

Reimagining the Suburban Ideal: Forging multiracial, inclusive community in the suburbs of Chicago and Los Angeles

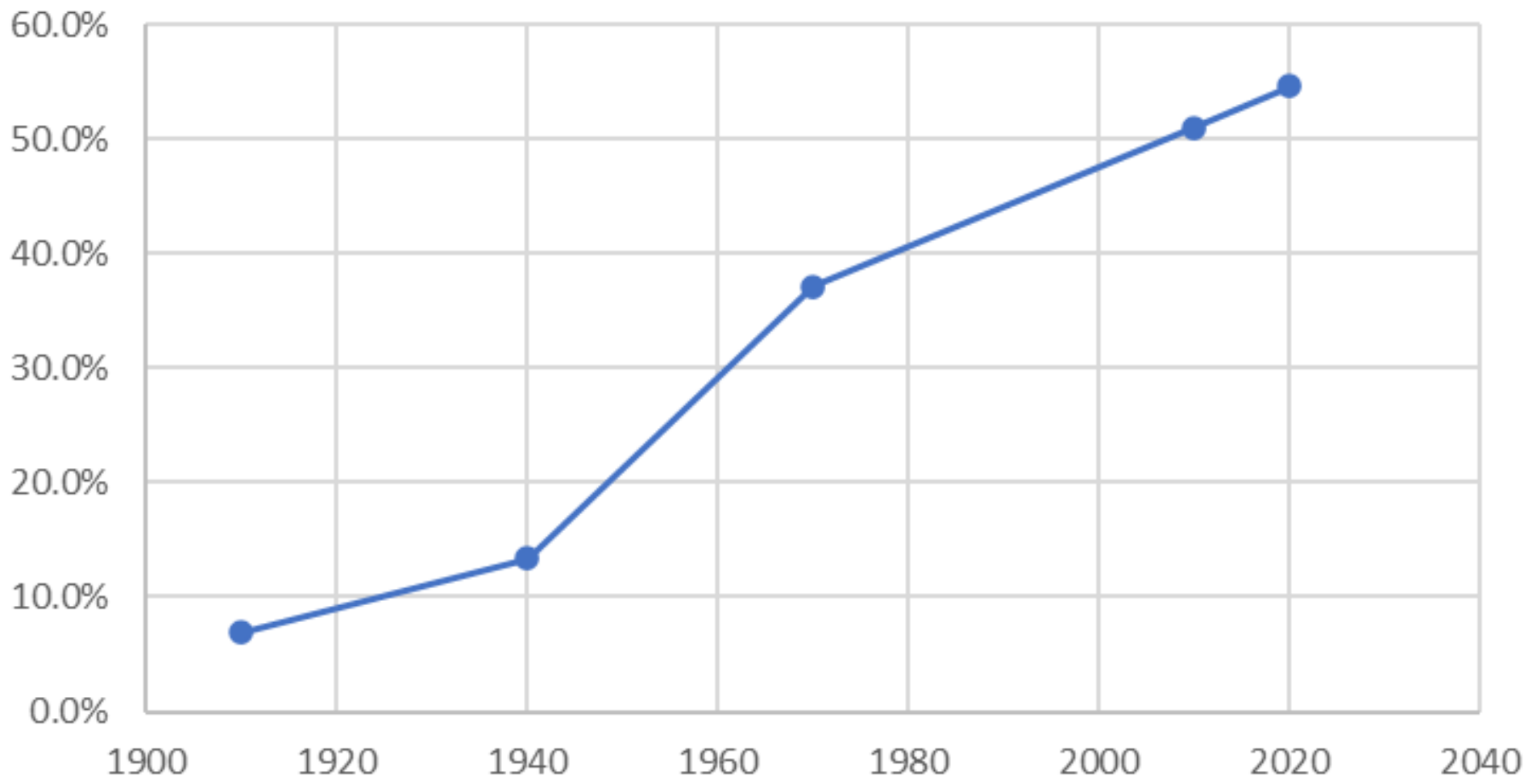
Becky Nicolaides, Ph.D.

EU Erasmus + Cooperative Partnership
“Urbanism and Suburbanization in the
EU Countries and Abroad”

Suburban Studies Conference, SUBEUA Partnership
Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republic
May 14, 2024



% of Americans living in suburbs



Great suburban diversity by race, ethnicity, class, and households



Arleta San Fernando Valley, 1989



South Pasadena, 1971



San Fernando Valley, 2019
(red bundle is a person)



Photo sources (top L-R): photo by Victor Chalermkij; photo by Audrey Dorf; photo by Eva Saks

The “traditional” suburban ideal of racial exclusion... for whites only



“Country Club District” in Kansas City, photo ca. 1910

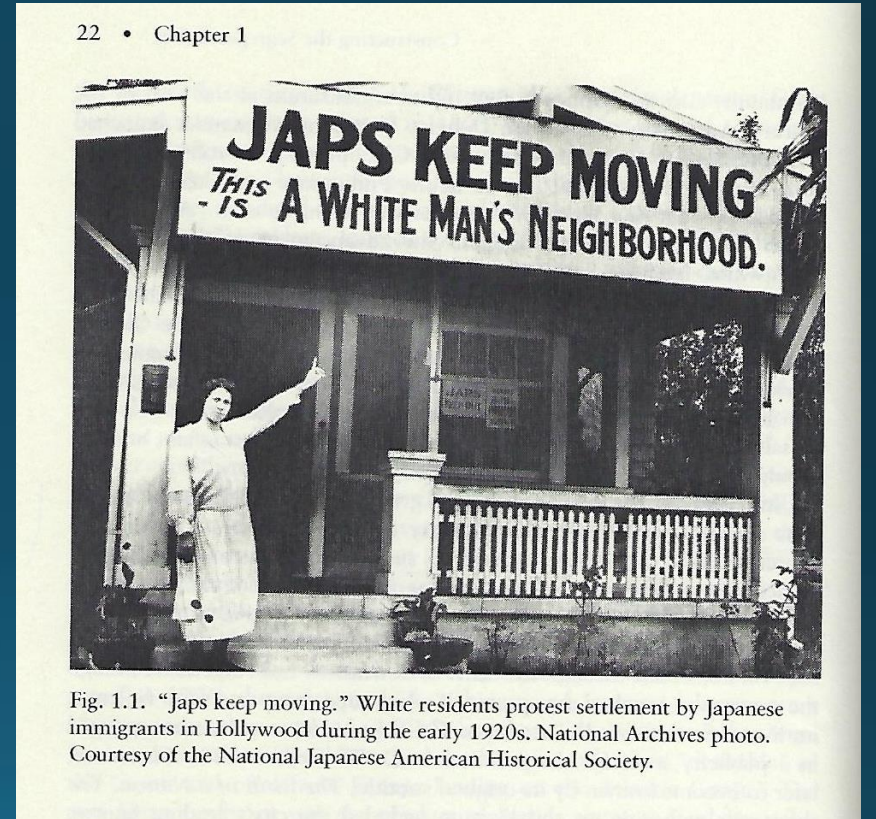


Fig. 1.1. “Japs keep moving.” White residents protest settlement by Japanese immigrants in Hollywood during the early 1920s. National Archives photo. Courtesy of the National Japanese American Historical Society.

Hollywood Protective Association, early 1920s
Scott Kurashige, *Shifting Grounds of Race*, 22.

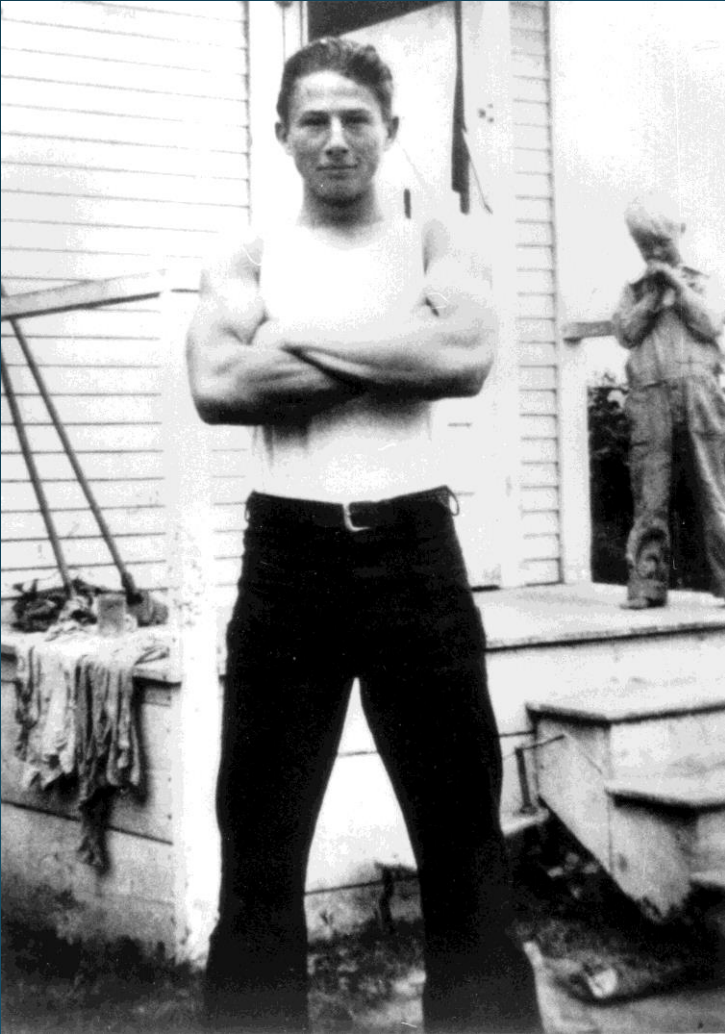


Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher
Stowe, *The American Woman's Home*, 1867



Riverside, Illinois, 2008

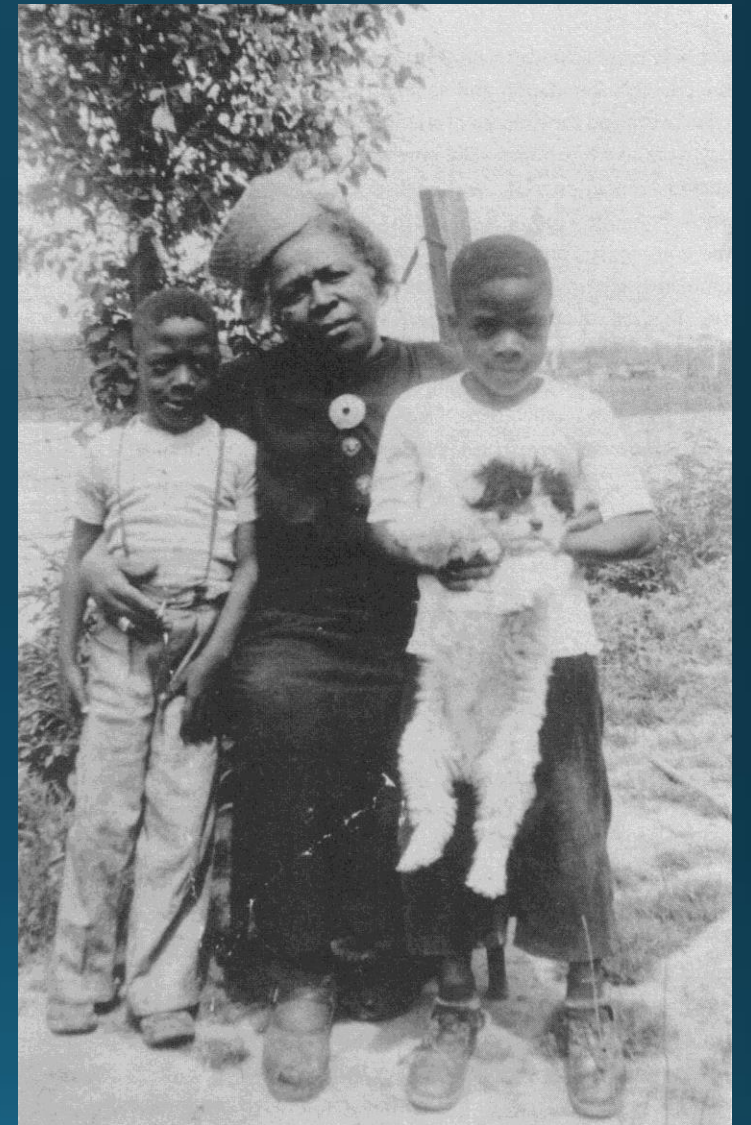
Alternative suburban ideals and experiences



Photos courtesy Glenn Seaborg

The African American suburban ideal, 1900-1940

Scenes of Chagrin Falls Park, Ohio



Chagrin Falls Park Resident Nellie Lawrence who served as surrogate "grandmother" to many local children.

Emerging multicultural suburban ideals

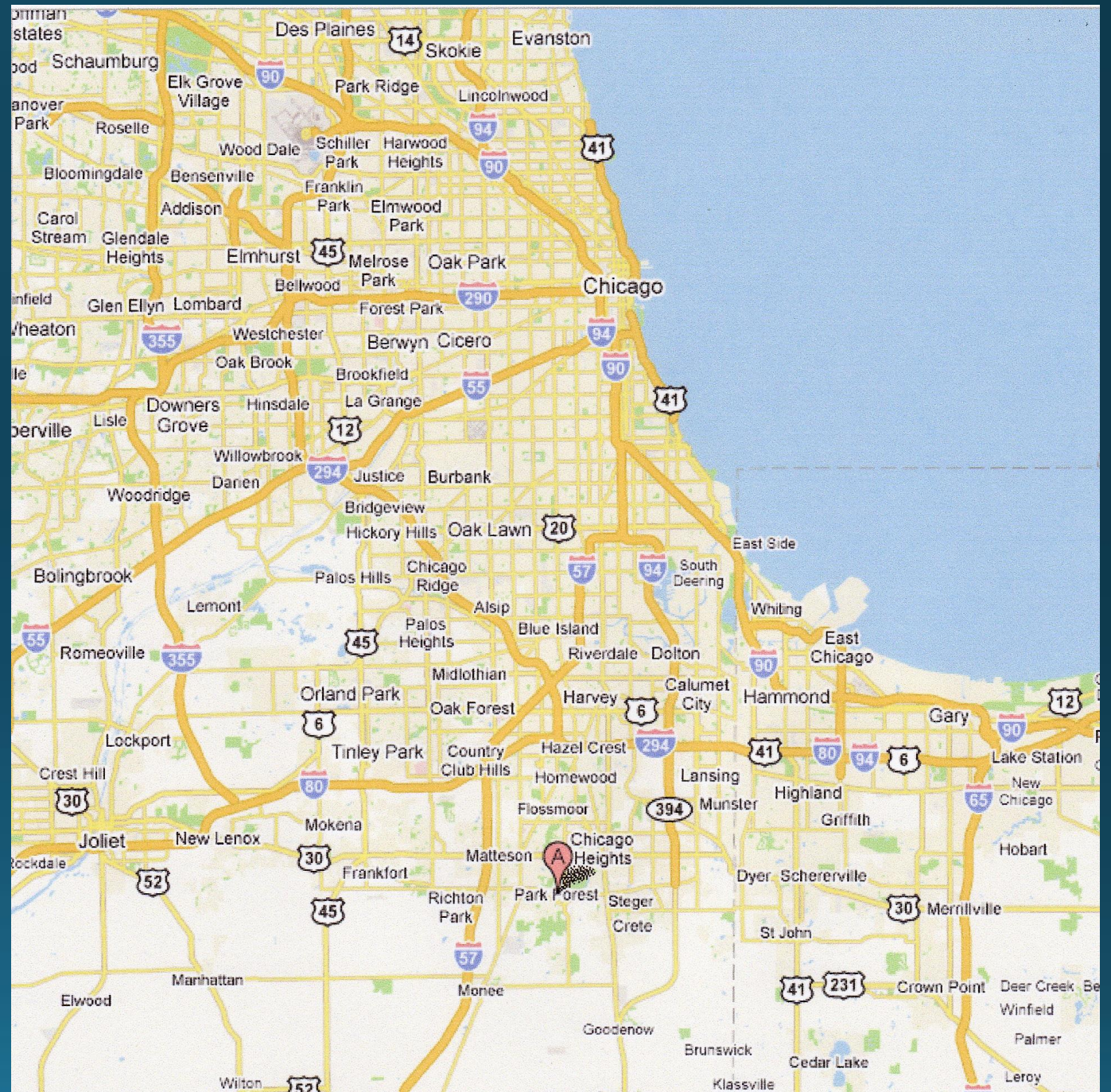


South Pasadena, 1971



Mark Padoongpatt, age 6,
Arleta, San Fernando Valley, 1989

Park Forest, Illinois



Park Forest, Illinois

Handwritten note:
C.D. Williams
4/1/48

“We aren’t interested in
houses alone.”

you are
looking at a
design for
better living

We are trying to create a better life for our people.

We will have failed if all we do is produce houses”

Philip W. Klutznick

President, American Community Builders, Inc.

February 14, 1948



Fig. 30. The “superblock” concept of apartment development is obvious in this view of the community under construction in the early 1950s. Source: courtesy of Park Forest Public Library.

House courts in Park Forest, 1953



Source: William Whyte, "The Outgoing Life," *Fortune*, July 1953, 88.

Integrate Quietly In Park Forest

PARK FOREST, Ill. — (UPI) — A Negro family moved into this all-white Chicago suburb recently with no fuss, bother or violence, it was revealed.

The quiet, successful integration was accomplished through careful planning and a program of resident education, village manager John L. Scott, said.

Scott said Charles Z. Wilson, 30, an assistant commerce professor at De Paul University, bought a \$21,000 ranch home and moved his family of five in with scarcely a ripple of disorder.

Village officials had expected a Negro would buy property in Park Forest sooner or later and had laid plans for the occasion, he said. Wilson's purchase created a good deal of discussion, which helped to settle the situation before the family moved in, he added.

DIFFERS FROM DEERFIELD

The Park Forest integration was in stark contrast to the dissension in Deerfield, another all-white Chicago suburb, where a contractor announced plans to sell a dozen homes to Negroes and village officials and residents fought

back with court suits to condemn the land and turn it into a park.

Scott said Park Forest officials learned Dec. 17 that Wilson had bought the home. They visited him, he said, and learned the sale was strictly a private transaction, with no organization involved.

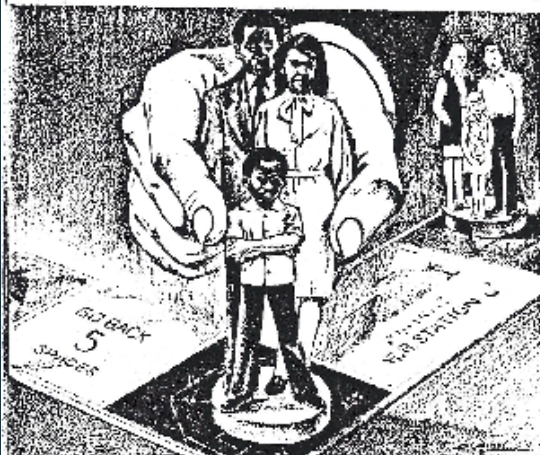
Then, Scott said, the village board and the village human relations commission visited homes within two blocks of Wilson's house and explained the situation to homeowners, cautioning them against violence or overt protests.

Wilson, his wife, and their three children, aged 5, 4, and 1, moved in Dec. 28. A few nights later, a group of teenage boys gathered on Wilson's lawn, but police whisked them to the police station, where they were given a strict lecture and released to their parents.

Scott said that while the Wilson family are the first Negroes in Park Forest, Orientals have lived in the 12-year-old, 30,000-population suburb. He said rumors that other Negroes have bought homes here are untrue.

M A N A G E D INTEGRATION

Despite claims of success, efforts to control black entry into the suburbs may be the newest disguise for segregation



Thirteen miles due west on the Eisenhower Expressway, one of the many ribbons of asphalt that shoot out from the hub of Chicago like spokes on a wheel, is Bellwood, a predominantly blue-collar community located in southwest Cook County. Bellwood is one of those communities that provide an affordable introduction into middleclass suburbia.

Once an enclave of mostly German and Russian immigrants, the village has undergone a dramatic transformation in recent years as it became a refuge for thousands of black suburban home seekers, and the focal point of a Supreme Court case. The change began as a trickle when the first black family moved in 14 years ago. In

By Arthur Hayes

1970, a mere 1.1 percent of the village's 27,000 population was black. By 1976, the percentage had soared to close to 25 percent. At the same time, hundreds of whites were fleeing for whiter suburbs and selling their homes below the market value.

The village leaders feared that their economically stable integrated community was in danger of turning into a suburban black ghetto. That possibility also bothered Fvonne Poindexter, a black housewife whose family had moved to Bellwood chiefly because it was integrated. "Ideally, to me, every community should be integrated," Poindexter declares. "I think the quality of life should improve when there is integration. But integration should take its natural course. It happened faster in Bellwood than it should have."

Her neighbor, Lorraine Anglet, white and a resident for 29 years adds: "The realtors were taking advantage of both blacks and whites. They used unethical procedures to frighten white people that the value of their property was going to go down and the crime rate was going to go up. . . . Then they would charge the black home buyers higher prices for the homes."

Seeing a common cause, Poindexter and Anglet joined the Bellwood Community Relations Advisory Council. In so doing, they became proponents of Integration Maintenance.

Integration Maintenance is the newfound religion of an increasing number of multiracial fair housing agencies and liberal suburban communities. Developed in the Chicago area in 1972, the gospel has spread across the Northeast industrial belt to an estimated 30 communities. Integration Maintenance, say its proponents, is suburbia's answer to widespread racial steering, panic peddling, and blockbusting conducted by real estate brokers.

Faced with a rapid change to black due to white flight and with the corollary threat of a dwindling tax base, these suburban communities adopted far-reaching fair housing ordinances. "For Sale" signs were banned, but that was knocked down as unconstitutional. Then towns got tougher and went after brokers who allegedly steered blacks by sending in black and white testers to unveil discriminatory selling patterns. Several towns hauled the accused brokers into court.

Other towns went further. They developed "affirmative marketing programs," enticed white home buyers to their towns, and set up centers to counsel blacks about available housing in neighboring white communities. They passed "anti-solicitation" ordinances regulating the brokers' ability to solicit, and "intent-to-sell" ordinances requiring home sellers to notify the local government when they put their homes up for sale.

All these measures were adopted or proposed, proponents contend, in an effort to promote stability and keep the communities integrated on a block-by-block basis. But there are critics, both black and white, who argue that Integration Maintenance is, in reality, racial gatekeeping. The most vocal critics of the movement are in the Chicago area.

The two South Side chapters of the NAACP, along with the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) and Operation PUSH, struck up a temporary alliance with the Chicago-based National Association of Realtors (NAR)—one of the perennial villains in the open housing struggle—in an effort to discredit the Integration Maintenance movement. As they see it, the programs impose color-conscious and unconstitutional restraints on black home seekers' freedom of choice. The programs are devised largely by whites, mostly for the benefit of whites, while penalizing blacks for white prejudice, they argue.

"The assumption is that somehow white Americans are

Park Forest shows way on integration

By Jerry Shnay *JS*

It was the week before Christmas, 1959, but there was little peace on earth among a group of angry white residents of Park Forest, and certainly less than good will toward their new neighbors—a black family.

Former Village President Bob Dinerstein remembers the loud voices and the pointed questions: Why here? Why now? Why us?

Brushing aside the shouts, Dinerstein asked again and again the same question, "Do you believe in the Constitution of the United States?"

"I kept asking them that," he said. "They started to listen. Things quieted down. Now we had time to work."

A few days later, on Christmas Eve, the first black family moved into Park Forest.

Some 29 years later, the south suburban village has a black population of 17 percent and is considered a model of successful inte-

gration. Schools are good. Property values are stable. And in the recent past, it had a black mayor.

Barbara Moore, the town's director of community relations, claims the scatter-gun approach to integrating blacks has been successful because of an open attitude among residents and the way the town was built, after World War II, as affordable housing for veterans.

"I moved here in 1974 and I even may have anticipated some problems, but I was made to feel comfortable almost immediately," she said. "There was no head-counting of blacks, and certainly no good side or bad side of the tracks. When you ask people what neighborhood they live in, they'll look at you and say, 'We don't live in a neighborhood, we live in Park Forest.'"

In an ironic twist, Moore recalls the impetus for the village's interest in integration came from a

man who suffered from discrimination because of his Japanese ancestry.

"Harry Teshima, who is now dead, used to say he didn't want anyone to go through what happened to him," said Moore. "He spearheaded some of the early efforts to form a human relations commission."

Bob Pierce, former village manager, recalls that the first black family lived in Park Forest "around a year or so before changing jobs" and moving out. The next black residents didn't move in until 1962, he said.

"Every time we knew there was a black family moving to Park Forest," he said, "at least two people, usually a member of the human relations commission and a village trustee, talked to the neighbors on all sides, trying to make them understand what was happening."

It wasn't that simple. "At first we thought we had to talk to ev-

eryone in a two-block area," said Dinerstein. "We were knocking on a lot of doors trying to break down any hostility."

There was also a strong effort to house blacks throughout the village.

"We were lucky," said Dinerstein. "Most of the blacks moving in were sprinkled throughout the village only because of the available housing. But every once in a while, we'd hear of one black family moving next door to another, and we'd want them to know there might be other housing available in Park Forest, not necessarily where they were looking."

"We never asked them not to buy in a certain place, however."

In one instance, Dinerstein recalled, white residents expressed enthusiasm for a new black family moving into their area. "The previous family hadn't maintained the property," he said. "All the neighbors wanted was someone nice living next to them."

PARK FOREST

Diversity dinners reach 4th year

By Brian Wasag
THE STAR

Participants gathered at a south suburban home Thursday for the fourth annual diversity dinners firmly believe the program is having an impact.

The dinners bring a diverse group of people together to express views about living in a multicultural society in hopes of promoting a better understanding

among people.

Fifty such dinners took place Thursday night in south suburban communities.

Gathered around the dining room table of Matteson Police Chief Larry Burnson and his wife Nancy, one group expressed the

More inside:
For different generations, dinner was a sign of hope. Page 4.

Dinner

Continued from Page 1

you didn't talk to them," she said. "I saw what was on TV and I believed, 'That must be the way it is in their world; obviously it's like this because they're showing it on TV all the time.'

"Everybody has their own set of stereotypes that after a while, you learn isn't all true."

Bradshaw said she eventually decided to attend a diversity dinner because she was curious to learn what it was like.

"I work in this community and I think I need to learn more about it," she said. "Sometimes I feel like I'm an outsider looking in and making assumptions as I see and hear things. This is a way for me to get in the community and get to know some of the people in the community and learn more about it."

Nathaniel Horn begrudgingly attended his first dinner at Kelly's behest.

"I really wasn't crazy about going, but some of the people who I've met at the dinners, when I see them now I know them," he



Star photo by Carol Dorsett

PARK FOREST

Tolerance tops dinner menus

Over the years Ruby and McAfee Marsh have broken bread with people from many backgrounds at their dining room table. They'll do it again this month as part of the eighth annual Diversity Dinners of the South Suburbs.

"I really enjoy participating in these dinners because I think we need to learn more about each other," said Ruby. "We really are more alike than we are different."

"Discovering the similarities in us all and understanding the range of attitudes that comes with differing backgrounds is what the Diversity Dinners are all about," said Park Forest director of community relations Barbara Moore.

Moore says the relationships forged from these discoveries are having a positive impact on the area's economy.

"We now know that developers and investors notice what a great commodity we have here," Moore said. "They see value in our diversity, and that makes them willing to invest in our region."

Last year nearly 600 people took part in the dinners.

Los Angeles and suburban diversity



Pasadena, late 1970s



South Pasadena, 1971

San Marino: interethnic community building



Source: Archive at Pasadena Museum of History

Pasadena



Pasadena: inclusive community building

- Pasadena Interracial Women's Club (1946)

Pasadena Interracial Woman's Club – founded 1946



l. to r. Anna Dozier, Lillian Brown, Flora Ogawa, and Alicia Lopez, members of first Executive Board.

Pasadena, Pasadena Interracial Women's Club

The Pasadena Interracial Woman's Club

"A PLUS QUALITY"



Organized December 9, 1946

P R U R P O S E

The purpose of this organization is to create a spirit of social and cultural fellowship in which women of all national and racial backgrounds may advance together in wisdom and understanding, looking toward a community where each may make her own unique contribution.

Pasadena: inclusive community building

- Pasadena Interracial Women's Club (1946)
- Garfield Heights Neighborhood Association (1988)

Garfield Heights Neighborhood Association, 1988+, (GHNA) Pasadena



Garfield Heights, Pasadena



GHNA activities



Monthly "Trash Walks"



Community yard sale in July



Lawn bowling & Happy Hour

GHNA Historic Bus tours



Danny Parker, leading GHNA Pasadena Historic Bus Tour

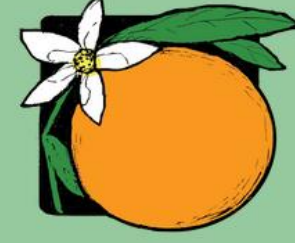
PASADENA HISTORIC BUS TOUR MAY 21, 2022



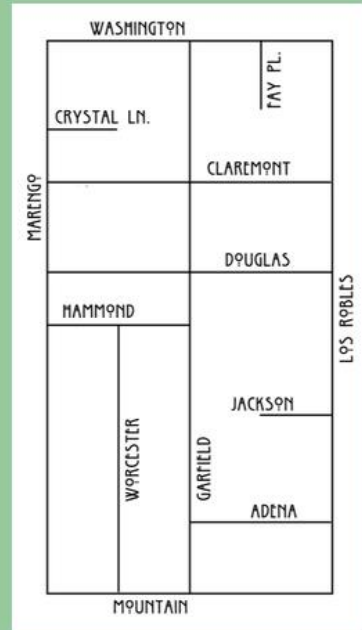
1. Pasadena Buddhist Temple
1993 Glen Ave.
2. Octavia E. Butler Magnet School
1505 N. Marengo Ave.
3. John Pashgian home
225 Grandview St.
4. Alebu-Lan Cultural Center
1435 N. Raymond Ave.
5. Hahamongna Watershed Park
4550 Oak Grove Dr.
6. Jackie and Mack Robinson Home
and Kings Villages 123 Pepper St.
7. Parsons/10 West Walnut
8. Armenian Genocide Memorial
NW corner of Memorial Park
9. Bellefontaine Nursery
838 S. Fair Oaks Ave.
10. Concordia Court
Enter from California Blvd.
11. Mijares Mexican Restaurant
245 Palmetto Dr.
12. Octavia Butler Childhood Home
915 N. Marengo Ave.

Additional Sites:

13. Johnny's Sporting Goods
14. St. Barnabas Episcopal Church
15. Woods Valentine Mortuary
16. Rose Bowl Aquatic Center
17. Friendship Baptist Church
18. Pashgian Brothers Rug Store



Four GHNA motifs designed in 1999 by neighbor and former GHNA Chair Michael O'Brien. GHNA selected the acorns for our Landmark District signage.



The Garfield Heights Neighborhood Association (GHNA) represents the residents of over 400 properties located within its boundaries: Marengo Avenue on the west (both sides of the street), Washington Boulevard on the north (the south side of street only), Los Robles Avenue on the east (the west side of the street only), and Mountain Avenue on the south (the north side of street only)

As a person living in our wonderful neighborhood, whether you rent or own your home, you are a member of the GHNA! There are no dues or applications. You simply belong!

Click [HERE](#) to see the **Garfield Heights Neighborhood Association Bylaws**, last amended by the Bylaws Committee on March 13, 2016.

Are you a new resident of Garfield Heights or do you have a new neighbor? If yes, please fill out our GHNA **Welcome Wagon form**. We'll follow up with a welcome gift and helpful resources about our neighborhood!



GHNA Block Party



The 2017 Block Party

<https://www.garfieldheights.org/2023-block-party.html>

Video courtesy Michael e. Stern, for the GHNA

Grandview rehab facility in Garfield Heights



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Call Us:
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You are here now.

We got you.

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[OUTPATIENT SERVICES](#)

Addiction is a medical condition.
Access to healthcare is a fundamental human right.

We are as strong as the support given! Join our Friends of Grandview Community.

Grandview offers Hope, Help, and Home.



At our center, we take a compassionate approach to addiction recovery, dedicated to rejuvenating one's sense of dignity and self-esteem.

Our methodology is firmly rooted in evidence-based treatment modalities, enabling us to craft personalized treatment plans tailored to each individual's unique needs.

In addition to engaging with our skilled Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Counselors through both individual and group sessions, patients benefit from weekly one-on-one therapy sessions and partake in enriching activities that lay the groundwork for sustained, long-term recovery.

Our dedicated team is available around the clock, staffed with people who are unwaveringly committed to making a positive impact.

All of this takes place in a nurturing, home-like environment that fosters a profound sense of belonging and instills a genuine desire to embrace the journey of recovery.

<https://www.grandviewfoundation.com>



Block Party 2023 -- Lisa Mann and three individuals from Grandview

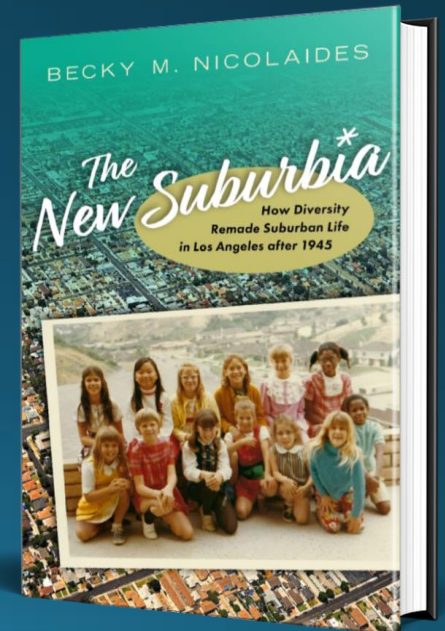
Garfield Heights

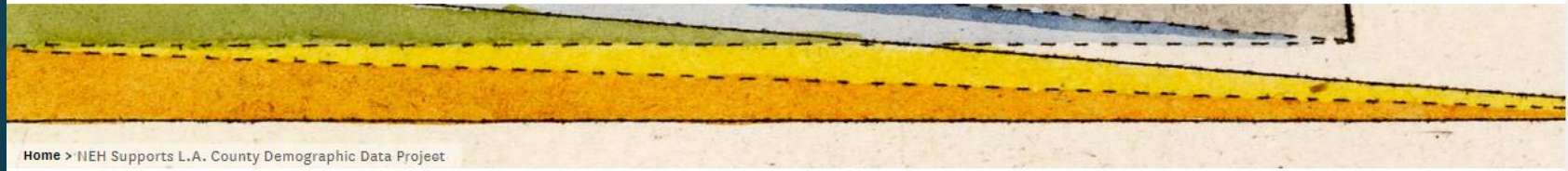


Reimagining the Suburban Ideal

Thank you!

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- Email: becky.nicolaides@outlook.com





Home > NEH Supports L.A. County Demographic Data Project

NEH Supports L.A. County Demographic Data Project

Bill Dotson Apr 25, 2022

Data/Statistics

