

Research Article

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The Jim Crow North: Segregation and Agency in New Jersey Beaches and Swimming Pools

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A common misconception is that Jim Crow practices in the United States were primarily a southern phenomenon. One theme that has emerged in recent scholarship is that public facilities were operated on an exclusionary basis in many northern areas until concerted campaigns in the mid-twentieth century finally gained legal equality for African Americans. New Jersey is a particularly interesting northern state to examine Jim Crow practices because of the complex history of race-relations in the state that have made it one of the most segregated places in modern America. A look at access to swimming facilities in New Jersey brings this reality into focus. For example, African Americans in Atlantic City were confined to one unmaintained section of the beach dubbed 'Chicken Bone Beach' and some lakes also had racially separate beach areas. Despite the achievement in 1949 of a constitutional amendment banning discrimination in New Jersey's public spaces, African Americans continued to be effectively barred by whites from some activities through informal practices. One strategy that whites used to continue segregationist practices was the creation of private swimming clubs, which also fostered class-based discrimination. This paper makes extensive use of primary source accounts and unpublished oral interviews to explore the acts of agency demonstrated by both individual whites and African Americans over the contentious spaces of beaches and swimming pools.

Introduction

ON A BEAUTIFUL NEW JERSEY summer day in the mid-1960s, an African American family drove to the resort community of Egg Harbor for a day at the beach. The family parked their car at the lake's parking lot and proceeded to carry their belongings to the other side of the lake, well past the main beach area that was exclusively designated for whites.¹ This was not an isolated example as segregation in pools and beaches throughout the state was commonplace. The United States was and continues to be a nation divided along racial lines. Following Reconstruction (1865-1876), white Americans systematically re-imposed a system of apartheid upon African Americans that became known as Jim Crow. Much of the United States was effectively a separated society where African Americans were socially divided from whites in schools, businesses, public accommodations, and in public transportation. Jim Crow practices became entrenched in American society with the landmark 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision that upheld segregation in public facilities provided that said facilities were offered on a separate but equal basis. A common misconception is that Jim Crow practices were primarily a southern phenomenon. The South was the focal point of much of the civil rights struggle and saw the most pervasive Jim Crow regimes. However, the North and West also experienced Jim Crow practices well into the twentieth century. Recent scholarship has revealed that public facilities were operated on an

exclusionary basis in many northern areas until concerted campaigns finally gained legal equality for African Americans. Whites then developed strategies to maintain the colour line in some social spaces. New Jersey is a particularly interesting place to examine Jim Crow practices because of the complex history of race-relations in the state. New Jersey's 566 independent municipalities have tremendous political power and developed a political culture that created one of the most racially segregated states in America.² A look at access to swimming facilities in New Jersey brings this reality into focus. This paper reviews New Jersey's history of race-relations, the state laws concerning civil rights, and Jim Crow practices in the state. I use oral history interviews, memoirs, newspaper articles, and government documents to argue that a focus on one issue, swimming facilities, reveals that both whites and African Americans engaged in legal and extralegal acts of agency to either maintain or dismantle New Jersey's version of Jim Crow.

Historiography

THERE HAS BEEN A RECENT EFFORT by historians to combat the myth of southern exceptionalism regarding Jim Crow practices and shift the attention of the civil rights narrative north. Most of this work has been done in major cities and often focusses on the mid-1960s ideological turn to black power.³ There have been some key works that explore the course of the black freedom struggle in New Jersey.⁴ Lizabeth Cohen's *A Consumer's Republic* examines racial politics and segregation in New Jersey

and Thomas Sugrue's, *Sweet Land of Liberty* is an important macro-analysis of the civil rights movement in the North that includes several New Jersey vignettes. Walter David Greason's *Suburban Erasure* explores how the processes of suburbanization in New Jersey negatively impacted the black freedom struggle, and Howard Gillette's *Camden After the Fall* examines issues such as deindustrialization, white flight, and the impact of black power politics.⁵

The concerted effort by historians to bring the civil rights narrative north should also not elide the key differences between the deep South, the North, and the West. Historian Clarence Lang has argued that the deep South and border states have different regional characteristics that shaped how the civil rights movement developed and proceeded. He writes, "Regional differences in black-white relations were stark and fundamental, and the regional differences between southern and northern black freedom struggles were equally as decisive."⁶ Sundiata Chajua and Lang add that the "the fallacy of arguing for North-South continuity is that it ignores regional variations in political economy, frequency and modes of racial violence, levels of political incorporation, and the stark differences in wages and wealth between African Americans in the South and the North."⁷ Thus, the civil rights/black power era should be viewed as a mosaic of local struggles that all have their own sets of causes, challenges, struggles, and outcomes.

While many historians have brought attention to the civil rights struggles in the northern states, some continue to identify the South alone as the key site

of racial violence, hatred, and exclusion. For example, in a 2010 anthology about 1970s radical movements, historian Scott Rutherford cited a newspaper report which "described the world of First Nations people in Kenora [Ontario] as reminiscent of the injustices endured by African American men and women in the southern United States."⁸ Historian Mary Louise Roberts also used the trope of the egalitarian North, writing in a 2013 book, "Black soldiers, especially those who hailed from the North, were often traumatized by [white southern] officers."⁹ This simplistic north-south binary can serve to exonerate and excuse northern racist practices that have been revealed by Sugrue, Cohen, Beryl Satter, Matthew Countryman, Patrick D. Jones, and others in their explorations of African American activism and northern white racism. These narratives, coupled with the enthusiastic support in many areas of the North for Alabama Governor and segregationist George C. Wallace in his 1968 and 1972 presidential campaigns, demonstrates the pervasiveness of racism and inequality in America regardless of region.¹⁰

Several historians have reconceptualised the traditional timelines associated with the civil rights movement that typically see activism begin with the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and end with the *Voting Rights Act* in 1965. Scholars such as Sugrue, Peniel Joseph, Robert O. Self, Doug McAdam, and Jacqueline Dowd Hall argue that African American activism both predates and outlasts the traditional timelines.¹¹ The experience of African American activism in New Jersey affirms this scholarly critique as

seen through the numerous examples of legal challenges and direct-action initiatives against segregation and inequality that took place both before 1954 and after 1965.

New Jersey's Nineteenth-Century Racial Laws and Jim Crow Foundations

NEW JERSEY HAS A PROBLEMATIC history of race-relations dating back to its foundation as a colony and later a state with legal slavery. In 1804, the state passed a gradual emancipation law regarding slavery, resulting in the continued enslavement of people right up to the Civil War.¹² New Jersey's revised 1844 State Constitution upheld the rights of the state's remaining slaveholders and limited the franchise to white men.¹³ Dr. John S. Rock of Salem, New Jersey, expressed his dissatisfaction with the state in 1849. He commented, "The state has never treated us as men.... She has always been an ardent supporter of the 'peculiar institution' [slavery] – the watchdog for the Southern plantations; and unless she shows her faith by her works, we will not believe in her."¹⁴ This is consistent with historian Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor's research that has documented the pervasiveness of Jim Crow practices in the North prior to the Civil War.¹⁵ During the war, President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation prompted numerous New Jersey citizens to write formal petitions seeking a prohibition against the migration of African Americans into the state. Its legislators nearly enacted a bill that was passed by the state assembly that stated, "[Any] Negro... [that] shall come into this state... and remain for ten days or more ... shall

be deemed guilty of misdemeanor, and on conviction shall be transported ... to Liberia, or some island in the West Indies."¹⁶ Some members of the state Democratic party even suggested that New Jersey formally secede from the Union and join the Confederacy.¹⁷ New Jersey also voted against Lincoln in both 1860 and 1864, only legally abolished slavery in 1866 after the thirteenth amendment was formally incorporated into the U.S. Constitution, and did not grant voting rights to African Americans until 1870.¹⁸

Prior to the Civil War, slave resisters who entered New Jersey along the established routes of the Underground Railroad often chose to stay in the state's African American population centers rather than travelling further north.¹⁸ Both Maryland and Delaware were slave states that were directly adjacent to South Jersey across Delaware Bay. Virginia had a large population of enslaved people, is located just west of these small states, and has sections more north in latitude than southern New Jersey. *Courier Post* reporter Joseph Busler claims that, "Nowhere was the Underground Railroad more active than in old West Jersey, where geography and a heavy anti-slavery Quaker presence made this area the major corridor for slaves escaping from the Southeastern slave states."²⁰ These migrants, alongside freed slaves and their descendants, gave New Jersey a diverse mosaic of African American habitation. For example, New Jersey historian Paul Schopp has identified ninety-five antebellum African American communities in the West/South Jersey area alone.²¹ New Jersey was also a popular migration destination for African Americans

during the various twentieth century waves of the Great Migration because the state had a great deal of industrial employment opportunities. This is reflected in the rapid expansion of African American industrial workers in New Jersey from a total of 8,345 in

Figure 1 Regional Map of New Jersey demonstrating its close proximity to the South. Delaware and Maryland were both states with full constitutional rights for slaveholders throughout the civil war. Virginia was the location of Richmond, the capital city of the Confederacy.



1910 to 31,871 by 1930, an increase of over 280 percent.²² In 1890, African Americans made up 3.3 per cent of New Jersey's population. The great northern and western exodus of African Americans from the South caused these figures to rise to 5.2 per cent in 1930 and 8.5 per cent by 1960.²³

Major sections of New Jersey have been described as more southern than northern in culture. Historian Giles Wright supports this view and comments that, "considering the difficulties blacks have faced in New Jersey, the state's role as a major place of settlement for southern blacks is a

paradox.”²⁴ Greason has described the state as a curious place where the culture and customs of the rural south, rural north, and urban north all intersect.²⁴ 5Sugrue summarizes New Jersey as follows:

*Scattered throughout the Garden State, particularly in its southern half – which appeared to observers to be Dixie’s northern outpost, complete with scrubby truck farms and tumbledown shacks – were rural and small-town settlements, populated by the descendants of slaves and agricultural laborers. There New Jersey more closely resembled North Carolina than New York.*²⁶

Thus, New Jersey demonstrates the importance of Lang’s contention that location and region matter when analyzing and assessing the black freedom struggle.

New Jersey’s Twentieth Century Political Culture and Continued Jim Crow Practices

NEW JERSEY’S LEGACY OF SLAVERY IN the nineteenth century, and widespread sympathy for the Confederate war effort, extended into the twentieth century with pervasive Jim Crow practices. For example, the state elected and advanced the career of Governor and then-President Woodrow Wilson whose ideology and worldview defended white supremacy as the natural order.²⁷ A key advisor to President Eisenhower named E. Frederick Morrow wrote a memoir about the racist and segregationist practices in his hometown of Hackensack, New Jersey

during the 1920s. He experienced caste exclusion from schools, swimming pools, movie theatres, and restaurants. For example, Morrow explained:

During most of my youth, the Y board was adamant against the admission of Negroes and around my senior year in high school (1925) a token evening on a very segregated basis was given to Negroes. They made the basketball court and the pool tables available to us, but not the other facilities – including the swimming pool.

Morrow also described the pain and frustration that African Americans experienced as a result of this way of life and how hope could only come from outside the community. He wrote:

*I have never recovered from the surprise of escaping the devastating futility of life in a community that offered neither opportunity nor hope to a child born black. Day in and day out, such a child is witness to the wasted adult lives about him, and if he is to receive inspiration to push onward and upward toward a consequential goal, it often must come from an outside source or stimuli.*²⁸

Morrow’s experiences were not an aberration as New Jersey, like much of the United States, was a bastion of inequality and intolerance in the 1920s.

New Jersey was a hotbed of Ku Klux Klan activity in the 1920s. There is evidence that Haddon Heights, New Jersey was the site of a large Klan rally in 1921, and that the Klan also rode in to terrorize a Catholic school picnic in the community during this time.²⁹

Lawnside, New Jersey, a near neighbour to Haddon Heights and one of at least ten self-governing African American communities in the United States was also targeted.³⁰ Isaac Rutledge (I.R.) Bryant, a long-time civic leader in Lawnside recalled, “I was just a little boy, but I remember being scared as hell watching them [the KKK] burn a cross on a lawn, right where the barbershop is now on Warwick Road.”³¹ When Lawnside became incorporated as a borough in 1926, a white neighbourhood known as Woodcrest was included within its territory. These homeowners unsuccessfully tried to secede from Lawnside before moving out of the community. It is alleged that the Woodcrest residents on several occasions burned crosses in Lawnside.³² The presence of the Klan in these Camden County communities was not an aberration as New Jersey was the third strongest Klan supportive state in the northeast with 60,000 members at its apex in the 1920s. An example of the Klan’s popularity is the numerous festivities held in Long Branch, New Jersey that attracted national Klan leaders, participants from all over the state, and thousands of spectators and participants.³³ The Federal government reflected this nativist agenda by passing the *National Origins Act* of 1924, which severely curtailed immigration from Asian countries and put significant restrictions on ethnic whites from Eastern and Southern Europe.

Wright argues that South Jersey, with its Quaker presence, was less hostile toward African American habitation and migration until the late nineteenth century. He contends that the Quaker influence waned at this time

and the region began to more resemble the attitudes prevalent in Philadelphia, Maryland, and Delaware.³⁴ While New Jersey is nominally in the North, I assert that the state, especially its southern region, must be viewed as a border state that has its own unique set of local conditions.

New Jersey’s 566 independent municipalities have tremendous political power. Each New Jersey municipality has its own police force, town government, fire department, and school board.³⁵ The state decreed in 1894, “that each city, borough and incorporated town shall be a school district, separate and distinct from the township school district.” It is this law that explains why there are several school districts in the state with less than 1000 students and in some cases only one elementary school. Thus, alongside residential segregation came educational segregation. The key exclusionary weapon that municipalities were also given in New Jersey was unquestioned control over zoning, a power that was defended by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1926 and sanctioned by the New Jersey State Supreme Court in 1927.³⁶ This political structure is what contributed to New Jersey’s pervasive pattern of residential segregation.

Municipalities throughout New Jersey enacted restrictive zoning laws that prevented the construction of multi-unit dwellings such as duplexes and apartment buildings.³⁷ Lot size minimums were also designed to price out ‘undesirable’ migrants.³⁸ Sugrue demonstrates that restrictive and discriminatory zoning was commonplace in other areas of the North.³⁹ Cohen documented numerous

North Jersey communities that practiced discriminatory zoning.⁴⁰ In the South Jersey community of Haddon Heights, over 150 residents attended a borough council meeting to object to a proposed apartment building on Prospect Ridge Boulevard. A petition to oppose the building's construction collected 128 signatures and stated that "the proposed apartments would result in the influx of transient residents and would decrease the value of properties."⁴¹ The *Courier Post* also has numerous articles about various South Jersey communities that enacted restrictive zoning ordinances.⁴² The most egregious example I located was in Medford, New Jersey, where a section of the town was zoned for ten-acre lots.⁴³

New Jersey's peculiar political culture of home rule and strong municipalities fostered the conditions for pervasive segregation. Greason explains that states with small cities and expansive farming areas such as New Jersey, Delaware, and Connecticut saw their rural hinterland rapidly transformed into residential suburbs between 1950 and 2000.⁴⁴ Many of New Jersey's small African American communities that were established in the nineteenth century became absorbed into white dominated municipalities because they did not gain political autonomy. For example, Timbuctoo was an established African American settlement in the early nineteenth century supported in part by an adjacent Quaker community (Mount Holly). After succumbing to suburban sprawl and experiencing out-migration in the twentieth century, the only remaining above-ground evidence of African American habitation is a cemetery.⁴⁵ In other cases, such as

in Mount Laurel, African American neighbourhoods were purposefully eradicated due to power imbalances with white municipal officials who sought to redevelop rural lands for suburban development.⁴⁶ The suburbanization of New Jersey is illustrated by the stark decrease in its number of farms from 23,838 in 1950 to just 8,400 in 1971. Farmland acreage also decreased from half of the total state land in 1950 to one-fifth of the total in 1971.⁴⁷

New Jersey slowly transformed into one of the more legally progressive states on racial matters despite its conservative political culture and widespread support for slavery in the nineteenth century. The *New Jersey School Law of 1881* prohibited the exclusion of any child on the basis of religion, nationality, or colour.⁴⁸ In 1883, this law was upheld in a state Supreme Court case wherein the Reverend Jeremiah H. Pierce won the right to enroll his children in a whites-only school in Burlington City. In 1884, New Jersey continued along the track of the Pierce decision, passing *An Act to Protect all Citizens in Their Civil and Legal Rights*. The state's 1884 civil rights act was a watershed piece of legislation that barred segregation in public schools and public accommodations and carried substantial penalties with restitution payable to the aggrieved party of up to \$500, fines payable to the state up to \$1000, and a maximum one-year jail term.⁴⁹ The Act was applied in *Miller v. Stampul* (1912) when the State Supreme Court ordered Christopher Stampul, a Paterson, New Jersey theatre owner to pay \$500 in restitution for increasing the admission price from five to twenty-five cents for an African American patron named Minerva

Miller for the purposes of excluding her from the theatre.⁵⁰ This was one of the few times the 1884 *Civil Rights Act* was successfully applied, pointing to the continuation of widespread civil rights abuses and violations for several decades to follow.⁵¹ As the battle for civil rights and integration gathered pace in the ensuing decades of the twentieth century, swimming pools and beaches would become a hotly contested space.

Segregationist Practices Involving Swimming Facilities in Other American Regions

BY THE 1930S, INTERRACIAL swimming at pools and beaches became a major social issue in American society. Historian Jeff Wiltse explains that interracial swimming was not an issue when public pools were operated as homosocial places where the sexes were divided. In the 1920s and 1930s, pools and beaches were more widely integrated along gender lines and became a key social space where flirting, touching, physical viewing, the demonstration of male masculinity, and the arrangement of dates were commonplace. The water thus became a place of major anxiety for many Americans because of the potential for interracial sexual contact. The presence of African American men also posed a challenge to some white Americans' perceived sense of their own masculinity.⁵² Many white Americans also ignorantly feared African Americans as vectors of communicable diseases. For example, as late as 1963, an Atlanta segregationist presented municipal pool-goers with handouts stating, "The negro race is a reservoir of

venereal infection."⁵³ White Americans would fight against the integration of pools and beaches with both violence and cunning acts of legal subterfuge.

Communities throughout the United States discriminated against African Americans and other people of colour by operating segregated or exclusionary beaches and swimming pools. A 1960 *New York Times* article chronicled the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) plan to confront the specter of thousands of miles of segregated American coastline from Cape May, New Jersey to Brownsville, Texas.⁵⁴ In the South, not only beaches, but also municipal pools and private swim clubs, were operated on a segregated basis until the courts finally intervened. For example, in Atlanta, desegregation of municipal pools in the summers of 1962 and 1963 happened without violence as many whites retreated to private clubs or built backyard pools. This led to widespread discontent amongst the city's working-class whites who could not afford these alternatives. Many of these disenfranchised citizens funneled their anger into a tax revolt movement and later contributed to the gubernatorial election of Lester Maddux, a local Atlanta business owner and staunch segregationist.⁵⁵

In northern cities, tensions over access to swimming facilities were a powder keg that often led to physical confrontation. For example, integration of Pittsburgh's municipal pools was a violent and turbulent process that began in 1931 and did not abate until the 1960s.⁵⁶ Most of the violent confrontations in Pittsburgh over pools were launched by whites who

attacked African Americans who tried to integrate the city's pools. In Chicago, African Americans were also attacked when they tried to use pools that traditionally had been the domain of whites. The lack of swimming facilities available for use by African Americans in Chicago contributed to what became known as "the fire hydrant riot." In 1966, three days of violence and upheaval followed after a police clash with African Americans who had opened up a city fire hydrant for relief on a particularly hot day. At the urging of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., city officials hastily constructed new swimming pools, many of which were in neighbourhoods with a large African American demographic. The Federal government also heeded the warning and earmarked funds for the construction of swimming pools in inner city areas in the hopes of stemming the violence associated with the hundreds of urban rebellions in cities throughout the country during the mid-to-late 1960s.⁵⁷

New Jersey Interwar Swimming Pool Case Studies

A 1932 SOCIOLOGICAL REPORT issued by the government of New Jersey demonstrated the near-universal segregation of swimming facilities and beaches in the state. The report explained that the prevailing attitude in most New Jersey communities and private agencies, such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), was one of "consistent opposition" to the integrated use of swimming pools. This included the city of Camden fully banning African

Americans from its public pools and the shore communities of Asbury Park, Cape May, and Atlantic City only permitting African Americans the use of the beach in special sections. Asbury Park city officials went so far as to restrict African Americans from using the boardwalk outside of their delineated beach space. The report found that segregation was increasing despite the state's civil rights laws and lamented that "the Negro group has noted tendencies toward an increasing social separation in housing, theatres, restaurants, hotels, swimming pools, beaches and other public accommodations."⁵⁸ Two incidents in Elizabeth and Trenton further demonstrate the segregated nature of the state's pools at this time.

Elizabeth, New Jersey immediately had racial issues when it opened its first city pool in 1930. A few days after the pool opened, an African American teen was arrested on bogus charges, and two more were forcibly denied entry to the pool by white patrons in an action overstatedly reported as a 1000 person "riot" by Bridgewater, New Jersey's *Courier-News*.⁵⁹ These actions deterred the city's African American inhabitants from using the pool until 1938 when several courageous individuals began actively integrating the pool. The result once again was white backlash in the form of renewed physical attacks, a vitriolic letter writing campaign, and a removal of pool patronage. The subsequent drop in attendance led the city to temporarily close the pool in the hopes that racial tensions would abate after a cooling off period. After reopening three weeks later, violence reached new levels as whites and African Americans clashed for thirteen

straight days before the pool was closed again.⁶⁰ The violence included a rock fight and a barrage of tomatoes thrown at African American patrons.⁶¹ City officials decided to absolve themselves of legal culpability by allowing African Americans entry to the pool while avoiding recrimination from white inhabitants in exchange for allowing free reign to their vigilante reprisals. The 1939 swimming season saw African Americans avoid the pool and regular attendance numbers returned because of renewed white patronage.⁶²

In 1933, an African American man named Chester W. Patterson filed suit against Trenton High School because of the segregated nature of his son's school swimming classes. Backed by the *Plessy v. Ferguson* separate but equal clause, school administrators argued that the child's rights were not being infringed because African American children were given equal use of the swimming pool during separated classes. The court's legal address stated, "to say to a lad 'you may study with your classmates; you may attend gymnasium with them, but you may not have swimming with them because of your color' is unlawful discrimination."⁶³ The legal rationale used in this case advanced the same logic as, and can be viewed as a forerunner to, the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision in 1954 that overruled segregation in education and was a key step in reversing the social dislocation caused by *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The significance of the Patterson suit is also demonstrated by Wiltse's assertion that "racial exclusion at municipal pools went almost unchallenged in the courts prior to the 1940s."⁶⁴ *Brown v. Board of*

Education also distinguished between *de facto* (non-intentional) and *de jure* (legal) segregation. Many Americans falsely attributed *de jure* segregationist practices to the South and excused northern segregation as an accidental happenstance based on residential housing patterns and other economic and social vagaries. The Patterson case is an example of intentional and unabashed *de jure* segregation wherein the school defended its policies on legal grounds.

New Jersey Post-Second World War Civil Rights Challenges

LEGAL PROTECTION FOR AFRICAN American equality and civil rights was achieved by the 1950s due to the concerted efforts of African American activists in conjunction with New Jersey lawmakers and enforcement officers.⁶⁵ Wright credits African American agency and the efforts of white allies for the progressive turn in New Jersey politics.⁶⁶ New Jersey, however, was still beholden to the 1866 and 1964 federal *Civil Rights Acts* that only forbade discrimination in public accommodations and had no effect on discrimination in private clubs.⁶⁷ With this legal power, resistance to integration continued despite the achievement of legal equality for African Americans in New Jersey.⁶⁸

In 1950, a young Martin Luther King Jr. experienced discrimination first hand in the South Jersey area when his party was refused service at a restaurant in Maple Shade, New Jersey. King and some fellow African American students, who were living in New Jersey while studying at Pennsylvania's

Crozier Theological Seminary, refused to leave the restaurant, citing New Jersey's antidiscrimination laws. They were finally chased away by the owner who brandished a gun and fired a warning shot in the parking lot.⁶⁹ New Jersey continued to experience notable instances of racist practices directed against African Americans in the post-Second World War period.

On Friday, June 11, 1948, a cross was burned on the lawn of a residence in Wall Township, New Jersey. LeRoy Hutson, a thirty-year-old African American man and his family moved into the home on June 10. The day of the cross burning, Hutson received several anonymous phone calls asking him how long he intended to stay in the heretofore all-white neighbourhood. A woman who was interviewed regarding the cross burning explained, "The Klan was formed to protect white southern womanhood from rape. Besides, when Negroes move in property values deteriorate."⁷⁰ The officer investigating the cross burning stated that the motive behind the burning was related to property value concerns with one man indicating that he planned to sell his home as soon as possible. There was also a cross burning in Wall Township in 1946, furthering the community's legacy of intolerance after serving as the headquarters of the state Ku Klux Klan in 1928. Hutson immediately sought assistance from other African American men at the nearby Asbury Park Serviceman's Club. Hutson and members of the club armed themselves and were ready to deter any aggressive action directed at the home. He was adamant that he would not be intimidated stating, "I don't see any

reason why I should move. I mind my own business and want to be left alone like anyone else. I haven't broken no laws." Members of the Serviceman's Club remarked, "The Klan could scare people 20 years ago but this is 1948. We've been to war and we're not afraid to fight for our rights."⁷¹ Wiltse asserts that many African American veterans were emboldened by their experiences fighting against tyranny in the war to resist efforts to circumscribe their rights and freedoms once they returned home.⁷² Cross burnings and Klan-related activities reveal extralegal methods that some whites employed to maintain segregation in New Jersey.⁷³

Activists sought to raise awareness of continued post-Second World War violations of New Jersey's civil rights legislation. In 1948, a group submitted a report to the state government entitled *Civil Liberties in New Jersey* that argued: "There are still frequent violations.... Negroes, for example, can never be sure when they leave the vicinity of their homes what conditions they will encounter in unfamiliar areas."⁷⁴ In Montclair, New Jersey, interracial members of an organization named American Youth for Democracy took the Montclair Skating Club to court for discriminatory practices. The Club was fined \$200 for refusing admission to two African American women.⁷⁵ In the field of education, concerted efforts by African American community organizers and interracial allies removed the last vestiges of school segregation in the state by the 1960s.⁷⁶

Segregation and Agency in New Jersey Pools and Beaches

IN THE 1950S AND 1960S, MILLIONS of white Americans left inner cities and migrated to newly built homes in sprawling segregated suburbs. The maintenance of segregation in these places could also be protected by the establishment of private clubs for leisure and entertainment. In a 1958 article, the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* extolled the virtues of joining a swim club in a newly formed suburban community, describing the clubs as:

*A means of becoming acquainted with neighbors, forming friendships among children and uniting a community in a common purpose. The community swim pool is an investment not only in money but in neighborhood co-operation, enjoyment and friendliness.*⁷⁷

A 1964 article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* about private swim clubs in the area explained that while few clubs specifically have bylaws and policies excluding African Americans, most were not integrated.⁷⁸ In New Jersey, the proliferation of private clubs with segregationist policies was also rampant.

A New Jersey State Civil Rights Commission acknowledged in 1958 that public swimming pools regularly converted into private clubs to avoid integration. A statistical survey was conducted that found that African Americans were being excluded through various devices from at least one-third of the inland swimming facilities in the state. The Commission also found that only 19 per cent of swimming facilities surveyed were in fact legitimate private

clubs and 36 per cent of swimming facilities were masquerading with signage as private clubs. Three swim club managers audaciously stated to Commission officials that their pool was operated as a public accommodation unless “the public skin is colored.”⁷⁹ By 1964, the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights saw fit to distribute educational and awareness pamphlets to 300 country clubs and swimming clubs in the hopes of deterring segregationist practices. The pamphlets included information on what constituted a private club and urged the clubs not to embarrass the state by denying use of their facilities to international travelers who may be in the area to attend the 1964 World’s Fair in New York City or New Jersey’s tercentenary celebrations.⁸⁰ Thus, white businessmen and civic leaders in New Jersey commonly declared pools, as well as barbershops, beauty parlours, and other spaces, to be private clubs to avoid integration.

Some public swimming pool managers in New Jersey avoided the legal responsibility to integrate by transforming their pools into private clubs. The Sun & Splash swimming pool in New Brunswick, New Jersey was ordered by New Jersey’s Education Commission and Division Against Discrimination to desegregate. Edgar L. Reed, the General Manager of Sun & Splash, signed a consent order requiring the club to cease barring African Americans. He then dissolved the club and reincorporated as the Suburbia Swim Club, Inc. Reed became the new President of Suburbia Swim Club with his wife Lois L. Reed serving as the ‘new’ club treasurer.⁸¹ Judge Dubois S. Thompson denied the state’s

application for an injunction forcing Suburbia to drop its membership requirement pending a full hearing. Thompson stated, “Members have paid their dues on the theory that they could swim with whom they liked, to wit their fellow members.”⁸² In a Letter to the Editor written four years later, Mr. Jack Wysoker confirmed the ongoing segregationist practices at the club and stated, “Aren’t Negro Americans entitled to a little democracy — that is a nearby pool to swim in when it’s hot, just as any other human being?”⁸³ The segregationist tactic of privatization was finally struck down in 1973 by the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Tillman v. Wheaton Haven Recreation Association* where the Court unanimously ruled against a private Maryland swim club for discrimination against African American applicants.⁸⁴ A look at the Haddon Glen Swim Club in Haddon Heights reveals how private swim clubs also discriminated upon class as well as racial lines.

Haddon Heights has been white and middle class for much of its history. In 1961, the community’s powerbrokers built a swimming pool that was immediately operated as a private club with no public access. Several members of the club in the 1960s and 1970s related to me how there were no African American members or guests of the club during that period. One recalled a special weekend where exchange students from the American Field Service including youth from Turkey and Panama were welcomed at the club.⁸⁵ Thus, people of colour who were not of African ancestry did swim at Haddon Glen. In a 2016 interview, one member who grew up and still resides in

Haddon Heights explained that Haddon Glen officials conducted interviews at the homes of prospective members. He shared that a prominent civic leader in the community came to his home and interviewed his parents to evaluate their membership application.⁸⁶ I also interviewed a former club official’s son who related that a classmate of theirs could not join him at the club because his friend’s family was not approved for membership because they were from the nearby community of Barrington and deemed “blue collar” and “low class.”⁸⁷ This same interviewee participated in the club’s competitive swim team and cannot recall ever seeing an African American at any of the other private pools in other communities where he competed. Thus, some individual whites were able to circumvent state laws and engage in both racist and classist discrimination. As Wiltse explains, the suburban United States was transformed into a space where culture, class, and race became monotonized and cleansed of elements deemed undesirable by elitist middle-class whites.⁸⁸

Atlantic City had a segregated beach that became known as ‘Chicken Bone Beach.’ Most of the resort city’s beaches were reserved for whites except one unmaintained section between Kentucky and Missouri Avenues. Despite its segregated status, the beach became a prime destination for African Americans to visit. Celebrities such as musicians Lena Horne, Sara Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie, and Sammy Davis Jr. and athletes such as Joe Louis, Sugar Ray Robinson, Larry Doby, and Jackie Robinson were known to frequent the beach. In 1956, Martin Luther King Jr. was even photographed enjoying a

relaxing afternoon at ‘Chicken Bone.’ Thus, this beach acquired the reputation as a location to see famous African Americans and a key spot for fun and entertainment. Musicians were known to play their instruments at the beach alongside family picnics and individuals tanning and playing in the sun and surf.⁸⁹

While ‘Chicken Bone Beach’ was a well-known destination for African Americans, it did not receive much attention in the mainstream media until decades after Atlantic City’s beaches were desegregated.⁹⁰ This points to the pervasiveness of segregation in New Jersey and how un-newsworthy the existence of a delineated space for African Americans in Atlantic City was



Figure 2 Martin Luther King Jr. (left) at ‘Chicken Bone’ Beach in a rare photograph where he is casually dressed. John W. Mosley, “Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Chicken Bone Beach, 1956,” Temple University, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, John W. Mosley Photograph Collection, BPA001X031956000002.

at the time. Regardless, ‘Chicken Bone’ Beach reveals that African Americans were able to create a vibrant social and cultural space despite segregationist restrictions.



Figure 3 Joe Louis (seated centre on left) at ‘Chicken Bone’ Beach.

John W. Mosley, “Joe Louis on Chicken Bone Beach in Atlantic City, New Jersey, 1952,” Temple University, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, John W. Mosley Photograph Collection, BPA001X0319520000003.



Figure 4 Sammy Davis Jr. at ‘Chicken Bone’ Beach. “John W. Mosley, Sammy Davis, Jr. on Chicken Bone Beach, 1954,” Temple University, Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, John W. Mosley Photograph Collection, BPA001X0319540800005.

The predominately African American community of Lawnside was surrounded by many historically white communities, making access to swimming facilities an issue for residents of the community. At least two African Americans who grew up in Lawnside fondly remember trips to ‘Chicken Bone’ Beach. This further demonstrates the importance of the site for African Americans in the South Jersey area. Just steps across the municipal borderline, between Lawnside and the wealthy and aristocratic community of Haddonfield, lies the Tavistock Hills Swim Club.⁹¹ This private club restricted African Americans from membership well into the 1970s and perhaps beyond. However, African Americans did frequent this club’s pool quite often. In a conversation at the 2016 Ralph G. Jordan Memorial Fundraiser in Lawnside, a long-time resident of the community related how he and several friends would often hop the fence at night to go for a summer swim. When the police were called, the children were fortunately sent home without incident. Another issue is a belief held by some African Americans in Lawnside that the historically white community of Haddon Heights operated a segregated swimming pool inside Haddon Heights High School. African American students have attended the school as a significant minority of the student body since at least 1916 because Lawnside was too small of a community to support its own high school. I studied the architectural plans and looked through decades of yearbooks and found that there was never a pool in the building. The significance of this rumour is not its falsehood, but the deep feelings of

distrust and historic oppression that some African Americans in Lawnside feel toward the historical legacy of Haddon Heights High School.⁹²

Residents from Lawnside also frequented a large public pool in the nearby community of Haddonfield called the Mountwell Pool. This pool

small African American population. Wiltse explains that the process of public pool closure and private pool rebirth was symptomatic of a common segregationist pattern throughout the United States.⁹⁶



attracted African Americans from as far away as Philadelphia before it was closed in 1973.⁹³ The pool became primarily the domain of African Americans as many white residents of the area chose to stay away.⁹⁴ Many white families in Haddonfield began sending their children to the private Wedgewood Swim Club which was opened in 1964.⁹⁵ The official reason for the closure of the pool was structural defects. However, some Lawnside residents have expressed to me that the pool was closed because of its popularity amongst African Americans in a community with a very

Figure 5 Children from Lawnside at Mountwell Pool in the 1960s. Photo Courtesy of Linda Shockley, Lawnside Historical Society President

Interracial civil rights organizations and African American organizational leaders worked to overturn segregation in New Jersey swimming facilities and beaches. The first key post-Second World War attempt to integrate a New Jersey swimming facility took place at Fort Lee's Palisades Amusement Park. This sprawling resort-type park actively discriminated against African

Americans, an action that gained the attention of a New York chapter of the interracial Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). CORE members began picketing and handing out informational pamphlets at both the park entrance and the 125th Street ferry terminal in New York City.⁹⁷ Park authorities, in conjunction with local police forces, responded to the actions with a series of arrests in both 1947 and 1948.⁹⁸ Two African American protestors, Melba Valle and Harold O. Cox, both alleged

onto a bus.¹⁰⁰ The result was a series of trials, retrials, and appeals that finally concluded in 1953 when a Federal jury sided with pool authorities and refused to award damages to Ms. Valle and Mr. Cox.¹⁰¹ During the trials, the Pool attorneys also attempted to discredit Mr. Scott as a witness by accusing him of being a communist, a common tactic during the early Cold War hysteria and a major impediment at this time to activism of any kind including the drive for civil rights.¹⁰²



they were refused entry by park staff because of their colour and filed suit against the park.⁹⁹ Another African American protester, Samuel Scott, claimed that he was beaten with a blackjack club by Park staff and thrown

Figure 6 CORE protest in the summer of 1947 outside the entrance of the Palisades Amusement Park. Photo courtesy of the Fort Lee Historical Society, Fort Lee, New Jersey

The Bergen County chapter of CORE and members of several chapters of the NAACP were active in integrating pools and resorts in the North Jersey area in 1963. Shirley Lacy, the Bergen County Chairman for CORE, was one of the most active leaders and frequently was a spokesperson to the press. CORE's tactic was private negotiations followed by public demonstrations in the form of pickets at the entrances of clubs and resorts which refused full integration. The most recalcitrant of the clubs selected by CORE for integration was the May Woods Swim Club. This club, with land in both Old Tappan, New Jersey, and Tappan, New York, was owned by a woman named May Furth. Furth resisted integration after over a year of negotiations and two weeks of CORE pickets. She allegedly threatened the protestors with arrest for trespass, phoned the police, and tried to order picketers off club property. Furth only relented to full integration on a first come, first served basis after Lacy declared that CORE would stage a wade-in demonstration.¹⁰³ The first African American member of May Woods was William Scott, the President of the Rock Valley, New York NAACP.¹⁰⁴ In a public statement issued during picketing at New Jersey's Fair Lawn Beach Club, Lacy declared:

After repeated evidence of discrimination at the Fair Lawn Club for two seasons, and futile attempts to end this situation by quiet negotiation, we are no longer patient.... We want an end to this now.... We are asking those who oppose discrimination, students as well as adults, to join

*our demonstrations.... This is a serious problem in Bergen County. The majority of public swimming places are closed to Negroes. Many Negro families travel as far as Bear Mountain for a place to swim. Something must be done to open swimming facilities to all regardless of color.*¹⁰⁵

In 1963, CORE and NAACP activists integrated at least eleven pools and swimming clubs in Bergen County, New Jersey.¹⁰⁶

African American religious leaders were also at the forefront of some of the key battles in swimming pool integration in New Jersey. In 1948, the YMCA Board of Directors in New Brunswick, New Jersey came under fire for refusing to allow African American students to use the swimming pool during a partnership with a city high school. The protest was officially filed by Rev. Solomon Hill.¹⁰⁷ Plainfield, New Jersey, a mixed-race suburb outside of New York City also restricted African Americans from its public swimming facilities.¹⁰⁸ In 1968, Richard L. Byrnes, representing the Plainfield Area Christian Layman's Association, wrote a Letter to the Editor arguing for a centralized location for a new community pool. He declared: "We believe all citizens of Plainfield must be given the opportunity to share in only the best recreation facilities. Segregation of these facilities for any reason cannot be tolerated."¹⁰⁹ Hill's and Byrnes' leadership demonstrates the importance of African American religious figures to community activism. There were thus a range of African American actors who fought against discrimination in New Jersey's swimming facilities.

Conclusion

NEW JERSEY WAS A NORTHERN state with entrenched Jim Crow practices that continued in many areas until the 1970s. The state experienced a flourishing Ku Klux Klan revival in the 1920s, periodic cross burnings throughout the twentieth century, and had widespread discrimination in public businesses such as motels, beauty parlours, bowling alleys, restaurants, and swimming facilities. After the Second World War, New Jersey became a leader in civil rights legislation and reform. Nevertheless, laws were frequently circumvented to maintain the colour line. For example, pools and beaches became contentious spaces where some whites fought to continue segregationist practices. One method was to operate pre-existing or newly constructed swimming pools as private clubs that were immune to State laws banning discrimination in public spaces. Another technique involved the simple

closure of municipal swimming pools. Privatization also afforded middle-class whites a tool to exclude working class whites from social spaces. African American individuals, religious leaders, and civil rights organizations fought for access to swimming facilities in various areas of the state, using the courts and direct-action techniques. In the face of segregation, African Americans created a thriving place of culture and identity at Atlantic City's segregated beach area known as 'Chicken Bone' Beach. On an individual level, African Americans frequented the few public pools that were open to their patronage and also used extralegal means to access segregated swim clubs at night. An analysis of segregation and inequality in New Jersey demonstrates that Jim Crow practices occurred throughout the United States and should not be viewed as part of a pattern of southern exceptionalism. ♦

ENDNOTES

¹ Anonymous, interview by Jason Romisher, August 2, 2016.

² Both historians Thomas Sugrue and Lizabeth Cohen have indicated that New Jersey's schools are in the top five in the nation in the degree of segregation. Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008), xix; Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 248; and Barbara G. Salmore & Stephen A. Salmore, *New Jersey Politics and Government: Suburban Politics Comes of Age* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 201.

³ For example, Sugrue explores racial issues and segregation in Detroit during deindustrialization and the black freedom struggle. Several historians including J. Anthony Lukas and Jeanne Theoharis have examined the racial issues that arose over court-ordered busing to desegregate Boston's public schools in the 1970s. Matthew Countryman looked at African American activism and white retrenchment in Philadelphia during the 1960s and 1970s. Other key works by Todd M. Michney (Cleveland), Patrick D. Jones (Milwaukee),

Beryl Satter (Chicago), and others have explored issues of inequality and activism in the North during the black freedom struggle. Robert O. Self (Oakland), Anne Valk (Washington D.C.), Komozi Woodard, Peniel Joseph, and others have examined the impact of black power on the direction of the civil rights movement. Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996); J. Anthony Lukas, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985); Jeanne Theoharis, “They Told Us Our Kids Were Stupid: Ruth Batson and the Educational Movement in Boston,” in *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America*, eds. Jeanne Theoharis, Komozi Woodard, and Charles M. Payne (New York: New York University Press, 2005); Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Todd M. Michney, *Surrogate Suburbs: Black Upward Mobility and Neighborhood Change in Cleveland, 1900-1980* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: How the Struggle Over Race and Real Estate Transformed Chicago and Urban America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Anne M. Valk, *Radical Sisters: Second-Wave Feminism and Black Liberation in Washington, D.C.* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Komozi Woodard, *A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and Peniel E. Joseph, ed. *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil-Rights-Black Power Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

⁴ In 1986, Clayborne Carson proposed a new title, “black freedom struggle,” to define the African American movement for racial equality. Carson’s term has been accepted and used by many scholars to the present. Clayborne Carson, “Civil Rights Reform and the Black Freedom Struggle,” in *The Civil Rights Movement in America*, ed. Charles W. Eagles. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1986), 27.

⁵ Walter David Greason, *Suburban Erasure: How the Suburbs Ended the Civil Rights Movement in New Jersey* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013); and Howard Gillette, Jr. *Camden After the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Post-Industrial City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

⁶ Clarence Lang, “Locating the Civil Rights Movement: An Essay on the Deep South, Midwest, and Border South in Black Freedom Studies,” *Journal of Social History* 47, no. 2 (2013): 373.

⁷ Sundiata Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, “The “Long Movement” as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies,” *The Journal of African American History* 92, no. 2 (Spring, 2007): 281.

⁸ Scott Rutherford, “Canada’s Other Red Scare: The Anicinabe Park Occupation and Indigenous Decolonization,” in: *The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism*, ed. Dan Berger (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 78.

⁹ Mary Louise Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American GI in World War II and France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 200.

¹⁰ For information about Wallace’s support in the North during his 1968 Presidential campaign see: Lewis Chester, Godfrey Hodgson, and Bruce Page, *An American Melodrama:*

The Presidential Campaign of 1968 (New York: The Viking Press, 1969); Samuel Lubell, *The Hidden Crisis in American Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1970); Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President: 1968* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1969); Steven V. Roberts, "Wallace Backers Say Why They Are: At Rally, They Give Voice to Their Dissatisfactions," *The New York Times*, Oct. 25, 1968, 32; and Sydney H. Schamberg, "For Most of the Policemen in Syracuse, Wallace Will Be the Man," *The New York Times*, Nov. 3, 1968, 78.

¹¹ Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Robert O. Self, "The Black Panther Party and the Long Civil Rights Era," in *In Search of the Black Panther Party*, eds. Jama Lazerow and Yohura Williams (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Doug McAdam, *Political Processes and the Development of Black Insurgency 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Peniel E. Joseph, "Community Organizing, Grassroots Politics, and Neighborhood Rebels: Local Struggles for Black Power in America," in *Neighborhood Rebels: Black Power at the Local Level*, ed. Peniel E. Joseph (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History*, 91, no. 4 (Mar. 2005): 1234.

¹² Clement Alexander Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey* (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1980), 77. Price stated that there were still eighteen slaves in New Jersey in 1860 on the eve of the Civil War.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁴ Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History* (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, Department of State, 1988), 13.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor, *Colored Travelers: Mobility and the Fight for Citizenship Before the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

¹⁶ Margo Downing and Martine Robinson, "Blacks: A Long, Hard Row to Achievement and Pride," *Courier Post*, Apr. 27, 1976, C11.

¹⁷ Marian Thompson Wright, "New Jersey Laws and the Negro," *The Journal of Negro History* 28, no. 2 (April 1943), 188.

¹⁸ Wynetta Devore, "The Education of Blacks in New Jersey, 1900-1930: An Exploration in Oral History" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 1980), 33; Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant*, 77; and Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 84.

¹⁹ Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 17.

²⁰ Joseph Busler, "N.J. Vital Stop on Path of Slave Escape Routes," *Courier Post*, Feb. 7, 1988.

²¹ Paul W. Schopp, "Black Communities in West/South Jersey," unpublished manuscript, Apr. 2014, PDF file.

²² Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 128.

²³ Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 16..

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

²⁵ Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 63.

²⁶ Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 176.

²⁷ Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 84.

²⁸ E. Frederic Morrow, *Way Down South Up North* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1973), 5, 21.

²⁹ Roger Hutchinson, a man who grew up in Haddon Heights, wrote, "The year before I entered first grade, probably 1921, perhaps the biggest Ku Klux Klan meeting ever to take

place in South Jersey was held in Haddon Heights.” Hutchinson’s claim that it was the largest Klan rally in the southern portion of the state is a highly dubious proposition due to the absence of a Haddon Heights rally in other histories written about New Jersey Ku Klux Klan activity that highlight large rallies elsewhere. Haddon Heights Historical Society, “Minutes,” Mar. 27, 2000, *Haddon Heights Public Library Archives*.

³⁰ Harold M. Rose, “The All Negro Town: Its Evolution and Function,” in *Black America: Geographic Perspectives*, eds. Robert T. Ernst and Lawrence Hugg (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1976), 354. For more on Lawnside see: Jason Romisher, “Youth Activism and the Black Freedom Struggle in Lawnside, New Jersey” (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2018).

³¹ Steven Levy, “South Jersey’s Oasis of Soul,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Jul. 17, 1977, 29.

³² Kristin Hunter, “Soul City North,” *Philadelphia Magazine*, May 1973; “Decision Reserved on Plea to Split Lawnside Borough,” Mar. 7, 1939, in “Lawnside the Way it Was,” (unpublished manuscript, Feb. 19, 1990), community brochure: Camden County Historical Society, Lawnside Collection.

³³ Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 95-98.

³⁴ Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 17.

³⁵ I was amazed how many small independent communities exist in the Haddon Heights area. For instance, driving along the Black Horse Pike I passed through Runnemede, Haddon Heights, Bellmawr, Mount Ephraim, Audubon, Oaklyn, and Woodlynne within five minutes. I also saw police cars from several of these borough’s independent forces.

³⁶ Alan J. Karcher, *New Jersey’s Multiple Municipal Madness* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 1998), 10, 82.

³⁷ John Standing, “Stratford Residents Protest Plans for Apartments Over Offices,” *Courier Post*, Jan. 28, 1972, 16.

³⁸ Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic*, 231.

³⁹ Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 237.

⁴⁰ Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic*, 231-232.

⁴¹ “Citizens Protest New Building,” *Evening Bulletin* (Philadelphia), Apr. 2, 1947.

⁴² The most contentious meetings observed through an analysis of the *Courier Post* during 1971 and 1972 were held in Pennsauken which directly borders Camden and has now undergone considerable racial demographic transition. “Suits Attack Pennsauken Zoning Law,” *Courier Post*, Feb. 11, 1972, 24.

⁴³ “Medford Okays New Zone Law,” *Courier Post*, May 10, 1972.

⁴⁴ Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 85.

⁴⁵ Christopher P. Barton and Patricia G. Markert, “Collaborative Archaeology, Oral History, and Memory at Timbuctoo, New Jersey,” *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage* 1, no. 1 (2012): 82-83.

⁴⁶ David L. Kirp, John. P. Dwyer, and Larry A. Rosenthal, *Our Town: Race, Housing, and the Soul of Suburbia* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995). One African American community, Lawnside, was able to survive obliteration because its residents were able to successfully lobby the state for borough status in 1926. This power enabled African Americans to municipally self-govern the community.

⁴⁷ Greason, *Suburban Erasure*, 163.

- ⁴⁸ Marian Thompson Wright, "Racial Integration in the Public Schools in New Jersey," *The Journal of Negro Education* 23, no. 3, (Summer, 1954): 282.
- ⁴⁹ Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant*, 142-143.
- ⁵⁰ "Decision Favors Excluded Negress: Theatre Owner Loses Appeal from \$500 Verdict of Lower Court," *Trenton Evening News* (Trenton, New Jersey), Jul. 22, 1912, 11; and Michael H. Ebner, "Mrs. Miller and "The Paterson Show": a 1911 Defeat for Racial Discrimination," *New Jersey History* LXXXVI, no. 2, (Summer, 1968): 88.
- ⁵¹ *The Negro in New Jersey*, Report of a Survey by The Interracial Committee of the New Jersey Conference of Social Work in Cooperation with the State Department of Institutions and Agencies, December 1932, 65. *The New Jersey Civil Rights Act* was weakened in 1917 when damages for offenses were awarded to charities chosen by the state. Giles R. Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 54.
- ⁵² Jeff Wiltse, *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 124, 132.
- ⁵³ Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 123.
- ⁵⁴ "N.A.A.C.P. to Fight Curbs at Beaches: Plans 'Wade-In' Campaign at Tax-Maintained Resorts from Jersey to Texas," *The New York Times*, May 8, 1960, 1.
- ⁵⁵ Kruse, *White Flight*, 123-124.
- ⁵⁶ Jeff Wiltse, "Swimming Against Segregation: The Struggle to Desegregate," *Pennsylvania Legacies* 10, no. 2 (November, 2010): 16.
- ⁵⁷ Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 184-187.
- ⁵⁸ *The Negro in New Jersey*, 50, 65.
- ⁵⁹ "Race Riot Ensues in Elizabeth Pool," *The Courier-News* (Bridgewater, New Jersey), Aug. 11, 1930, 1.
- ⁶⁰ Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 136-138.
- ⁶¹ "Whites Hurl Tomato Barrage at Race Bathers in City Pool: Dowd Natatorium, Jersey Trouble Center, Is Reopened After Recent Riots," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, Aug. 27, 1938, 6; and Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 138.
- ⁶² Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 139.
- ⁶³ "Favors Negroes: Segregation in Pool Must Stop, Supreme Court Rules," *Asbury Park Press*, Mar. 4, 1933, 9.
- ⁶⁴ Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 145.
- ⁶⁵ After the Second World War, New Jersey passed the following civil rights related acts: a Fair Employment Practices Law (1945), a regulatory body named The Division Against Discrimination (DAD) (1945), a new Constitution (1947), which included an anti-discrimination provision that applied to education and militia service, and constitutional amendments banning discrimination in public accommodations (1949), the Armed Forces (1953), and public housing (1954). Price, 258; and Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 115-116.
- ⁶⁶ Giles R Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, 70.
- ⁶⁷ Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 197.
- ⁶⁸ New Jersey continued to have a reformist State Supreme Court that was attentive to civil rights issues in the latter half of the twentieth century. The Court ruled against restrictive municipal zoning practices in multiple trials known as the Mount Laurel decisions, and

against unequal municipal funding for education in *Robinson v. Cahill* (1973) and the multiple rulings in *Abbott v. Burke*.

⁶⁹ Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 130.

⁷⁰ *Report on Cross Burning in Wall Township N.J.*, Urban Colored Population Commission Records, 1944-1946, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, N.J., Series # SZURC001, Box One.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 158.

⁷³ Cross burnings continued to be used in New Jersey as a means of intimidation and violence into the 1990s. For example, in Bridgewater, New Jersey leaders of the Somerset Community Action Program and the NAACP had crosses burned on their lawns in 1979. In 1990, a cross was also burned on the lawn of an African American homeowner in Camden. Marilyn Ostermiller, "Clergymen, Labor Unions Deplore SCAP Cross Burnings," *Courier-News* (Bridgewater, New Jersey), Nov. 8, 1979, B-3; and Carol Comegno, "Cross Burning Costs \$75 ... 3 Charged," *Courier Post*, Oct. 19, 1990, 1.

⁷⁴ Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*, 182-184.

⁷⁵ "Club to Appeal Fine for Negro Ban," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Feb. 4, 1948, 1.

⁷⁶ Woodbury, New Jersey was one of the most recalcitrant municipalities in the transition toward integrated schools. The 1963 Camden County Civil Rights Commission chose to investigate the situation in Woodbury despite the town being in Gloucester County because of the urgent need for government intervention. The Commission described Woodbury as a city "which has long resisted attempts at integration." By 1963, most New Jersey school district officials understood that segregation in its schools was no longer tenable and moved to halt the practice without the prodding of the state. Woodbury was an exception and twice saw the state intervene prior to 1963 to correct segregationist practices. The Carpenter Street Elementary School in Woodbury was a *de jure* segregated facility prior to 1947. African American children who lived too far away to walk to Carpenter were sent at the town's expense to other districts rather than accommodate them at the Woodbury schools reserved for whites. In 1948, school officials gerrymandered school district lines to ensure continued segregation in its schools. In 1954, district lines were squared off after numerous protests, but this resulted in only a token number of white children attending the school. The Carpenter Street School was finally closed in 1964 to facilitate integration. Many areas of the state also had segregated schools prior to the Second World War with some school districts continuing to segregate children into the 1960s.

Camden and Environs, Civil Rights U.S.A., Public Schools, Cities in the North and West, a staff report submitted in 1963 by Albert P. Blaustein to The United States Commission on Civil Rights, 38-39. Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture; "Council Pleads School Cause in Woodbury: Board is Silent After 2nd Defeat on Expansion," *The Philadelphia Inquirer New Jersey Section*, Jan. 9, 1966, 1.

⁷⁷ Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 194.

⁷⁸ "Boom in Public Pools Lags Behind Rise in Swimmer Population," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Jul. 30, 1964, 17.

⁷⁹ William A. Caldwell, "Jim Crow Says It's a Club," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey),

Jun. 7, 1960, 42.

⁸⁰ “State Agency Defines Codes on Public Bias: Circulates Pamphlets to 300 Swim Clubs Explaining Law,” *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Jul. 2, 1964, 5.

⁸¹ “Complaint of Discrimination Filed Against Swim Club: State Charges Negroes Are Illegally Barred from Admission to Suburbia Swim Club,” *The Central New Jersey Home News* (New Brunswick, New Jersey), Jul. 23, 1958, 1.

⁸² “State’s Plea for Injunction Against Swimming Pool Denied,” *The Central New Jersey Home News* (New Brunswick, New Jersey), Jul. 30, 1958, 5.

⁸³ Jack Wysoker, “Letter to the Editor,” *The Central New Jersey Home News* (New Brunswick, New Jersey), Jun. 5, 1962, 14.

⁸⁴ Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 198.

⁸⁵ Anonymous, interview by Jason Romisher, May 8, 2016.

⁸⁶ Anonymous, interview by Jason Romisher, Jul. 28, 2016.

⁸⁷ Anonymous, interview by Jason Romisher, Aug. 8, 2016.

⁸⁸ Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 183.

⁸⁹ Brendan Schurr, “In Honor of ‘Chicken Bone Beach,’” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Aug. 16, 1997, 2.

⁹⁰ Newspapers.com has numerous New Jersey and Philadelphia newspapers and the only articles about ‘Chicken Bone’ Beach were written in the last twenty years and are essentially nostalgia pieces. I could not locate any articles written in the mainstream press about the beach during the era of segregation at Atlantic City’s beaches.

⁹¹ Haddonfield is a very wealthy and predominately white community that produced New Jersey Governor Alfred E. Driscoll who served from 1947-1954. The community has many large and spectacular homes that were built in the nineteenth century. Quakers from Haddonfield parcelled out land in what is now Lawnside, for use by African Americans. This provided Haddonfield with a source of inexpensive manual and domestic labour. Up until the 1950s, it was still a common sight to see African American women in uniforms riding public transportation to work in Haddonfield. There even was a small public bus that had two runs in the morning and two in the afternoon to facilitate these workers. Haddonfield segregated its elementary education and operated a small African American school which was closed in 1948. The school’s teacher had tenure with the board and could not be dismissed. She never received another classroom assignment and worked until 1962 as an itinerant remedial reading teacher.

⁹² Scholars Dori Laub and Alessandro Portelli both believe that it is unimportant whether or not testimonials match objective facts. Portelli explains, “the credibility of oral sources is a different credibility.” He expounds on this point stating: “The importance of oral testimony may often lie not in its adherence to facts but rather in its divergence from them, where imagination, symbolism, desire break in. Therefore there are no ‘false’ oral sources... The diversity of oral history consists in the fact that ‘untrue’ statements are still psychologically ‘true’, and these previous ‘errors’ sometimes reveal more than factually accurate accounts.” Dori Laub, “Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Learning,” in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, ed. S. Felman and D. Laub (New York: Routledge, 1992), 27; and Alessandro Portelli, “The Peculiarities of Oral History,” *History*

Workshop 12 (Autumn 1981), 100. For more on inequality at Haddon Heights High School see, Romisher, *Youth Activism and the Black Freedom Struggle*.

⁹³ "Closed-Down Pool," *Courier Post*, May 17, 1955, 10.

⁹⁴ "County to Study Future of Pool Beset by Leaks," *Courier-Post*, Feb. 28, 1973, 45.

⁹⁵ James Reuter, "Swimming Hole a Distant Memory," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Oct. 20, 2002, L10.

⁹⁶ Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 184.

⁹⁷ "28 Seized for Picketing: Groups Charge Discrimination Against Negroes at Pool," *New York Times*, Sep. 1, 1947.

⁹⁸ "28 Seized in Picketing;" "11 Seized in Jersey Race Equality Row," *New York Times*, Aug. 4, 1947, 15; "Appeal Planned for 7 Convicted in Row at Pool," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Sep. 5, 1947, 1; and "Fined for Bias Disorder: New York Woman Found Guilty in Palisades Park Incident," *New York Times*, Aug. 21, 1947, 19.

⁹⁹ "Bias Case Retrial Case," *The Courier-News* (Bridgewater, New Jersey), Dec. 8, 1948, 11.

¹⁰⁰ "Not a Red, Complainant Tells Court," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Feb. 21, 1952, 1.

¹⁰¹ "Bias Damages Denied by Jury: Plaintiff Charged Discrimination at Pool," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Mar. 1, 1952, 1.

¹⁰² "Not a Red," 1.

¹⁰³ "Talks Secret on Pool Peace: Proprietors, C.O.R.E. Meet with Calissi," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Jul. 12, 1963, 1, 10.

¹⁰⁴ "Maywoods Swim Club Agrees to Integrate: President of Spring Valley N.A.A.C.P. Becomes First Negro Member," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Jul. 13, 1963, 1-2.

¹⁰⁵ "C.O.R.E. Sets Sight on Fair Lawn Pool: Weekend Protest Planned After Club Refuses to Admits Negroes," *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey), Jun. 13, 1963, 2.

¹⁰⁶ "Maywoods Swim Club Agrees to Integrate," 1-2.

¹⁰⁷ "School Board Drops 'Y' Swimming Project: Board of Education Votes to Discontinue After-School Activity as Result of Protests on Negro Ban; Explains Discrimination Not Tolerated," *The Central New Jersey Home News* (New Brunswick, N.J.), Apr. 7, 1948.

¹⁰⁸ Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 155.

¹⁰⁹ Richard L. Byrnes, "Letter to the Editor," *The Courier-News* (Bridgewater, N.J.), Mar. 18, 1968, 18.

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