South Orange Civic Organization enriched South Orange and Maplewood residents lives by sponsoring events such as the African festival, health fairs, fashion shows, musicals, Kwanzaa ceremonies, essay contests, Black History month programming, and an annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s life and work. Source: South Orange Civic Organization 43rd Annual celebration of the Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. pamphlet, President’s Address from South Orange Civic Organization President Dr. Phylis J. Peterman.

⁷⁵ According to the table, “Race by Sex for Places of 10,000 to 50,000:1970,” South Orange had a total population of 16,971. Of the total population, 16,300 of South Orange’s residents were white, and 583 of South Orange’s residents were black.

According to the table, “Race by Sex for Towns/Townships 1980 Towns/Townships of 2,500 or More,” South Orange had a total population of 15,864 residents. Of the total population, 13,856 of South Orange’s residents were white, and 1,593 of South Orange’s residents were black.

⁷⁶ Lopez, Rosemary. “Happiness in South Orange,” *The New York Times* March 20, 1977.

⁷⁷ Realtor steering is the practice of showing homebuyers homes in certain neighborhoods based on their race. Source: Lacy, 107-109.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Wang, Katie. “Historic area enjoying revival.” *The Star-Ledger* June 2, 2005.

⁸² Lopez, Rosemary. “Happiness in South Orange,” *New York Times* March 20, 1977.

⁸³ I was unable to locate South Orange Neighbors’ internal documents, so I merely offer a bit of speculation on the efficacy of their anti-steering initiative based on the brief glimpse of their structure and programming that the March 20, 1977 *New York Times* article “Happiness in South Orange,” by Rosemary Lopez, provides.

⁸⁴ “Friends and Neighbors (FAN) of South Orange & Maplewood Presidents a Community Forum: Turning Fear to Friendship: Combatting Racial Steering and Building a Shared Future in Our Communities.” December 10, 1994.

⁸⁵ Friends and Neighbors is an outgrowth of South Orange Neighbors and Maplewood Friends. Members of South Orange Neighbors and Maplewood Friends and combined to form Friends and Neighbors of Maplewood & South Orange, after realizing that they had similar goals. Sources: Barbara Heisler, Founding Director of the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race interview by Nichole Nelson. February 12, 2013. The South Orange Maplewood Community Coalition on Race’s “Our History” section of its website. <http://www.twotowns.org/about/our-history/>.

⁸⁶ “Villager of the Month: FAN—Friends & Neighbors.” *The South Orange Gaslight*. March 1996.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Friends and Neighbors of South Orange & Maplewood’s “Petition to the Board of Trustees of the Township of South Orange Village.”

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² “Race by Sex for Towns/Townships 1980 Towns/Townships of 2,500 or More.”

⁹³ “Race and Hispanic Origin: 1990 Place and [In Selected States] County Subdivision [1,000 or More Persons]”

⁹⁴ Leiderman, Sally and Matthew Leiderman. “Keeping Our Eyes on the Prize: Potential Markers Towards Stable Intentional Integration.” *Integral: The Journal of Fund for an Open Society*, 48. According to the authors, “‘Tipping’ is said to occur when substantial numbers of the group formerly in the majority in a community move out (often referred to as ‘white flight’) engage in panic selling and/or avoid moving into the area.”

⁹⁵ “Racial Balance Task Force 1997 Report to the Community,” 1.

⁹⁶ Fund for an OPEN Society is an organization that was founded in 1975 by African-American civil rights activist and founder of the Congress of Racial Equality, James Farmer Jr. and Morris Milgram, a white homebuilder who specialized in creating integrated housing developments, such as Concord Park, Pennsylvania. Source: <http://www.fundopensoc.org/Farmer-and-Milgram.html>. South Orange Patch Directory: Charitable & Civic Organizations. <http://southorange.patch.com/listings/fund-for-an-open-society-2>.

⁹⁷ Ragozzino, Joe. “Racial forum draws hundreds.” *The Maplewood-South Orange News-Record*. April 10, 1997.

⁹⁸ Racial Balance Task Force’s 1997 Report to the Community,” 1.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ “Leiderman, Sally and Matthew Leiderman, 47-48. According to the authors, “...there is a body of thought that assumes that when a community reaches a certain proportion of residents of color (or more specifically, changes from majority white to majority African-American), it will inevitably move from being mostly segregated to integrated to resegregating.”

¹⁰¹ “Racial Balance Task Force’s 1997 Report to the Community,” 2.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ The forum was a legacy of these groups as well as the South Orange Community Relations Committee. Not previously mentioned, the South Orange Community Relations Committee was founded in 1980 and served as an ombudsman to “handle citizen grievances of that aren’t addressed via other channels” and “stimulate affirmative action by the village when needed” prior to the founding of the South Orange/Maplewood Coalition on Race. Source: South Orange Community Relations Committee “CRC History.” 11/2012 Draft.

¹⁰⁴ There were many ways that the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race made South Orange and Maplewood diverse towns, but for the purpose of this paper, I will only focus on three main strategies.

¹⁰⁵ “Racial Balance Task Force’s 1997 Report to the Community,” 3.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ DeMarco, Donald. “Non-Racial Marketing Externally.” South Orange Maplewood Community Coalition on Race Annual Report, 2, no. 3 (1999): 2.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

- ¹⁰⁹ Barbara Heisler, Founding Director of the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race interview by Nichole Nelson. February 12, 2013.
- ¹¹⁰ Carol Barry-Austin, Founding Member of the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race interview by Nichole Nelson. March 2, 2013.
- ¹¹¹ Hevesi, Dennis. "Selling a Rainbow, and a Pot of Gold." *New York Times*, April 13, 2003.
- ¹¹² Barbara Heisler, Founding Director of the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race interview by Nichole Nelson. February 12, 2013.
- ¹¹³ Lacy, 109.
- ¹¹⁴ The South Orange Maplewood Community Coalition on Race's "Neighborhood Association/Civic Life Committee Profile" section of its website. <http://www.twotowns.org/programs/committees/neighborhood-association/>
- ¹¹⁵ Nancy Gangier, current Executive Director of the South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race interview by Nichole Nelson. February 28, 2013.
- ¹¹⁶ White flight normally results when white homeowners believe that African-Americans 'incompatible values' make them incompatible with the neighborhood, and therefore a threat to their homeowners' property values. Source: Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).
- ¹¹⁷ South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race newsletter. Fall 2006, 1.
- ¹¹⁸ The South Orange Civic Organization was previously called the South Orange Civic Association.
- ¹¹⁹ South Orange Civic Organization 43rd Annual celebration of the Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. pamphlet.
- ¹²⁰ South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race: Integration Through the Arts. <http://www.twotowns.org/programs/integration-through-the-arts/>.
- ¹²¹ "Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin: 2010" from New Jersey: 2010—Summary Population and Housing Characteristics."