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Learning Place:
Education and Planning in Seattle and the Pacific Northwest, 1934-1955

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Abstract

Learning Place
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"Learning Place" traces the development of educational ideas amongst professional planners at the federal, regional, and local levels. As federal funds became available for the construction and re-construction of cities and regions in response to the economic crisis and world war of the 1930s and 1940s, two educational ideas amongst planners gained national attention and federal sanction. The first idea, "education in design terms," sought to create new city and regional neighborhoods with schools and informal educative spaces as central design features in the realization of an ideal community. The second idea, "educating the public," sought to create public awareness of, and assent to, the role of planning as an interventionist alternative to both *laissez faire* economics and political-economic revolution. Planners recruited educators and used educational technologies to 'educate the public' about planning through school curriculum, civic projects, and/or as a public relations or propaganda effort.

Planners in Seattle and the Pacific Northwest– including public housing advocates, large-scale real estate developers, members of social welfare organizations, and business leaders– clashed as they maneuvered between federal dictates, local pressures, and each other in their efforts to guide the policies and practices that would make new places in the city and region. On the one hand, a small but influential group of *democratic placemakers*– led by Jesse Epstein and the Seattle Housing Authority– advocated the design and construction of places grounded in use value, with schools and informal educative spaces as a means of bringing heterogeneous groups of people together with the goal of dissolving antagonisms. They educated the public about their plans and designs by showing places as populated, diverse, and active.

On the other hand, *economic placemakers*– led by members of the Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission and the Seattle Real Estate Board– advocated the construction of places grounded in exchange value, with central schools and informal educative spaces as amenities that increased the economic value of land and as markers that delimited inclusion and exclusion. They educated the public about their plans and designs by quite literally showing places as numerical values or by displaying them as efficient, ordered, and homogeneous.

While *economic placemakers* used federal planning and housing policies to increase their power and increase racial segregation in schools and neighborhoods between 1934 and 1955, *democratic placemakers* remained active. Their alternative conceptualizations of place are a potential resource for a creative politics and a disciplined analysis and critique of proposed housing, school, and (sub)urban policies in our own time.

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ACKNOWELDGEMENTS

In one of my favorite opening paragraphs of a book, James C. Scott begins Seeing Like a State in this way:

> This book grew out of an intellectual detour that became so gripping that I decided to abandon my original itinerary altogether. After I had made what appeared to be an ill-considered turn, the surprising new scenery and the sense that I was headed for a more satisfying destination persuaded me to change my plans. The new itinerary, I think, has a logic of its own. It might have been a more elegant trip had I possessed the wit to conceive of it at the outset. What does seem clear to me is that the detour, although along roads that were bumpier and more circuitous that I had foreseen has led to a more substantial place.[1]

The research and writing of my dissertation has followed a similar circuitous, detour-laden, path. I set out to understand the rhetorical and policy construction of 'neighborhood schools' in a city that long prided itself on its progressivism, internationalism, and cosmopolitanism. But in one of the first history of education conference sessions that I attended back in 2009, a slight detour presented itself in the form of an image: Clarence Perry's 1929 rendering of an ideal neighborhood unit. The image appeared in Ansley Erickson's talk on school-centric neighborhood construction in post-war Nashville and within one of those conference sessions that stick with you long after it ends. The slight detour to study Clarence Perry led to a larger and longer path into the historiography of urban and regional planning. It also provided opportunities to engage in extended conversation with two of the scholars from that conference session: Ansley Erickson and Jack Dougherty. I have learned a great deal from these conversations and appreciate their willingness to talk and email with a doctoral student wandering along a path that they had, in many ways, blazed.

[1] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 1.

Because of these conversations and wanderings, the original itinerary of studying Seattle school construction and attendance zone boundary creation became part of a national story about the role of schools in the imagination and the visions of planners. In the end, I feel like this is a more substantial place and has led me to a whole new landscape to explore in the future.

For me, to say that the path was bumpy and circuitous would be an impressive understatement. Unsure of the direction I was headed, or fearful of moving in circles, I often wanted to turn around or quit moving altogether. As an advisor, Nancy Beadie, was always there: to listen; to offer encouragement and support; to ask critical questions; and to suggest alternative ways of looking at the archival evidence. It is hardly an understatement to suggest that this dissertation would not have been completed without her support. Of course, any errors or oversights are mine alone.

Nancy and Joy Williamson-Lott also created an intellectual environment where graduate students could share their own work and learn from each other; could read and discuss new and important books and articles in the field in small and collegial settings; and, over this past year, participate in the planning of the History of Education Quarterly as it moved from the University of Illinois to the University of Washington. These opportunities allowed me to try out new ideas and to participate in conversations about ideas and scholarly directions in the fields of both history of education and social foundations of education. The feedback from fellow graduate students Gonzalo Guzman, Kathy Nicholas, and Rebecca Wellington has helped me clarify my own writing and argument and has provided links to other literatures inside and outside of the field of education.

One of the overarching themes in this dissertation is the political, ideological, and educational dimension of placemaking. Over the past seven years, I have had the good fortune to

meet– and teach with– a number of talented educators and scholars who shared an interest in place and placemaking. I have learned so much from planning courses, curriculum, and 'strands' with Kate Napolitan that words won't quite do it justice. From summer middle school classes at the Urban League, to fourth grade classrooms at two Seattle elementary schools, to campus classrooms and off-site locations with UW teacher candidates, I have learned how teachers can help students see places and people by actually stepping outside the classroom and meeting and listening to people on their own terms. In the current climate of schooling and academia, this 'in the field' work constitutes a significant act of 'teaching against the grain.' With the faculty support of Ken Zeichner and Nancy Beadie– and because of the work of Kate, Dawn Bennett, Lorena Guillen, and Kerry Cooley-Stroum– the teacher education program at the University of Washington took a couple steps toward a place-conscious and politically-conscious form of preparation that I feel fortunate to have been a part.

Early in graduate school, I met Isaac Gottesman, whose reputation as a scholar with an almost encyclopedic knowledge of texts and intellectual positions across multiple fields and sub-fields preceded him. We shared an office together; we taught together; we started writing together; we presented papers together; we talked long distance as we each struggled through writing blocks and as we each prepared and re-wrote (and discarded) syllabi. I am excited about the continuation of our joint writing, joint thinking, and joint work at Iowa State in the years to come.

I was extremely fortunate to receive support from the National Academy of Education/Spencer Foundation to complete the writing of this dissertation. Not only did the NAEd/Spencer Foundation provide the funding that allowed me the time to invest in writing, but it also introduced me to a group of dissertators and post-doctoral fellows whose work will

influence the field of education for decades to come. I am especially thankful for Washington D.C. conversations with Nick Juravich, Erika Kitzmiller, and Nicole Joseph.

Presentations of various aspects of this dissertation at the NAEd/Spencer Foundation retreats, as well as at the History of Education Society and American Educational Research Association annual conferences, helped me think through arguments and claims. Sevan Terzian, James Albisetti, and Maris Vinovskis all provided helpful and critical responses to papers and presentations.

Last, but not least, my family and friends have supported me throughout this long journey. Linda and Bill Bowman are models of persistent curiosity and educational pursuit. James Lovell and Adrienne Lugg allowed me to talk about maps and archives and ideas while also helping me stop talking about those things. Lai Nguyen is the love of my life.

DEDICATION

To Lai

Introduction

Learning Place
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In her 1934 book *Modern Housing*, the young planner Catherine Bauer extolled the social virtues of European 'planned neighborhoods' of the interwar years. At the focal point of these neighborhoods stood the school, whether it was "merely a kindergarten and a nursery" or a "complete elementary school […] together with its recreation space." Because the school was "equally convenient to all the inhabitants," it served as a meeting point for adults and children alike; a place "to create a neighborhood atmosphere;" strengthen primary contacts, and develop a small-scaled civic identity.[1] In its final chapter, Bauer asked whether the European vision of modern housing in school-centric, planned neighborhoods could be realized in the United States. Bauer expressed a guarded optimism. American modern housing would develop, but only if social progressives, labor, and the unemployed organized a widespread civic education campaign to demand it.

Twenty years later, Bauer claimed that the vision of "school-centered neighborhoods" *had been realized* to a significant degree in both public policy and in the nominally-private housing market.[2] The Housing and Home Financing Agency supported school-centric design in land subdivision regulations; the Federal Housing Administration took "pride in its encouragement of community planning;" the Public Housing Administration's site planning standards required the construction of centralized "community facilities" that often included nursery schools, play centers, or adult education sites; and the National Association of Real

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[1] Catherine Bauer, *Modern Housing* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1934), p. 164.
[2] Catherine Bauer, "Housing Policy and the Educational System," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 302 (1955), p. 21.

Estate Boards recommended school-centric design in its *Community Builders Handbook*.[3] Yet, despite the diffusion of the school-centric neighborhood design, Catherine Bauer expressed a growing concern. "Thus far," she wrote, "the new housing system tends to promote a much greater degree of social segregation at the neighborhood level by income, age, and racial groups than has been traditional in the United States."[4] Her critique moved beyond housing and into planning more generally. But, again, she expressed a guarded optimism in the power of civic education, arguing that inequalities could be ameliorated by "a conscious civic effort to reshape housing and planning policy in terms of basic community values."[5]

This dissertation examines the two different ideas of education at work in planning policy, practice, and culture between 1934 and 1955, as represented in Catherine Bauer's statements. The first idea is "education" as schooling, schools, and informal educative spaces as central design features in the realization of an ideal community ("education in design terms"). Between the mid-1930s and 1955, as Bauer suggested, education in design terms was widely accepted in federal housing and planning policy, although its luster began to fade in certain circles as it was used to further social, class, and racial segregation. The second idea is "education" as a civic project, and/or as a public relations or propaganda effort ("educating the public"). In the 1930s and 1940s especially, planners attempted to educate the public about the *meaning* of planning through a variety of media: school curriculum, film, radio, popular magazines, organizational publications, and theater. Through these media they differentiated American planning from Soviet or fascist planning regimes and argued that American planning could be a third way to respond to economic and urban crises– between a continuation of *laissez*

[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, 22.
[5] *Ibid.*

faire and a complete social revolution. Through these media, they attempted to teach what a planned future might look like.

Planners were not a monolithic group, of course. While they all sought to construct new places in response to the economic and urban crises of this period– the Depression, overcrowding in slums or tenements, internal migrations between regions and from farm to city and city to suburb, the world war– their responses ranged ideologically from left to right and their educational ideas reflected differences in how they understood the places that they were planning. A small but influential group of regional planners and public housers– Catherine Bauer amongst them– responded to the crises by advocating the construction of places grounded in use value, open to a heterogeneity of uses and populations. These planners, whom I refer to as *democratic placemakers*, understood the centrality of schools and informal educative spaces in their designs as a means of bringing heterogeneous groups of people together with the goal of dissolving antagonisms. They educated the public about their plans and designs by showing places as populated, diverse, and active.

On the other end of the ideological spectrum, New Deal economic planners and a powerful federated network of large-scale real estate developers responded to the crises by advocating the construction of places grounded in exchange value; often single-use places with homogeneous populations dictated by the new 'sciences' of land management and the urban life cycle. These planners, whom I refer to as *economic placemakers*, understood central schools and informal educative spaces as amenities that increased the economic value of land and as markers that delimited inclusion and exclusion. They educated the public about their plans and designs by

quite literally showing places as numerical values or by displaying them as efficient, ordered, and homogeneous.[6]

These are not intended as hard and fast categories. Several planners and plans in this study lay somewhere between these two poles, shifted between them for political expediency, or shifted between them over time. However, the categories provide at least an initial frame to pursue the historical questions: What *were* the educational ideas of leading planners in the years immediately preceding the Depression? How did these ideas change over time and in response to depression and war?

This study seeks to add to a handful of recent works in the history of education that suggest new ways of thinking about the role of schools in 20th century metropolitan placemaking. These works– which we might label as belonging to 'the new (sub)urban history of education'– pay particular attention to the mutual constitution of housing and schooling in the making of particular neighborhoods or suburbs and show that schools have long served as a means for distinguishing one place from another.[7] Karen Benjamin shows a history of collaborations between school boards and real estate interests in Raleigh that dates back to the 1920s, with school siting decisions defining the placemaking efforts of these collaborations. She finds that the siting of schools– especially high schools– encouraged both white suburbanization as well as black settlement in older areas of the city and argues that increasing the spatial separation between white and African American schools and communities both increased real estate profits and made later desegregation efforts more difficult.[8] Despite popular mythology and the bulk of

[6] These ideas of land as use and land as exchange value come from Marx via John Logan's and Harvey Molotch's classic *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007/1987).
[7] The label seems appropriate given that this scholarship is often in communication with the literature of historians who identify themselves as scholars of "the new suburban history." See Kevin Kruse and Thomas Sugrue (eds.), *The New Suburban History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
[8] Karen Benjamin, "Suburbanizing Jim Crow: The Impact of School Policy on Residential Segregation in Raleigh," *Journal of Urban History* 38, no. 2 (2012).

historical studies, suburbanization did not only consist of white out-migration from the city. Jack Dougherty's study of Hartford demonstrates that both white and African American families left the city for the suburbs in the 1950s, but they purchased homes in different suburbs. Dougherty's analysis gives equal weight to school board curricular decisions, deliberate racial blockbusting, real estate advertising, and social class as explanatory factors of this differentiation, revealing that the non-racial (but implicitly racial) language of 'school quality' added significant value to suburban homes.[9] The use of 'color-blind' rhetoric to achieve differentiated and segregated spaces had federal provenance as well. Following the lead of 'the new suburban historians,' Ansley Erickson's work on Nashville illuminates the role of the federal government in local placemaking efforts during the post-war era. Keeping both the city and suburbs within view, Erickson shows that urban renewal policies gave city officials the means to construct new public schools near all-black or all-white public housing projects while at the same time using consolidated city-county tax dollars to build new suburban school campuses in line with federal school construction recommendations.[10] Similarly, Michael Clapper examines this urban renewal process at work in Philadelphia, with federal funds used to construct simple, block construction schools with "highly defended exterior space" in largely black West Philadelphia neighborhoods while the district built sprawling campuses in new developments on the periphery.[11] For Erickson and Clapper, school architecture reflected both federal funding directives and local

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[9] Jack Dougherty, "Shopping for Schools: How Public Education and Private Housing Shaped Suburban Connecticut," *Journal of Urban History* 38, no. 2 (2012): 205-224.

[10] Ansley Erickson, "Building Inequality: The Spatial Organization of Schooling in Nashville, Tennessee after *Brown,*" *Journal of Urban History* 38, No. 2 (2012), 242-270.

[11] Michael Clapper, "School Design, Site Selection, and the Political Geography of Race in Postwar Philadelphia," *Journal of Planning History*, no. 5 (2006): 241-263. Clapper's article appeared in a special section of this 2006 issue of the *Journal of Planning History* entitled, "Re-Forming Schools and Cities: Placing Education on the Landscape of Planning History." As th introductory essay by Domenic Vitiello explains, urban/education historian Michael Katz inspired the theme.

officials' ideas about the needs and desires of inhabitants and the future social and economic value of urban and suburban places.

Together these works have begun to "bridge the gap" between (sub)urban history and educational history by highlighting the processes by which local places are made and re-made around the physical and rhetorical constructions of schools.[12] Examining the overlapping policy contexts of education and housing have illuminated the often invisible administrative, political, and cognitive "schooling and housing *lines that divide*" individual cities and metropolitan areas.[13] The present study builds on that work and at the same time shifts the focus of analysis from school district leaders and real estate interests to "planners," an often overlooked group of agents who were party to the collaborations between school boards, housing, and real estate interests. Beginning in the 1920s and accelerating during the Depression and the World War II eras, professional planners at the federal, regional, and local levels played significant roles in imagining new designs for social living and crafting policies that attempted to bring these designs to fruition in local contexts. This study, then, is a contribution to the attempts to build a new bridge to span the gap between educational, housing, and planning history.

How was education incorporated into federal planning and housing policy between 1934-1955? In what ways did education enter into local implementations of federal policies in Seattle and the Pacific Northwest? What ideological and political-economic forces shaped these policies and implementations? What were the consequences of these policies and implementations for the ethnoracial, residential, and educational geographies of Seattle? Since the new (sub)urban historians of education have exclusively focused on the policies and practices of *economic*

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[12] Jack Dougherty, "Bridging the Gap Between Urban, Suburban, and Educational History" in *Rethinking the History of American Education,* eds. William Reece and John Rury (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2007).
[13] Jack Dougherty and contributors, *On the Line: How Schooling, Housing, and Civil Rights Shaped Hartford and Its Suburbs* (Hartford, CT: Trinity College, 2015), http://epress.trincoll.edu/ontheline2015.

placemakers who have divided cities and metropolitan areas by race and class, how do we understand those planners like Catherine Bauer who pushed against the use of planning to divide? Overall, we need a richer understanding of the historical relationships between education and planning so we can also see the ideas and efforts of *democratic placemakers*. In some instances, this will provide a history of what Juliane Zelizer calls "lost alternatives," when democratic ideas become compromised by the political-economic realities of policy-making and local implementations.[14] In other instances, historical cases of democratic placemaking provide glimpses of the possible, which are valuable to both the field of history and as tools for contemporary imaginings and movements.

Seattle and Its Places as a Context for Study

A primary site for this study is Seattle, a city that underwent significant growth in both population and spatial extent over the period. In sheer numbers, the population increased from 365,000 in 1930 to 557,000 thirty years later, with the defense and war industries exerting a strong pull to the city and region beginning in 1940 and lasting into the Korean War era. As historians Howard Droker and Quintard Taylor have shown, these industries (through the War Manpower Commission) actively recruited African American labor from the South beginning in 1943, and as a result Seattle's black population mushroomed from a mere 3,800 in 1940 to nearly 16,000 in 1950 and 27,000 in 1960.[15] The wartime in-migration in general put strains on housing, education, and social services in the city; the African American in-migration in

[14] Julian Zelizer, "Clio's Lost Tribe: Public Policy History Since 1978," *Journal of Policy History* 12, no. 3 (2000): 369-394.

[15] Howard Droker, "Seattle Race Relations during the Second World War," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (1976): 163-174; Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1994), chapters 6 and 7; also see National Housing Agency, Racial Relations Service, "The Minority Races in Seattle During and Since the War," (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1946).

particular put strains on Seattle's claim to progressivism, cosmopolitanism, and multiracial democracy.

City boosters, planners, and educational leaders long-touted their city to be exceptional. As Shelly Sang-Hee Lee has cogently argued, Seattle boosters beginning at the turn of the century marketed the city as the "Oriental Gateway" in order to gain a favorable position in the lucrative trans-Pacific trade market. Through public celebrations and promotional materials, boosters repeatedly described Seattle as a "cosmopolitan" and forward-looking city that was bound to serve as the cultural and economic entrepôt between the United States and Asia, between the 'Occident' and the 'Orient.' Drawing on earlier work of Bryce Nelson and Yoon Pak, Lee finds that Seattle schools occupied an important role within this cosmopolitan self-promotion in the 1920s and 1930s: the schools both fostered this cosmopolitan outlook amongst students through an intercultural curriculum and appeared as evidence of the city's cosmopolitan accomplishments. Unlike other West coast cities that segregated "Orientals" and other non-white students on the basis or race or perceived English proficiency– most notably San Francisco– Seattle had no school segregation policy and boosters trumpeted the district's refusal to bow to the demands of some white residents for the creation of a separate "Oriental School."[16]

Yet, the booster's cosmopolitan claims stood in opposition to many of the policies and practices occurring 'on the ground.' As Lee herself demonstrates, some white Seattlelites vigorously objected to the presence of Japanese pupils alongside white students in Seattle Schools, especially when Japanese students were seen to be taking opportunities away from

[16] Shelley Sang-Hee Lee, *Claiming the Oriental Gateway*; Nelson, *Good Schools*; Yoon Pak, *Wherever I Go I Will Always Be a Loyal American: Schooling Japanese Americans During World War II* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2002); Municipal Plans Commission, *Plan of Seattle: Report of the Municipal Plans Commission* (Seattle, 1911). The epigraph of the *Plan of Seattle* is striking: "Seattle/How beautiful thou art!/Stretching thine arms to greet the Orient;/Gazing with eyes of mystery, to pierce/The far sea-spaces; dreaming, mother-like;/The boundaries of thy power still unset,/The wonder of thy destiny, unknown."

whites. Likewise, the fact that Seattle did not create a separate 'Oriental school' can be explained by the fact that racially restrictive housing covenants and policies ensured segregated residential patterns, which in turn ensured that Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, African American, and Jewish students would be concentrated in only a few of the district's schools in Seattle's Chinatown, Nihonmachi (Japantown), Profanity Hill, and Central District. And, of course, the fact of the incarceration of Japanese-American residents of the city is the most blatant of the contradictions to Seattle's cosmopolitan image.

By the 1930s, Seattle political leaders and planners also had a history of municipal interventions in the physical landscape of the city. These municipal interventions were ostensibly efforts to improve both the living and commercial conditions of the city, but they clearly had ethnoracial, class, and political motivations and implications as well. In 1915, the city's Department of Health and Sanitation condemned 547 buildings throughout the city, many of them squatter's shacks along the tidelands to the south of the city or in the immigrant areas around Jackson Street.[17] In 1922, the city's health commissioner charged houseboat owners on Lake Union with creating a "virtual cesspool" of the lake and he demanded that their floating homes be removed.[18] In 1924, Roderick McKenzie, the young sociology professor at the University of Washington who had been trained under Robert Park and Ernest Burgess at the University of Chicago, noted that the "conservative, law-abiding, civic-minded population elements dwell" on the city's north and northeast hill-tops while the downtown section and the southern valleys contained a "class of people who are not only more mobile but whose mores and attitudes, as tested by voting habits, are more vagrant and radical."[19]

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[17] Matthew Klingle, *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 180.
[18] *Ibid.*, 189.
[19] *Ibid.*, 187.

As urban environmental historian Matthew Klingle notes, the city's attempts to flatten the undulating landscape between the valleys and the hilltops through a series of regrade projects between 1898-1931 did not produce the kind of social and economic improvements that they had envisioned. City planners, engineers, and business leaders thought the regrades would lead to an expansion of the commercial district, which would, in turn, bring workmen and capital into the city. They thought, too, that the flattening of the physical geography around the city center would expose the inhabitants of its valleys to more light, by which they meant moral light just as much as the light from the sun that officials believed would improve physical health. But instead, the city was left pockmarked by partially-regraded buttes as a stream of legal challenges by individual property owners suspended operations for months at a time. By 1925, the nascent Seattle Planning Commission admitted that some of the city's regrade projects failed so miserably that they yielded slide-prone areas filled with "dilapidated" dwellings."[20] With the return of the 1930 Census figures showing less than expected population growth, the Planning Commission also feared that frustration over the regrades, in addition to the city's massive highway construction efforts and the spread of public utilities, were pushing population growth toward the suburbs to the north of the city.[21] Those who were moving to the outskirts, the Commission declared, were "leaving [behind] what we are forced to call blighted areas."[22]

The onset of the Depression, of course, only increased fears that the city was turning into one big slum. Instead of concentrating on suburban growth, officials began turning their attention to tracts of land just south of the central business district, worrying that "Seattle's new 'real

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[20] Matthew Klingle, "Changing Spaces: Nature, Property, and Power in Seattle, 1880-1945," *Journal of Urban History* 32 (2006): 197-230.
[21] Seattle City Planning Commission, "Report of the City Planning Commission, 1931," Annual Reports, City Planning Commission, 1928-1967, Seattle Municipal Archives (hereafter, SMA).
[22] *Ibid.*

estate boom'" might be confined to the homeless encampments of the 'Hooverville' that sprouted on the grounds of the old Moran shipyard.[23] City officials expressed anxiety about how massive unemployment, especially in the extractive industries of Seattle's hinterlands, led to the establishment of these urban camps. It can be assumed that some of this concern was of a genuine humanitarian nature, but officials also expressed a race-class fear that the "ethnic rainbow" of Hoovervilles could pose a threat to the continuity of the city; a fear of having "[w]hite, black, red, yellow, and brown brush frayed elbows in shabby camaraderie."[24]

New Deal and wartime planners, plans, and policies entered into this local historical context. Chapters three through five detail the pitched battles between *economic placemakers* and *democratic placemakers* across multiple policy scales: federal, regional, state, and municipal. Specifically, four groups of historical actors– politicians, real estate developers, public housing officials, and public schooling officials– collaborated with planners and planning ideas as they vied for public support and federal funds during this period. While federal policy tended to privilege both the nominally-private real estate industry and residential and educational racial segregation, these chapters argue that the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) repeatedly fought to create more democratic places. Although politically calculating so as to sustain enough public and political support, SHA officials, in collaboration with Seattle Schools, included schools and informal educative spaces in its designs as a means of bringing somewhat heterogeneous groups of people together with the goal of dissolving antagonisms. As these chapters will show, the SHA was not without ideological and practical faults, but it served as a

[23] Donald Francis Roy, "Hooverville: A Study of a Community of Homeless Men in Seattle" (master's thesis, University of Washington, 1935), 22.
[24] *Ibid*., 42.

modest example locally and nationally that Catherine Bauer's ideal of school-centric planned neighborhoods could at least be partially realized.

While Seattle is the primary site for this study, in each chapter I move beyond the city: to the offices of the Russell Sage Foundation in New York; to the banks of the Columbia River and the incongruous landscape of the Great Columbia Plains; to the halls of Congress and the offices of several of the New Deal's alphabet soup of agencies. Educational policy makers, school district officials, University faculty, primary and secondary teachers, and students all appear in this study; as do nursery school, kindergarten, primary and secondary, and University classrooms. However, they are not the focus. They often appear first in the imagination of planners: schools as the imagined social centers of new neighborhoods on planning diagrams and teachers as the imagined translators and disseminators of planning information and visions. As planners moved toward realization of "education in design terms" and attempted to "educate the public" about the value of planning, they came into contact and began collaborations with educational leaders and educators.

Contributions of Study

The research for this dissertation spanned both educational archives (Seattle Public Schools Archive and the National Archives' Office of Education files) and planning archives (Seattle Municipal Archives, the National Archives' National Resources Planning Board files, the University of Pennsylvania's Lewis Mumford Papers collection and the Bancroft Libraries' Catherine Bauer Wurster Papers collection). Along the way, I also discovered the archival collections of federal, regional, and state agencies at the intersection of education and planning activities: the Washington State Archives' State Planning Council files and the Northwest branch

of the National Archives' Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission collection. This archival evidence, revealing the fits and starts of collaboration between the fields of education and planning during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s led me to the questions that ground this study and led to a story that travels across multiple contexts and multiple policy scales in search for answers. As mentioned previously, I understand this as a contribution to the effort to build a bridge between educational, housing, and planning histories. As such, I make three overarching historical claims.

1. City and Regional Planners Have Long Held Educational Ideas

At a 1909 meeting of the Chicago Planning Committee, Daniel Burnham and the committee members discussed how to create enthusiasm and political support for their ambitious, City Beautiful-inspired *Plan of Chicago*. They agreed "that a certain amount of money must be set aside to carry on a campaign of education on behalf of this Plan of Chicago, with lectures in Public Schools, etc., to show what was proposed in this matter here and had already been done on similar matters elsewhere."[25] Over the following eleven years, the committee produced a number of publications spreading the gospel of planning in general and the *Plan of Chicago* in particular, including *Wacker's Manual*, an eighth grade textbook for students in Chicago Public Schools. This may have been the first official collaboration between the new profession of city planning, public education, and public schooling.[26] When planning and planners moved away from the monumentalism of the City Beautiful movement toward a smaller scale– what historian Susan Marie Wirka calls the "City Social" movement– schools

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[25] Carl Smith, *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 112.
[26] Walter Moody and Charles Wacker, *Wacker's Manual of the Plan of Chicago: Municipal Economy* (Chicago: Chicago Plan Commission, 1911/1916/1920).

were imagined as neighborhood social centers for children and adults alike and as key sites for both/either democratic deliberation and/or social surveillance and control.[27]

These two ideas– planning as providing curriculum for a civic education and schooling as providing a physical and social anchor for planning– found their greatest expression during the late 1920s and during the New Deal. Chapter One concentrates on one prominent proponent of schools as an anchor: the educational researcher-turned-planner, Clarence Perry, whose 'neighborhood unit plan' became the single most referenced planning design of the period (and since). Chapter two focuses on regional planners in the Pacific Northwest and their collaborations with educational leaders and educators to create a textbook on the resources, industries, and potential economic future of the region.

2. New Deal and Wartime Housing Policies Contained Important Educational Provisions Based on Neighborhood Unit Planning

The process of "shopping for schools" that Jack Dougherty detailed in his study of real estate-school board collaborations in the 1950s had federal policy roots. Both the "presence *and quality*" of schools had figured into federal housing policy since 1934, with local agents of the newly-established Federal Housing Authority (FHA) evaluating educational access and quality as part of their assessment of home value, neighborhood desirability, and mortgage risk.[28] The Wagner-Steagall Housing Act of 1937, which created the United States Housing Authority (USHA) and the framework for local slum clearance and public housing construction, also contained educational provisions. The Act required adequate school facilities to be located in

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[27] Susan Marie Wirka, "The City Social Movement: Progressive Women Reforms and Early Social Planning," in Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver (eds.) *Planning the Twentieth Century American City* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 55-75.

[28] See Federal Housing Administration, *Underwriting Manual: Underwriting and Valuation Procedure Under Title II of the National Housing Act* (Washington: GPO, 1936), Section 2, par. 262.

proximity to the project– which usually wasn't an issue in central city 'slum' areas– but more importantly, it required and financially supported the construction of community facilities and informal educational sites to serve as the physical and social centers of public projects. The Lanham Act of 1940 (and its subsequent amendments) provided federal funding in heavily-impacted defense production areas to support the construction and operation of community facilities, nursery schools, and elementary schools in new defense housing projects near industrial sites. Federal policy makers hoped that these educational and social centers would increase the sociability amongst in-migrants from various parts of the country; thereby decreasing tensions amongst different ethnic, religious, economic, and sometimes racial groupings living together in these projects; and, ultimately, increasing the productive capacity of women and men working in war-related industries.

The Seattle Housing Authority's (SHA) policy of 'non-discrimination' in its low-cost and, especially in its suburban defense housing projects, meant that its social, recreational, and educational centers achieved a degree of white-nonwhite integration uncommon in most parts of the city and, indeed, in most parts of the country. This modest but uncommon degree of white-nonwhite integration, as well as the SHA's continual battles with real estate interests over the location and disposition of public and defense housing developments between 1939 and 1952, form the basis of chapters three through five. The results of these battles produced a highly segregated Seattle by the early 1950s, which would in turn set the stage for a civil rights movement that pushed back against the *economic placemakers* who propagated white racial fears and anxieties about integrated living and schooling.

3. Economic Placemakers Controlled Development During the Period, but their Control Was Not Total

The notion that a home's proximity to a school added economic value to the home was not new in the 1930s, but it did become codified in the standards and regulations of real estate groups such as the National Association of Real Estate Boards as well as in federal policies and agencies such as the Federal Housing Administration (see the Catherine Bauer's 1955 assessment above). This economic argument reached wider audiences during the period under study and became a common rationale for local, state, and federal intervention in the landscape. As Seattle entered the 1950s, the Seattle Planning Commission and the Seattle School District (among other agencies) divided the entire city into new places– small neighborhood units and slightly larger community units in an effort, they claimed, to assure an equal distribution of educational, social, and recreational services and resources to all parts of the city. As I detail in Chapter Five, not very far beneath the surface lay an economic argument: "[o]ne of the most significant factors in the preservation of [property] values is the provision of adequate educational and recreational facilities, properly located so as to serve all age groups, within accessible distance from home."[29] To many– perhaps most– Seattleites, this rationale seemed logical, commonplace. However, some Seattle residents, especially those involved in Seattle civil rights organizations, recognized that tying economics, education, and housing together had produced segregation historically, both in Seattle and in cities across the country.

True to history, Seattle's post-war planners, real estate developers, and white homeowners achieved an even greater segregation by 1960 than they had achieved immediately after the war. Fully 78% of African American Seattleites lived in ten of the city's 118 census

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[29] *Ibid.*, 12.

tracts according to the 1960 decennial census– up from 69% in 1950– even though the black population had increased by 11,000.[30] And in 1957, when the Seattle Schools did its own census, nine elementary schools– eight in the Central District and one at the Seattle Housing Authority's low-rent project at High Point– contained 81% of all African American pupils in the city. In one of these Central District schools, T.T. Minor, the school district continued to add portable classrooms to its grounds in order to preserve the 'neighborhood school plan' instead of transferring black students to fill open seats at the 99.6% white Lowell School less than a mile away.[31]

As had been the case throughout the period under study, the *economic placemakers* were successful in achieving their goals, but their victory would not be total. Planners such as Catherine Bauer would begin to urge planners and educational leaders who believed in the possibilities of democratic places to join with civil rights, open housing, and school desegregation efforts in order "to reshape housing and planning policy in terms of basic community values."[32] Similarly, at the local level, SHA officials of the 1950s fought for institutional survival and relevance amidst a postwar policy shift that favored the 'economic development' of cities through public-private ventures in urban redevelopment and renewal. SHA officials attempted to keep alive the vision of public housing as a working social experiment that proved the viability and benefit of black-white neighborhood interactions– especially amongst youth. They drew on the SHA's positive reception amongst local and national civil rights leaders and University scholars in 'race relations' to claim that SHA

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[30] Quintard Taylor, *The Forging a Black Community*, 178-181.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 209; Aaron Gilmartin (Seattle Urban League School Committee) to Seattle Superintendent Ernest Campbell, 30 October 1958, Superintendent's Working Files, Superintendent's Office/Fleming & Campbell, Seattle School District Archives).
[32] Bauer, "Housing Policy and the Educational System," 22.

housing, educational and recreational offerings, and community centers were model democratic places.

These democratic conceptualizations of places– while at times overstated or more aspirational than actual– remain a potential resource for a creative politics and a disciplined analysis and critique of proposed housing, educational, and (sub)urban policies in our own time.

Chapter One

School-Centric Neighborhood Design: Clarence Perry, the Regional Planning Association of America, and the Early New Deal, 1909-1934

Clarence Perry, associate director of the Recreation Department at the influential Russell Sage Foundation, began his address to the 1924 Annual Meeting of the National Council on Social Welfare in Toronto by engaging the imagination of his audience, “Suppose we wanted to plan a [city] district so it would meet our ideals as to health, recreation, young people's environment, and all-round human happiness-how would we lay it out?”[1]

The Toronto audience was one of the first to hear Perry’s proposal for the construction of what he came to call “neighborhood units”: small, highly-planned areas with separated commercial and residential sections, ample recreational and park-like “breathing spots,” and importantly, a public elementary school at its center. While this neighborhood design was not a wholly original response to the perceived social problems associated with a congested and anonymous modern urban life– indeed it shared much in common with the European models that Catherine Bauer would write about in *Modern Housing*– it nonetheless marked a significant transition in Perry’s own thinking and advocacy and a significant moment in the history of American planning.[2]

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[1] Clarence Arthur Perry, “The Relation of Neighborhood Forces to the Larger Community: Planning a City Neighborhood from the Social Point of View,” *Official Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the National Conference on Social Welfare*, 1924, 415.

[2] Some in the Toronto audience probably recognized Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City design as Perry’s influence. Perry might have taken the name and design specifications directly from Chicago architect William Drummond, who submitted his “neighborhood unit plan” to a design competition held by the City Club of Chicago in 1913. All the designs for the development of 160 acre suburban plot of land were published by the University of Chicago Press in 1916. Alfred Yeomans (ed), *City Residential Land Development: Studies in Planning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916), 37.

During most of his previous fifteen years at Russell Sage, Perry's writings, speeches, and professional consultations focused on the construction of modern school buildings as the social centers of immigrant and working class urban neighborhoods. From this point forward, he would focus on the construction of *entire neighborhoods* from a "social point of view." Perry's neighborhood unit systematically and spatially tied schools, informal educational spaces (parks, community centers, playgrounds), and other urban elements (residences, public buildings, roads, etc.) together in a single design.[3] Thus, examining the work of Clarence Perry is a logical starting place to examine the intersections of education and planning precisely because his biography itself bridged education and planning. However, to date his treatment in the literature is symptomatic of a broader disconnect between the historiographies of the two sub-fields. In education, Perry appears as a minor character in the field's Progressive Era march towards a greater scientific understanding of new approaches in education; his later collaborative work with urbanists around the conceptualization and promotion of the 'neighborhood unit' is rarely mentioned, despite its emphasis on the centrality of schooling to family, community, and civic life.[4] In the urban planning literature, Perry and the 'neighborhood unit' are treated as foundational to the field and the profession, but Perry's long career in education and the important social function of the school receives short shrift.[5]

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[3] Christopher Roach, "Education Superinfrastructure: Education + Urbanization in Rio de Janiero, Brazil," *Harvard Design Magazine* 37 (2011), 1-5.

[4] For examples of Perry in the historiography of education, see William Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform: Grassroots Movements During the Progressive Era* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), chapters 6 & 7; Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *An Elusive Science: The Troubling History of Education Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000): 83-87; Tracy Steffes, *School, Society, and State: A New Education to Govern America, 1890-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012): 38-41.

[5] For examples of Perry in the historiography of urban planning, see Mary Sies and Christopher Silver, *Planning the Twentieth-Century American City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2002); Edward Relph, *The Modern Urban Landscape* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1987); *American City Planning Since 1890*; William Rohe, "From Local to Global: One Hundred Years of Neighborhood Planning," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 75 (Spring 2009): 209

How did Perry's earlier work at Russell Sage influence his school-centric neighborhood unit design? What explains the rapid and widespread acceptance of the neighborhood unit plan in the decade between 1924 and 1934? How did the neighborhood unit intersect with racial and class formations in this period of immigration controls and African American migration from the south to northern cities? What were the consequences of the neighborhood unit on early New Deal policy formations?

Answering these questions can help illuminate the centrality of Clarence Perry– and education– to later federal planning and housing policies and designs. This chapter begins by examining Clarence Perry's work with the Russell Sage Foundation surveying and disseminating information about the various movements nationwide promoting the 'wider use of schools' and the school as a social center. Even though Perry did not himself engage in 'on the ground' work in cities and school districts related to these educational reform movements, I argue that he deserves more attention as an advocate and disseminator of the social center idea than he has received within the extant literature. The remainder of the chapter examines Perry's work on the neighborhood unit design over the course of the 1920s. I argue that what began as a democratic design– one that intended to bring heterogeneous groups of people together with the goal of dissolving antagonisms and building a community– became compromised by Perry's own racial fears about African American migration to New York and his interaction with the real estate industry and 'real estate science.' By the mid 1920s, Perry and other economic placemakers were advocating the neighborhood unit as a tool *for* racial segregation in new, large-scale, high-end suburban developments and in slum clearance and urban redevelopment projects. However, the economic rationale of the neighborhood unit did not exhaust the concept's potential. I end the chapter by following it into the 'radical' plans to create regional constellations of urban clusters

in the Tennessee River Valley and the Columbia River Basin that became foundational to Roosevelt's early New Deal response to economic crisis.

Clarence Perry and the Modern Public School, 1909-1921

In May 1909, Leonard Ayres, then director of education and statistics at the Russell Sage Foundation, enticed Clarence Perry to New York City to join the Department of Recreation at the Foundation.[6] Perry's first assignment was to collect information from school districts and municipal recreation departments (largely on the East Coast) about the extent to which school buildings were used, or could be used, beyond school hours "for recreation and for other social and civic purposes."[7] Eighteen months later, *Wider Use of the School Plant* appeared, documenting a range of efforts: from school athletic leagues and folk dancing instruction after hours in New York City schools; to evening commercial courses in Buffalo and Pittsburgh; to English literacy courses in the mill town of Lowell; to the evening and weekend use of school playgrounds in Newark; to the public lectures at schools in Cleveland; and the experiments of Edward Ward's "adult civic clubs" in Rochester.[8]

In the book's final chapter, Perry argued that even though "the wider use of schools" meant different things in different municipalities, the calls for 'wider use' were united by a desire to see schools as local institutions that could counter the most destructive forces of modernity. Perry, in line with social settlement directors like Robert Woods and Jane Addams, as well as sociologists like Charles Horton Cooley, contended that modern industrial economy stratified

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[6] Memorandum, "Personal Data Regarding Clarence Arthur Perry," Recreation Department: Clarence Perry Papers, Russell Sage Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center (hereafter, CPP).
[7] John Glenn, Lilian Brandt, F. Emerson Andrews, *Russell Sage Foundation, 1907-1946, Volume 1* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1947), 72. (hereafter, *RSF Vol.1*).
[8] Clarence Perry, *Wider Use of the School Plant* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1913 [1910]).

people "horizontally" along class lines while at the same time "cleaving us vertically" along ethnic and religious lines. Schools, as public institutions distributed throughout cities, could counter these tendencies of social fragmentation if they were built with wider use in mind and if their hours and activities were extended to meet the needs of both adults and youth.[9]

Based on the initial success of *Wider Use*, Perry had been invited to participate in the First National Conference on Civic and Social Center Development in Madison in October 1911, where he found himself in the midst of a "spirit akin to the fervor of a great religious revival."[10] In subsequent journal articles and bulletins for Sage, Perry documented how that spirit translated into numerous campaigns to secure state enabling legislation permitting 'wider use' of buildings and provided the impetus for a growing network of university scholars, foundation leaders, and school and welfare administrators involved in surveying their local educational and recreational offerings.[11] He also strove to capture the wide-ranging motivations for wider use advocates in cities and towns across the country: calls from mothers' unions and parent-teacher associations for wider use as a means for "pleasant and suggestive contact" between parent and teacher; urban reformers who promoted wider use as a way to counteract "hostile street influences" through structured and supervised recreation; and civic groups that urged the use of the school as a central site for the discussion of educational and municipal issues.[12]

Perry argued that at its most advanced and most democratic, the school as social center would not only host community activities, but would have "a conscious purpose to develop

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[9] *Ibid.*, 366.
[10] Quotation from the *Survey* magazine in William Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform: Grassroots Movements During the Progressive Era* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 177.
[11] Glenn, Brandt, and Andrews, *RSF Vol. 1*, 78-82. For discussion of the growing network of scholars, foundation staff, and educational and welfare administrators see Tracy Steffes, *School, Society, & State,* 36-44.
[12] Clarence Perry, "A Survey of the Social-Center Movement," *The Elementary School Teacher*, vol. 13 (Nov., 1912), 131-133; Clarence Perry, *The Real Snag in Social Center Extension* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1914); Perry, *Educational Extension*.

neighborhood organization."[13] Each social center would have a director who would go out into the neighborhood and involve residents in organizing and managing its activities, giving them "a real voice in shaping the policy of the center" and a hand "in the growth and improvement of the center."[14] Giving residents a real voice could mean expanding educational or recreational opportunities at the center or organizing around neighborhood or municipal concerns.

This kind of active organizing and participation, which Perry linked to both Jane Addams' Hull House and an idealized vision of the New England town meeting, could "make one big family out of the whole neighborhood," and produce a "heightened social solidarity [and] the dissolution of class and racial antagonisms" through interaction, discussion, and debate.[15] This might be especially important in immigrant enclaves– like the Haymarket District Perry studied as part of Leonard Ayres' famous Cleveland School Survey in 1916– but Perry argued the "democratic scope" of the social center would be impaired if there was a widespread belief that they existed "exclusively [for] the less privileged classes."[16] 'True democracy' could only be attained if every school, in every part of the city, functioned as a social center.

When viewed in historical perspective, the calls for wider use and schools as social centers fit alongside a bevy of other Progressive Era school reforms such as kindergartens, playgrounds, Americanization classes, and vocational education. As educational historian Tracy Steffes has argued, such reforms were often initiated by middle-class, female-dominated, private groups and they "promoted a similar mix of humanitarian concern, paternalism, social justice, and Americanization anxieties."[17] They did little to disrupt or challenge the *causes* of horizontal

[13] Clarence Perry, *The School as a Factor in Neighborhood Development* (New York: Russell Sage, 1914), 9.
[14] Perry, *Educational Extension*, 99.
[15] Perry, *Ten Years of the Community Center Movement*, 4.
[16] Perry, *The School as a Factor in Neighborhood Development*, 10.
[17] Steffes, *School, Society, and State*, 22.

stratification or vertical cleavages, but they sought to extend the reach and responsibilities of schools and create the means for more active and engaged citizens amongst both adults and children.

While many of these Progressive Era school reforms became an accepted part of the school system, Perry lamented in an article ten years after the Madison conference there were few school districts or municipalities that supported the kind of social center with staff that actively sought to build neighborhood consciousness or social solidarity. To Perry, this could be partly explained by the intransigence and fear of entrenched city bosses and political factions:

> A municipally supported staff in every neighborhood, each building up an organization, constitutes a civic machine with political potentiality of no small order. If it was not for you, it could be terribly against you. Since it could not be controlled, no important political faction is willing to run the risk of having it as a possible enemy. There are elements also in every community which are constitutionally opposed to any vital extension of the public education system [especially if such an extension was remotely political]. [18]

But Perry also found overlaps of efforts in neighborhoods across the country: churches, social settlements, schools, and social clubs all located in the same neighborhood and yet their activities and missions were uncoordinated and disconnected. Such overlap and waste could continue in prosperous neighborhoods because residents could financially support myriad organizations, but "poorer districts [would be forced to] go on without the requisite facilities for a healthy civic and cultural life– feeling they cannot afford them."[19] He proffered a solution: the "comprehensive planning" of neighborhoods in order to avoid overlap and in order to ensure facilities for such a healthy civic and cultural life.[20]

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[18] Perry, *Ten Years of the Community Center Movement*, 5.
[19] *Ibid.*, 9.
[20] *Ibid.*

Perry was not entirely moving away from his study and promotion of wider use or the school as social center. But this article reflecting on ten years of the social center movement, published in the *New York Evening Post* and reprinted in the journal *Community Center* and as a Russell Sage pamphlet, marked the start of a propitious transition toward thinking about what the urban historian Howard Gillette has dubbed "civitas by design."[21] If school districts and municipalities were unwilling to support organizers to shape *civitas*– that social contract binding the community of citizens– then perhaps neighborhoods could be physically designed in ways that encouraged such community relations. As Gillette explains, this idea of 'civitas by design' was not new in the 1920s; it fit within a considerable history of environmental interventionist thought that had found its most advanced expression in Ebenezer Howard's conception and construction of his two 'Garden Cities' outside London. Howard's well-known illustration 'The Three Magnets' from *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1902; image 1.1) presented the basic idea: he would take the best of the town (social opportunity, chances of employment, high wages, places of amusement) and the best of the country (natural beauty and an abundance of land, water, sun, and clean air) and create the town-country– the Garden City– as a new kind of living environment where cooperation and freedom would reign.

Clarence Perry knew of Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City idea, not least because he lived in Forest Hills Gardens in Queens, built by the Russell Sage Foundation as one of the first attempts to realize the Garden City in the United States. But between

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[21] Howard Gillette, Jr., *Civitas by Design: Building Better Communities, from the Garden City to the New Urbanism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

1922 and 1929, he came into extended contact with a number of Garden City planners as part of a massive Sage survey of the New York metropolitan area.

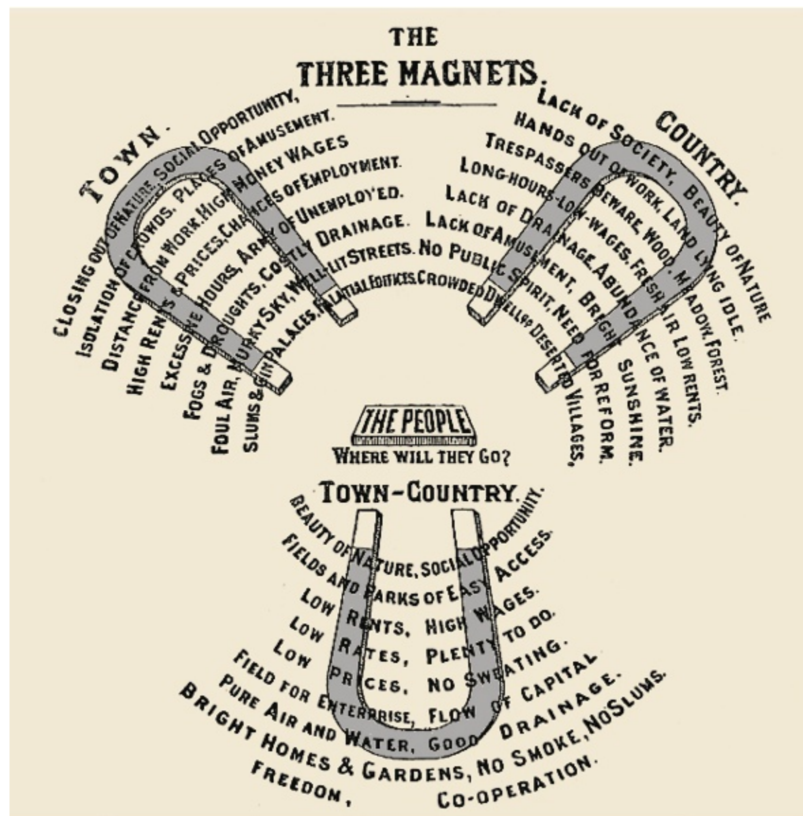

Image 1.1. Ebenezer Howard, "The Three Magnets," *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1902)

With these contacts, I argue, Perry transformed his rather vague notion of 'comprehensive planning' of neighborhoods to solve the problem of social and civic overlap into an image of a rationally and civic-centered unit of social living that would soon surpass Ebenezer Howard's famous image of the three magnets.

Clarence Perry and The Regional Plan of New York, 1922-1929

In February 1921, the trustees of the Russell Sage Foundation authorized the appointment of a committee to make a comprehensive study of "all the area in which New Yorkers earn their

livelihood and make their homes." The trustees initially appropriated "as much as $300,000" over three or four years to make the necessary surveys and subsequent plans, but the final product– eight survey volumes and two volumes of actual plans– took ten years to complete at a total expense of $1.2 million.[22] What the committee defined as 'the region' consisted of 5,528 square miles and had a population of almost 10 million. Within that geographic scope, the New York survey set out to study a range of relations "between comparatively static physical conditions, and dynamic and evolutionary economic and social conditions affecting millions of associated beings."[23] The director of the Survey, the esteemed Garden City planner Thomas Adams, invited several members of the Sage Foundation staff to contribute their expertise. Because Adams intended to survey the distribution of recreational sites within the region, he called on the Foundation's Director and Assistant Director of Recreation, Lee Hanmer and Clarence Perry.

Hanmer had been an employee at Sage almost from the beginning. He began his work in November 1907 as the secretary of the Foundation's Committee on Playground Extension, the Foundation's "first venture in sustained work of its own," and a key source of publicity for the Playground Association of America.[24] While Hanmer's work on recreation tended to focus on public playgrounds as a physical and moral health issue and Perry's work focused on the 'wider use' and social center movements, the two did come together on occasion to survey the recreational opportunities writ large of cities.[25] The New York survey, however, dwarfed their

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[22] John Glenn, Lilian Brandt, F. Emerson Andrews, *Russell Sage Foundation, 1907-1946, Volume 2* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1947), 438-439. (hereafter, *RSF Vol.2*).
[23] *Ibid.*, 444.
[24] Glenn, Brandt, and Andrews, *RSF Vol. 1*, 70.
[25] See for example, Lee Hanmer and Clarence Perry, *Recreation in Springfield, Illinois* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1914).

previous efforts in terms of its large geographic scale and in the demands for statistical precision placed on them by Adams.

The two began their joint work in the fall of 1922 in a standard rational-mathematical manner. For every given section of the metropolitan area, they calculated the actual and projected population, then multiplied that number by the standard square footage of recreational space deemed sufficient, and then located on a map areas where large enough recreational spaces could be distributed within walking to the most amount of people. However, and much to his credit, Perry became concerned that this method didn't do justice to other factors that might prevent children and families from accessing or utilizing public spaces that appeared to be within a reasonable distance. The "automobile menace" topped his list of factors that needed to be considered. Perry wrote that "deep lines are gradually being drawn upon the city map" resulting in the "cutting up [of] residential areas into small islands separated from each other by raging streams of traffic."[26] There seemed to be no stopping the march of progress that automobiles and highways represented, but Perry believed that a comprehensive neighborhood planning scheme could prevent the "carnage" of street fatalities involving children and could re-orient urban populations around common services. The new situation prompted by the automobile might in fact be "a blessing in disguise," Perry argued. It signaled an opportunity for planners– in collaboration with reformers and sociologists– to propose "a model scheme of arrangement for the various services, institutions and other components of the neighborhood *milieu*."[27]

Between September 1922 and December 1923, it appears that Perry left Hanmer to continue the survey of parks and playgrounds while Perry sketched out such a model scheme in

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[26] Clarence Perry, "The Neighborhood Unit: A Scheme of Arrangement for Family-Life Community," Perry et al., *Neighborhood and Community Planning, Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs* (New York: Regional Plan, 1929), 30.
[27] *Ibid.*, 31.

consultation with some of the city planning staff employed by Adams. Perry presented his scheme first to a joint annual meeting of the Community Center Association and American Sociological Society in Washington, D.C. in December 1923 and then to the full staffs of the Plan of New York and the Russell Sage Foundation the following month. It received instant acclaim, garnering an article in the *Washington Post* on the day following its initial presentation and accolades from the New York planning staff, which included some of the nation's leading city planners and landscape architects.[28]

Ideally, Perry's neighborhood unit would total 160 acres (a quarter section) and be based around a number of design principles. Those wide arterial highways carrying streams of traffic would form the boundaries of each unit, with curved interior streets that discouraged all traffic that was not local. Along the periphery of each city unit would be two or three shopping districts, housing "stores of a neighborhood character" where the "housewife will find her grocery, meat shop, bakery and drug store all together in a compact, accessible" area within walking distance of the home.[29] The neighborhood unit would be subdivided into a number of different sized lots– some single-family homes, other multi-family row houses or apartment buildings– with easy access to green and play spaces. In Perry's initial rendering, the center of each city district was to be a civic center: a central green with an "ample site" devoted to an "up-to-date" public elementary school on one side and other "public" buildings nearby; including perhaps churches, a fraternal hall, a "little theater or a motion-picture house" (figure 1.2).[30]

[28] "Speaker Forecasts Neighborhood Plan for Future Cities," *The Washington Post*, December 27, 1923; Memorandum, "Significant Dates in the Development of the Neighborhood Unit Idea," February 11, 1938, Clarence Perry Papers, Russell Sage Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center.
[29] "Speaker Forecasts Neighborhood Plan for Future Cities."
[30] Perry, "The Relation of Neighborhood Forces to the Larger Community," 415-416.

In fact, Perry argued that the population size and density of any neighborhood unit (even it didn't meet the 160 acre ideal) should be determined by the capacity of the central elementary school. Referencing a number of city school district surveys as well as national reports on schoolhouse planning, Perry calculated that it would take a population of between 4,800 to

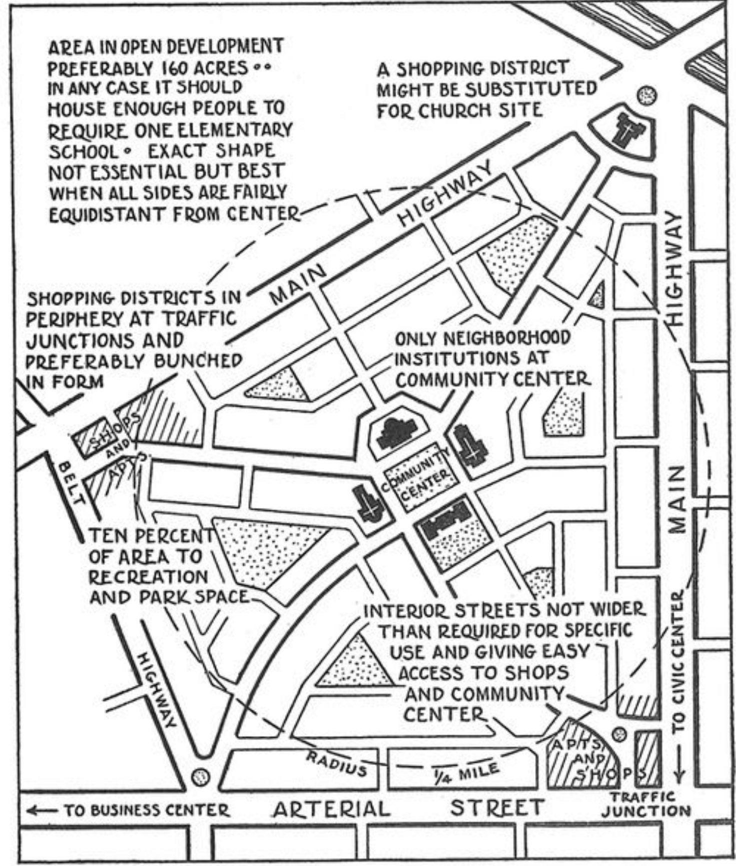

Figure 1.2. Clarence Perry, **"**Neighborhood Unit Principles," *Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs,* Volume 7 (1929)

support a 'small elementary school' of about 800 pupils and a population of 9,000 to supply the 1,500 pupils that would constitute an acceptably large elementary school.[31]

When the perspicacious writer, planner, and social philosopher Lewis Mumford later commented on Perry's design in *The City in History* (1961), he made clear that Perry's use of the

[31] Perry references a number of studies undertaken by George Strayer and N.L. Englhardt on the proper size of modern schools and acceptable distances between the home and school. Perry includes a brief summary of one of their reports as an appendix to his volume on the neighborhood unit for the New York Survey.

modern school as the anchor of the design made it immediately attractive to architects, planners, and social reformers alike.[32] Mumford also claimed that Perry's earlier involvement in the field of education allowed him to see what other planners could not; namely, that modern education was much more than a school building of individual classrooms. Perry described to planners that the modern school contained "a commodious assembly hall," a "spacious gymnasium," a large enough plot of land for play and for children to explore nature, and perhaps a branch of the public library. Following in the 'wider use' tradition, students would use these spaces during the school day, but neighborhood residents seeking intellectual or entertainment activities could take advantage of these spaces during the evenings and weekends.[33] Because all of the students would reside within the boundaries of the neighborhood unit and because the school would be located no more than a half mile from any neighborhood residence, children would be able to walk or bike to school along interior streets without fear of drowning within the 'raging streams of traffic.'

Mumford suggested that much as the church or the market held together the cities of previous epochs, the modern school with its ancillary educative spaces would form the nucleus of the cell that held the modern body politic together.

> Clarence Perry had in effect restored, with modern ideas and modern facilities, above all with self-conscious art, one of the oldest components of the city, the quarter, which we found in early Mesopotamia. But he had transposed the temple or church, as the attractive nucleus, into the school and the community center, and he had incorporated the playground and the park as an essential element of the

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[32] When I purchased a used, but original edition of *The City in History*, I found a clipping of Mumford's *New York Times* obituary inside the back cover. It begins, "Lewis Mumford, a philosopher, literary critic, historian, city planner, cultural and political commentator, essayist and perspicacious writer on the subject of architecture, died on Friday at his home in Amernia, N.Y. He was 94 years old." "Lewis Mumford, a Visionary Social Critic, Dies at 94," *New York Times*, January 28, 1990.

[33] Perry, "The Neighborhood Unit," 49.

> whole design, thus bringing back into the city some of the rural elements it had too complaisantly forfeited.[34]

As part of Perry's promotion of the social and civic potential of the neighborhood unit plan, he delivered a paper entitled "The Local Community as a Unit in the Planning of Urban Residential Areas" at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Society in New York in 1925. The paper basically rehashed the motivations and principles of the plan, but the meeting proved auspicious because it introduced Perry to a number of University of Chicago sociologists who were developing a human ecological model of the city that mirrored plant and animal ecology. Two human ecological ideas in particular informed Perry's subsequent thinking about the neighborhood unit. The first, Ernest Burgess' 'concentric zone' theory, proffered an image of the city as a series five zones: 1) the central business district, 2) a 'zone in transition' between commercial and residential areas, 3) a zone of workingmen's homes, 4) a residential zone of apartments, and 5) a zone of single family dwelling on the periphery. Briefly, in a growing city where there is dynamic competition for land, industrial and population 'invasions' into neighboring zones causes a process of 'succession' and begins a wavelike pattern of out-migration of the more affluent to a more distant zone. The second, Robert Park and Burgess' 'urban life cycle' theory, contended that human communities, like plant communities, progressed in a predictable and sequential set of stages in which they "arise, grow, mature, attain old age and die".[35]

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[34] Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1961), 501.
[35] Quote from Frederick Clements in Jennifer Light, "New Deal Conservation and Urban Improvement," *Journal of Urban History* vol. 35 (May 2009), 533.

Perry became one of the first to apply the Chicago-based concentric zone theory to "the evolution taking place in New York City, and especially on the Island of Manhattan."[36] The limited space on the island required that the "concentric rings [be] squeezed into segments," but Perry found only one key difference between the two cities: in New York there existed "a discernable tendency for wealthy citizens to shift their town abodes in the opposite direction– towards the center."[37] Perry believed that this provided him– and the *Regional Survey* directors– a unique opportunity to illustrate the "usefulness of neighborhood-unit principles in the replanning [sic] and reconstruction of central residence districts."[38] In what would become an essential policy element in the federal urban redevelopment policies of the 1940s, Perry argued for new municipal powers and some form of state aid to assemble and clear land for the purpose of initiating a demonstration project that would create a five-block neighborhood unit of "a luxurious and costly character."[39] He even identified an ideal spot for the first project: the tenements on the Lower East Side, which he predicted would continue on the cycle toward death as the new immigrant population dwindled because of national restrictions.

If the area was to survive at all, the ecological logic went, redevelopment was necessary. Such redevelopment would "probably displace many of the present inhabitants" because ground rents had become too high for architects and builders to replace the tenements with modern structures that would be affordable to previous residents. Thus, the redevelopment would gradually "change the character of much of the East Side population."[40] 'Changing the character' of the Lower East Side meant not only that the dangerous and ill-constructed

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[36] Perry, "Neighborhood Unit," 106.
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] *Ibid.,* 107.
[39] *Ibid.*, 111.
[40] *Ibid.*

tenements would be replaced by a neighborhood "that would meet our ideals as to health, recreation, young people's environment, and all-round human happiness," it also meant that poor and working class immigrant laborers would be replaced by affluent and native-born whites.

Perry began promoting the neighborhood unit in journal articles between 1926 and 1929 as a "method of *producing* homogeneity" by "draw[ing] together a group of people of similar living standards and similar economic ability to realize them."[41] Although it received little attention at the time, this seemed to reflect a change in Perry's thinking. Recall that in 1921 he advocated a form of community organizing around social centers that could take a seemingly diverse community and, *through participation*, achieve a form of *civitas*– "heightened social solidarity [and] the dissolution of class and racial antagonisms." By 1926, *civitas* appeared in Perry's writing about the neighborhood unit as an *a priori* feature of the design that needed preservation and protection from difference. He gave the example of his own Forest Hills Gardens:

> You go to the Gardens because you like the homes and the environment. Consequently, there is an automatic selection of more or less like-minded people. The Gardens, by its process of formation, achieves homogeneity and that […] is the cardinal requisite of the herd. It is then a group with at least one common vital interest– that of preserving the characteristics of its environment.[42]

To Perry, the "preservation" of the "environment"– the preservation of like-mindedness– could be the basis for a homeowners association and any number of voluntary associations or interest groups. It could only be assured, however, through the formal-legal restrictions on properties. Unlike J.C. Nichols' planned "Country Club District" in Kansas City, which Perry also feted as an exemplar of neighborhood unit design principles, the Forest Hills property restrictions did not include racial covenants. However, from statements Perry made in 1927–

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[41] Clarence Perry, "City Planning for Neighborhood Life," *Social Forces,* 8 (Sept. 1929), 99. Emphasis mine.
[42] *Ibid*., 560.

which will be explored in greater detail in the next section– it is clear that he favored racial segregation in neighborhood units. What contributed to Perry's advocacy for racial exclusion?[43]

One plausible explanation is that Perry's interaction with the Chicago human ecologists produced racial fears that the increases in southern black migration would cause an 'invasion' and 'succession' of neighborhoods throughout New York and other northern cities unless neighborhood boundaries and 'protections' were initiated or maintained. Another plausible explanation is that Perry's work with Robert Whitten, Russell Sage's leading expert on zoning, convinced Perry to transition from thinking about the neighborhood unit as a tool for democratic placemaking toward thinking about it in purely economic terms. Whitten joined Perry in 1925 to adapt the neighborhood unit to the five-block area for slum clearance and redevelopment as a luxury city neighborhood for wealthy whites returning to the city.

As urban/planning historians have detailed, Whitten was an influential advocate for zoning and a consultant on numerous comprehensive municipal zoning efforts. He helped design New York City's comprehensive ordinance in 1916 (the first in the nation) that restricted and regulated the height of buildings, ostensibly on public health and land value grounds. But not far beneath the surface, Whitten's zoning ordinance intended to halt the expansion of factory lofts and thousands of immigrant factory workers from the "finest retail and residential areas in the world" on Fifth Avenue above Thirty-second Street.[44] Whitten also authored zoning measures in suburban Cleveland in the early 1920s that included prohibitions on multiple-family dwellings. While Whitten maintained benign intent, he faced accusations that anti-Semitism motivated the efforts, with one contemporary writing that "'Jewish elements' are attacked in local publications

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[43] Thanks to Katy Swalwell of Iowa State University and Ansley Erickson of Teachers College for engaging me on this question.
[44] See David Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and Whit Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 63.

for advancing apartment projects in the area."[45] In Atlanta, Whitten's 1922 comprehensive zoning proposal included not only the standard land classifications by size and use, but also created three residential "race districts": R1, white; R2, "colored"; and R3, undetermined. Throwing off all pretense, Whitten argued that "[a] reasonable segregation is normal, inevitable, and desirable" and that his zoning proposal represented a generous opportunity to "promote the welfare and prosperity of both the white and colored races" in stable, racially homogenous Atlanta neighborhoods. Historian David Freund contends that Whitten here articulated what would soon become a familiar defense of zoning: "the existence of de facto segregation […] made continued, state-sponsored segregation a necessity."[46]

Perry's meetings with Whitten represented the first occasions in which Perry considered the neighborhood unit in economic placemaker terms. Essentially an outsider to the field of real estate and its profit-driven and risk-averse racial ideology– Perry took Whitten as the expert and worked with him to modify the neighborhood unit so it would appeal to the greatest number. By November 1926, Whitten and Perry had sketched out two additional neighborhood units to fit the development needs and economic requirements of different metropolitan situations: a 100 acre unit for an industrial section, a 75 acre "Apartment House Unit" at the confluence of the downtown business and close-in residential areas, in addition to the "Five-Block Apartment-House" unit to meet the "rehabilitation" needs of a "slum district" (image 1.3).[47] Even though these units did not match the ideal suburban quarter-section of land previously proposed by Perry, they each consisted of the same design principles and features, and required a population

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[45] Stuart Meck, "Zoning and Anti-Semitism in the 1920s: The Case of Cleveland Jewish Orphan Home v. Village of University Heights and its Aftermath," *Journal of Planning History*, vol 4 (May 2005), 97.
[46] LeeAnn Lands, *The Culture of Property: Race, Class, and Housing Landscapes in Atlanta, 1880-1950* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 143-5; Christopher Silver, *The Separate City: Black Communities in the Urban South, 1940-1968* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1995), 22; Freund, *Colored Property*, 66.
[47] Perry, "The Neighborhood Unit," 34-44; Clarence Perry, "The Cellular City– Why It Is Coming," *The Survey* (January 15, 1930), 459.

able to support the modern elementary school always stationed near the center of the neighborhood.

When these modified plans were finally published alongside the original 160-acre plan in volume 7 of the New York survey in 1929, the neighborhood unit appeared malleable enough to serve different purposes. The neighborhood unit could draw people ‘of similar living standards’ together and be the basis upon which they protected those common values; it could interrupt the human ecologists’ notion of an urban area’s predictable decline toward death; it could, at the same time, guide the real estate s interest in realizing greater profits by redeveloping ‘blighted’ areas in the central city and maintaining them as exclusive neighborhoods protected by restrictive zoning.

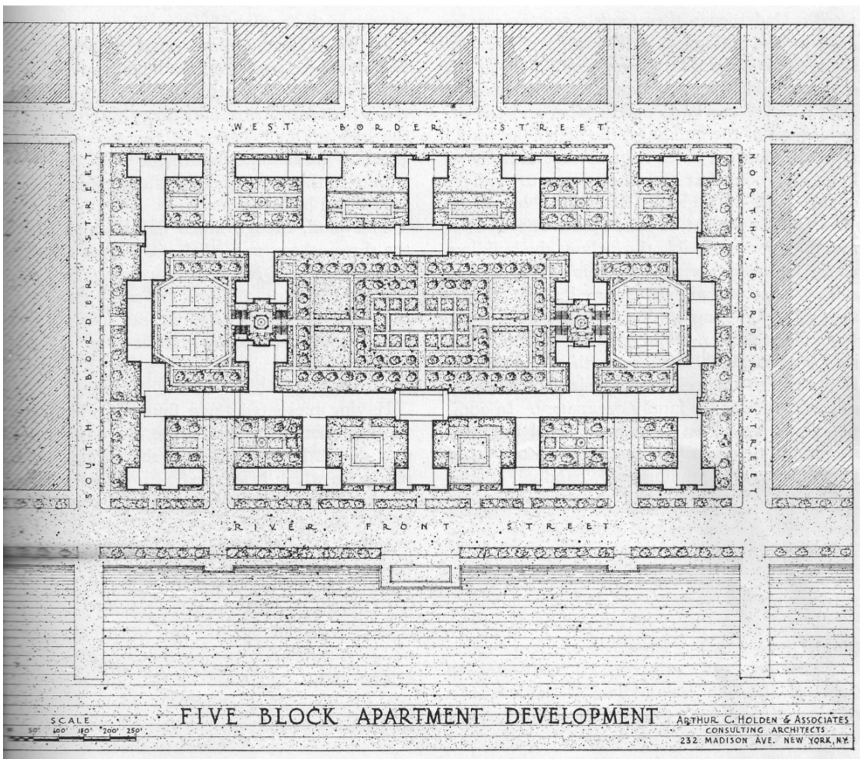

Figure 1.3. Clarence Perry, “How A Slum District Might Be Rehabilitated,” *Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs,* Volume 7 (1929)

The Neighborhood Unit and the Regional Planning Association of America, 1925-1930

In October 1927, roughly two years after his initial interactions with both the human ecologists from the University of Chicago and Robert Whitten and the Russell Sage planners, Clarence Perry found himself fifty miles outside New York City, in the dining hall of the Hudson Guild Farm near Netcong, New Jersey. Designed in 1920 by the architect-planner Clarence Stein for New York's Hudson's Guild and Settlement House, the dining hall served as the frequent meeting place of a cadre of intellectuals who called themselves the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA). The name made the group seem larger and more official than they actually were; between its founding in 1923 and its slow death in the 1930s, there were no more than twenty members at any given time, and a number of individuals visited with the group only once or twice. The RPAA might have been small in size but not in stature. RPAA meetings were attended by some of the leading urban and regional thinkers of the time– Stein, Mumford, Benton MacKaye of Appalachian Trail fame, architect Henry Wright, and (after 1930) modern houser Catherine Bauer. RPAA participants had connections to leading figures in the architectural and social welfare press, in New York City philanthropic circles, and in state and federal government agencies. As such, a number of planning historians have detailed individual RPAA members and the advocacy of the group as a whole.[48] While Clarence Perry is often included in this literature, the interpretation of his contribution is often muddled; Perry has been identified as "a member of the RPAA," a "founding member," and "an active contributor."[49] Yet,

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[48] See Roy Lubove, *Community Planning in the 1920s: The Contribution of the Regional Planning Association of America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963); Spann, *Modern America*; Eugenia Birch, "Radburn and the American Planning Movement: The Persistence of an Idea," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 46, no. 4 (1980), 424-431; Kermit C. Parsons, "Collaborative Genius, The Regional Planning Association of America," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 60, no. 4 (1994), 462-482.

[49] These descriptors of Perry are found in: William Peterman, *Neighborhood Planning and Community-Based Development: The Potential and the Limits of Grassroots Action* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2000), 15; Robert Freestone, *Urban Planning in a Changing World: The Twentieth Century Experience* (New York: Routledge,

meeting minutes suggest that his October visit was his only formal meeting with the group as a whole, and core member Lewis Mumford later couldn't recall if Perry came "once or more."[50]

The October meeting revolved around "problems connected with a Garden City." Perry was invited to comment on the RPAA's plans for constructing a new garden city in suburban Radburn, New Jersey that would be financed Alexander Bing's limited-dividend City Housing Corporation (CHC). Perry responded to members' questions about proper school siting and size as well as the best distribution of recreational areas, drawing on the calculations he had recently made for the Sage Foundation's New York regional survey. Perry repeated the calls he was making in various journal articles and speeches about the desirability of 160-acres for each neighborhood unit or "cell" with an elementary school of less than 1500 students located within a half mile of every residence so that "children could go back and forth [...] without discomfort or danger." Perry also added a new idea– that eight cells would form a unit big enough to support a high school.[51]

Perry also participated in a candid discussion about segregation in American garden cities. Presumably Clarence Stein, who moderated the discussion, asked attendees near the end of the two-day retreat, "What should be the policy of the garden city in relation to the admission of negroes and people of other races than the white?"[52] Dr. John Lovejoy Elliot, the director of the Hudson Guild Settlement House, first responded that the decision should be left to the eventual residents if RPAA members truly believed in the democratic governance potential of garden

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2000), 122; Andrew Meyers, "Invisible Cities: Lewis Mumford, Thomas Adams, and the Invention of the Regional City, 1923-1929," *Business and Economic History* 27, no. 2 (1998): 297.

[50] Edward Spann, *Designing Modern America: The Regional Planning Association of America* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996), 37; Lewis Mumford to Roy Lubove, 12 October 1962, Box 4, Roy Lubove Papers, UA.90.F-72, University Archives, University of Pittsburgh (unprocessed collection).

[51] "Summary of Discussions of Problems Connected with a Garden City, at a Series of Conferences of the Regional Planning Association of America at the Hudson Guild Farm, October 8 and 9, 1927," Lewis Mumford papers, University of Pennsylvania Libraries, Box 180.

[52] *Ibid*., 6.

cities. Stein countered by suggesting that the decision would have to be company policy because it would determine who could initially settle in Radburn. Elliot conceded this point and then floundered to answer the original question: he "could appreciate the necessity of not endangering the development of Sunnyside [the RPAA-CHC's first garden city] by permitting negroes to enter it," but he also claimed that "it would be a great mistake if this remained a permanent policy of the garden city." Harold Buttenheim, the editor and publisher of *American City*, an influential municipal affairs magazine, agreed that a resolution of the question about residence and race would be particular important in the coming years because "with the restriction of foreign immigration barriers we could expect a still greater migration of negroes from the South to the North." Perry added that he approved of residential segregation, but he believed that segregation didn't have to have the negative connotations that Elliot was giving it: "certain students of cultural groups in America felt that something was gained by permitting their segregation." Although Perry didn't name these 'students of cultural groups,' he very well could have been referring to the work on immigrant enclaves and ghettos as 'natural areas' or distinct 'social worlds' going on at the same time at the University of Chicago. Perry suggested that cultural values and traditions might be erased through the "assimilation" (quotations in original) that he believed necessarily accompanied interracial living, and so "in this case the segregation of negroes in the garden city would not be discriminatory; it might be done for other racial groups."[53] This strand of racist paternalism seemed to echo the views of Robert Whitten, who, as noted earlier, tried to codify "race district" zoning ordinances in Atlanta by claiming that segregationist policies would be beneficial for both black and white residents of Atlanta. To Perry and Whitten, rationally ordered cities could be segregative and egalitarian at the same time.

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[53] *Ibid.*

As long as each neighborhood had the same features, the racial conflict that they believed necessarily accompanied multiracial living could be avoided. When pressed by Mumford, Perry also admitted that he believed racial segregation would help with "development and sale" in the new community of Radburn.[54] Here, Perry parroted the prevailing real estate logic; racialization had become a recognized and codified means of increasing market value.

Mumford then turned to the issue of class segregation in garden cities. As discussed above, Perry had advocated class segregation in his work with the Russell Sage planners; the four different kinds of neighborhood units that Perry and Whitten had drawn in 1926 was evidence of this advocacy. But Perry did not participate in this discussion. In fact, Henry Wright was the only participant to respond, intimating that Mumford was asking the wrong kind of question. Wright held that the question should not be whether to permit economic segregation, but how garden city design might be used to dissolve differences. Physical design could render class differences invisible: "[a]ll the houses would be substantially built and architecturally designed; the differences between one income group and another would not be a matter of outward appearance as much as one of commodiousness and elaboration of appliances."[55]

The 'formal' aspects of the meeting ended on this note, even though "the points raised […] continued informally."[56] The meeting was a significant moment. Perry's racially segregative neighborhood unit plan travelled into an influential intellectual and policy group at a moment when that group debated the future of race-class restriction in a new garden city. Mumford, Stein, and Wright all individually acknowledged the importance of the 1927 meeting with Perry on their own thinking about the neighborhood as the organizing unit for a garden city. Even

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[54] *Ibid.*
[55] *Ibid.*
[56] *Ibid.*, 7.

though the Radburn garden city was never fully realized– the economic depression sent the City Housing Corporation into receivership after only about twenty percent of the original plan had been constructed– the neighborhood unit principle of placing a school at the center of the design within easy and safe walking distance of all residences became Radburn's hallmark. As Mumford later wrote, Stein and Wright took this aspect of Perry's neighborhood unit and played with the possibilities, "working it out in their own way."[57] They chose to link all residences to the elementary school via paved pathways and through interior green spaces (image 1.4); they separated vehicular roads and pedestrian paths entirely, at one point constructing what one historian dubbed "[p]erhaps the most influential overpass in American planning history" (image 1.5).[58]

For Clarence Perry, the October 1927 RPAA meeting allowed him to participate in some of the initial plans for Radburn, which in turn allowed him to (rightly) claim in his volume of the 1929 *Regional Survey of New York* that his neighborhood unit plan was already guiding the construction of a garden city-like development in the New York region. True, Perry admitted, Radburn did not yet contain all of Howard's garden city elements, especially an on-site manufacturing district, robust cultural institutions, and homes within the financial means of most workers. Instead, Radburn, as it stood in 1929, represented an object lesson; it was "the second step [after Sunnyside] in the evolutionary process of educating public opinion toward the acceptance of a complete 'garden city'" for the motor age.[59] Perry proudly reported that the Radburn Association had formed and that the City Housing Corporation was transferring much of the responsibility for developing "the social and political life of the new city" to the active

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[57] Lewis Mumford to Roy Lubove, 12 October 1962.
[58] Steven Conn, *Americans Against the City: Anti-Urbanism in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[59] Perry, "The Neighborhood Unit," 265.

members of the association. Perry ended his entire volume by boldly, but presciently, predicting that Radburn and the neighborhood unit would have a significant influence in subsequent years.

> Whatever good [Radburn] contains will have an influence far greater than can be obtained from the most perfect plans and theories. That influence will extend to housing schemes in the center of existing cities, as well as to new suburban developments. But it seems likely that one of the greatest achievements will be in showing the way toward the fulfillment of a still more perfect ideal in the building of a self-contained model community.[60]

Of course, Mumford, Stein, and Wright agreed with Perry's last statement– that Radburn could show the way toward a new kind of living for the motor age; a new kind of living within a self-sustaining and decentralized community 'cell' surrounded by a greenbelt within a natural region and connected to other cells by MacKaye's townless highway system. Yet, they were likely dismayed by Perry's suggestion that there were lessons for city and suburban housing and design schemes in the Radburn experience as well.

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[60] Perry, "The Neighborhood Unit," 268.

Image 1.4. Radburn, N.J. pathways funneling into the central green and the school grounds

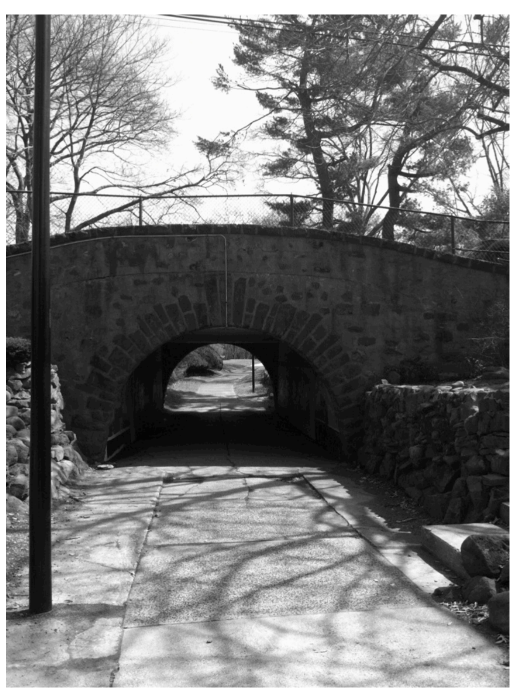

Image 1.5. Pedestrian underpass, vehicular overpass (both photographs taken by the author, April 11, 2014)

In fact, Perry's conclusion represented the kind of intellectual "drift" that Mumford abhorred in the eight *Regional Survey* volumes published between 1927-1929 and within the two volumes of the actual *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs* published in 1929 and 1931. Mumford, who never shied away from very public and often very vicious broadsides, pinned the responsibility for this 'drift' on the director of the *Regional Plan*, Thomas Adams. In two articles published in *The New Republic* in June 1932, Mumford made public the critiques he had previously kept within private and professional circles.[61] Mumford claimed that Adams had

[61] The Mumford-Adams feud began in 1925 with an article published by the former in *The Journal of the American Institute of Architects* entitled "Realities versus Dreams." The article accused Adams of overseeing a plan "to promote better living conditions by costly plans for more traffic, higher buildings, increasing land values, more intensive congestion." Adams began an amiable private correspondence with Mumford in December 1925, regretting the "misunderstanding between those who seem to have the same purposes," and offering to share the results of ongoing Regional Plan Association studies, after which he would "welcome the most candid criticism based on facts." Thomas Adams to Lewis Mumford, 17 December 1925, Russell Sage Foundation, Early Office Files, Box 32, Folder 248, Mumford, Lewis, Rockefeller Archive Center (hereafter, RSF-Mumford).

foolishly embarked on a "Pauline effort to be all things to all men" and thus the final *Regional Plan* "neutralize[d] the effect of any one proposal." Adams "fasten[ed] to a viable solution, a solution acceptable to [Russell Sage's] committee full of illustrious names in financial and civic affairs, to the business community generally, [and] to the public officials of the region."[62] The 'viable solution' that Mumford critiqued was one that accepted the steady population growth of the region and the need to accommodate a growing number of residents who would live in the suburbs and commute to Manhattan, Brooklyn, or smaller urban centers for work. To Mumford, Adams and the Regional Plan Association (RPA) staff had refused to consider how technology and modern intellect– not least of which were the plans for complete garden cities coming from the RPAA– could create new ways of living, new social-economic relations, and new institutions. Instead of dreaming up new arrangements that would locate the best of the urban and the best of the rural in new urban constellations, Adams' vision did not look substantively different from the metropolitan agglomeration that already existed.

Adams fired back in the *New Republic*, calling Mumford an "esthete-sociologist" who dreamed of "unworkable" ideas that would require either "the combined power of the President, Congress and state legislatures" or a "despotic government" like the one gaining power in Russia to implement.[63] Mumford had no legitimacy according to Adams; he "does not write as a man who has faced the facts and difficulties of making a thorough survey of urban conditions and tendencies, or of planning a city or region in a democratic country."

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[62] Lewis Mumford, "The Plan of New York," *The New Republic*, June 15, 1932, 123.
[63] Thomas Adams, "A Communication in Defense of the Regional Plan," *New Republic*, July 6, 1932, p. 208. Adams' colleague F.E. Andrews said that the Russian model of planning "is now a fever, and those who have come down with it as hard as Mr. Mumford can see salvation nowhere but in it." F.E. Andrews to Lawrence Orton, 10 June 1932, RSF-Mumford. This comment would come to look especially striking during the 1930s as the President, Congress, and state executive and legislative branches *did* create planning agencies in an effort to guide new kinds of regional development (see Chapter 2).

A number of planning historians have detailed the significance of this public feud between Mumford and Adams, positioning each as embodiments of distinct traditions in the field of planning (utopian vs. pragmatic), and usually siding with one or the other.[64] I do not need to rehash these arguments here. But the feud is also revealing for our understanding of the 'roots and routes' of educational urbanism.[65]

Both Mumford and Adams– through their respective work with Clarence Perry– understood the school as a physical anchor of new or reconstructed neighborhoods. Each also conceived the school as related to other urban and regional design elements– parks, roads, residences, public buildings, commercial and industrial spaces, and points of access to transportation. In fact, the only element within the thousand-odd pages of the final *Regional Plan* that Mumford applauded in his *New Republic* articles was the pages devoted to Perry's neighborhood unit plan.[66] But Mumford critiqued Adams and the Russell Sage planners for only "obliquely present[ing]" Perry's neighborhood unit in the final publication and presenting it in a way that de-coupled the school from other social, cultural, and aesthetic institutions that appeared within Perry's initial model and in various RPAA proposals.[67] This de-coupling was emblematic, Mumford argued, of Adams' view of metropolitan decentralization as a strategy to decongest the city center of people and industry without decentralizing and redistributing the

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[64] See, for example, David Johnson, "Regional Planning for the Great American Metropolis: New York Between the World Wars," in Daniel Shaffer (ed.) *Two Centuries of American Planning* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1988), 167-196; Conn, "Americans Against the City," 69; Mel Scott, *American City Planning Since 1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 287-294; Stanley Buder, *Visionaries and Planners: The Garden City Movement and the Modern Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Meyers, "Invisible Cities
[65] I borrow this phrase from Samuel Zipp, "The Roots and Routes of Urban Renewal," *Journal of Urban History* 39, no. 3 (2012), 366-391.
[66] Mumford was not uncritical of Perry and the neighborhood unit, however. Mumford believed that even though Perry "shrinks for accepting the *gigantic, understaffed, overequipped prison schools* developed to meet the high costs and curtailed budgets of megalopolis New York, he probably places the maximum number too high." Mumford, "The Plan of New York: II", p. 148, emphasis mine.
[67] *Ibid.*, 153.

institutions and activities that made modern life worth living. This section of Mumford's critique has received little scholarly attention, but it bears quoting at length:

> […] the nucleus is not alone the school, but all the other social groups and institutions which make the difference between an integrated corporate life and a private, isolated life. Through the concentration of rich individuals, the present financial metropolis claims a disproportionate share of the institutions of art and culture in the country; but by the very act of expanding its urban areas, it removes or lessens the opportunity to enjoy these advantages on the part of any considerable share of its population. […] As an instance of the failure of the Russell Sage planners to consider any other aspects than the physical and financial one, one may take its failure to mention the possibility of coordinating a recentralization of its facilities with the needs of our universities, our museums, and our library system for greater diffusion and wider influence.[68]

To Mumford, Adams and his planners viewed the problem of crowded urban centers primarily as an engineering problem. Simply applying a school-centric neighborhood design on suburban or rural land on the periphery of urban centers might be an engineering solution, Mumford claimed, but such a solution ignored the 'sociological' aspects that brought people together in pursuit of a good life: education broadly-conceived, aesthetic appreciation, and cultural experiences. He concluded that unless the modern planner had "a guiding notion as to what the good life in his generation is, how it is expressed in communities, what organs must be created for it, his elaborate surveys and his vast engineering projects will remain disoriented–disoriented and wasteful."[69] Adams, not surprisingly, found such an assessment unfair. Yet, instead of confronting the allegations, Adams deflected, arguing that "the forces that enter into the life of cities are inexhaustible" and so the Russell Sage planners had to be pragmatic and deal with forces only "to the extent they were relevant."[70] He spent the majority of his 'defense of the

[68] *Ibid.*
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] Adams, "A Communication in Defense," 210.

Regional Plan' in *New Republic* correcting Mumford on specific aspects of the plan– the bulk of Manhattan skyscrapers, the amount of open space per family unit, zoning and land coverage, and the park acreage of Hackensack Meadows, for instance– which seemed to only validate Mumford's accusation that this was an engineering plan, rather than one of applied sociology.

This distinction– between the technical and sociological purposes of planning– carried over into their respective views of the educational, or pedagogical, value of regional plans themselves. To Adams, the regional plan constituted an educational tool for the members of hundreds of local governments bodies across New York and New Jersey. The RPA produced small, individualized booklets describing the parts of the plan that applied to each of the metropolitan counties involved in the study. Throughout the early 1930s, an RPA representative would travel to a county planning meeting, present the booklet, and the two-volume *Regional Plan*, and respond to questions from local government officials and their constituents about how the RPA-proposed project in their local county fit with the 469 other projects recommended by the RPA to produce a manageable and relatively efficient metropolitan whole. As historian Mel Scott concludes, "[t]hus began the long and tireless endeavor by which much of the regional plan was translated into reality, with initial successes greatest in highway and railroad improvements and in the expansion of the regional park system."[71]

But for Mumford, a regional plan deserved and demanded a much broader educational purpose and audience. In a theme that would continue to develop over the next twenty years in his work, Mumford promoted regional surveys and plans as potential curricular materials for school children and University students. However, in order to fulfill its educational potential, regional surveys and plans had to at least suggest that alternative "methods and institutions and

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[71] Scott, "American City Planning," 293-94.

controls" might create *better* arrangements for future social, political, economic, and recreational life.[72] Referencing a paper from one of his intellectual mentors– the polymath Sir Patrick Geddes– Mumford argued that regional surveys represented a form of civics that could guide students as future citizens. Properly presented as curricula, surveys rooted students in the geography and history of a particular regional place as the "first step to the comprehension of the present." Students could then, "to some extent discern, then patiently plan out, at length boldly suggest, something of [the region's] actual or potential development."[73]

That Mumford considered regional plans to be of pedagogical and civic use pushes against both Adams' and planning historians' interpretation of Mumford as a hopelessly utopian 'esthete sociologist' disconnected from planning in the real world. While Thomas Adams, and to some extent Clarence Perry, engaged in the slow political process of shaping the New York metropolis into an expanding set of school-centric neighborhoods, Mumford and his RPAA colleagues worked largely behind-the-scenes in the years immediately following the 1929 economic collapse to influence the regional thinking of the then-Governor of New York. As we will see, this behind-the-scenes work had a tremendous influence on early New Deal policies and directly refutes the rather smug claim about Mumford's significance in Steven Conn's celebrated new book *Americans Against the City*. "Ideas can indeed be powerful," Conn writes of Mumford's *New Republic* articles, "but without some mechanism to translate ideas into practice, they can languish for years without doing much work in the world."[74] Mumford and the RPAA did have a powerful idea; that the neighborhood unit could form the basis of a true garden city in

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[72] I discuss Mumford's curricular ideas in chapter 2. Lewis Mumford, "The Plan of New York: II," *The New Republic*, June 22, 1932, 151.
[73] The quotations come from the paper that Mumford cites, Patrick Geddes, "Civics: as Applied Sociology," Paper read before the Sociological Society, University of London, July, 18, 1904. Accessed May 6, 2015, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13205/13205-h/13205-h.htm.
[74] Steven Conn, *Americans Against the City,* 69.

America containing a central school *as well as* social, cultural, and intellectual institutions *as well as* residential, industrial, commercial, and agricultural spaces. But they also had a powerful mechanism to turn this idea into practice: the administrations of Franklin Roosevelt.

Letters to Roosevelt: The RPAA and Early New Deal Regionalism

New York Governor Franklin Roosevelt had familial connections with the *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs*, but his regional planning philosophy had much more in common with members of the RPAA. Roosevelt's uncle, engineer-turned-planner Frederic Delano, had worked closely with Daniel Burnham and Charles Norton on the nation's first metropolitan regional plan, the 1909 Plan of Chicago. Delano and Norton joined again in 1927 to oversee the publication of, and the publicity for, the Sage Foundation's regional surveys and its final *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs.* In extemporaneous remarks in December 1931 celebrating the publication of the final volume of the *Regional Plan*, Roosevelt opened with a story of the day his uncle first talked to him about the regional elements of the Chicago plan "nearly twenty years ago." Roosevelt claimed that "from that very moment I have been interested not in the planning of any one mere city but in planning in its larger aspects."[75] As Roosevelt continued though, it became clear that he believed the economic depression that had thrown many New York urban residents out of work called for a more radical approach than what the *Regional Plan* offered. Of course, he chose his words carefully, commending the work of his uncle and Thomas Adams on collecting and distributing such large amounts of social, economic, and engineering data. Yet, he wondered whether this data and the current economic

[75] Franklin Roosevelt, "Extemporaneous Address on Regional Planning (Excerpts). New York City. December 11, 1931" in *The Public Papers and Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, *Volume 1* (New York: Random House, 1938), 496.

situation did not put them in "a position to take the bull by the horns in the immediate future and adopt some kind of experimental work based on a distribution of the population. […] I am convinced that one of the greatest values of this total regional planning is the fact that it dares us to make experiments."[76]

That Roosevelt took a decentralist and experimentalist position similar to Mumford and the members of the RPAA was no mere coincidence. Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, Lewis Mumford, and Benton MacKaye had all been involved in New York State's Commission of Housing and Regional Planning in the mid-1920s, with Stein as chairman. Appointed by then-Governor Alfred Smith, the commission produced a preliminary plan for the entire state in 1925 that recommended state assistance in redistributing industry, housing, transportation, and recreation in order "to prevent large centers from becoming unmanageable."[77]

Roosevelt was familiar with Clarence Stein and this regional planning report when he assumed the state executive office in 1928. Stein's communications with Roosevelt ramped up in 1931, as Roosevelt was gaining attention as a possible Democratic Party nominee for President. Beginning in March 1931, Stein communicated RPAA tenets of neighborhood units as the basis of garden city construction and regional planning through a series of memoranda and policy suggestions. These memos and Roosevelt's public speeches related to regional planning in 1931 and 1932 reveal a mutual respect; RPAA members believed they had a powerful political ally in Roosevelt; and Roosevelt believed he had found a fount of progressive regional planning ideas that had the potential to guide the experimental work that he would suggest in his remarks to the Regional Plan Association.

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[76] *Ibid.*, 497-498.
[77] Edward Spann, *Designing Modern America*, 59.

The first of Stein's memos– dated March 23, 1931– began with an appreciation of Roosevelt's January address to the Legislature that proposed a rural land survey for the entire state. Roosevelt's proposal included gathering evidence related to soils, land use, production capacity, and population trends in hopes that this data could guide state policies that would ensure the best use of the land: agricultural, reforestation, or recreational use. In the address, Roosevelt argued that such land use data and state inducements for its 'best use' would have short term and long-range benefits. In the short term, it would go a long way in ending the misery of farmers who were trying to grow agricultural products on unprofitable land by helping them move to more suitable land. In the long run, the use of data to inform "the proper settling of population" would be the basis "for planning future State and local developments": constructing and improving farm-to-market roads, locating power and telephone lines, and the "scientific allocation of school facilities."[78]

Stein, of course, agreed wholeheartedly with Roosevelt's belief in the potential of planning to improve living conditions by redistributing population, but the second paragraph in his letter began: "Should not this program be broadened to take in other industries than farming and forestry?"[79] The same scientific advancements in data collection as well as the technological advancements in transportation and new methods of power generation that Roosevelt mentioned in relation to agricultural, reforestation, and recreational land use made "a much wider distribution of population throughout the state […] not only practical but desirable."[80] Imagine, Stein wrote, a state and regional survey that *also* included the study of suburban and urban land

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[78] Franklin Roosevelt, "A Message to the Legislature Formulating a Land Use Policy for the State. January 26, 1931," in *The Public Papers and Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, *Volume 1* (New York: Random House, 1938), 483.
[79] Clarence Stein, "Memorandum to Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt Suggesting a Regional Planning Board in the Executive Department," 23 March 1931, Mumford Papers.
[80] *Ibid.*

uses that began with a similar notion that the present uses were neither efficient nor productive nor satisfying. The state could then induce not only rural resettlement, but could devise plans for massive residential and industrial decentralization into garden cities as well. Only with this more comprehensive survey and policy framework, Stein argued, should the state begin the planning of "roads, power houses, and schools, as well as parks, hospitals, prisons, and all other buildings constructed for the State."[81] He acknowledged that such a proposal might seem overwhelming and politically unfeasible because it cut across so many departments within state government, but Stein and his RPAA colleagues had a solution to this problem: a 'Regional Planning Board' within the executive branch. Under the RPAA's proposal, the planning board would have not only have an advisory role but would have power to "coordinate the various agencies, both governmental and private."[82] This administrative authority was a contentious idea in New York State in 1931 and it would continue to be well into Roosevelt's federal New Deal.[83]

Stein sat with Roosevelt in the Governor's Albany office two days later. According to historian Edward Spann, Roosevelt did most of the talking; sharing with Stein ideas on how to re-establish small industries in rural areas as a strategy to reverse the flow of population to metropolitan centers.[84] Stein might not have been able to share much of his own thinking with the Governor, but he came away with the impression that Roosevelt had "a very broad point of view in regard to State Planning. In fact, he is already thinking of national planning."[85] Before leaving Albany, Stein extended an invitation for Roosevelt to join a roundtable discussion that

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[81] *Ibid.*
[82] *Ibid.*
[83] See, for instance, William Leuchtenburg, "Roosevelt, Norris and the 'Seven Little TVAs," *The Journal of Politics* 14, no. 3 (1952), 418-441.
[84] Spann, *Designing Modern America*, 127-128.
[85] Clarence Stein to Benton MacKaye, 25 March 1931

the RPAA was hosting at the annual meeting of the Institute for Public Affairs at the University of Virginia in July 1931.

Roosevelt accepted, both because of his interest in regional planning and his growing interest in the 1932 Democratic presidential nomination. His remarks to the regional planning roundtable gained only minimal attention, with RPAA member Charles Ascher providing the only national coverage in *The* Survey. Ascher began the article by admitting that when the question of 'regionalism' was put to all the speakers at the conference, most speakers had to "state frankly that they didn't know what they were talking about." This uncertainty about a definition of regionalism extended even to the keynote speaker, Governor Roosevelt, who endorsed a rather vague notion of regional planning as the plans that come from collective answers to the question "what are we going to hand on to those who come later?"[86] Roosevelt's address the following day to the parent organization– the Institute for Public Affairs– did not mention the need for regional planning by name, but did include regional ideas, including: the idea that he had discussed with Stein about re-establishing rural industries; a statement on the state's responsibility in giving all children, especially those in rural areas "opportunities to learn;" a statement about the inefficiencies and redundancies of fragmented governance; and, related, his call to "remold government to make it more serviceable to all the people and more responsive to modern needs."[87] While it was hard to tell exactly what Roosevelt had in mind when he spoke of 'remolding government' to reduce fragmentation, we can at least speculate that the RPAA's proposal of a planning board in the executive branch to coordinate various agencies had sparked an interest.

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[86] Charles Ascher, "Regionalism Charting the Future," *The Survey*, August 15, 1931.
[87] "Roosevelt Assails '10-Layer' Tax Load as Outworn Relic," *New York Times*, July 7, 1931; "Governor Roosevelt's Address at the Virginia Institute," *New York Times*, July 7, 1931.

It might not have been the ringing public endorsement of the RPAA's definition of regionalism and regional planning that the organizers had hoped for, but by multiple accounts it was in the off-the-record private meetings between the Governor and RPAA members where Roosevelt began to recognize the possibilities (and feasibility) of regional planning grounded in garden city and neighborhood unit ideas. In fact, two conference attendees that were privy to these private conversations (and who later were staffers in the Tennessee Valley Authority) claimed that the conference "provided fertile soil for the transplanting of [the RPAA's regional planning] idea from New York southward."[88] A little over a month later, with Roosevelt officially on the stump, RPAA members began to see their own work in Roosevelt's public remarks. In his address before the American Country Life Conference (the creation of a President Theodore Roosevelt a quarter century prior), Roosevelt spoke of the need not only to stem rural population flow into the cities, as he had done before, but he outlined a position where the state would actively work to redistribute urban population to the countryside.

> In times of economic depression we expect to find a concentration of unemployed persons and, as a result, a concentration of distress, in the cities. It is so normal and so usual that is does not seem to merit comment. It is there the floating industrial population has congregated. […] The difficulty is not solely that purchasing power does not lie in the hands of those who need to buy and must buy to live. There is difficulty also in the fact that those who lack food and shelter are in the very places where it is most inconvenient and expensive for society to help them, for the cost of food in the cities is made up of many charges […]. City workers must be fed on food transported to the cities and distributed there through an elaborate and highly systematized machine. […] Is it not possible that we might devise methods by which the farmer's market may be brought closer to him and the industrial worker might be brought closer to his food supply?[89]

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[88] Larry Anderson, *Benton MacKaye: Conservationist, Planner, and Creator of the Appalachian Trail* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2008), 251.
[89] Franklin Roosevelt, "Address Before the Country Life Conference on the Better Distribution of Population Away from Cities. Ithaca, N.Y., August 19, 1931" in *The Public Papers and Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, *Volume 1* (New York: Random House, 1938), 505-507.

RPAA members, especially Mumford and Stein, heard Roosevelt, for the first time in this speech to the Country Life conference, invoke the RPAA belief that technological advancements could facilitate both residential and industrial decentralization on a scale heretofore unimaginable. Industry "has been freed of a great many old restrictions as to location," Roosevelt acknowledged, and "high tension transmission of electric current" made it possible to move industrial plants further away from the source of power. Improvements in communication and transportation had diminished concerns over distance and time, and industrial leaders themselves had told Roosevelt that they had come to appreciate the amount of 'open' land in the countryside that they could use for the construction of new modern plants. These technological advancements also improved rural living, Roosevelt claimed; farmhouses were now benefitting from electric lights, refrigeration, new methods of sanitation, and access to the radio, the rural picture house, new parks and playgrounds, and "modern consolidated schools equipped to supply as good primary and high school education as can be had in the city."[90] Roosevelt proposed to the conference, and then to the people of New York via a radio broadcast a month later, the formation of a state Commission on Rural Homes that would look into creating a state agency for rural-industrial resettlement, extending to questions about the building of new rural communities: its "architecture, layouts of roads and sanitary facilities, planting schemes and methods of community cooperation."[91]

Days after the radio address, the RPAA held its annual meeting in New York City and appointed Mumford and Stein to write a memo to Roosevelt "suggesting a definite policy in

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[90] Roosevelt, "Address Before the Country Life Conference," 508-511.
[91] *Ibid.*, 514; Franklin Roosevelt, "Radio Address Advocating Distribution of Population toward the Source of Food Supply. November 13, 1931," in *The Public Papers and Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, *Volume 1* (New York: Random House, 1938), 515-518.

regard to the formation of rural communities."[92] Despite the formal appointment, it was the young Catherine Bauer who actually wrote the primary outline for the memo, sending it to Stein and Mumford early in 1932. She entitled the memo, "On State Planning for New Communities" and laid out what she– and by extension, the RPAA– understood to be the political, design, and organizational imperatives of new rural-industrial communities. Using the knowledge she had gained from her 1930 sojourn to meet with European municipal planners and public housers, she urged Roosevelt to use state power and funds to buy, plan, and build "whole communit[ies]" on rural land. State planning and construction of whole communities, as opposed to private or even limited-dividend construction of single or multi-family units, would be the quickest and most effective way to decentralize; an argument that would form the basis of Bauer's 1934 publication *Modern Housing* and her public housing advocacy on Capitol Hill during 1936-1937 session. Although Bauer did not detail the features of the RPAA's conception of 'whole communities' in this memo, she suggested a size of no less than 8-10,000: large enough to secure "collective advantages of balanced industries and a degree of self-sufficiency" without sacrificing the convenience and "social unity" of smaller towns. She envisioned the possibility of "*urban* constellations of such communities" that would be "[p]lanned for balanced agricultural and industrial activities."[93]

In direct opposition to claims, then and now, that RPAA members' decentralization plans were too abstract and disconnected from mechanisms that would translate into practice, Bauer devoted considerable space in the memo to questions about implementation. Her suggestions echoed the RPAA's earlier calls for an executive level planning board, which presaged

[92] Spann, *Designing Modern America,* 130.

[93] Catherine Bauer, "Outline for Memo to Governor Roosevelt, On State Planning for New Communities," 2 January 1932, Lewis Mumford Papers. Emphasis mine. To Bauer and the RPAA, 'decentralization' and 'urban' were not mutually exclusive ideas.

Roosevelt's formation of a national planning agency upon his entering the White House fifteen months later. Such a central planning body could expedite the preparation of a 'master plan' based on surveys of "natural resources, water supply, power, etc." and the coordination of state and federal agencies to guide state land use policy, transportation priorities, set-asides for parks and conservation projects, and power and freight rates. In the memo, Bauer also suggested a role for public education in state planning, as Mumford would do in his *New Republic* critique of Thomas Adams; state planners could partner with Universities to assist in research endeavors and could produce "education [materials] and publicity directed to the individual" in hopes of convincing New Yorkers of the value of decentralized living and industrial work.[94]

On the 1932 national campaign trail, Roosevelt folded RPAA ideas of comprehensive land use planning, population redistribution, and rural resettlement into broad policy positions that he believed spoke to a voting public that was increasingly disenchanted with the Hoover administration's conservative and associative approach to economic recovery. In an Atlanta commencement address in May, Roosevelt told the crowd that the nation needed and demanded "bold, persistent experimentation" that could be summarized in one phrase: "social planning."[95] The lack of state planning and state involvement in economic and industrial affairs more generally allowed "our economic life to be controlled by that small group of men whose chief outlook upon social welfare is tinctured by the fact that they can make huge profits" from controlling production, distribution, and lending.[96] When the Governor accepted the Democratic nomination for the Presidency in Chicago less than three months later, he closed with a pithy but

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[94] *Ibid.*
[95] Franklin Roosevelt, "The Country Needs, the Country Demands Bold, Persistent Experimentation. Address at Oglethorpe University. May 22, 1932," in *The Public Papers and Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, *Volume 1* (New York: Random House, 1938), 639, 642.
[96] *Ibid.*, 642.

compelling new phrase that signaled the Democratic Party commitment to state planning and intervention; "I pledge you, I pledge myself to a *new deal* for the American people."[97] Roosevelt had borrowed the 'new deal' phrase from RPAA member and economist Stuart Chase, whose ongoing series of articles by the same name appeared in *The New Republic* as a call for a 'third way' between "the wild and stormy road of violent revolution" and the "stern, steel-walled road of commercial dictatorship, with political democracy swept down a gully and constitutional guarantees rolled flat."[98] The third and preferable road for both Stuart Chase and Franklin Roosevelt– the road that would assure a new deal for America– would be the responsibility of the imaginative "men and women who have grasped the hands of science" and who were willing to "grasp the possibility of an objective, scientific control of production and distribution."[99] As a quintessential statement of the modernist faith in the scientific rationality of experts, both Chase and Roosevelt saw the new deal– soon to be capitalized– as promoting the entrance of a new kind of government servant who would be given unprecedented power to conduct research and to inform, guide, and rationalize executive and legislative action. No doubt Chase and his RPAA colleagues saw themselves as just the kind of government servants that Roosevelt and the New Deal demanded; no doubt that RPAA members as government servants would promote a decentralist, garden city third way between the rural and the urban.

After his election in November 1932 but before his inauguration as president, Roosevelt travelled down to Muscle Shoals, Alabama, the site of a long-running debate about the

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[97] Franklin Roosevelt, "I Pledge You– I Pledge Myself to a New Deal for the American People. The Governor Accepts the Nomination for the Presidency, Chicago, Ill. July 2, 1932," in *The Public Papers and Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, *Volume 1* (New York: Random House, 1938), 647, 659.

[98] Stuart Chase, "A New Deal for America II: The Road of Revolution," *The New Republic*, July 6, 1932. The Chase series in *The New Republic*, "A New Deal for America," began June 29 and covered four issues, concluding with the July 27th issue.

[99] Stuart Chase, "A New Deal for America IV: Survey for a Third Road, *The New Republic*, July 27, 1932

disposition of government-operated dams and nitrate plants from World War I.[100] After touring the sites along the Tennessee River with an entourage of local politicians and Congressmen, Roosevelt returned to Montgomery and gave his first public indication that Muscle Shoals would likely be the first site of America's new deal: a federal intervention that would put the unemployed back to work while realizing the RPAA's vision of regional planning that had first been discussed in the July 1931 University of Virginia conference.

> Muscle Shoals is more today than a mere opportunity for the Federal Government to do a kind turn for the people in one small section of a couple of States. Muscles Shoals gives us the opportunity to accomplish a great purpose for the people of the many States and, indeed, for the whole Union. Because there we have an opportunity of setting an example of planning, not just for ourselves but for the generations to come, tying in industry and agriculture and forestry and flood prevention, tying them all into a unified whole over a distance of a thousand miles so that we can afford better opportunities and better places for living for millions of yet unborn in the days to come. […] [J]ust as soon as we possibly can, we are going to start something in Washington practical, useful and necessary.[101]

Just a few weeks later, from his retreat in Warm Springs, Georgia, Roosevelt dreamed aloud, suggesting to a gathering of reporters that the regional planning project in the Tennessee Valley would immediately employ 200,000 men in reforestation, flood prevention, and electrification projects and would eventually build garden cities comprising of new industrial plants and residential environments using modern neighborhood unit principles.[102]

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[100] For the history of the Muscle Shoals operations during World War I and the various proposals for the disposition of dams and plants– including two by Henry Ford– see Paul Conkin, "Intellectual and Political Roots," in Erwin Hargrove and Paul Conkin (eds.), *TVA: Fifty Years of Grass-Roots Bureaucracy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 3-34; Robert Kargon and Arthur Molella, *Invented Edens: Techno-Cities of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), chapter 2.

[101] Franklin Roosevelt, "Informal Extemporaneous Remarks at Alabama, Ala., on Muscle Shoals Inspection Trip. January 21, 1933," in *The Public Papers and Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, *Volume 1* (New York: Random House, 1938), 888-889.

[102] Conkin, "Intellectual and Political Roots," p. 23.

Conclusion

In a letter dated March 1, 1933, RPAA president Clarence Stein wrote to the "Honorable Franklin Roosevelt" at Hyde Park as Roosevelt prepared to deliver his first inaugural address. Stein wrote of the RPAA's endorsement of the plan for the development of the Tennessee Valley and expressed the organization's belief that the plan "offers the opportunity of broadly developing this environment in terms of the house itself, the neighborhood unit, the balanced industrial and agricultural unit, the community and the region."[103] Stein humbly concluded,

> [y]our program has fired our imagination and enthusiasm. The Regional Planning Association of America believes it offers the possibility in the present emergency of securing a stable future rather than salvaging a speculative past.[104]

The plans for what was to become the Tennessee Valley Authority may have indeed fired RPAA members' imaginations about the extent of Roosevelt's commitment to the regional planning idea. But many of these ideas had come directly from RPAA members themselves: social and economic planning as 'a new deal for America'; residential and industrial decentralization into garden cities; and Clarence Perry's neighborhood unit as the social, spatial, and civic building block of a new kind of living. Without the influence of the RPAA, Roosevelt's early New Deal would not have looked the same; without Roosevelt's early New Deal, the RPAA ideas would not have received such a hearing in influential policy and planning conversations.

The 'enthusiasm' related to the TVA from most of the RPAA members did not last long. Many resented the appointment of Earle Draper, a southern landscape architect without the experience or desire to develop comprehensive social plans, as the TVA's Director of Regional

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[103] Clarence Stein to Franklin Roosevelt, 1 March 1933, MS 2, Box 180, Folder 8034, Lewis Mumford Papers, University of Pennsylvania Libraries.
[104] *Ibid*. For MacKaye's 'Townless Highway' proposal and his overall influence on the RPAA, see: Benton MacKaye and Lewis Mumford, "Townless Highways for the Motorist: A Proposal for the Automobile Age," *Harper's Magazine*, August 1931, 347-356; Spann, *Designing Modern America*, p. 19-30.

Planning and Housing and criticized his lack of vision. According to her biographers, Catherine Bauer believed it was a missed opportunity to demonstrate the application of Garden City principles in new urban constellations. Unlike the RPAA's plans for a regional educational urbanism, the goal of the TVA seemed to be "to keep the mountaineers quaint, dumb, inefficient, frustrated, and *harmless*."[105]

All was not lost, however. Lewis Mumford, Catherine Bauer, and representatives from the first executive-level national planning agency pushed a vision of the Pacific Northwest as a new and fertile land (quite literally) for the development of a polycentric urbanism planned and guided by a muscle-bound federal government. In a quintessential expression of high modernist ideology, Bauer wrote the following after one of her several trips to the Columbia River Basin:

> A million acres of new land. A fresh blank page as big as Delaware, to be filled in gradually with families, farms and towns. One more chance to create something better than the feudal factory farms of Imperial Valley, the impoverished 'stump ranches' of Washington, the miserable shacks and cellar homes of recent irrigation settlers in Oregon and Idaho.
>
> A million new acres– for what? […] The Columbia Basin has more than local significance. It's so big, and at the same time so simplified because it starts with a piece of bare desert, that every major question of planning and housing technique, of agricultural method and administrative pattern and social organization, is brought into dramatic focus.[106]

In order to fully realize the possibilities of creating something anew, planners had a double task. They had to both erase an inhabited history of the land that they were claiming to be a simplified 'blank page'– a 'bare piece of desert'– and they had to convince those who identified with the Western idea of 'rugged individualism' that state planning was in their best interest. To do this,

[105] H. Peter Oberlander and Eva Newbrun, *Houser: The Life and Work of Catherine Bauer* (Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 2000), 101

[106] Catherine Bauer, "The Columbia Basin: Test for Regional Planning," Catherine Bauer Wurster Papers, MSS 74/163c, Box 1, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

they needed education; they needed to develop a curriculum. The Pacific Northwest– and not the Tennessee River Valley– became the site in which regional planners embarked upon their most ambitious civic education project.

Chapter Two

Learning to See Like a State: Regional Planning and Curriculum Development in the Pacific Northwest, 1934-1940

In *The Public and Its Problems* (1927), John Dewey also mentioned the controversy surrounding the disposition and utilization of the dams and nitrate plants surrounding Muscle Shoals. For Dewey, the political disputes in Alabama and in Congress were emblematic of a larger democratic problem in 'the machine age,' as policy issues and choices had become so complex, interwoven, and technical. The questions involved in Muscle Shoals included "questions of science, agriculture, industry and finance," and Dewey asked, "How many voters are competent to measure all the factors involved at arriving at a decision? And if they were competent after studying it, how many have the time to devote to it?"[1] Dewey worried that the complexity of the issues, combined with the cooption of communication and entertainments by political-economic interests and government experts, would eclipse the possibilities of the creation of "an organized, articulated Public."[2]

The Depression added an additional weight to these democratic questions. Calls for a new social order– or at least a significant social reconstruction– could be heard from academic-activist educators on the left. Even the staid National Education Association (NEA), through its Educational Policies Commission, recruited noted left historian Charles Beard and social reconstructionist George Counts to author reports advocating for a significant "relationship of education to the social reconstruction that would follow the end of the depression."[3] Perhaps this

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[1] John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems: An Essay in Political Inquiry* (Chicago: Gateway Books, 1927/1946), p. 136.
[2] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, p. 184.
[3] Wayne Urban, "The Educational Policies Commission, 1936-1968: Notes for an Autopsy," *The Sophist's Bane* 3, no. 1 (2005), p. 16. Thanks to Dr. Urban for sharing this article with me.

was simply a calculated attempt by the NEA to appear more radical than its membership actually was so as to secure a piece of New Deal largesse, but it indicates that at least the rhetoric around social reconstruction through education was not confined to the offices of Teachers College or the pages of *The Social Frontier*.[4] On the other side of the ideological spectrum, conservatives, as they had done during the first world war, turned to nationalist organizations like the American Legion to inculcate patriotic and 'free market' fervor amongst youth and demand teacher loyalty to country and the traditional textbook. As educational philosopher Robert Kunzman and educational historian David Tyack put it, in the Depression "[p]anacea mongers and demagogues found ready audiences."[5]

Beginning in 1935, regional planners in the Pacific Northwest thought they had discovered a third way between social reconstructionist indoctrination and blind nationalist indoctrination. Marshall Dana, the chairman of the Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission, urged national, regional, state, and local planning bodies to begin formulating an "educational program for planning" in collaboration with educational scholars, University faculty, school district leaders, and teachers across subject areas.[6] By 1940, this appeal had reached a national audience within both educational circles and amongst planners at all governance scales associated with the National Planning Board. Writing in *Teachers College Record*, Stanford education professors Paul Hanna and Harold Hand asked educators to imagine what an "educational program for planning" might entail:

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[4] Paula Fass, "Without Design: Educational Policy in the New Deal," *American Journal of Education* 91, no. 1 (1982), 36-64.
[5] Robert Kunzman and David Tyack, "Educational Forums of the 1930s: An Experiment in Adult Civic Education," *American Journal of Education* 111, no. 3 (2005), p. 321.
[6] Marshall Dana, "An Educational Program for Planning. A Paper presented at the Conference of City, Regional, State, and National Planning, Cincinnati, OH, May 1935," Correspondences and Related Records of NRPB, 1933-1943, National Archives-Seattle (hereafter cited as Correspondences, NRPB).

> Can you picture on one side of the conference table the experts in soil, in agriculture, in forests, in minerals, in water, in economic welfare levels, in health, in recreation? And on the other side of the same conference table the teachers who are experts in child growth and the guidance of youth? Could these teachers leave such a conference lacking the will so to direct the learning experiences of childhood and youth that the oncoming generation is able to use our democratic machinery to protect the earth's storehouse of resources from being wasted? For this waste must be stopped. It can eventually lead only to serious economic decline and consequent social ruin.[7]

Hanna and Hand's call for an education that introduced children and youth to the 'wise use' of natural resources and the cessation of what the geographer George Renner called the "prolonged orgy of waste" mirrored one dimension of New Deal social, economic, and regional planning policy. New Dealers continually referenced the "unbridled individualism and ruthless competition" of *laissez faire* economics as the cause of an environmental exploitation that left the land unproductive and uncultivable. Such exploitation played no small part in the economic depression. New Dealers called for an end to waste and inefficiency as well as new tools and policies of conservation and cooperation that would "enable millions of our people to take advantage of the opportunities which God has given our country."[8]

New Deal social, economic, and regional planning policy also promoted the creation of *new* lands and new opportunities that the *state* could give the country. This dimension was particular strong in the Pacific Northwest during the 1930s and 1940s. The hydroelectric, reclamation, and resettlement projects inspired the Roosevelt administration's and regional planners' dreams of the development of new Western frontiers– new and productive lands and

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[7] Paul Hanna and Harold Hand, "Education for the Wise Utilization of Resources," *Teachers College Record* 52, no. 6 (1940), 176.

[8] Curtis Nettles, "Frederick Jackson Turner and the New Deal," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 17, no. 3 (1934), 257; Franklin Roosevelt, "Annual Message to Congress," January 3, 1934, in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 3, 1934, (New York City: Random House, 1938), 8.

urban constellations created through massive technological and administrative state undertakings.

What did the 'educational program for planning' include in the Pacific Northwest? How did it reconcile the goals of the conservation of land and the creation of new lands? What did it aim to teach students about the field of planning; the economy; rural and urban living; the role of government; and the future? What would Dewey have thought of it?

After briefly discussing the emergence of the federated New Deal planning structure and the significance of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission within that structure, this chapter examines how planners and educators in the Northwest came together to discuss their joint responsibilities for preparing– in Dana's words– "tomorrow's users of the facilities created today."[9] One curriculum that emerged from these collaborations gained national attention within planning and education organizations. However, a critical view of federal and regional planners' educational program for planning also appeared near the end of the 1930s, from none other than Lewis Mumford.

The New Deal Federated Planning Apparatus and the Future of the Columbia Basin

On July 20, 1933, Harold Ickes, as head of the Public Works Administration (PWA), appointed the National Planning Board (NPB). The Board's mission was two-fold: prepare "comprehensive and coordinated plans for regional areas" to guide public works funding as well as a broader mission to research "the distribution and trends of population, land uses, industry, housing, and natural resources" and the "social and economic habits, trends, and values involved in developing projects and plans."[10] Ickes staffed the initial three-member board with

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[9] *Ibid.*
[10] National Resource Planning Board, "Final Report," 1.

individuals who represented three traditions in planning– urban, social, and economic– and who all had experience working within the highly politicized environment of Washington, D.C.

Frederic A. Delano– the President's "favorite uncle"– represented the urban planners. He was a veteran of Daniel Burnham's influential Chicago Plan of 1909, worked alongside Thomas Adams and Clarence Perry to craft the *Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs* in 1929, and had D.C. connections through his work on the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, a Congressionally-established agency that since 1926 had the responsibility of comprehensive planning for the Washington, D.C region. Charles Merriam, a political scientist who founded the Local Community Research Committee at the University of Chicago in 1923 before heading Herbert Hoover's Research Committee on Social Trends, was by most accounts the most influential member of the board. Wesley C. Mitchell, a University of Chicago trained economist whose scholarly work postulated a theory of natural business cycles (of prosperity, crisis, depression, and revival) worked alongside Merriam on the Committee on Social Trends, and followed him into the Roosevelt administration.[11]

Although the National Planning Board members claimed in their *Final Report* (published August 1, 1934)[12] that they did not want to be alarmist in their justification for the need national

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[11]Alan Brinkley, "The National Resource Planning Board and the Reconstruction of Planning" in *The American Planning Tradition: Culture and Policy*, ed. Robert Fishman (Washington D.C.: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000), 174; Carl Abbott, "*Our Cities* and *The City*: Incompatible Classics?" *Planning Perspectives*, 27, no. 2 (2012), 106-108. The influence of the University of Chicago on federal policy in the 1930s can hardly be understated, but it is worth noting here that Merriam's Local Community Research Committee included many of that institution's most notable sociologists (Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, E. Franklin Frazier, and Louis Wirth) and that Mitchell's study of the cyclical nature of economics was widely-circulated. The latter influenced the 'urban life cycle' models of Homer Hoyt and Robert McKenzie that will be discussed in chapter 3. For a superior intellectual history that traces the influence, see Jennifer Light, *The Nature of Cities: Ecological Visions and the American Urban Professions, 1920-1960* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), esp. chapter 1.

[12] This publication was the "final" report of the NPB before it folded into the National Resources Board in 1934, where it was no longer an adjunct of the PWA. The agency underwent two additional name changes: in 1935 it became the National Resources Committee and in 1939, as part of a larger executive reorganization, it became the National Resource Planning Board. As we will see, the board did expand its scope over the decade of its existence, but the core personnel and the overall goals stayed consistent, despite the name changes and executive reorganizations.

planning, they directly quoted from the last report of Hoover's Committee on Social Trends: "there can be no assurance that the alternatives of force and violence, with their accompaniments of violent revolution, dark periods of serious repression of libertarian and democratic forms, the proscription and loss of many useful elements in the present productive system, can be averted."[13] Indeed, they noted that in the brief window between that publication and the writing of the NPB's *Final Report*, "[i]n Germany and Austria the parliamentary and democratic balance of authority has been violently overthrown, and an entirely different system substituted."[14] They outlined a proposal in the *Final Report*, which they dubbed a "plan for planning," that aimed to convince Roosevelt, Ickes, and Congress that permanent national, regional, state, and local planning bodies could play instrumental and advisory roles in improving administrative efficiency, supporting economic and social recovery, and thereby forever averting 'violent revolution' or 'dark periods of serious repression.'[15]

The NPB spent almost half of its initial $100,000 budget to support local planning agencies, which were urged "to demonstrate the practical value of well-prepared comprehensive plans."[16] It appointed regional advisors to travel within assigned territories and consult with state legislators, city, and University leaders about the benefits of a federated system of planning. Indeed, these regional advisors carried with them the promise that organized planning bodies would increase the possibility and speed of federal support for state and local public works projects. In terms of sheer numbers, the NPB and its regional field advisors were largely successful: within two years, every state in the Union contained a state planning board and by

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[13] National Planning Board, *Final Report, 1933-1934* (Washington: GPO, 1934), 18.
[14] Ibid., 18.
[15] *Ibid.*, 18-35.
[16] Quote from Delano to "Members of Planning Boards of Towns, Cities, and Regions," August 17, 1933, in Byrd Jones, "A Plan for Planning in the New Deal," *Social Science Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (1969), 525-534.

January 1937, 1,073 town or city planning boards informed urban or metropolitan development.[17]

Marshall Dana, the regional advisor for the Pacific Northwest region (Oregon, Idaho, Washington, and western Montana), pulled off an additional feat: he organized a regional planning body that brought the directors of the four state boards together to discuss topics of regional concern.[18] According to Dana, the regional planning commission's mission was to quell tensions that historically were the "byproducts of the struggle for the advantages anticipated from the growth of population, from the benefits of public works, and for the expansion of the economic and social life of the region."[19] Dana attempted to strengthen interstate bonds by creating a regional identity organized around the future of the Columbia River. He told the members of state planning boards and state legislative and executive bodies that the National Planning Board– and Roosevelt himself – considered the Pacific Northwest to be "a planning laboratory" that would test the viability of voluntary, cooperative regional planning.[20]

Similar to the Tennessee River, the federal government viewed the Columbia River as an untapped resource where hydroelectric engineering marvels could work alongside massive irrigation projects to spur industrial and population growth over the entire region. A plan for ten dam projects stretching from the Canadian border to the mouth of the Columbia had been submitted to Congress by the Chief of Army Engineers in March 1932 in what Dana later called

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[17] National Resources Committee, *Status of City and County Zoning in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Governmental Printing Office, 1937), 4-6; Philip Funigiello, "City Planning in World War II: The Experience of the National Resource Planning Board," *Social Science Quarterly*, 53 (June 1972), 91.

[18] Only two active regional boards operated during the NRP's tenure: The Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission and the New England Regional Planning Commission.

[19] *Ibid*., xi.

[20] Marshall Dana, remarks from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission to the Washington State Planning Council [23 June 1934], Minutes of Meetings, Washington State Planning Council February 23, 1934-December 14, 1935, Washington State Archives. The voluntary, cooperative nature of the organization of regional planning was to be distinct from the planning in the Tennessee River Valley, which was accomplished through a federal government corporation.

"the largest, most important and far reaching plan ever developed for the region."[21] The Corps of Engineers estimated that the "water power resources of the region represented 41 percent of the total potential water power of the United States" and therefore could be a boon to development if that potential could be harnessed.[22]

As in many high modernist proposals, Dana presented an idealistic, future-oriented analysis of the potential of the region with proper planning and state intervention. In his 1936 report to the National Resources Committee[23] (*Columbia Basin Study*), Dana painted the present four-state Pacific Northwest region as only "partially developed." Its population of four million largely subsisted on an agricultural and extractive economy in the interior, with several commercial-trade hubs at strategic points along railroads and ports. But if the regional planning commission and federal government could gain support for its planning endeavors within the legislatures and from the citizens of all four of states, the region could reinvent itself as a new frontier with "the capacity to sustain life at the same standard of living for approximately ten million."[24] If the distribution of cheap hydroelectric power was properly planned and managed, the regional economy would also grow to support increases in manufacturing that would allow the region to assert a degree of self-sufficiency and end what some believed to be "[t]he economic imperial control by the North over the West."[25]

Much of this planning would be technical– reliant upon engineers and elaborate mappings of power generation, transmission, and distribution systems (image 2.1)– but it could

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[21] National Resources Committee, *Regional Planning: Part I– Pacific Northwest* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, May 1936), 3.
[22] *Ibid.*, ix.
[23] The National Planning Board became the National Resources Committee in 1935; see note 12, *supra.*
[24] Dana, Remarks.
[25] Quote from Western historian Walter Prescott Webb's 1937 *Divided We Stand: The Crisis of a Frontierless Democracy*, in Gerald Nash, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 4.

also "facilitate the attainment in some degree of broad social objectives."[26] New or relocated regional inhabitants would settle into newly planned and designed neighborhoods in regional centers like Portland, Spokane, or Seattle or they would become the 'pioneers' of new satellite towns and garden cities rationally located throughout the region. Such regional redistribution of population and industry certainly bore the stamp of earlier RPAA proposals in New York State and its letters and meetings with Governor-turned-President Roosevelt. Lewis Mumford himself made this connection in a "Memorandum" on regional planning in the Pacific Northwest:

> The natural resources of the Northwest give it claim to a far larger proportion of the country's population than it yet possesses; many of its lonely areas cry for occupation and settlement. […] For the economic laying down of utilities, for security against unemployment in a single industry, for the advantages of a many-sided social existence, population needs *not merely be decentralized but to be recentralized*. Henry Wright made this very clear in his 1926 report on Planning the State of New York: in Oregon and Washington, no less than in the East, it is as important to empty out areas that can never be satisfactorily settled, because of distance, climate, or inferior resources, as it is to relieve the over-congested centers of their congestion. Hence the aim of a power system that seeks good social results must be to spread power to points of maximum advantage, and to concentrate city building and industrial expansion in those areas.[27]

As he had done in response to Thomas Adams' *Regional Plan for New York*, Mumford wanted the public to understand that simply opening up new land for settlement in order to relieve congestion in the city slums– or in this case, relieve weary Dust Bowl migrants–did not constitute social, economic, or spatial improvement. In order to achieve a "Planned Promise Land," power from the Bonneville and Grand Coulee dams could not be spread willy-nilly– or

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[26] National Resources Committee, *Regional Planning,*153.
[27] Lewis Mumford, *Regional Planning in the Pacific Northwest: A Memorandum* (Portland: Northwest Regional Council, 1939), 3, 12-13, *emphasis mine.*

"wherever it suited the private needs of the enterprise, and without respect to what manner of community development took place."[28] Instead, hydroelectric power– and eventually the thousands of miles of main canals, laterals, and irrigation drains of the Columbia Basin Project– would have to support decentralization *and* recentralization in farm communities and urban constellations throughout the river basin. Mumford argued that a strong regional planning authority, guided by an unwavering commitment to the "public good," could bring about a period of "regional renewal" in the Pacific Northwest that would be envied and copied throughout the country.[29] Of course, the 'public good' for Mumford equated to the principles of the RPAA: self-sufficient communities with balanced agricultural and industrial activities and equal access to aesthetic, educational, and cultural institutions.

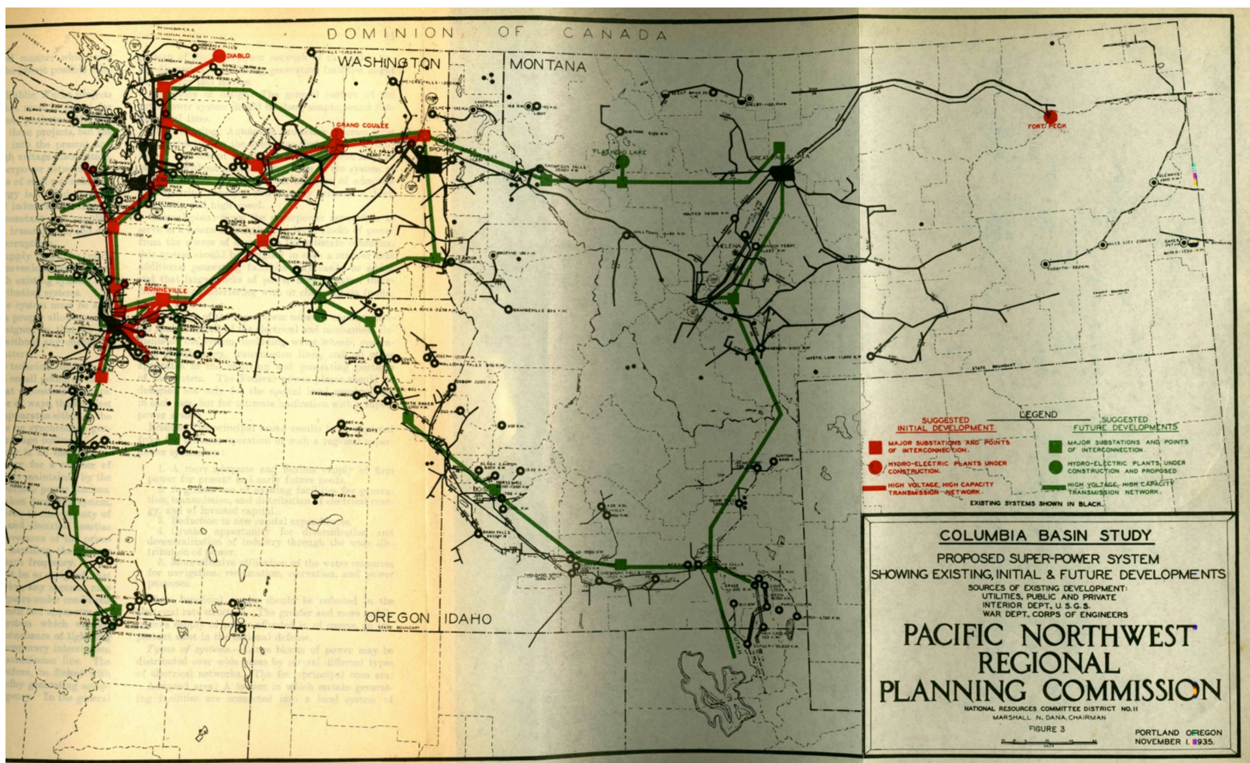

Image 2.1. Super-Power System Map, *Columbia Basin Study (1936).*

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[28] "Planned Promise Land" is a phrase given to the Columbia Basin Project by Richard Lowitt, *The New Deal and the West* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 152. The longer quotation is from Mumford, *Regional Planning in the Pacific Northwest*, 12.

[29] Mumford, *Regional Planning in the Pacific Northwest*, 20.

Mumford's "Memorandum" and the Northwest Regional Planning Commission's *Columbia Basin Study* did not pay much attention to the idea that these proposals would force the displacement of people. They viewed the present land as largely uninhabited, except for a few frontier families of the previous generation who lived on 'submarginal lands' or on the 'stump ranches' that sprang up in the wake of Pacific Northwest logging companies. There was a complete erasure of indigenous physical and cultural presence on the land and no mention of the forced displacement that the Columbia Basin projects would entail.

This erasure of indigenous presence and the invisibility of dislocation in regional planning discourse may not be surprising given the history of American settler colonialism. Just as the original cadastral surveys, the plans for American military forts, and the reservation and allotment plans erased indigenous presence for purposes of promoting future white settlement and cultural hegemony, these documents erased existing dense networks of relations and replaced them with utopian visions of techno-cities of the future: mammoth dams, high-tension power lines, large manufacturing plants, and garden cities.

Half of the Grand Coulee Dam, approved by Congress in August 1935 and the key project in the Columbia Basin plan, was to be constructed on the Colville Reservation, then home to a confederation of twelve tribes: Colville, Chelan, Entiat, Sin-Aikst, Nespelem, Okanogan, Sanpoil, Wenatchee, Palus, Methow, Moses Columbia, and the Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce. Lawney Reyes has written about the land around the reservation in the early 1930s as containing the "best fields for camas, bitterroot, chokecherries, and serviceberries" that were used in medicines.[30] He wrote of the stories his mother told him about the Chinook that "used to go up the river by the millions" at Kettle Falls and how it had long been a node in the social,

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[30] Lawney Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear: An Urban Indian's Quest for Justice* (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 2006),

cultural, and trading network of a number of tribes, "even tribes from the Plains" who would bring "dried buffalo meat and robes made of fur to trade for the salmon."[31] From collected oral histories, William Layman wrote that the camps that sprung up around Kettle Falls during the summers "bustled with activity– a rich assortment of families sharing the work of fishing by day and the pleasure of singing, dancing, and gaming at night."[32] As historical geographer D.W. Meinig writes in *The Great Columbia Plain*, the phrase 'a rich assortment of families' is a profound understatement. The river system bound indigenous groups and families together– "it was either an anchor or a magnet: holding some permanently along the banks, drawing others seasonally to replenish their supplies" after wintering in the low country and canyons along the periphery of the region.[33]

Because these places, networks, and lifeways did not appear as part of the future of the region– a future made by state intervention and planning– they would not appear in what Marshall Dana came to call "an educational program for planning."

Marshall Dana and "An Educational Program for Planning"

Marshall Dana was tapped as the regional advisor for the National Resources Board and chairman of the Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission because he had a long history of promoting plans that he thought would ensure future growth and social change. As a leader in Portland's Civic Improvement League and a journalist at *The Oregonian*, he actively promoted the Progressive Era, City Beautiful-inspired comprehensive plan that he vowed would transform

[31] *Ibid.*, 11.
[32] William Layman, "River of Memory: The Columbia, Wild & Free," *Columbia: The Magazine of Northwest History* (Spring 2003).
[33] D.W. Meinig, *The Great Columbian Plain: A Historical Geography, 1805-1910* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), 21.

Portland into a "Paris of the Pacific" with two million residents (the city's population in the 1910 Census was just over 200,000).[34] When that "Greater Portland Plan" faltered in the midst of a regional economic downturn in the early 1910s, Dana took on some of the responsibility for its failure. While bad timing played a role in the voters' rejection of a 1913 bond issue to support the plan, Dana also suggested that he and other city boosters did not do enough to educate the public about the ways comprehensive planning contributed to the "manner and mode of the good life."[35]

Dana carried this assessment of the important role of education into his New Deal work and, in May 1935, made an impassioned plea for a "program of education for planning" as "the next step in the planning program."[36] To an influential audience at the Conference on City, Regional, State and National Planning in Cincinnati that included Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, NRB Secretary Charles Eliot and member Charles Merriam, Dana shared what he had learned from his Portland experience:

> A planning project naturally evolves from scientific research and analysis into campaigns for accomplishment. […] As a newspaperman I have found that if a thing is needed, if it is right, if the word about it is spread systematically and persistently, […] if he employs the vital energy of enthusiasm and keeps at it everlastingly, it will be done. Effort at first will seem futile, the public apathetic. But sentiment will be aroused. Then it will amaze even the crusader with its energy, its generosity and its momentum.[37]

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[34] Carl Abbott, *Portland: Planning, Politics, and Growth in a Twentieth-Century City* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 49, 61.
[35] Abbott, Portland, chapter 3; quotation from Marshall Dana, "An Educational Program for Planning. A Paper presented at the Conference of City, Regional, State, and National Planning, Cincinnati, OH, May 1935," Correspondences and Related Records of NRPB, 1933-1943, National Archives-Seattle (hereafter cited as Correspondences, NRPB). For comparison, in March 1912 Seattle voters rejected a City Beautiful city plan ('the Bogue Plan') of similar scope to the one in Portland. See Matthew Klingle, *Emerald City*, chapter 4.
[36] Dana, "An Educational Program for Planning," 1.
[37] *Ibid.*, 4.

Because national, regional, and local planning was being proposed on a scale never before attempted in the United States, Dana argued for "direct and definite inclusion of educational divisions in planning organizations" that would contribute materials "not only in the school and college course, but in public understanding" of the "value of planning."[38]

We can imagine Dana turning to Eliot and Merriam in the audience as he made the following comments:

> A suggestion is therefore submitted. […] Let the National Resources Board now set up an educational planning project. Let it be done on the level of the water inventory and land classification. Let it summon the best qualified persons in the country to prepare a program of education for planning, accurate pedagogically, but likewise alive and challenging to the mass mind. Let it be a program national in scope but intimately related to divisional and local needs.[39]

An educational program for planning would begin early in childhood by teaching students that "cooperative effort can widen individual opportunity."[40] It would continue in junior and senior high schools with work that helped students "become literate about the region" and informed about the new economic and employment opportunities created by new technologies, new plans for the conservation of natural resources, and "the strange new processes being developed in connection with electricity and chemistry."[41] Such work would also be a means for "reduc[ing] the abruptness of transition from school to life, and give them [students] less feeling of strangeness upon entry into the world of work."[42] In college, a program for planning would ensure that all students of the social sciences, as well as those in the professional schools of business, engineering, law, and education would be trained "to think in terms of public interest"

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[38] *Ibid.*
[39] *Ibid.,* 3.
[40] *Ibid*., 5.
[41] "Pacific Northwest Presents Wealth of Opportunities," *The Seattle Educational Bulletin*, October 1936.
[42] Dana, "An Educational Program for Planning," 2.

so that they could provide leadership in planning for the future.[43] Beyond the school, an educational program for planning would encourage "an informed following" that valued interpersonal, interstate, and interagency cooperation; that recognized the well-being of an individual was related to the well-being of the community; and that could distinguish "truly civilized persons and barbarians wearing the trappings of civilization."[44] It is hard to determine whether the 'barbarians' Dana was identifying were the fascists in Berlin or the Indians along the Columbia River.

Dana told his Cincinnati audience that such introductions of planning into the curriculum of schools and colleges would require that planners move out from behind their drafting tables and beyond the office doors of government agencies and city halls into the public sphere. It would require them to work with educational policy makers, state and local superintendents, University presidents and faculty, and would require the means to find space in local newspapers, popular magazines, and on new media such as the radio in order to reach a broader public audience. With a passing reference to John Dewey, Dana argued that planning curriculum did not have to consist of "pedagogical tomes." It could include the reports of the National Resources Board, local planning surveys, or newspaper articles, and could even take the form of a visit to "a power dam in full use, a city well built, or a Nation with a recovery program governed by a plan." These experiential opportunities would be especially impactful, but if nothing else, planners had to develop a visual language– "a great chart," "graphic charts," "simple diagrams," or even "noble and logical diagram[s]"– to bring planning ideas "nearer to plain people."[45]

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[43] *Ibid.*; Ben Kizer to Marshall Dana, 24 February 1936, Correspondences, NRPB.
[44] Dana, "An Educational Program for Planning," 2.
[45] *Ibid.,* 2, 6.

All indications point to an enthusiastic reception of the speech, and Dana continued to promote it well after returning to the Northwest, sending a hard copy to Charles Merriam in June, to Ben Kizer of the Washington State Planning Council in September, and several other state and national leaders as he prepared a special session on the topic of "Education and Planning" at the 3rd Annual Pacific Northwest Planning Conference to be held in Spokane in February, 1936.[46]

In order to set an agenda for the conference session that would appeal to both educators and planners and encourage further collaboration, he consulted with a number of regional and national colleagues. From Noah Showalter– the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Education advisor on both the Washington State Planning Council and the Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission– Dana figured that school finance must be a topic of conversation for the conference. Of particular interest to Showalter was the relation of state, county, and local school support: should any of these means of school support be eliminated? Could school costs be cut without curtailing their efficiency?[47] Ben Kizer– chairman of the Washington State Planning Council– seemed most interested in a working session with representatives of the region's institutions of higher education to "give adequate consideration to the training of men to live in and forward the progress of a 'planned society.'[48] Elmer Breckner– Superintendent of Tacoma Public Schools– wanted to see the conference session tackle curriculum revision because, in his view, this was the "biggest single problem facing public education." He wrote to Dana that "[t]he world has changed so rapidly that the schools could not have made the necessary adjustment even under the most favorable circumstances," and

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[46] Dana to Merriam, 25 June 1935; Dana to Kizer, 9 September 1935; Elmer Breckner (Superintendent, Tacoma Schools) to Dana, 20 December 1935; Charles Eliot to Dana, 31 January 1936; Robert Randall (Consultant, State Section, National Resources Committee) to Dana, 7 February 1936, Correspondences, NRPB.
[47] Memorandum from Dana, "Tentative Program for Education and Planning Section of PNW Regional Planning Commission," n.d., Correspondences, NRPB.
[48] Kizer to Dana, 16 September 1935; Kizer to Dr. Charles E. Martin (Professor of Political Science, University of Washington), 6 February 1936, Correspondences, NRPB.

suggested that the data collected by state and regional planners could help update and adapt the course of study. Breckner also echoed Showalter's interest in the school support issue and believed that the topic of district reorganization "around logical community centers, giving consideration to such factors as topography, highways, social and business centers" could be a means of uniting educators and physical planners around a long-contested issue: rural school consolidation.[49]

Dana also wrote to the National Resources Board in December 1935 to query about how other states had attempted to merge education and planning concerns. NRB Secretary Charles Eliot replied to Dana, but had no specific information on such attempts and forwarded Dana's request to others in the office. One NRB staffer, Robert Randall, later wrote that the Board might take up the issue of higher education in its committee on 'population problems,' since this committee would be directing its attention to questions of the development and 'conservation' of *human resources*. Foregrounding that committee's findings and recommendations, Randall suggested to Dana that the Northwest conference might consider "making education for public service free and available to all young persons who qualify by scholastic record and character."[50] But this was not simply a matter of the benevolence of the state or even a means to attract the best students into new public service occupations; for Randall, it was a response to the problems of a changing population. Providing free higher education and assurances that graduates would enter an "adequate and honored livelihood" would result in improved "population quality through the higher birth rates in better class families." Apparently, the 'committee on population problems' was finding a negative relationship between "fertility and social or economic status," which they worried might precipitate an "imperceptible drag on cultural advance" that could

[49] Breckner to Dana, 20 December 1935, Correspondences, NRPB.
[50] Randall to Dana, 7 February 1936, Correspondences, NRPB.

only be ameliorated by governmental action, including "extensive provisions for public education."[51] There is no evidence to suggest that the Spokane conference took up this particular 'fertility rationale' for greater coordination between education and regional planning, but the exchange does reveal that the NRB itself was beginning to move toward an understanding of 'human resources' and educational provision as topics under their purview.[52]

In fact, one can only speculate about the discussions during the 'Education and Planning' section of the conference. While the Spokane conference as a whole did get some media attention from the regional press, the 'Education and Planning' section received scant mention. The *Seattle Times* included a terse summary statement from this section in its coverage of the final day of the three day conference: "Merging of small, inadequate rural schools into large schools and providing transportation should be our goal. Stress teaching of Northwest history and resource courses."[53] Noah Showalter felt that the work of the section was well-received although he– and, no doubt, Dana– were disappointed that there were no representatives of the region's institutions of higher education in attendance. Showalter also expressed concern that educators and school district personnel did not fully grasp that the goal of the section was to "inspire collective judgment" on the future of public schooling in the region rather than simply present a final plan for their approval. In a letter two weeks after the conference, Showalter

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[51] National Resources Committee, Committee on Population Problems, *The Problems of a Changing Population* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1938), 11-12. It should be noted that Randall does not appear as one of the authors or contributors to this study, but in his February 7, 1936 letter to Dana he does mention that the committee will include discussion of the link between provision of higher education and higher birth rates in its final report. *The Problems of a Changing Population* is a fascinating text that takes several steps away from the eugenics movement, especially in relation to race (although retaining some support for voluntary sterilization "of certain groups of diseased or defective persons"). Taken as a whole, it seems to argue for a positive role of the state in increasing "population quality" through education of certain classes, rather than a negative state role in slowing the birth rates of those perceived to be of a lower class. See pages 163-165.
[52] An entire chapter in *The Problems of a Changing Population* focused on formal education, "Social Development and Education," written by University of Chicago professor of education Newton Edwards.
[53] "Planners Doubt Farm Increase," *The Seattle Sunday Times*, February 16, 1936.

suggested to Marshall Dana that because school matters were considered to be fundamentally a local and state concern, perhaps the tie between education and planning should start there as opposed to the regional level.[54] Indeed, as we will see, Dana would begin the following school year speaking with the Seattle teaching corps about its participation in co-creating an educational program for planning.

The 'Education and Planning' section may not have been the immediate success that Dana had envisioned, but a little over a month later, in March 1936, Dana and all other federal advisors to state and regional planning boards, received a bulletin from the National Resources Committee signed by Charles Eliot:

> The Educational Policies Commission, appointed by the National Education Association and the Department of Superintendence, has sent to the secretary of each State Planning Board which has made education surveys a copy of the attached publication, 'Activities of State Planning Boards Relating to Public Education,' now in preliminary form. […] The Education Policies Commission is also cooperating with the National Resources Committee in the preparation of a publication dealing with procedures for state planning work in the field of education.[55]

This interaction between the National Resources Committee and the NEA's Educational Policies Commission likely served mutually beneficial purposes. For the National Resources Committee, the connection to the NEA and to state departments of education *did*, as Dana suggested, give them the opportunity to spread the gospel of planning to a future generation. It also provided the NRC the opportunity to circuitously move federal planning policy into what the administration perceived to be one of the more conservative and obstinate government domains: local and state education agencies. Recall that late in his term as Governor of New

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[54] Showalter to Dana, 26 February 1936, Correspondences, NRPB.
[55] Eliot to all state planning consultants, *Bulletin D-22-(1)*, 19 March 1936, Correspondences, NRPB.

York, Roosevelt called for the rational planning and management of schooling (through school consolidation and administrative re-orderings) so as to give those in rural areas greater 'opportunities to learn.' Perhaps this connection would give Roosevelt and the NRC the opportunity to 'teach' state educational officials how to be more efficient through planning. For the Educational Policies Commission, and its parent National Education Association, the motivation for collaboration seemed clear: perhaps it would bring the New Deal administration closer to supporting no-strings-attached federal aid to state departments of education.

Although Marshall Dana made no mention of the timing of the NRC missive in his correspondences, he must have at least entertained the idea that it was a federal response to his Cincinnati speech and his letters to Merriam and Eliot requesting information about state planning efforts involving education. Indeed, William Carr, the Secretary of the Educational Policies Commission wrote a separate letter to Dana expressing his interest in and appreciation for Dana's speech that had subsequently been published as the closing article in the *American Planning and Civic Annual*.[56]

The authors of the preliminary Educational Policies Commission-NRC report found that three-fourths of the states had engaged in at least one state-wide educational survey over the course of their statehood, many during the 1910s and 1920s. But they found the scope of these Progressive Era surveys limited. They claimed that the 23 state planning board educational surveys profiled in the report, on the other hand, were able "to present education in its proper perspective in the economic and social life of the state" because they were initiated by state

[56] Carr to Dana, 31 March 1936, Correspondences, NRPB. Dana's article appeared as a truncated version of his speech and as the closing article in the annual. Marshall Dana, "An Educational Program for Planning," in *American Planning and Civic Annual*, ed. Harlean James (Harrisburg, PA.: Mount Pleasant Press, 1935), 336.

planning boards that spanned multiple fields.[57] This claim was more aspirational than factual; most of the surveys profiled focused on rather standard educational matters: finance, enrollment, administration, district organization, teacher training, rural and vocational education, and the like. A few states mentioned that they planned to use the population and land use maps from the state planning board to guide school consolidation efforts or, like Ohio, "pave the way for a mandatory comprehensive planning of school building facilities in each county, to serve as a guide in, and to control future school construction."[58] Of the Northwest states, the Oregon State Planning Board's Division of Education– with its sixteen sub-divisions– was included in the report, and the fact that the Washington Planning Council *had* an Education Committee received a one-line mention.[59]

Given Dana's earlier call for an educational program for planning, he was likely disappointed at the scant amount of work being done at the state level to translate planning board surveys of natural resources and new technologies into curriculum. Only three states in the report– Michigan, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota– contained any mention of curriculum or instruction work, and even these states did not specify if the curricular or instructional recommendations had any relation to the other fields involved in the planning board. Over the course of the following two years, Dana would attempt to realize his vision of an educational program for planning by speaking directly with faculty and administrators of the Pacific Northwest's schools and colleges. His speech to the Seattle corps of teachers and administrators

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[57] Educational Policies Commission, "Activities of State Planning Boards Relating to Public Education: Preliminary Draft; Subject to Revision," (March 1936), 3.
[58] *Ibid.*, 21.
[59] The Washington State Planning Council embarked upon its educational survey– subtitled "The Schools of Tomorrow: A Study in Educational Planning"– in August 1937. This survey largely followed in the tradition of earlier surveys in the state, discussing topics like school consolidation, state funding, and vocational education.

at their annual Teacher Institute at the beginning of the 1936-1937 school year launched the development of a regional curriculum that would become a national model.

The Making of *The Pacific Northwest: Its Resources and Industries*

Marshall Dana carried an oversized book up to the podium at the Seattle Schools' annual Teachers' Institute in September 1936. It was a giant textbook, Dana dramatically declared, "its covers the mountains and cliffs; its pages the farms and the fields, the forests and the plains; its binders the rivers and the streams; its illustrations color plates beautiful beyond appreciation to describe."[60] The textbook about the natural resources of the state– as well as the state's cities, neighborhoods, and homes "planned to match modern discoveries"– had yet to be written. But Dana believed that the Seattle corps was well-suited to the task; it had shown its interest in local and regional curriculum development over the previous few years, publishing material for classroom use such as *Government in Seattle* and *This City of Ours.*[61]

Seattle Superintendent Worth McClure responded enthusiastically to Dana's presentation. In the months that followed, McClure requested, and Dana gathered and delivered, "a great mass of printed materials, maps, graphs, pictures, etc." produced by the surveys and field work of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission and the planning boards that comprised the four state region.[62] McClure then asked William King, Principal of James Monroe Junior High School, and Elmer Fullenwider, a teacher of social science at Monroe, to "study the materials with a view of

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[60] "Pacific Northwest Presents Wealth of Opportunities."
[61] *Ibid.* In a letter to the Regional Planning Commission in the summer of 1937, Seattle Superintendent Worth McClure claimed that the district had been "experimenting […] with a course of study for ninth grade pupils in basic resources and industries of the Pacific Northwest." In "Planning Education Conference, Reed College, July 8, 1937, Extracts from Replies to Conference Announcement," NRPB, Correspondences.
[62] Elmer Fullenwider, "Utilization of Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission and National Resources Committee Materials in the Seattle Public Schools and College of Education, University of Washington, Seattle," n.d., NRPB, Correspondences.

their possible use in the schools."[63] While King and Fullenwider found these materials interesting, they could not agree with Marshall Dana's assessment in his Cincinnati speech that they could be used directly in junior or senior high school classrooms because they were "not written (or prepared) for children."[64] They then set out to write and prepare the great textbook that Dana and McClure envisioned.

Over the course of the school year, King and Fullenwider augmented the materials sent by Dana with consultations with University faculty in forestry, fisheries, and economics as well as conversations with individual members of planning boards. In the spring of 1937, Principal King approved the creation of a series of elective classes at Monroe where Fullenwider could experiment with the selection and presentation of materials amongst junior high school students. Even as a work-in-progress, Fullenwider mimeographed topical sections and sent them to "teachers in various schools throughout the city," soliciting their feedback about content and pedagogy after they used the sections in their own classrooms.[65] Also during that spring, King and Fullenwider co-led a professional development course for Seattle teachers called "Our Pacific Northwest" where they shared the materials as well as the reflections from the field and asked participants to help them assemble a manuscript for publication. Fullenwider finalized the manuscript in the summer of 1937 after teaching a summer course in the College of Education at the University of Washington on "The Utilization of Pacific Northwest Resource Materials in the Social Studies."

Impressed by the translation and presentation of difficult and disparate materials, as well as the positive reception of the materials by Seattle teachers, Superintendent Worth McClure

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[63] *Ibid.*
[64] *Ibid.*
[65] William King and Elmer Fullenwider, *The Pacific Northwest: Its Resources and Industries* (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1938), 4.

announced that an elective course called "The Pacific Northwest: Resources, Industries and Opportunities" would be offered in "selected junior and senior high schools in the ninth grade" during the 1937-1938 school year. McClure suggested that when the materials were published in textbook form, the elective would then turn into a required course "to be taken by every boy and girl going through the Seattle Public Schools."[66] South-Western Publishing Company in Cincinnati published *The Pacific Northwest: Its Resources and Industries* early in 1938, and the textbook would go through a second printing for distribution to all ninth grade Seattle students and teachers at the start of the 1938-1939 school year.[67]

The textbook fully realized Marshall Dana's vision of an educational program for planning in the schools. The textbook's content mirrored the idealistic, future-orientation of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission's *Columbia Basin Study* and the textbook's introduction to teachers expressed similar goals to those discussed in Dana's Cincinnati speech three years earlier. Dana had hoped that regional planning curriculum would

> lead to the popular conviction that real and lasting values are to be had; that planning is better than chaos; […] that deep desires of human beings are within reach; that water can be held from flood and erosion and made useful in sanitation, power, industry, transportation, recreation, and domestic requirements; that land may be used for its fertility, *assured by study and classification*; that wasteful use of minerals and forests may be substituted by a *sane policy* nationally applied; that when public institutions are built, public works installed, and facilities provided for industry, trade, and commerce, these may *function smoothly through coordination*; that to not plan means losses in bread and meat, and that to do so means life at a higher level of subsistence and happiness.[68]

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[66] Fullenwider, "Utilization of Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission and National Resources Committee Materials."
[67] There is no indication in the archives of any sort of relationship between Dana's speech in Cincinnati in 1935 and the Cincinnati publishing house.
[68] Dana, "An Educational Program for Planning," 5, *emphasis mine*.

Dana wanted a curriculum whereby students were taught to "see like a state": where they could read and, quite literally, *see* how state action was turning chaos into order and transforming 'raw' nature into productive and rationally ordered machines. King and Fullenwider heeded Dana's call for "great charts" and "noble and logical diagram[s]"– the textbook included 44 charts or diagrams– and did him one better by interspersing 93 photographs throughout the text and 7 regional reference maps in the appendix. The visuals in the textbook do not stand alone; they are part of a narrative approach that is in itself visual. The first half of the textbook is arranged as what the authors dub "a "Sky Tour" of the region, with students 'lifting off' from Seattle's Boeing Field and flying over the region and 'touching down' in spots of significance in order to learn more. In the introduction, King and Fullenwider explain the pedagogical significance of lifting students from the ground level to a more elevated view in the sky. Such an approach

> lets him [sic] behold the physical and cultural landscape– in brief, the various environmental patterns– as he flies rapidly over the region. This approach has proved successful with experimental classes. The student's imagination is brought into play at once. When he is asked, 'Can you imagine how this city or this country appears from the air?' he feels his interest challenged, and he reads on with more eagerness than is usually given a textbook. Pictures liberally distributed throughout the unit and supported with carefully written legends aid in fixing in the student's mind the imagined scenes.[69]

To see Seattle, for example, from the street level may allow the reader to become familiar with a local architectural gem or point of interest, but to see it from an elevation of 10,000 feet is to become familiar with the ways in which the landscape has been made into rational and ordered spaces within a natural world that provides its share of obstacles (image 2.2). To see a farm from the dirt level is to likely see the people, animals, plants, and farm buildings that make up that

[69] King and Fullenwider, *The Pacific Northwest*, 2.

farm; to see a modern farm from the air is to remove the activity and focus on the order (image 2.3). To see a Columbia dam from the air is to recognize the massiveness of the undertaking; to understand its intricacies or complexities one might need to examine a working model (image 2.4). The 'Sky Tour' narrative approach in the first half of *The Pacific Northwest* is a curricular example of what political scientist James C. Scott has called the high modernist tendency to visualize the state's power; "an efficient, rationally organized city, village or farm [to the high modernist] was a city that *looked* regimented and orderly in a geometrical sense." Scott dubbed this reliance on the visual to communicate state power: "seeing like a state."[70]

In addition to the elevated photographs, the text of both the 'Sky Tour' section and the second half of the textbook on individual regional industries imposes a statist epistemological and ideological orientation on its readers. This orientation– seeing like a state– is most obvious in the selection of places in the four-state region that the authors choose to fly over. There is a heavy emphasis on places where the federal government– especially New Deal policies and projects– were active in 'improving' the landscape and the productivity of the region's land. Students read about the sixty subsistence homesteads built in Longview, Washington by the Resettlement Administration; about the farmers in the Palouse hills learning from the Soil Conservation Service about crop rotations; students read about the construction of the Grand Coulee dam and federal plans for making the region the biggest producer of hydroelectric power in the world; and about the irrigation projects in the Yakima and Klamath Valleys through the Bureau of Reclamation that would turn 'unusable land' into fertile soil. Together, the active New Deal state is understood as a primary reason for the bright economic future of the region.

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[70] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 4.

Image 2.2. Seattle from 10,000 feet

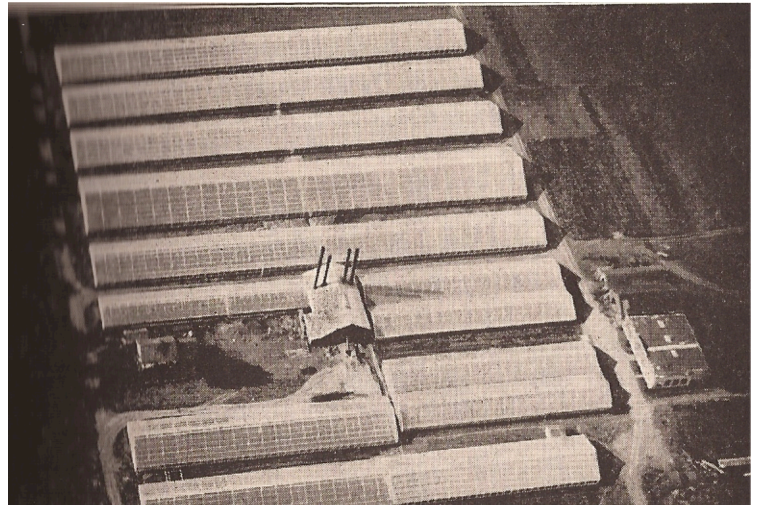

Image 2.3. Aerial view of Chase Gardens, Eugene, OR

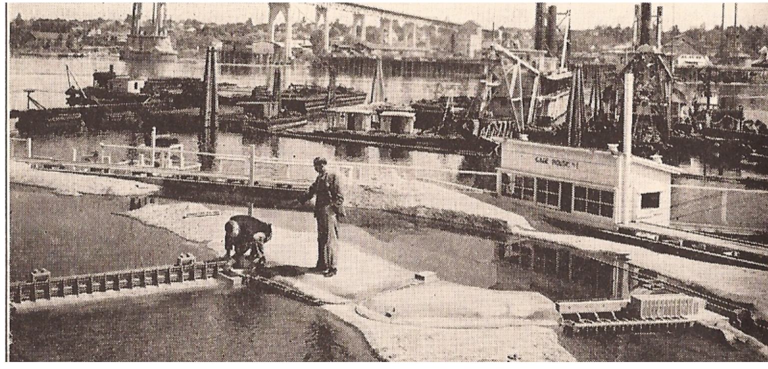

Image 2.4. Working model of Bonneville dam

Source: All photographs from *The Pacific Northwest: Its Resources and Industries*

Seeing like a state appears more subtly in the ways in which the natural world is represented and discussed. The text concentrates on those aspects of the natural world that can be appropriated for human use: plants become ‘crops,’ trees become ‘timber,’ fauna become ‘livestock,’ even the rugged mountains become ‘scenic recreational spots.’[71] The textbook works a similar magic on humans; there is an almost complete absence of any discussion or images of the region’s people *unless* they appear in relation to work and industry. People are reduced to either their labor or their consumptive power. Just to highlight this, of the 93 photographs in the text, only 19 include people, and 16 of those depict people working in the region’s industries (the other 3 are consuming the region’s scenic recreational spots). The text’s 44 charts and diagrams all communicate labor-related activities or statistics: from the tonnage of water-borne exports of lumber, to the value of mineral output, to the purse seine method of salmon catching favored by commercial fishers, and the entire process of canning salmon. This nature-human-work relationship in the text extends to the brief mentions of the region’s indigenous inhabitants. They, too, appear only in relation to work and industry, but this relationship only appears within federally designated reservation lands. The reservations of (unnamed) coastal tribes are viewed in relation to the forests of the Olympic Peninsula, which the text tells the reader will “provide a perpetual source of timber” if properly conserved.[72] The Klamath Indian Reservation is featured, but only because the value of its Ponderosa pine stands and irrigated lands make the Klamath “second in tribal wealth […] among the Indians of the United States.”[73] When the text glows about the future of the dam and irrigation projects along the great Columbia River as a solution

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[71] *Ibid*., 13.
[72] King and Fullenwider, *The Pacific Northwest*, 27.
[73] *Ibid.*, 70.

to the "undeveloped" or "underdeveloped" lands, it erases the place value of fisheries like Kettle Falls by suggesting that the technologies of fishways, power wheels, and fish ladders will allow the runs to continue.

Finally, the text exudes a high-modernist optimism about the future, once the technologies of the state become fully operational. Echoing Marshall Dana, the authors wrote:

> It is estimated that our present [regional] population will be increased by 2,500,000 within twenty-five years. […] Our present and potential power will bring new types of manufactures. The combination of resources of various kinds, and their further development and utilization under the stimulus of abundant and low-cost power, present an opportunity for the creation of great wealth, national as well as regional.[74]

At the very end of the textbook, however, there is one significant break from the statist epistemological and ideological orientation. Analogous to the broader political-economic conversations circulating during the New Deal, the textbook suggests that international trade and markets– especially in the Pacific Rim– could be of profound importance to the economic future of the region.

> In China there are 490,000,000 people. In Japan there is a total of 63,000,000 people. The populations of the two countries total 553,000,000, or 3,000,000 more people than there are on the entire continent of Europe. If Seattle and other cities of the Pacific Northwest will cultivate permanent markets with these populous countries, this area should one day see a Puget Sound city much larger than the present city of Seattle.[75]

The textbook spent the great majority of its pages presenting a robust New Deal state as strengthening regional production capabilities and solidifying regional boundaries through its various projects, but it couldn't help but intimate the potential of Pacific Rim as a future site for

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[74] King and Elmer Fullenwider, *The Pacific Northwest,* 17.
[75] Ibid., 148.

the consumption of regional products. No matter that China and Japan were then engaged in an imperial struggle over lands and ports. No matter that there was a rekindled anti-Japanese sentiment in the North American West that would eventually lead to Japanese-American dispossession and incarceration. The Chinese and Japanese *markets* might help realize the state's idealistic projections for the future– those markets remained relatively untapped, but with the proper planning, they could be a boon to the manufactures of the Pacific Northwest and could lead to a more populous and more prosperous urban future for coastal cities like Seattle and Portland. Students needed to be aware of the future geographies of global capital flow (image 2.5).

Image 2.5. Potential trade routes for Pacific Northwest goods. Inset of "Student's Regional Work Map" from *The Pacific Northwest: Its Resources and Industries* (1938), *UW Special Collections, Pacific Northwest Collection*

The Reception of *The Pacific Northwest* and Lewis Mumford's Challenge

In the spring of 1939, the National Education Association and the Progressive Education Association jointly formed a "Commission on Resources and Education," supported by a grant from the General Education Board (GEB). By this time, the GEB had spread its influence well beyond the South, exerting substantial influence in determining the projects undertaken by the Progressive Education Association and the American Council on Education as well as funding educational surveys done in cooperation with state planning agencies.[76] The Commission's 441-page final report, *The Role of Education in Utilizing Regional Resources*, was published later that year. Taken as a whole, the report argued that collaborative work between regional planners and educators held promise. The authors of the report– chaired by Paul Hanna and Harold C. Hand of Stanford– commended the Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission's educational program for planning as well as *The Pacific Northwest: Its Resources and Industries,* calling it "[o]ne of the very few volumes written specifically for school use on the problems of planning in a region."[77]

The Commission followed up on its report by giving financial support to two five-week intensive summer workshops in 1940 organized by the Northwest Regional Council (NRC), the educational arm of the Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission. Held at Reed College in Portland, Oregon and at the University of Washington's College of Education in Seattle, the

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[76] Craig Kridel and Robert Bullough, Jr., *Stories of the Eight-Year Study: Reexamining Secondary Education in America* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), 28. The GEB funded the Washington State Planning Council's 1938 educational survey: *The Schools of Tomorrow, A Study in Educational Planning* (Olympia: State Printing Office, 1938). Washington State Planning Council to General Education Board, 4 October 1937, Education Minutes, 1934-1938, State Planning Council Archives, Washington State Archives, Olympia, WA

[77] Hanna and Hand, "Education and the Wise Utilization of Resources, 176-179; Paul Hanna, Harold Hand, Aubrey Haan, Clarence Hunnicutt, Wendall Van Loan, and Nora Palm, *The Role of Education in Utilizing Regional Resources* (New York: *The Progressive Education Association, 1939*), ii.

workshops sought to create "a broad, cooperative effort" amongst educators and planners at all levels and across all fields in order to carry an educational program for planning into the 1940s. *The Pacific Northwest* served as a model textbook, even as the organizers promoted new collaborations and new place-based curriculum.

In September 1940, the NRC published a report entitled *Seattle Schools Discover the Region*. The authors of the report commended Seattle teachers and administrators for embracing the region as an important area of study, not only in geography classes but as "a vital, integral part of the social studies program at all educational levels."[78] In Seattle, they saw teachers devising new courses like "The Pacific Northwest: Resources, Industries and Opportunities" that used innovative textbooks like *The Pacific Northwest* and addressed both regional conservation problems like the depletion of "forest resources" as well as regional opportunities that would arrive "[w]hen the vast quantities of low cost power start humming over high tension lines" causing "an army of 460,000 migrants" to flood into the region.[79] The NRC hoped that *Seattle Schools Discover the Region*, which was part of a five-volume *Know Your Northwest Series*, would spark the imagination of teachers and administrators throughout the four-state region that were unable to attend the summer workshops. The future looked bright, the NRC announced, if "city youths, as well as farm boys" could come to know, through regional curriculum, the interconnected social, environmental, and economic dimensions of the region in which they lived and were likely to remain after completing their schooling.[80]

Lewis Mumford urged caution. Not much scholarly attention has been given to his participation in the field of education, but he was active during the late 1930s, precisely because

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[78] Northwest Regional Council, *Seattle Schools Discover the Region* (Portland, OR: NRC, 1940), 7.
[79] *Ibid.*, p. 8, 9.
[80] *Ibid.* 9.

of the increased attention given to regional planning and resources as subjects of interest in education.[81] It was the Northwest Regional Council that sponsored Mumford's two-week trip to the Pacific Northwest in 1938, where he met with various members of state planning boards, educators, and civic groups in both Portland and Seattle. The NRC printed Mumford's "Memorandum" on regional planning in the Pacific Northwest in an edition of 1500 copies the following year. Mumford served on the aforementioned Commission on Resources and Education as a "regionalism and planning" advisor in 1939, even as he continued his service as an appointed member of the American Council on Education's Commission on Teacher Education, another GEB-funded project.

Of the questions examined by the Commission on Teacher Education, Mumford was likely drawn to two: "How may the teacher grow in understanding and grasp of the social scene […]?" and "What firsthand experiences […] ought to be included in the education of teachers [..]?"[82] Mumford set out to address these questions in an extraordinary speech entitled "The Social Responsibilities of Teachers and Their Implications for Teacher Education," delivered as part of the Commission's 1939 Conference on the Cooperative Study of Teacher Education. Referencing his work with the NEA-PEA Commission on Resources and Education, Mumford acknowledged that "various collaborative textbooks" had emerged over the previous few years as a means to synthesize and present a great deal of information being gathered by planning departments at all scales of government. In many ways, the intention of these collaborative

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[81] A notable exception is Kurt Stemhagen & David Waddington, "Beyond the 'Pragmatic Acquiescence' Controversy: Reconciling the Educational Thought of Lewis Mumford and John Dewey," *Educational Studies* 47, no. 5 (2011), 469-489. The article is one of only a handful to take Mumford seriously as an educational thinker.

[82] American Council on Education, *The Commission on Teacher Education: A Brief Statement on Its Origins and Scope* (Washington: American Council on Education, 1940), 2.

efforts was to help the teacher gain an understanding of the social-political-economic scene so that she could prepare the next generation to fit within that scene.

> But although much good comes from these efforts, the method has a serious defect: that is, it proceeds from the results already given, results wholly external to the student's experience, whereas what is needed is a *unified* approach, in terms of the *process* of study, rather than a unified *result* through the more systematic massing of already formulated knowledge.[83]

A textbook like *The Pacific Northwest* and courses on resources and industries, Mumford would argue, enabled students to see the myriad *products* of state and regional survey work. But there were severe limitations to this approach. It forced the student to see the region as completely external– hence, she flies over it– and already made. It forced the student to see *only* like a state; to believe in the "metaphysics of the machine, derived from the needs and interests of capitalism."[84] It also made the teacher resemble a "servile pedagogue" if she only looked toward planning agencies or a synthesis of regional planning work to engage in the social-political-economic world surrounding the classroom. To Mumford, regionalism and the regional survey were not mere additions to the standard course of study, but rather the "backbone of a drastically revised method of study, in which every aspect of the sciences and the arts is ecologically related from the *bottom up* […][to] the student's experience of his region and his community."[85]

With echoes of his earlier critiques of Thomas Adams and the *Regional Survey of New York*, Mumford worried that most planners still understood the region and regional planning as "mere knowledge, mere fact-finding, mere technical skill" and he worried that this top-down perspective would be passed on to teachers and students through 'collaborative textbooks' like

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[83] Lewis Mumford, "The Social Responsibilities of Teachers," in *Values for Survival: Essays, Addresses, and Letters on Politics and Education* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1946), 151.
[84] *Ibid.*, 147.
[85] *Ibid.*, 151-152.

The Pacific Northwest.[86] Mumford urged teachers and teacher educators to augment this kind of knowledge with a regional survey method that illuminated and embraced the "expressive arts" as cultural productions of "the inner life" of regional inhabitants. The integration and elevation of this aspect of the region– the subjective, the experiential, the emotional, the moral– gave teachers and students what he referred to as a proper balance or an "equilibrium" between inner and outer worlds, between the wisdom of the machine and the wisdom of the living organism. A proper balance would enable teachers and students to themselves conceive of a new, humane, and collaborative social order.[87]

As we have seen, this desire for equilibrium had always been a part of Mumford's thinking. In response to the crowded and alienating patterns of *laissez faire* industrial capitalism, he supported the early efforts to create garden cities in America as a balance between town and country. When he came to the Northwest in 1938 and heard the excited talk amongst planners like Marshall Dana about future population and industrial growth with the coming of hydroelectric power, Mumford urged caution. The technological innovation of hydroelectric power had to be balanced by social objectives that sought to improve living conditions through the decentralization and recentralization of population and industry. On that same visit to the Northwest, Mumford also worried that New Deal regional planning in the Northwest and nationally had largely forsaken the central city in favor of planning the blank slate and the open frontier. In a very Mumfordian play with language, he encouraged regional planners and the public to take a more balanced account of regional renewal by recognizing the need for "the

[86] *Ibid.*, 153.
[87] *Ibid.*

restoration of blighted or sub-marginal *urban land*, the 'reforestation' of *urban* culture, [and] the prevention of *social* erosion."[88]

When his regional tour brought him to Seattle, the *Seattle Times* attempted to capture what Mumford meant by this kind of urban restoration. Before a scheduled meeting with Seattle mayor Arthur Langlie, Mumford allegedly pointed out the window and told those in the room to look at the city and express what they saw. After hearing the names of specific streets and buildings, Mumford suggested that the audience had become blind to the blighted areas that lay just beyond those downtown streets and buildings. Mumford then claimed that city leaders and planners needed to intervene in order to build or restore a balance in these areas: "small play areas for the younger children" and "low-cost housing" might be two such interventions.[89] Without intervention, more and more residents would leave the city and "spread out into the country districts, where there are fewer facilities for civilized living."[90] The time for intervention was now, Mumford said; the passage of the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act of 1937 provided federal funding to clear slums and start the process of urban restoration. Because the State of Washington and the city of Seattle had not yet passed enabling legislation to receive these federal housing funds, there would need to be a broad educational effort to bring blighted areas– and the possibilities of their replacement– to the public. Mumford discovered the following day that the *Seattle Times* would likely not aid in these educational endeavors; the title of the article describing his visit read: "Planner Looks at Our Fair City and Suggests that We Tear It Down" and the caption under his photograph, "Lewis Mumford: He takes things apart."[91] We might

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[88] Mumford, *Regional Planning in the Pacific Northwest*, 20.
[89] "Planner Looks at Our Fair City and Suggests that We Tear It Down," *The Seattle Times*, July 22, 1938; "Mumford Gives Advice to City," *The Seattle Times*, July 23, 1938.
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] "Planner Looks at Our Fair City and Suggests That We Tear It Down," *Seattle Times*, July 22, 1938.

imagine him humored by the newspaper's assessment, wanting to augment the caption with: 'and puts them back together differently.'

Conclusion

Mumford did not seem to realize this obvious contradiction. On the one hand, he advised teachers to distrust the technical and the top-down approaches of regional planners and instead go out and embrace the human, the experiential, and the varied cultural expressions of inhabitants: to embrace the democratic nature of places. This kind of education would, in turn, create people "with humanist attitudes, cooperative methods, rational controls all linked by a common feeling for the landscape and the common regional culture."[92] On the other hand, he looked out at the city of Seattle, likely from the fourteenth floor of the City-County Building, and diagnosed blight and recommended intervention without regard for the human, the experiential, and the cultural expressions of inhabitants. Herein lay the tendency of the economic placemaker as it emerged in the Pacific Northwest over the 1930s. In order to see anew, the tendency was to erase the old.

Between 1938 and 1940, over 2000 Colville and an additional 250 Spokane were forced by rising waters to put their homes on log skids to move to higher ground. They too moved the graves from the old cemeteries, which one Sin-Aikst man described as difficult because "the graves of loved-ones brought back memories of better days."[93] The dammed river behind Grand Coulee would inundate entire towns and bury other important place relations.

In June 1940, Kettle Falls hosted a three-day "Ceremony of Tears." According to the Spokane *Spokesman Review*, six chiefs from the Colville reservation spoke in their native

[92] Quotation in Richard White, *The Organic Machine* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), 68.
[93] Reyes, *Bernie Whitebear*, 15.

languages to a crowd of over one thousand about the loss of the fisheries as a gathering place and the loss of the salmon, roots, and berries of the area. Then, in a speech that captures the future-orientation of planning, Senator Homer Bone, a major proponent of the Columbia Basin Project addressed the audience. His concern lay elsewhere, as Hitler's forces had just entered Paris. The hydroelectricity of the dam would power great defense industries and the waters of the Columbia were about to save the future rather than bury the past.

> We can build more airplanes and tanks and can train more pilots for national defense than any other nation or combination of nations and the quicker we do it the better. We know now that the only thing in this world that Hitler will respect is more force than he controls.
>
> The Indians have fished here for thousands of years. They love this spot above all others on their reservation because it is a source both of food and beauty. We should see to it that the electricity which the great dam at Grand Coulee produces shall be delivered to all the people without profit, so that the Indians of future generations, as well as the white men, will find the change made here a great benefit to the people.[94]

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[94] "Farewell is Bid to Kettle Falls," *Spokesman Review,* June 17, 1940, quoted in "Native Americans Begin 'Ceremony of Tears' for Kettle Falls on June 14, 1940," *HistoryLink,* http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=7276 (accessed June 24, 2015).

Chapter Three

Public Housing, Civic Education: Jesse Epstein, Federal Housing Policies, and Seattle's Racial Geographies, 1937-1942

> By far the greatest number of arguments [against public housing] […] arise out of pure misunderstanding. [….] [W]e are on the whole very badly educated in this matter of environment. Many an intelligent university graduate would be better able to deliver a sensible opinion on the foreign policy of Rumania, or the function of the gold reserve, than he would on the physical framework of his city, or the social and economic implications of a slum area– even though that area might be half a block from his home.
>
> -Catherine Bauer, *A Citizen's Guide to Public Housing* (1940)[1]

Jesse Epstein, who would become the first executive director of the Seattle Housing Authority in 1939, must have appreciated Lewis Mumford's challenge to Seattle civic leaders to intervene in the city's 'blighted' districts just beyond downtown. Like Mumford's claim in his "Memorandum" on the Pacific Northwest, Epstein believed that the urbanism of the early New Deal focused too much on regional solutions to housing and community development at the expense of already-existing cities. Epstein claimed that "[t]he city is not as outworn an instrument as is believed; it is more worn out than outworn."[2] Epstein argued that housing authorities could be the means for "injecting new life into communities;" or, as Mumford would have it, restoring city land, reforesting city culture, and preventing further social erosion in the city.[3]

The passage of the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act of 1937 provided the federal policy framework for the creation of local housing authorities. But a provision in the bill required each

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[1] Catherine Bauer, *A Citizen's Guide to Public Housing* (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.: Vassar College, 1940), 47.
[2] Jesse Epstein, "Housing and Regional Planning: A talk delivered at the Symposium on Social and Economic Problems of the Pacific Northwest," June 20, 1940, Seattle Housing Authority, Box 1, Speeches, WSA-Bellevue.
[3] Mumford, *Regional Planning in the Pacific Northwest.*

state, and then each municipality, to pass enabling legislation in order to establish such housing authorities and be eligible for federal funds. Such political decentralization is why Catherine Bauer, a chief architect of the bill, stressed the need to educate the public about the social and economic ills of city slums and the transformative power of public housing. Unlike the school curriculum to prepare the rising generation for a future economy and pattern of living, educating the public about the before-and-after of public housing would need to focus on adults with (actual or latent) political pull: labor, social workers, civic clubs, politicians.

This chapter examines the civic education materials developed by Jesse Epstein to convince the public of the need for state intervention in the clearance of 'blight' and the construction of modern housing in 'whole communities.' This civic education drew on the environmental determinism and the planning principles of Clarence Perry and RPAA members. Although Epstein only periodically mentioned them by name, he compiled a reading list to inform his public speeches and radio chats. Like the titles on a syllabus, he included Perry's *Housing for the Machine Age*, Bauer's *Modern Housing*, Mumford's *The Culture of Cities*, and Robert Duffus's *Mastering a Metropolis*, a synopsis of the most important findings of the 1929 *Regional Plan of New York* (including Perry's neighborhood unit principles).[4]

The ideas and logics of these works, combined with the technical details of the Housing Act and the policy directives of the United States Housing Authority, entered into Epstein's thinking, planning, and teaching about the evils of the slums and the power of public housing. The work of sociologists from the urban ecology tradition and, related, the mapping and data collections of the Federal Housing Administration also entered into Epstein's educational efforts,

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[4] It is good fortune that Epstein developed– and the SHA archived– Epstein's "Bibliography, Housing and Regional Planning." All of the books mentioned above– except for Bauer's– explicitly mention Clarence Perry's neighborhood unit as a model for urban redevelopment. Seattle Housing Authority, Jesse Epstein Speeches, WSA-Bellevue.

especially when he moved from the moral and social rationale for public housing to the statistical and economic arguments. The debates that accompanied Epstein's educational efforts in the late 1930s and early 1940s had significant implications for the public's conception of the purpose and potential of public housing as well as for the ethnoracial geographies of the city.

Catherine Bauer and the 1937 Housing Act

With a contact list and letters of introduction from Lewis Mumford, Catherine Bauer made her second trip to Europe in June 1930. Her first European sojourn four years earlier resulted in a *New York Times* essay about what Americans could learn from French modernism, but it was the latter trip that proved to be a pivotal experience in the shaping of Bauer's thinking about architecture, site planning, and workers' housing.[5] Although she traveled throughout Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Germany during her 1930 trip, the work being done by architect Ernst May in Frankfurt most captivated her. May steered Bauer toward the new settlements on the outskirts of the city where she "ran around for hours snapping rolls of film and wearing out a new pair of heels" and then convinced her to enroll in a three-day course on Frankfort's New Construction.[6] There she learned about public land ownership, the role of progressive government in shaping cities, and how Garden City principles of satellite communities could be implemented to revive the urban core and provide low-cost housing in well-designed neighborhoods for the working class.

Bauer recorded her enthusiasm for Ernst May and the Römerstadt development just outside Frankfurt in a prize-winning essay for *Fortune Magazine* on "Art and Industry" (she beat Mumford for the prize, much to his dismay):

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[5] Oberlander and Newbrun, *Houser*, chapter 3.
[6] *Ibid.*, 61.

> Strong central control [by municipal government] has made it possible to build *communities as a whole*. Ground, houses, public utilities, educational and transport facilities, roads are all made ready for use at the same time– thus preventing the waste incurred when one lagging factor keeps a whole development lying idle. In the open areas, there are already half a dozen handsome new schools, mostly of poured concrete. All of them have provision for open-air classes, all sorts of sports, and experimental gardens. There is also special development in the green belt for intensive truck-gardening– as well as a large swimming establishment at a dam in the Nidda. […] Several communities have central laundries– each family paying its share, and every neighborhood has its *Consumverein*– cooperative store– and its day nursery.[7]

As the chief architect and city planner in a city with strong central control over construction and land use, May had considerable authority to put Ebenezer Howard's Garden City principles into practice. Bauer argued that such central control was necessary, but not sufficient to explain the public acceptance of this new way of living in interwar Germany. She quoted May: "'Inner enthusiasm,' said May, 'and a critical cooperation toward a common aim of people who had never thought these things before…made our success possible.'"[8] Such living arrangements– with functional but modern housing in 'whole communities' containing recreational and working green belts, schools, day nurseries, libraries where "lectures, political discussions, and art classes flourished," and communal gathering spaces– could be achievable in the United States, Bauer argued in her 1934 book *Modern Housing*, but only if a strong domestic housing movement developed to press the issue. "Good, planned, community housing" would not be won simply through legislative benevolence, Bauer argued, "it had to be acquired by people who knew what they wanted, and how to get it": "workers and the consumers– and the unemployed– themselves [must] take a hand in the solution."[9] This suggested a kind of mutual

[7] Catherine Bauer, "Art and Industry," *Fortune Magazine*, May 1931, p. 104.
[8] *Ibid.*, 110.
[9] Catherine Bauer, *Modern Housing* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), 122, 255.

education: workers and consumers needed to learn about the possibilities of building and living in 'whole communities' while architects and planners needed to learn what workers and consumers wanted within that design framework.

Catherine Bauer participated in such educational work in a number of settings throughout the 1930s. Upon returning from Europe in November 1930, Lewis Mumford introduced her to the RPAA and, as we saw in chapter 1, she advocated for the development of 'whole communities' as part of RPAA's regional planning proposals in New York state. In 1933, she became the first executive secretary of the Labor Housing Conference (LHC), an arm of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor organized to promote "large-scale planned housing developments on a non-profit basis, designed, constructed and administered in direct collaboration with bona fide groups of workers and consumers."[10] It was through Bauer's involvement in the Labor Housing Conference– her travels throughout the country drumming up labor support for government-aided housing and her groundwork in drawing up a federal labor housing bill– that brought her to Washington to work with Senator Robert Wagner to write, lobby, and eventual pass a federal public housing bill in 1937.

As a number of urban historians have detailed, the 1937 Wagner-Steagall Housing Act represented a severely compromised version of Catherine Bauer's vision for a European-style program of government-aided construction of whole communities with significant input from labor.[11] Whereas Bauer and the LHC lobbied for Römerstadt-like developments on undeveloped and inexpensive land on the periphery of cities with space for a surrounding greenbelt, the final

[10] Quote in Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era* (Chiacgo: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 181.
[11] *Ibid.*; D. Bradford Hunt, "Was the 1937 U.S. Housing Act a Pyrrhic Victory?," *Journal of Planning History* 4, no. 3 (2005); Joseph Heathcott, "The Strange Career of Public Housing," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, vol. 78 (2012); John Baumann, *Public Housing, Race, and Renewal: Urban Planning in Philadelphia, 1920-1974* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

Housing Act all-but-confined public housing to more expensive land in the city as a means of slum clearance and replacement. Out of 170,000 dwelling units constructed through the USHA in 260 municipalities, 89 percent were built as slum-clearance projects.[12] This is partly explained by the bill's "equivalent elimination" provision, mandating the demolition of one 'substandard dwelling' for every unit of public housing built. This 'equivalent elimination' amendment was largely the work of the Senate Education and Labor Chairman David Walsh (a Massachusetts Democrat) who insisted that the benefits of public housing "reach the lowest income group" and therefore be in proximity to the small factories and workshops that provided employment to that group. The clearance of entire areas of 'substandard dwellings' proved to be expedient, politically palpable to a range of Progressive reformers and private interests, and, because the USHA paid the cost of clearance, economically advantageous.[13]

Whereas Bauer and the LHC lobbied for the eligibility of a broad range of agencies to implement public housing construction (including labor unions), the final Housing Act confined implementation to local housing authorities with federal funds allocated by the United States Housing Authority (USHA). In this concession, in order to receive federal funds, individual states had to pass enabling legislation authorizing the creation of local public housing authorities as corporate bodies. Then municipalities had to officially declare that there was a need for a public housing because the private sector could not supply "decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings for families of low income."[14]

Whereas Bauer and the LHC advocated for federal housing funds for the construction of 'whole communities' for workers irrespective of income, the final Housing Act placated to real

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[12] Lawrence Vale, *Purging the Poorest: Public Housing and the Design Politics of Twice Cleared Communities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 11.
[13] Hunt, "Was the 1937 U.S. Housing Act a Pyrrhic Victory?," 201, 208, 213.
[14] Wagner-Steagall Act of 1937, Pub.L. 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, (1937).

estate interests who feared market competition and placed income restrictions on eligibility, with the maximum income set at 10 percent below the level of the least expensive private housing. The final Housing Act also added construction cost limits, which would force local housing authorities to streamline design and use cheaper materials– although, for the most part, the designs during this period did not resemble the austere high-rise designs of the post-war period.

As detailed in D. Bradford Hunt's excellent analysis of the Congressional debates over the bill, Bauer felt that the concessions and compromises left the final Housing Act "battle-scarred" but "still in fairly workable shape" with a "solid foundation definitely intact."[15] Even the battle-scarred bill represented to Bauer a "radical step" in the recognition that the federal government had a role and responsibility in providing "decent, safe and, sanitary dwellings" for citizens who could not afford such housing on the private market.[16] Moreover, when codified in USHA policy bulletins and its 1939 'Minimum Standards' document, the design of public housing shared several features with Clarence Perry's 'neighborhood unit plan' and the modern housing developments Bauer found on her European travels. The USHA required that local housing authorities provide "facilities for community activities" in each of their developments, including "pre-school play areas," central "community rooms," and "outdoor sitting areas for adults." In addition, if adequate park and playground facilities did not exist within ¼ mile of the housing project, or if such facilities required crossing "important traffic arteries," local housing authorities were instructed to include them within the project. If no elementary school existed

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[15] Hunt, "Was the 1937 U.S. Housing Act a Pyrrhic Victory?"; Catherine Bauer, "Now, At Last, Housing," *New Republic*, September 8, 1937, 119-121.
[16] *Ibid.*; Wagner-Steagall Act of 1937.

within a ½ mile of the site, local authorities were encouraged to work with the local school district to construct one.[17]

Importantly, this design reflected the USHA's focus on providing housing *for families*. Over the course of its first year, the agency established an elaborate scoring system that they claimed enabled local officials to 'objectively assess' housing need. As urban historian Lawrence Vale points out, although "liberally bathed in a rhetoric of uplift" the scoring system had the effect of favoring the "upwardly mobile working class."[18] It gave preference to a "working adult known to have regularly lived as an inherent part of a family group whose earnings are an integral part of the family income," who had lived in 'substandard housing' for at least a year, fit the income guidelines, and who cared for children under the age of 18.[19] In a strongly-worded dismissal of those who argued that the 'new education' alone– even with its expanded social welfare role– could sufficiently mold the rising generation, Catherine Bauer argued:

> Even education in healthy living habits and responsible citizenship, education to develop intelligence and ambition, can hardly be truly effective as long as slum homes, through no fault of their occupants, are overcrowded and lacking in sanitary facilities, and as long as slum neighborhoods with automatic regularity turn out large numbers of anti-social, defiant, and delinquent children to make the criminals of the next generation.[20]

A powerful testament to the tradition of environmental determinism amongst planners and public housers, Bauer intimated that USHA-aided housing would produce social, compliant, happy, and law-abiding citizens of the next generation. This family-centered focus also proved to be rhetorically and politically valuable for the USHA and local authorities during a period when the

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[17] Federal Works Agency, "Summary of General Requirements and Minimum Standards for USHA-Aided Projects," July 13, 1939, p. 17
[18] Lawrence Vale, *Purging the Poorest*, 14.
[19] United States Housing Authority, "Initial Steps in Tenant Selection," Bulletin No. 22, in Baumann, *Public Housing, Race, and Renewal.*
[20] Catherine Bauer, *A Citizen's Guide to Public Housing,* 3.

public was inundated with news and images of transient children and families, 'out of school youth,' and 'juvenile delinquents.' As we will see, text and images of children playing on project playgrounds or reading in a project nursery school, as well as women gardening in a project plot or taking cooking classes in the community center (the men were almost always 'at work') created a sense of the transformative and educative possibilities of design.

USHA policy documents also included explicit sections related to race. Following the lead of a much smaller housing program established in the Public Works Administration (PWA), the USHA required that local housing authorities not discriminate based on "race, creed, color, or political affiliation in the employment of persons for work on USHA-aided projects."[21] Called the 'fair share' clause, it required local housing authorities to document the percentage of "Negro skilled and unskilled workers" employed on construction projects. The housing authority was in compliance if those percentages reflected the percentages of black skilled and unskilled workers in the particular city, as reflected in the previous national census.[22] Robert Weaver called the 'fair share' clauses the "'guinea pig' of antidiscrimination efforts in the federal government," but its provisions were geared toward housing authorities in the east and south with significant black populations prior to World War II mobilizations.[23]

The other race-related provision in early USHA documents involved site and tenant selection and proved much more ambiguous and difficult to assess. Ostensibly, the USHA again followed PWA precedent and its "neighborhood composition formula," which *suggested* that the occupancy of the project reflect the racial demographics of the surrounding area. In theory, this

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[21] *Ibid.*, 10.
[22] *Ibid.*, 10.
[23] Arnold Hirsch, "Containment on the Home Front: Race and Federal Housing Policy from the New Deal to the Cold War," *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 26 (2000), 161. Weaver's 'guinea pig' quote appears in Wendell Pritchett, *Robert Clifton Weaver and the American City: The Life and Times of an Urban Reformer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

meant that when a housing authority selected a site, they were also indicating future racial tenancy. A separate USHA provision, likely authored by Robert Weaver, reiterated that the agency did not support the displacement of 'minority racial groups' through public housing site selection and construction.

> In the selection of sites, minority racial groups shall not be displaced *from stable and integrated neighborhoods.* Demolition in connection with a public housing development should never involve the demolition of more units occupied by a minority racial group than are made available to that same group in the new project *unless the excess families can be accommodated in safe and sanitary dwellings at rentals they can afford in other suitable neighborhoods.* In the selection of sites involving immediate demolition, *consideration* should be given to the immediate availability of housing for the different racial groups displaced by the demolition program.[24]

There were plenty of caveats in this provision. What constituted a 'stable and integrated neighborhood' that would prevent 'minority racial group' displacement? Who would keep track of those families displaced by public housing construction in order to assess the suitability of their dwellings and neighborhoods once construction was completed? What constituted 'consideration' of the immediate availability of housing for those displaced– a survey? a relocation supervisor?

Unlike the 'fair share' employment clause, no reporting requirements or federal oversight monitored compliance with these site selection standards; local authorities selected sites in whatever way they and the interest groups in the city saw fit. As many urban historians have demonstrated, the result of this deference to localism made the federal government complicit in supporting both the continuation of existing racially segregated urban geographies as well as the production of new segregated communities. Historian Wendell Pritchett describes such 'strategic

placements' by housing authorities around the country: Detroit, New York, Los Angeles, and the case of the Atlanta Housing Authority, which tried to save money by building one big project split down the middle by a wall to separate black and white. When the USHA objected, they replaced the wall with a boulevard.[25] Of the housing authorities in the ethnoracially diverse cities of the West, Oakland's first project in west Oakland conformed to what they called "the checkerboard pattern" of African Americans living next to whites, but this pattern eroded as the East Bay became inundated with defense workers at the end of the 1930s. The San Francisco Housing Authority, compelled by Chinese American activists who appealed to the 'neighborhood composition formula,' constructed a segregated project in Chinatown. An ethnoracial coalition of Los Angeles leaders also pressed the city's housing authority to follow the neighborhood formula, and therefore its first USHA-aided housing development in Boyle Heights began as integrated project, although with quotas for black and Mexican occupancy. The Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles, on the other hand, constructed completely segregated projects for Mexican and white county residents. As historian Charlotte Brooks shows, these segregated projects ostensibly contained similar allocations of both dwelling units and community facilities. But the county planners' cultural misrecognition– their constructed "vision of Mexicanness"– prompted them to arrange buildings in particular ways, provide dirt as well as pavement play areas for children, and supply a dirt area for such adult "community activities as barbeque and the like" while the white project contained horseshoe, badminton, and shuffleboard courts.[26] The construction of segregated housing projects in the North and West, for the most part, also translated into segregated parks, playgrounds, pools, and public schools.

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[25] Pritchett, *Robert Clifton Weaver and the American City*, 82-87.

[26] Marilyn Johnson, *The Second Gold Rush: Oakland and the East Bay in World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 105; On San Francisco see, Charlotte Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends: Asian*

As much as USHA policy and PWA precedent mattered to site location, so too did private real estate interests. (Sub)urban historians since Kenneth Jackson and Marc Weiss have illuminated the powerful role of real estate interests and lobbying organizations like the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) on federal New Deal housing policy. Many have focused on the how these real estate interests championed what Gail Radford identifies as the "upper tier" of federal policy in contradistinction to the "lower tier" policy of public housing.[27] This 'upper tier' housing policy included the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) residential mortgage insurance program that spread long-term, low-interest, fully amortized loans to millions of Americans by backing the loans of local lending institutions. It also included the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), which was initially authorized in 1933 to refinance homes in foreclosure, but by 1935 oversaw a mortgage-risk surveying program that produced the infamous 'redlining' maps of entire cities.[28] While these 'upper tier' federal interventions in the nominally private housing market were undoubtedly crucial to metropolitan development in the 1930s and beyond, less attention has been given to how the robust data collection and mapping infrastructures of these 'upper tier' federal agencies actually influenced the selection of public housing sites. This infrastructure, combined with the ecological life-cycle theories of city development, provided the educational content that Jesse Epstein would use to convince

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Americans, Housing, and the Transformation of Urban California (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 98-104; On Los Angeles, see Brooks, 77-83.

[27] Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Marc A. Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders: The American Real Estate Industry and Urban Land Planning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Greg Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth-century Metropolis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Freund, *Colored Property*; Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America*.

[28] For a history of HOLC and the infamous redlining maps, see James Greer, "The Home Owners' Loan Corporation and the Development of the Residential Security Maps," *Journal of Urban History* 39, no. 2 (2012), 275-296; Amy E. Hillier, "Redlining and the Home Owners' Loan Corporation." *Journal of Urban History* 29, no. 4 (2003): 394-420.

government officials and the public that Seattle needed public housing. It even identified the exact areas in need.

The Federal Real Property Inventories and the Interpretations of Homer Hoyt, 1934-1939

Although largely overshadowed in the urban history literature by the "Security Maps" of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), the federal *Real Property Inventories* were also crucial to the spatial and racial reconstruction of 20th century American cities. The Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce and the Civil Works Administration launched the federal *Real Property Inventory* in December 1933 as the first large-scale data collection on housing conditions in American cities large and small. Seattle was selected as one of the initial 64 cities to participate in March 1934, and soon after local enumerators began a house-to-house enumeration using a uniform schedule for cataloguing the features and conditions of dwelling units as well as the value and mortgage status of single-family dwellings. Enumerators were trained to then interview a member of each family unit to ascertain other residential data, such as duration of occupancy, number of people living in each room, the race of the head of household, the ownership of an automobile, and the tending of a vegetable garden. Enumerators sent their schedule and interview data off to Washington, D.C. for editing, coding, and tabulation under the direction of staff from the Department of Commerce. That department published the compiled data tables for each city and the Division of Economics and Statistics of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) sent block tabulations and data maps to each city.[29]

[29] Peyton Stapp, *Urban Housing: A Summary of Real Property Inventories Conducted as Work Projects* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1938),

Taken as a whole, the property surveys demonstrated two things clearly. Not surprisingly, it showed that in cities across the country, the Depression was causing homeowners to delay or postpone maintenance and upkeep; enumerators consistently found their city's housing stock to be deteriorating for lack of repair. The surveys also showed that single-family housing was still "the American standard;" fully 69% of dwellings surveyed nationwide were single-family homes. The data for Seattle paralleled national trends: single-family homes constituted 70.2% of the city's housing stock, with 17% of all housing needing "major repairs" and 43% needing "minor repairs."[30] These early property inventories served as a large and comprehensive data set that, in the right hands, could guide federal urban housing policy. Officials in the Division of Economics and Statistics at the FHA believed that the 'right hands' belonged to Homer Hoyt.

A recent graduate of the University of Chicago under the supervision of those pillars of urban ecological thinking (Wirth, Park, and Burgess), Hoyt's dissertation on the previous century of land values in Chicago attempted to make use of the troves of both economic and sociological data collected on the city by faculty members and graduate students.[31] Brought to Washington, D.C. in late 1934 to revise– or 'perfect' as Hoyt might have it– the FHA's *Underwriting Manual* and its tools for mortgage risk assessment, Hoyt found in the Federal Real Property Inventories a baseline of data that could be used to examine existing housing conditions and, potentially, predict future trends. To the original sixty-four cities, Hoyt and the FHA sponsored more than one hundred additional housing surveys between 1934-1936, at times in conjunction with local

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[30] Alanson Morehouse, "The Real Property Inventory of 1934," in *Survey of Current Business* (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, November 1934), 16-19; "Realtor Emphasizes Need for New Home Construction," *Seattle Sunday* Times, July 29, 1934;"Single Homes Lead Move for Modernization," *Seattle Sunday Times*, September 16, 1934.

[31] Much of the Homer Hoyt biographical information comes from Jennifer Light's excellent discussion of ecological thinking and New Deal federal policy. Light, *The Nature of Cities*, chapter 2. See also Henrika Kuklick, "Chicago Sociology and Urban Planning Policy: Sociological Theory as Occupational Ideology," *Theory and Society* 9 (1980): 821-845.

planning or housing authorities and in the latter year using WPA labor. Hoyt tweaked the survey schedule and interview protocol over the course of these early years, but his proposed use of the resulting data and maps by local officials and lenders remained consistent. True to the form of "twentieth century high modernism," Hoyt called for quantitative data to guide the administrative process of "dividing the city into neighborhoods." Customary neighborhood boundaries identified in previous city maps or by local residents themselves should not interfere, Hoyt argued, with the emerging rational science of risk assessment and city building. First abstracting every city block into a single value– monthly rents– and then locating the non-white population, Hoyt, and by extension the federal government, believed that the city could be 'read' and evaluated without having much local knowledge at all.[32]

Hoyt's written directions to the Chamber of Commerce of Springfield, Massachusetts gives an indication of how he personally counseled local bodies in this high modernist real estate science. After instructing them to draw lines around the central business district, industrial areas, and "all brick apartment buildings with eight or more units"– these could not be considered neighborhoods after all– Hoyt detailed how to divide the remainder of the city into residential neighborhoods based on monthly rents.

> In all areas where the average monthly rent is $15.00 or less, you are to shade in the area solidly with green. All areas where rental is $15.00 to $20.00 per month, you are to color yellow. All areas where rental is $20.00 to $30.00 per month, you are to fill in solidly in orange. In all areas where monthly rental is $30.00 to $50.00 you are to color red. All areas where the monthly rental is $50.00 or more, you are to color purple.[33]

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[32] Homer Hoyt, "Instructions for Dividing the City into Neighborhoods," n.d. (circa July, 1935), RG 31, Housing Surveys, box 3, National Archives, College Park, MD; James C. Scott, "High Modernist Social Engineering: The Case of the Tennessee Valley Authority," in Lloyd Rudolph and John Kurt Jacobsen, *Experiencing the State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3-52.
[33] Hoyt, "Instructions."

The next step involved drawing a "blue pencil around all blocks in which there are more than 10% negroes or race other than white; also indicate areas in which there are a considerable number of Italians or Jews in the lower income group."[34] This wouldn't be the final neighborhood rating, but it would be a good start, Hoyt argued; the lowest rental areas were also likely to be circled in blue and be the least attractive for living and loan purposes, while those in red and purple "might well represent the best mortgage insurance risks."[35] Hoyt intentionally used the word "might" because he wanted local lenders as well as local business and civic leaders to understand that even the best neighborhoods at any given moment could be corrupted and invaded if "in the path of a low-grade neighborhood that is growing in its direction." The stability of a good neighborhood could be secured, Hoyt wrote, only if there were "barriers dividing it from poor neighborhoods": natural barriers such as hills and waterways or legal barriers such as restrictive covenants or zoning.[36]

Hoyt also scoured the property inventories in search of a logic for city residential growth. Could one predict where high rent districts would emerge or where poor neighborhoods would 'invade' by examining the maps and data of individual cities or by comparing the data from like cities? These questions were foundational to his 1939 study, *The Structure and Growth of Residential Neighborhoods*. The study, sponsored by the FHA, purported to give real estate professionals and government planners at all scales the analytic framework necessary to understand the growth and life cycles of *particular* cities so that the private and public sector could act in ways that promoted growth and slowed the so-called 'natural' decline of central city neighborhoods. The sheer volume of data collected by the federal government and analyzed by

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[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] *Ibid.*

Hoyt had the potential "to bring order out of chaos": to make legible the variables that contributed to and predicted the life of cities, block by block (see image 3.1). *The Structure and Growth of Residential Neighborhoods* was not an academic exercise, Hoyt argued, nor was it a theoretical model advanced using the data of one city (Chicago) to extrapolate the structure and growth of all cities and all metropolitan neighborhoods, as was the concentric zone theory of his mentors Ernest Burgess and Robert Park. What became Hoyt's 'sector model' would overtake

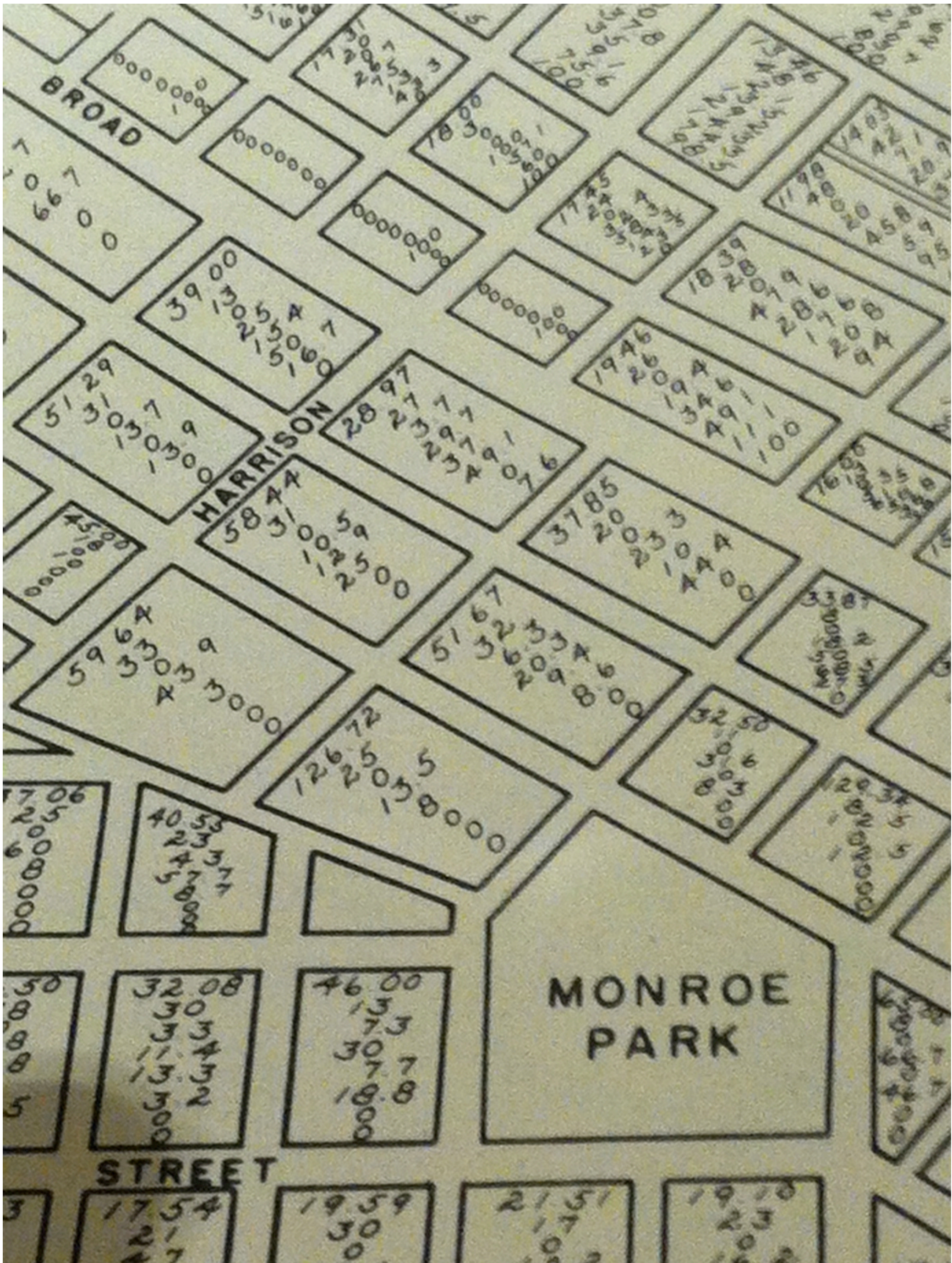

Image 3.1. Block-by-block data. Homer Hoyt**,** *The Structure and Growth of Residential Neighborhoods* (1939*).* The eight numbers in each block represent, from top to bottom: average rent, total number of residences, percent less than 15 years old, percentage owner occupied, percentage in need of major repairs or unfit for occupancy, percentage of commercial structures, percentage of dwellings with no private bath, percentage of persons that are a race other than white.

the concentric zone theory as a tool for urban explanation precisely because it was malleable enough to be adapted to local conditions. Hoyt's demonstration of predicted growth patterns proved valuable for FHA mortgage risk assessment as it showed the direction of the shifts in "fashionable residential areas" and thereby the areas of future low-risk growth (image 3.2).

The maps accompanying each city's *Real Property Inventory* also could show the "worst slum areas" and declining parts of the city. Hoyt instructed his readers to "choos[e] a few of the most pertinent characteristics" of blight found in the inventory data– low monthly rent, high percentage of structures in poor condition, high percentages of "other than white occupancy," etc.– and make "a series of *transparent* maps," and then lay them one on top of the other. Where there existed significant overlap would be the areas of the city that needed the most intervention; if these blighted areas were in close proximity or spreading in the direction of fashionable residential areas, intervention would need to be immediate.[37] Using the biological and public health language common amongst placemakers of the period, Hoyt explained that the inevitability of urban residential movement meant that unchecked blight could damage the entire city:

> the filtration of families, contaminated by the vicious environment of the slums into adjacent areas, threatened the stability of residential investments in the rest of the city. Like a cancer, blight spread through all the tissues of the urban body and the urban organism was unable to cure itself except by a major surgical operation.[38]

Hoyt preferred that this 'major surgical operation' be a public-private venture, with a public land commission acquiring blighted land and selling or leasing it to private firms that would build "new model neighborhoods" according to the city's master plan. While Hoyt was never an

[37] *Ibid.*, 48.
[38] Homer Hoyt, "Rebuilding of American Cities After the War," *The Journal of Land & Public Utility Economics 19*, (1943), 364-368.

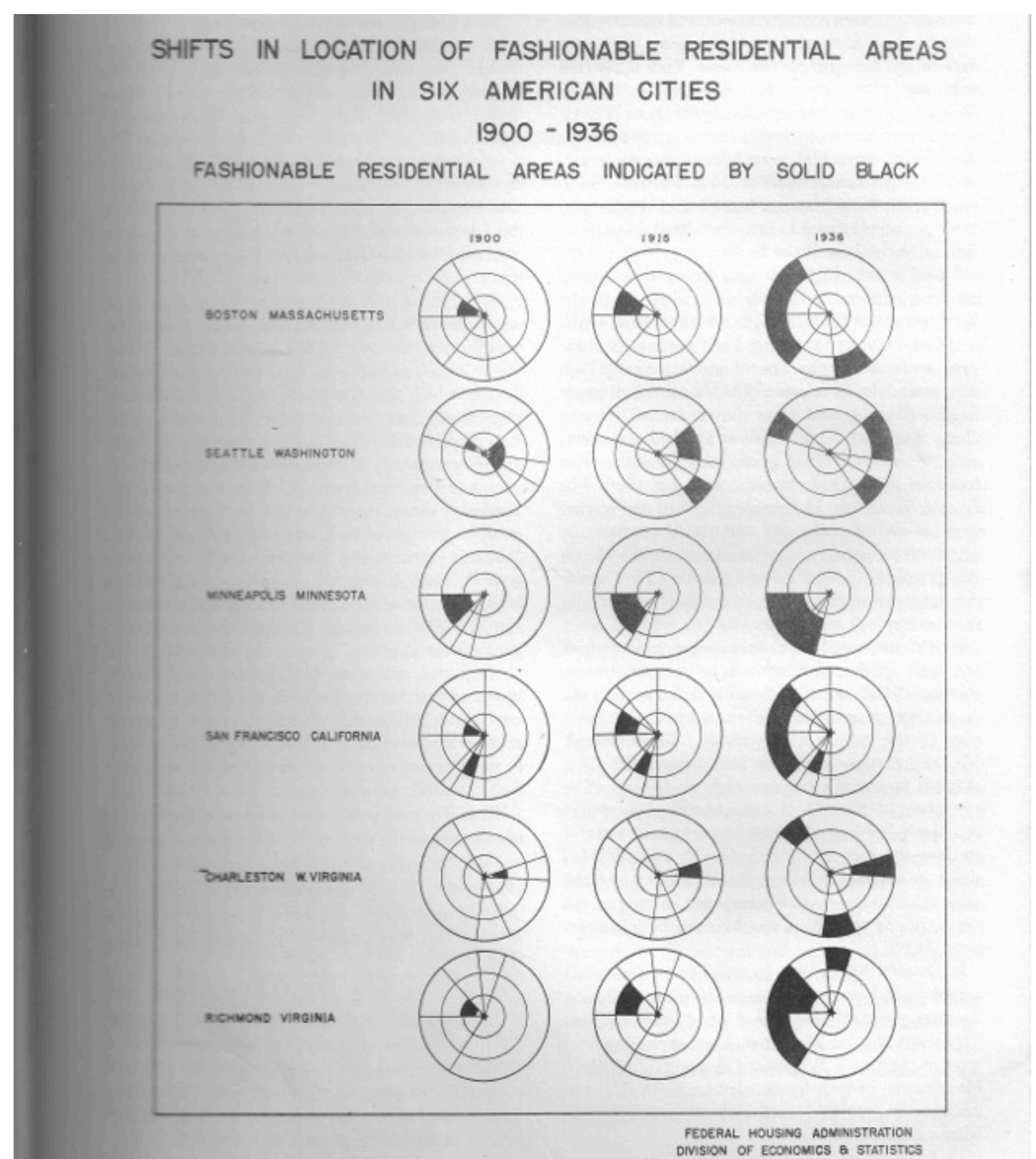

Image 3.2. Direction of growth in "fashionable residential areas" in Homer Hoyt, *The Structure and Growth of Residential Neighborhoods* (1939)

advocate of public housing, after the passage of the Housing Act of 1937 he came to accept that "some subsidized housing may be necessary for the lowest income groups."[39] Subsidized public housing could be a part of the city's slum clearance and central rebuilding projects; it could help turn "half-empty schools and little-used streets" into "tree-lined home areas with parks and playgrounds […] curved streets, community centers and through traffic routed around them."[40] But this could only happen if public housing shared the design principles of the 'model neighborhoods' being built by the private sector and only if public housing officials shared in the economic goals of private builders.[41] A slum clearance and rebuilding project– or a number of them, private and public– would stem the decline in a certain area of the city and would, no doubt, positively affect the value and stability of areas nearby.

The *Real Property Inventory* and the urban life-cycle ideology of Homer Hoyt grounded much of the conversation and debate about the need for, and the location of, public housing in Seattle.

Jesse Epstein, *The Real Property Inventory*, and Evidence of Slums

Jesse Epstein formally entered Seattle urban policy and housing debates after graduating from law school at the University of Washington and gaining admittance to the Washington State bar in late 1935. Gravitating toward policy formation and government service in an expanding New Deal state, Epstein took a research assistant position at the Bureau of Governmental

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[39] *Ibid.*, 367.
[40] *Ibid.*
[41] The 'model neighborhoods' most lauded by Hoyt happened to be the suburban neighborhoods built by private developers, but designed by the Land Planning Division of his Federal Housing Administration. I will return to this in chapter 5.

Research, a two-year old center at the University of Washington that sought to put into contact "governmental officials, legislative bodies, citizen groups and others interested in government."[42] Initially drawn to the legal dimensions of the use of zoning and eminent domain by city and county planning agencies, Epstein soon developed an interest in New Deal housing policy.[43] In the summer of 1936 he intently followed the congressional debates in Washington, D.C. regarding the Housing Act, as it passed the Senate, but failed in the House. As Senator Wagner and Catherine Bauer maneuvered the "battle-scarred" bill toward its eventual passage in September 1937, Epstein started laying the groundwork to enable Washington state and the city of Seattle to take advantage of federal funds for slum clearance and public housing.

Perhaps because Jesse Epstein believed New Deal Democrat Governor Clarence Martin would jump at the chance to receive federal funds to relieve the state's housing problems, he underestimated the political opposition to state enabling legislation. Immediately after the passage of the federal legislation in September 1937, Governor Martin dismissed calls for state public housing enabling legislation by declaring, "There are no slums in Washington."[44] In part, Government Martin substantiated his claim by referencing the 1934 *Real Property Inventory* of the state's largest city, which calculated that there existed 13,770 vacant dwelling units that were available to house the residents of the 9,300 units that enumerators had found 'unfit for use' or

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[42] Governmental Research and Services, *Twenty-five years of governmental research and service; a history of the Bureau of Governmental Research and Services at the University of Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959).

[43] Evidence suggests that Epstein's first public talk concerned "Problems of Zoning and Land Use from the Viewpoint of City and County Planning Officials" at the third annual Pacific Northwest Planning Conference. Jesse Epstein Papers, Acc. 3043, Box 1, "Biography," University of Washington Special Collections (hereafter, 'Epstein Papers').

[44] I have not been able to locate a source for the exact date of this declaration by Martin. However, in a news clipping from Jesse Epstein's paper, there is a reference to the statement. "Governor Martin at the last legislative session [1937] blocked passage of an enabling act, blandly declaring: "There are no slums in Washington." "Slum Fund Available for Seattle," *San Francisco People's World*, November 3, 1938, Epstein Papers, box 2, "Scrapbooks". An April 1938 article in the *Seattle Times*, referenced Martin's previously stated views that there were no slums in Washington, but did not give an exact date for the utterance, See "No Slums to Clear," *Seattle Times*, April 25, 1938.

'overcrowded'.[45] That is, Martin agreed that Seattle and other Washington cities and towns had buildings that should be closed and condemned, but he saw reliable federal data suggesting that residents in those buildings could be re-housed in sufficient and safe dwellings provided by private builders. In other words, the statement 'there are no slums in Washington' also translated into 'there is no need for public housing.'

Seattle political and social welfare leaders did not agree with Governor Martin's assessment and reasoned that up-to-date data might compel him to recognize the need. In November 1937, the Seattle Federation of Women's Clubs petitioned the Seattle City Council to establish a city survey committee to update the 1934 *Real Property Inventory*, writing that there was a "*fast developing* slum condition in certain areas now being used for residential purposes."[46] Seattle Mayor Arthur Langlie named Jesse Epstein as the director of a Housing Advisory Committee in April 1938 to convince Governor Martin and state legislators that there was a need– and indeed a desire– for public housing in Seattle. He made two primary arguments in his meetings with Martin and other legislators over the course of 1938.

First, Epstein simply countered the findings of the 1934 *Real Property Inventory* that Martin had used to claim an absence of slum conditions in the city. Epstein and Pat Hetherton, a regional consultant for the National Resources Committee, received verification from the Commerce Department that the 1934 *Inventory* did not count the shacks in Seattle's "Hooverville" on the old Moran shipyard site, nor did it account for the "considerable influx of people, especially from the drought states" who had entered Seattle and put additional stress on

[45] Letter from Charles Ernst (State Department of Social Security) and R.K. Tiffany (Executive Officer, Washington State Planning Council) to Members of the Washington State Planning Council, April 28, 1938, WSPC.
[46] Leora Stewart, "What the Club Women are Doing," *Seattle Times*, November 23, 1937.

the local housing situation.[47] Taken together, Epstein reasoned, the data in the 1934 *Inventory* drastically undercounted the number of substandard dwellings in the city and the number of Seattleites who were now searching for housing. In May 1938, Epstein began the new housing survey that the Seattle Federation of Women's Clubs had advocated six months prior. Various revisionist statistics and narratives made their way to the Governor's office and into the Seattle press over the latter half of 1938. "Facts were what they sought," the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported after the 275-page final survey appeared in January 1939, "and many of the facts they found were startling": over 22,000 shacks; 16,000 additional dwellings needing major repairs; 2,000 unfit for human habitation; and 10,000 overcrowded units.[48]

The second line of argument Epstein employed to convince Martin and legislators of the need for public housing legislation came down to an argument about the 'power of the purse.' Epstein made the case that the city of Seattle had, ever since its first regrade project in 1898, expended a spectacular amount of municipal funds in order to transform the landscape and eliminate its 'blighted residences,' 'virtual cesspools,' and 'dilapidated dwellings.' As a result, the city's bonded indebtedness was one of the highest in the country and yet, the blight remained, and worse, would increase if the suburbanization trend continued. The Housing Act provided a federal alternative, and federal money, that might prove more successful and might curry favor with the Seattle electorate and its legislators. In the spring of 1938, Epstein arranged meetings with high-ranking national figures as well as doing the behind-the-scenes work with federal officials to re-write the state legislation so that it would guarantee immediate state eligibility for

[47] Letter from Charles Ernst (State Department of Social Security) and R.K. Tiffany (Executive Officer, Washington State Planning Council) to Members of the Washington State Planning Council, April 28, 1938, WSPC.
[48] Dan Markel, "Plans Being Drawn for Rehousing of 700 Seattle Families," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, September 10, 1939.

federal housing funds and would require to expend minimal political capital to bring federal public housing dollars to Seattle.

In April, Epstein introduced Governor Martin to Hugh Pomeroy, chief field service officer for both the American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO) and the National Association of Housing Officials (NAHO), who echoed Epstein's claim that even though Washington did not have slums to the extent of cities in the East and South, the state would only benefit from slum clearance and public housing funds. Using his clout and professional networks, Pomeroy then arranged for Martin to meet with Nathan Straus, the head of the United States Housing Authority (USHA), the following week in Washington, D.C. The meetings secured gubernatorial support, but the degree of support remained a question.[49]

Epstein himself traveled to the nation's capital in October 1938 to attend NAHO's annual convention. Sent by the Seattle mayor and the Washington State Planning Council, to which Governor Martin appointed him Chairman of the Joint Committee of the Washington State Planning Council and the State Department of Social Security in June, Epstein finalized the two enabling bills needed for the next legislative session (a "Housing Authorities Law" and a "Housing Co-operation Law") by consulting with Straus and his assistants at the USHA. He tried to secure a $15 million "set-aside" for the state that would be granted immediately after state legislative approval in hopes that such a guarantee might encourage Martin to lobby more vigorously, but Straus vetoed such a promise. Nonetheless, Epstein wrote to the members of the

[49] Letter from Pat Hetherton (Consultant National Resources Committee) to Walter Blucher (Executive Director American Society of Planning Officials), April 16, 1938, Acc. 90/2-9, Box 48, Washington State Archives, Olympia (hereafter, WSPC).

Planning Council that "Mr. Straus expressed the belief that money would be made available, and later put this belief in a letter to me and it is pretty assuring."[50]

As the year unfolded, the prospects for passage of the state enabling legislation improved, but Epstein did not want to rely solely on the governor's and state legislators' assurances. The state had missed out on the first rounds of federal public housing grants because of a lack of political will and Epstein was determined not to let that happen during the next legislative session. Essentially, Epstein adopted Catherine Bauer's political philosophy that "good, planned, community housing" would not be won through legislative benevolence; "it had to be acquired by people who knew what they wanted, and how to get it."[51] Therefore, parallel to his maneuverings inside state government and the USHA, Epstein devoted considerable attention to developing a 'curriculum' for the public related to public housing in the state and city.

The Civic Education Agenda: Women, Workers, and the WPA

Epstein concentrated his 1938 civic education campaigns on women's and labor organizations, urging them to join the campaign to both secure enabling legislation and then immediately start slum clearance and public housing construction in Seattle. Epstein believed his professional duties included helping educate people on what kind of housing the private sector provided, the alternatives possible with public funds, and how people might band together as workers and consumers to actively demand legislative action.

Epstein strategically used the data and literatures he had been poring over to make his case to labor and women's organizations, especially in the articles he published in the *Seattle*

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[50] Letter from Jesse Epstein to Pat Hetherton, November 9, 1938, Washington State Planning Council, Acc. 90/2-9, Box 48, WSPC.
[51] Bauer, *Modern Housing*, 122.

Federation of Women's Club Journal and *The Timber Worker*. In the first of these articles, published in both journals in June 1938, Epstein made the argument that while the dwellings of low-wage workers in Seattle might look different from other locations, their deleterious social and health conditions were similar.

> In the large industrial centers [poor housing] takes the form that we know as 'slums'; in the South it may be the Negro shanty; in San Francisco, the large old rooming houses; in the Northwest, the individual residence.

He then quoted directly from the conclusion of a recent study by Catherine Bauer herself,

> 'It is now generally accepted that slum conditions create enormous social problems. Crime and disease are bred in slum areas. But we have begun to learn that slum conditions also make serious economic problems.'[52]

In later articles for *The Timber Worker,* the official paper of the International Woodworkers of America (IWA) published out of Aberdeen, Epstein tailored his message to workers generally and to the lumber trade specifically. A July 2nd article again drew on Bauer's research in Europe and then outlined New Deal efforts to address the housing problem in the United States. He made a point to distinguish the USHA from the HOLC and the FHA by writing that the USHA was the only agency intent on "providing decent houses for low-income groups" like most timber workers; the other agencies were designed only to serve "an income group above that which the USHA attempts to reach."[53] He made a more direct appeal to timber workers and the building trades later that summer by arguing that the states that passed enabling legislation and were beginning slum clearance and housing projects were reaping the employment rewards that came

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[52] Jesse Epstein, "Poor Housing Expensive, Breeds Disease and Crime, Survey Shows," June 11, 1938, *The Timber Worker* and *Seattle Federation of Women's Club Journal*, in "Scrapbooks," Epstein Papers.
[53] Jesse Epstein, "Europe ahead of U.S. in Low-Cost Housing; New Deal First to Help Low-Pay Families," July 2, 1938, *The Timber Worker*, in "Scrapbooks," Epstein Papers.

with this infusion of federal money. The USHA had the potential to construct hundreds of thousands of new homes in the coming years and Epstein calculated that

> each 100,000 homes would require 1 to 1.5 billion feet of lumber, millions of bricks and barrels of cement and millions of gallons of paint. These materials would require millions of man-months of work in forests, mines, factories and transportation. We can thus think in terms of each 100,000 dwelling units as giving normal employment to more than 300,000 people.[54]

It is difficult to know exactly how Epstein's articles were received by, or the impact they had on, the readers of *The Timber Worker*. However, public housing *did* become a significant issue during the summer of 1938 amongst labor groups, culminating in a 100,000 signature petition to Governor Martin to call a special legislative session that fall for the sole purpose of passing enabling legislation. A letter to Governor Martin mentioning the petition and the unity of labor behind public housing circulated amongst members of the State Planning Council, with a handwritten message by one of its members: "This should sure help!!!" Written on behalf of the Cowlitz Industrial Union Council, the letter included the two rationale for enabling legislation mentioned in Epstein's articles– "more and better homes" for workers and increased employment– and specifically addressed the relationship between public housing and the lumber industry.

> We of this Council wonder what manner of tortuous mental gymnastics you and your friends, the Lumber Barons, went thru to reach the conclusion that you were helping business, or anything else when you sabotaged the efforts of Pres.Roosvelt [sic], the mans [sic] coat-tails that you rode into office on, by the way, when you failed to put this state housing act thru […].[55]

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[54] Jesse Epstein, "Here's How U.S. Housing Authority Works; 33 States All Prepared; Employment All Set for Boost," *The Timber Worker*, n.d. [but between July and October, 1938], in "Scrapbooks," Epstein Papers.

[55] Letter from The Cowlitz Industrial Union Council to Governor Clarence Martin, July 8, 1938, Acc. 90/2-9, Box 48, Washington State Archives, Olympia (hereafter, WSPC).

Even though Martin ignored the petitions for a special 1938 legislative session, Epstein kept pressing the issue in union meeting halls and in the pages of *The Timber Worker*. In late November 1938, a poster advertising an 'Open Forum' with Epstein about public housing took Governor Martin to task for his earlier declaration that 'no slums exist in Washington' and assured attendees that "Mr. Epstein will present facts and figures to prove that this statement is untrue!" (see image 3.3).[56]

It is unclear whether Governor Martin read the actual letter from the Cowlitz Council or knew the extent of Epstein's communications with workers in the lumber and buildings trades. Yet, learning from the petition and from the members of the State Planning Council that labor strongly backed public housing likely helped solidify Martin's support for the legislation during upcoming session.

Epstein and his colleagues on the Mayor's Housing Advisory Committee also appealed to the general public through talks to civic organizations, through a series of twelve local radio broadcasts, through a course on housing for the League of Women Voters, as well as through articles in the *Post-Intelligencer*, the city's daily newspaper most supportive of New Deal policies.[57] All of these civic educational activities were intended to manufacture a strong public opinion toward the passage of enabling legislation and toward public housing in general; the communiqués grounded in the data that the Advisory Committee was updating through its Seattle housing survey.

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[56] "HEAR! Mr. Jesse Epstein," in "Scrapbooks," Epstein Papers.
[57] Coleman Woodbury, ed., *The Housing Yearbook, 1939* (Chicago: National Association of Housing Officials, 1939), 100. The *Post-Intelligencer* was managed by John Boettinger, President Roosevelt's son-in-law.

The case for public housing received additional publicity through an alternative kind of newspaper. In May, Seattle's Federal Theatre in the Rainier Valley district, southeast of the central city, staged its production of "One-Third of a Nation," a play that attributed the presence

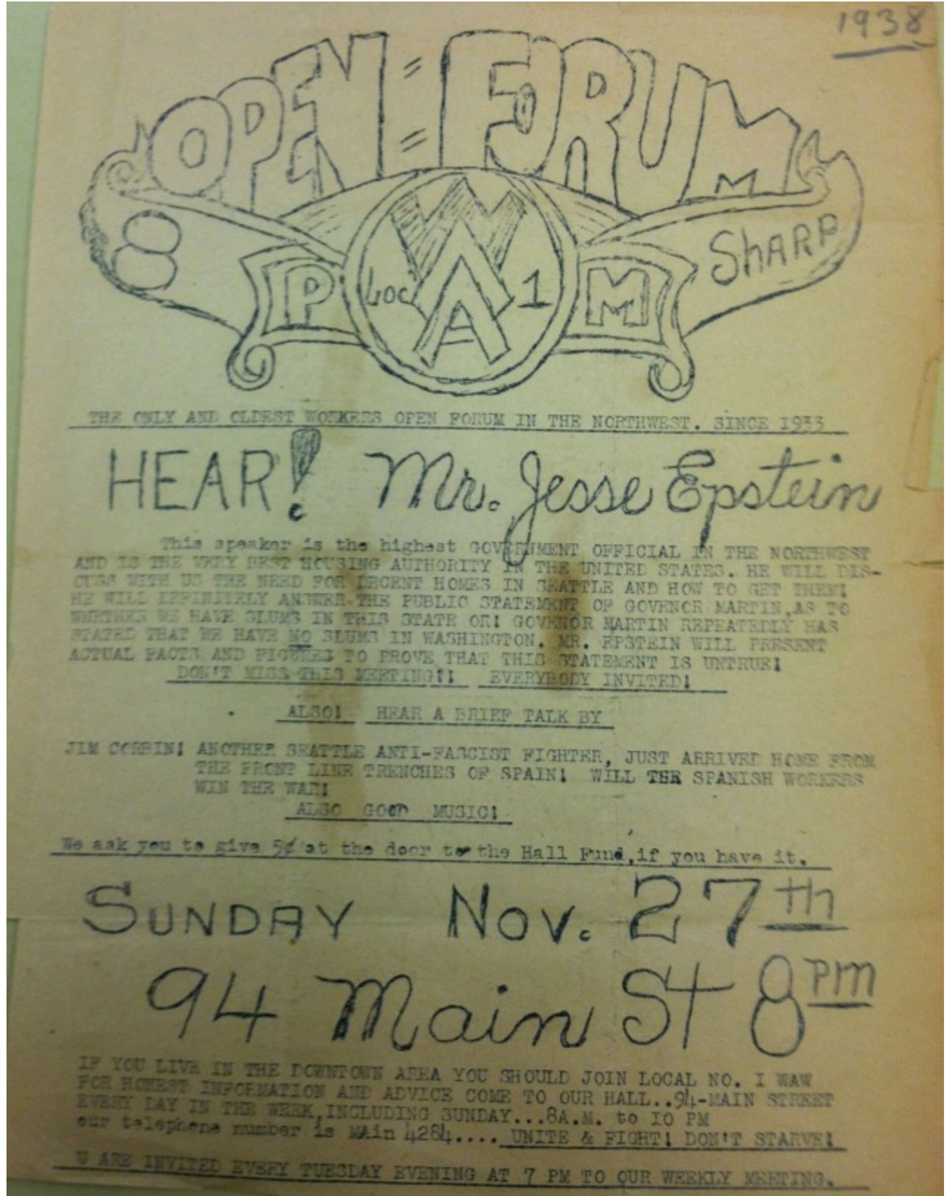

Image 3.3. Union 'Open Forum' advertisement, Jesse Epstein featured speaker. Source: "Scrapbooks," Epstein Papers, UW Special Collections

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of tenements and the wretched condition of its residents to the greed of profit-hungry landowners. As one of the Federal Theatre Project's 'Living Newspapers,' the play also portrayed the politicization of its main character, 'Little Man': as the play nears completion "Little Man and his wife resolve to continue haranguing the government until slums are removed and everyone in America can find a 'decent' place to live; their rallying cry is a call to action, including their audiences in their urgent resolve."[58] Although the local producers wanted the staging to be place-specific by changing the play's references from New York to Seattle, time and money constraints forced them to keep the original set design. They opted instead for modifications: inserting Seattle housing statistics where New York statistics had been, displaying enlarged photographs of Seattle's substandard housing districts in the lobby, and transforming one of the lobby's coatrooms into a projector room where "before and after the show and during intermission, were more slides of housing conditions in Seattle passing across a small screen."[59] Despite the fact that it had no publicity budget, *One-Third of a Nation* had the longest run of any of the "Living Newspapers" produced by Seattle's Federal Theatre (nine weeks) partly because its theme spoke to many in academia, social work, labor, and the women's clubs and partly because the play's call to action seemed so immediate. Jesse Epstein attended opening night with friends and colleagues from the housing committee and the University of Washington and the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* recommended the play to its readers, calling it "stimulating" and "thought-provoking" even if "overlong."[60]

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[58] Sarah Guthu, "Living Newspapers: *One-Third of a Nation*," *The Great Depression in Washington State: Pacific Northwest Labor and Civil Rights Project*, http://depts.washington.edu/depress/theater_arts_living_newspaper_onethird.shtml, accessed February 1, 2015.
[59] Barry Witham, *The Federal Theatre Project: A Case Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 108.
[60] Guthu, "Living Newspapers"; Witham, *The Federal Theatre Project*, 110. Humorously, Epstein does not have any reference to the play in his personal papers, but he does have a copy of a script presumably written by a local opponent of public housing and sent to his office. That 'counter-play' was entitled *Two-Thirds of a Notion* and

The play's greatest legacy, perhaps, is that it demonstrated to Epstein and colleagues the power of persuasion through visual and popular means. Such a realization influenced how Epstein and the newly-formed Seattle Housing Authority would communicate with Seattle residents after the state enabling legislation easily passed into law in February 1939.[61] Thereafter, instead of presenting general data about housing conditions in the city at large, Epstein and colleagues would need to visualize, interpret, and publicize the spatial dimensions of these conditions in order to advocate for slum clearance and the construction of public housing in a *particular* area of the city.

From Blighted to 'Fresh and Attractive': The Logic of Seattle Site Selection

In April 1939, the head administrator of the United States Housing Authority, Nathan Straus, announced that the recent passage of enabling legislation in Washington and three other western states, as well as the rapid growth of local housing authorities in the thirty-three states with pre-existing legislation, meant that "[p]ublic housing has 'taken.'" Yet, he warned his fellow public housers not to become complacent and self-congratulatory, because a tremendous amount of work remained to turn "plans and policy into projects."[62] He therefore outlined a "Houser's Resolution for the Coming Year" and asked all the readers of the National Association of Housing Officials' *Housing Yearbook* to pledge a similar commitment. Of his nine

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featured Seattle's local housing authority director, "Luvsam Awl," and USHA director "Nathan House" as a fascistic European houser who controls Luvsam like a puppet. Whether Epstein saved the script as a reminder of the tenor of local opposition or because he found it utterly ridiculous is anyone's guess. In "Scrapbooks," Epstein Papers.

[61] The two bills, the "Housing Authorities Law" (SB 79) and the "Housing Co-operation Law" (SB 80) passed the State Senate on February 2, 1939 and, after some parliamentary procedural maneuvering to get it out of the House Rules Committee, passed the House on February 22, 1939. Governor Martin signed the bills into law two days later. Housing Authorities Law, c 23 § 2; RRS § 6889-2 (1939); Housing Cooperation Law, c 24 § 1; RRS § 6889-31 (1939); J.W. Gilber, "House Liberals Plan New Fight," *The Seattle Times*, February 22, 1939.

[62] Nathan Straus, "Public Housing 1938-1939: From Plans and Policies into Projects," in Coleman Woodbury (ed.), *The Housing Yearbook, 1939* (Chicago: National Association of Housing Officials, 1939), 103.

resolutions, three seemed particularly pertinent to Jesse Epstein and the situation in Seattle in 1939:

> *Let's develop long-term programs*, related to the market and to all aspects of the city plan, so that our children can inherit a city that is both pleasant to live in and efficient to run, instead of a patchwork of hopeful but unrelated 'improvements.'
>
> *Let's build fresh, attractive housing projects*, which demonstrate that the simplest and most inexpensive kind of construction, when combined with rational neighborhood planning, can result, not in something dreary though sanitary, but instead in real homes which please managers, tenants, and average citizens alike, and thus provide a much needed example to private enterprise. […]
>
> *Let's develop better public understanding, and encourage more effective public participation*, never forgetting that low-rent housing and slum clearance must necessarily be a democratic enterprise in any community, that no successful long-term program can possibly be achieved without the informed support of the many different kinds of citizens who are vitally concerned.[63]

Epstein had deftly managed the state-wide enabling legislation campaign– turning Governor Martin and other officials from strong deniers of a housing problem to firm believers in public housing in a little over a year– but he knew that turning legal permissibility into an actual Seattle public housing plan and project would arouse more pointed opposition. Following Straus's resolutions and drawing on his prior year's experience, he set out to prove that the SHA could build "fresh, attractive housing projects" that were low-cost, exemplary in design, and examples for– rather than competition with– private enterprise. Visualizing Seattle's slums and their antidote was a key dimension of Epstein's political-educational strategy between 1939-1941.

In August, Langdon Post, a close advisor to President Roosevelt on housing and relief issues and former chairman of the New York City Housing Authority, visited Seattle as a national consultant to the USHA with a pledge of three million dollars for Seattle's first low-rent

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[63] *Ibid.,* p. 113-114

project. The pledge was contingent upon both municipal and federal approval of the site location as well as assurances that municipal departments would cooperate by extending normal services to the area ("parks, playgrounds, streets, roads, water, sewer or drainage facilities and other improvements and facilities").[64] Epstein took Post, along with a reporter from the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, through the three 'blighted' or 'slum' areas the SHA was considering for the first project: Ballard, a lumber manufacturing industrial district near the northwest corner of the city limits; the Warren Avenue area surrounding the decade-old civic center just to the north of the central business district; and Profanity Hill, an area just east of the central business district that received its name from the profusion of lawyers who cussed all the way up the steep hill to the nearby city courthouse. All of these areas had histories with Seattle urban real estate men and urban reformers, suggesting that the building of 'fresh, attractive public housing projects' was a new strategy in an ongoing effort to, in the words of lumber magnate George Emerson in 1907, "order the parts of our Modern City."[65]

Ballard, the site of two acrimonious annexation campaigns in the early 1900s, drew the ire and suspicion of Seattle real estate and reform elites because its residents stubbornly clung to an identity as an independent, insular, white working class manufacturing center. In other words, Ballardites intentionally promoted themselves in opposition to Seattle's modern cosmopolitanism and as such, opened themselves to municipal intervention that would seek to change the built environment, the social geography, and oppositional character of the district.[66] Unlike Ballard, the Warren Avenue area had been the site of numerous Seattle interventions into the physical and social landscape: the siting of the Warren Avenue School in 1903 and its

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[64] Housing Cooperation Law (1939).
[65] Quoted in Klingle, "Changing Spaces," 213.
[66] Michael Bowman, "Urbanization and Schooling on Seattle's Industrial Edge: A Scalar History, 1890-1910" (unpublished, Research and Inquiry paper, University of Washington, 2010).

designation as an Industrial-Special School in 1914; the proposed Civic Center construction as part of Seattle's failed City Beautiful plan ("the Bogue Plan") in 1911; the city's actual building of its first Civic Auditorium and Exhibition Hall in 1928; and the second Denny Hill regrade project finally completed in 1931.[67] Likewise, Profanity Hill had been in the sights of the Seattle Planning Commission since 1925. Planning Commission President and local developer E.S. Goodwin suggested regrading Profanity Hill because earlier regrade projects in the area "had yielded a slide-prone area filled with 'dilapidated' abodes." According to urban environmental historian Matthew Klingle, this was "the first time that city officials acknowledged that regrading could exacerbate physical and social problems, but acknowledging those problems only justified still more regrading."[68] In its 1929 report, the Planning Commission announced plans to remove as much as 2.7 million cubic yards of earth from Profanity Hill in an effort to provide 'new land' for commercial and residential redevelopment. But the onset of the Depression ended *these* plans for Profanity Hill and, by 1931, forced the Planning Commission itself to cease its activities, including the drawing of the city's new comprehensive plan.[69]

Langdon Post might not have been fully briefed about the history of the three areas that Epstein showed him in August 1939, but he agreed with the assessment of the SHA, telling the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reporter that "any one of them might well be the locale of this city's housing project."[70] Post suggested that the cost of transforming all the substandard housing in

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[67] City of Seattle, Seattle Redevelopment Department, "Seattle Center Historical Landmark Study" (March 2013): 5; Nile Thompson and Carolyn J. Marr, *Building for Learning: Seattle Public School Histories, 1862-2000* (Seattle: Seattle Public Schools, 2002), 299.
[68] Klingle, "Changing Spaces," 217.
[69] *Ibid.*; "Report of Planning Commission on Regrade of Yesler Hill," October 10, 1929, box 160, Seattle City Clerk's Files (hereafter, SCCF), Seattle Municipal Archives (hereafter, SMA); Seattle City Planning Commission, "Annual Report," (January 1, 1929), SCCF, SMA. Seattle's Planning Commission, like many others around the country, was not active during the New Deal, Defense, and World War II periods. Its planning activities were delegated to other municipal, state, and federal offices. The Seattle Planning Commission resumed its activities in earnest in 1949.
[70] Forest Williams, "$3,000,000 for Housing 'Just a Start,'" *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 5, 1939.

these three areas into "modern, livable, low-cost housing" would be "in the neighborhood of seventy-five million dollars," but the initial three million dollar pledge would get the SHA started on whatever area it deemed most in need.[71] Before heading back to Washington, D.C., Post spoke in front of the Seattle Real Estate Board and urged them to support the locational decision of the SHA. Anticipating their primary objections to public housing, Post argued that public housing was not 'socialism'; rather it was an antidote to the "Communism" that flourished in the "squalid, drab surroundings of [the] miserable hovels" found in the three districts he had visited. Moreover, real estate men should not feel threatened by public housing construction, Post maintained, because private enterprise could not build housing that would reach "families with low incomes" and still turn even a meager profit. Instead, echoing Homer Hoyt's observations in *The Structure and Growth of Residential Neighborhoods*, Post suggested that private enterprise should applaud the interventions of the Seattle Housing Authority because its activities would clear slums, arrest blight, and ultimately maintain or improve the value of the middle-class homes in the path of blight's 'cancerous growth.' Seattle's public housing project could be the first New Deal 'surgical operation' in the city, and private homeowners and builders stood to reap the spillover effects of the construction of 'fresh, attractive' modern housing built in whole communities.[72]

When the SHA formally proposed Profanity Hill and applied for USHA funds in late September 1939, a statement released by the FHA (perhaps from Hoyt himself) re-emphasized this idea:

> The fact is that, by rehabilitating blighted neighborhoods which were formerly dead to any construction activity, by raising the general standard of demand, by raising the productive level of the building industry, and by developing proven

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[71] *Ibid.*
[72] *Ibid.*; "West Coast Slums Hit by Langdon Post," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 6, 1939.

> techniques for large-scale low-cost housing safe for long-term investment, the program in Seattle may prove to be a stimulus to private enterprise.[73]

Dan Markel of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* also made a point to mention to his readers that the data collected from the city's first two property surveys were used as evidence to substantiate the SHA's claim that Profanity Hill was the proper place to start. Markel wrote that "[w]ith the 123-page application [to the USHA] went seven bedspread size maps, two large charts, and a cylinder crammed with both aerial and ground photographs."[74] In addition to the abundance of substandard dwellings, Profanity Hill filled USHA's requirements that public housing projects be proximal to industrial and commercial centers, be accessible to transportation routes, and be serviceable by area playgrounds and schools.

The Visuality of the Slum and its Transformation: Turning Profanity Hill into Yesler Terrace

The announcement of the selection of Profanity Hill in September 1939 was accompanied by a local publicity campaign that had roots in what architectural historian Andrew Shanken describes as the visual language of the before-and-after contrast.[75] Much like a widely distributed 1938 USHA monograph entitled *What the Housing Act Can Do for Your City*, the SHA sought– in text, word, and image– to contrast the old crumbling wooden Victorians of Profanity Hill with the new sleek modernism of the proposed Yesler Terrace. Initially, in newspaper articles and in SHA materials, this meant placing photographs showing "typical scenes" of a barren and blighted Profanity Hill alongside architectural renderings of what the *Post-Intelligencer*

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[73] Dan Markel, "Yesler Hill Proposed for Housing Plan," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, October 1, 1939.
[74] Dan Markel, "Seattle Applies for Housing Funds," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, September 26, 1939.
[75] Andrew Shanken, *194X: Architecture, Planning, and Consumer Culture on the American Home Front* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 25.

suggested would be Yesler Terrace's "pleasant and functional design architecture, consisting of row houses and flats," and arranged in ways that showcased its "attractive landscaping" and communal green spaces (see image 3.4). In one instance, under the double entendre headline "Sunlight on Yesler Hill," a sketch of four ill-spaced, multiple-story, wooden-framed houses, with windows and fences broken, sit under a bright sun with the words "Proposed Site for U.S. Low Cost Housing Project" attached (see image 3.5).[76]

As a featured image on the *Post-Intelligencer* editorial page the week after the announcement of the selection of Profanity Hill, the editorial staff tried to convey the message that the new housing project would bring healthier physical conditions to the hill– sunlight being a consistent trope of housers– and would bring about 'a bright new day,' when such substandard housing would not be found anywhere within the city. When Jesse Epstein took to the KOL radio airways in late October 1939, he too starkly contrasted the present Profanity Hill with the eventual Yesler Terrace. Profanity Hill was merely a "40 acre smudge on the map of Seattle" and

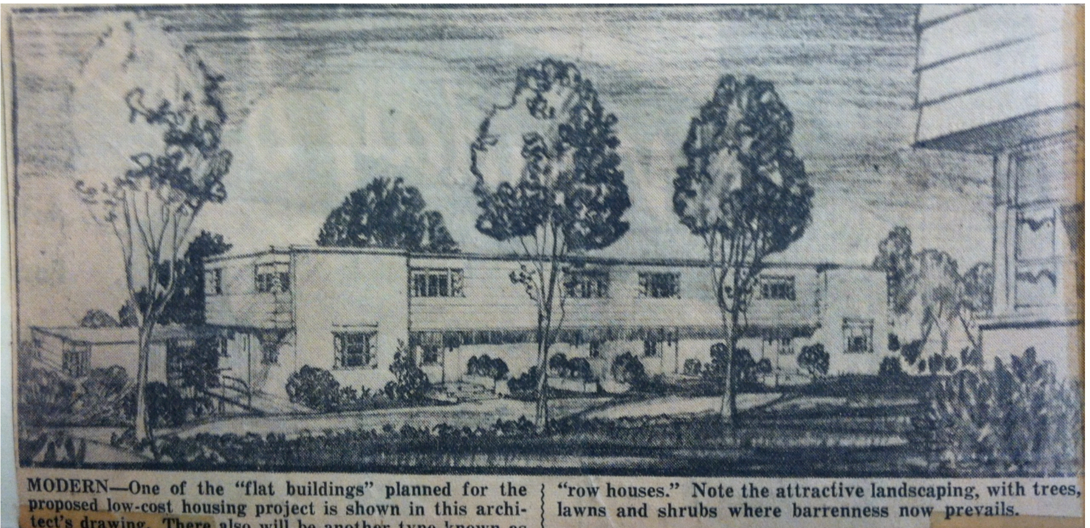
MODERN—One of the "flat buildings" planned for the proposed low-cost housing project is shown in this architect's drawing. There also will be another type known as "row houses." Note the attractive landscaping, with trees, lawns and shrubs where barrenness now prevails.

Image 3.4. Modern housing design for the proposed Yesler Terrace (October 1, 1939), *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

[76] Dan Markel, "Yesler Hill Proposed for Housing Plan," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, October 1, 1939; "Sunlight on Yesler Hill," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, October 5, 1939.

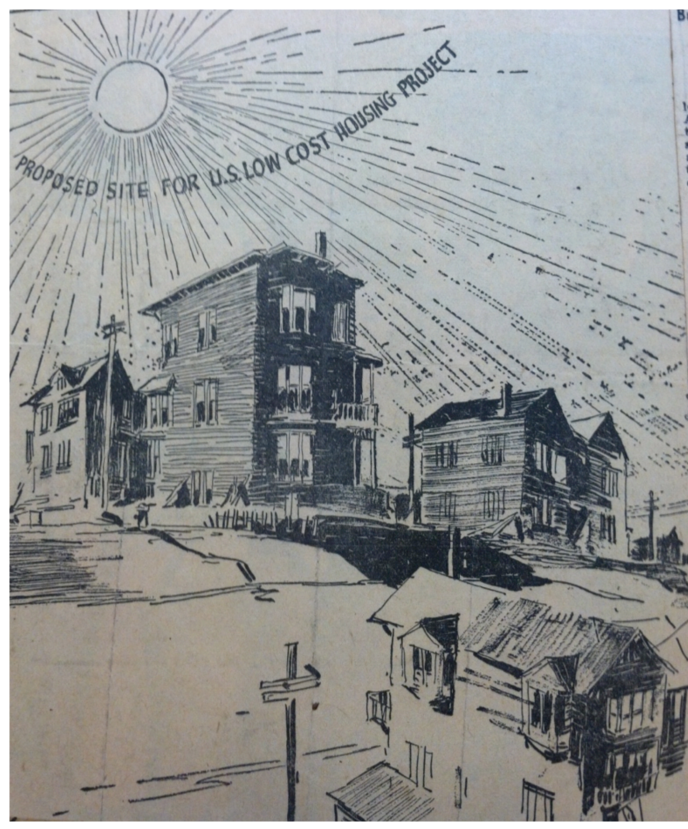

Image 3.5. "Sunlight on Yesler Hill," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, October 5, 1939.

the SHA would transform it into a "neighborhood [that] can easily become once more a showplace of the Northwest."[77] The actual demolition of Profanity Hill buildings would not begin until September 1940 and the first residents would not move into Yesler Terrace until November 1941, but Jesse Epstein and SHA officials used various media to drum up support for the work.

Profanity Hill constituted one of the most ethnoracially diverse areas in the city. Seattle's central Nihonmachi (Japantown) and Chinatown were a short walk west down Jackson Street; its Jewish community concentrated just a few blocks to the east-northeast around Yesler Avenue; its

[77] Jesse Epstein, "Yesler Hill for Seattle's Low-Cost Housing Project," Station KOL-Seattle, October 25, 1939, Jesse Epstein Speeches, WSA-Bellevue.

relatively small African American population divided between the above areas and a middle-class enclave just north of Yesler and 23rd Avenues; and its predominantly male Filipino population grouped in several pockets. The specific 43-acres slated for demolition reflected this diversity; of the 1,021 residents of the area, there lived "161 white families, 127 Japanese families, 66 Negro families, and 5 Chinese families" as well as "single persons including 20 Filipinos and a smattering of Indians, Greeks, and Eskimos."[78] Historians Quintard Taylor, James Gregory, and Trevor Griffey have discussed and documented how the racially restrictive covenants organized by white real estate professionals, homeowners associations, and informal groups of homeowners made non-white residency outside of these areas dangerous or impossible.[79]

Yet, to many residents, it also provided a home-place of social, cultural, and familial connections and feelings of safety and affirmation. Cultural organizations reflective of, and responsive to, the inhabitants of the area located here: the Kokugo Gakko Japanese Language School; the Council of Jewish Women's Education Center; the offices of Seattle's African American weekly, *The Northwest Enterprise*; the Japanese Seventh Day Adventist, Shinto, and Buddhist worship halls; as well as the Collins Playground, home to some of the most spirited and cross-cultural youth and semi-pro baseball leagues of the 1930s and the early 1940s. *The Northwest Enterprise* described Jackson Street– steps away from Profanity Hill– like this in 1933:

> Daily, nightly and weekly, Jackson street assumes the brisk business atmosphere found on State St. in Chicago; Wiley Ave., Pittsburgh or Central Ave., Los

---

[78] Irene Burns Miller, "Research Report Series, No. 1, January 13, 1941: Relocation of Tenants on the Site of Yesler Terrace" in Office of Secretary of State, Seattle Housing Authority, Research Report Series, Reports 1-48 (Accession No. 96-PS-0027), Washington State Archives–Bellevue.

[79] Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community*; James Gregory, *Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project*, (http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/); Trevor Griffey, "Rethinking Race and Place: The Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project," *OAH Magazine of History* 26, no. 1 (2012), 47-50.

> Angeles, but Sunday on the ill famed street is as quiet and well ordered as on any of the other Seattle streets. […] Jackson Street might as well be called the 'Poor Man's Playground.' Here all races meet on common ground and rub elbows as equals. Fillipinos [sic], Japanese, Negroes and whites mingle in the same hotels and restaurants and there is an air of comradeship. They address each other as 'buddy,' 'brother,' and 'pal.'[80]

Jesse Epstein and SHA officials could not see these places– they could only see the substandard housing stock and the 'ill famed' aspects of the ethnoracially diverse Jackson Street and Profanity Hill. In recognition of the USHA's stated policy around the displacement of "minority racial groups" and the "consideration" of their ability to find housing elsewhere in the city, the SHA set up a relocation office in "a long vacant Japanese hotel" on Profanity Hill in the summer of 1940. The SHA's lead social worker and relocation director, Irene Burns Miller, recorded her first 'consideration': "How, I thought, will I persuade the one thousand residents here now to move and what about the eighteen houses of prostitution, the three Japanese churches, grocery store, Chinese laundry and two hotels operated by Asians?"[81] Over the following months, she introduced *Post-Intelligencer* reported Bob Jenkins to individuals and families on the hill in hopes that a "human interest" story in the newspaper would result in sympathetic readers offering rooms for rent to those who needed to be relocated. Indeed, when the story ran in August 1940, with a number of photographs of residents, the SHA received calls resulting in thirty-one new relocation listings. However, the photographs printed by the newspaper did not include any depictions of the African American residents of the hill nor did the article make any mention of race. In at least one case, when a homeowner who called the

[80] "Jackson Street is Quiet
[81] Irene Burns Miller, *Profanity Hill* (Everett, WA: The Working Press, 1979), 10.

SHA office to offer a spare room learned that the widow and three children featured in the story "was a Negro family, they refused to rent."[82]

Ellis Ash, Assistant Director of the SHA, headed two civic education campaigns of his own. The first, which he called "Come and See Tours," allowed city officials and representatives from churches, civic groups, and the general public to become temporary voyeurs– peeking into the squalor of Profanity Hill and then imagining its demolition and rebuilding along lines much more amenable to the middle class and civically-minded gaze (see image 3.6). At the same time, Ash was at work with a filmmaker to bring the visual language of the before-and-after contrast to the big screen. The filmmaker captured 'before scenes' of Profanity Hill as relocation got into full swing, demolition scenes in September 1940, move-in day scenes in November 1941, and 'typical day' scenes after the community center and nursery school were in full operation over the course of 1942. The resulting 16-minute film, *It Happened on Yesler Hill*, imitated the storyline of other public housing and planning films of the era.[83] Like the RPAA's 1939 film *The City,* which gained national attention at the New York World's Fair, the Seattle film traced a trajectory of the "declension and renewal" of housing in a particular area while weaving images of children's play and women's homemaking into the narrative in order to contrast the former blighted neighborhood with a new socially and educationally vibrant one.[84]

Completed in 1942, the film did not debut until 1949. I can find no explanation for this lag in the archives, but it is plausible to suggest that the SHA did not need such an 'educational film' during the war years because the public approved of all efforts made by private *and public*

[82] *Ibid.*, 53-55.
[83] In 1941, the USHA surveyed "local housing authorities and citizens' housing associations" about the local production of motion pictures related to public housing. Thirty-four local films in nineteen states, as well as seven nationally produced films, appeared on the USHA's list as of December, 1941. Memorandum, "Films on Housing," December, 1941, United States Housing Authority, Acc. 90/2-9, Box 48, WSPC.
[84] Carl Abbott, "*Our Cities* and *The City,"* 105.

sectors to build housing for the massive influx of war workers (discussed in the following chapter). The film's release in 1949 came at a moment when the Seattle City Council, the Mayor's Office, and the SHA confronted the issue of the disposition of the permanent war housing projects. The SHA must have thought that the film would educate the Seattle public– some of them new to the area– to the transformative capabilities of Seattle public housing. As such, I save my discussion of the content of this film for chapter 5.

Seattle Public Housing and Racial Occupancies

As Irene Burns Miller and Ellis Ash attempted to educate the public about Profanity Hill-Yesler Terrace, Jesse Epstein proposed an additional public housing site for Seattle. After receiving word from Langdon Post on April 10, 1940 that the SHA would receive an additional $1 million to clear and re-build, Epstein proposed the Warren Avenue district just north of downtown to the City Council as the next SHA site.[85] Despite the fact that this had been one of the three sites considered the previous year, the announcement provoked swift and negative responses from private builders, which had largely supported the Profanity Hill project. In a letter to the City Council, the Seattle Real Estate Board reported that its Board of Directors unanimously voted to oppose "any further extension of housing projects in the City of Seattle until such time as the Yesler Hill project was complete, in operation, and it was possible to see what results were being achieved."[86] Over the following month and a half, the Seattle Master Builders, Inc. and the Central Federated Club communicated the opposition of its membership to

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[85] "Seattle Assured Housing Project," *Seattle Times*, April 10, 1938.
[86] Seattle Real Estate Boards, Inc. to Seattle City Council, April 15, 1940, #165890, Comptroller Files, Seattle Municipal Archives (hereafter, CF-SMA).

the City Council. The latter organization, which represented residents and businesses near downtown, insisted that the "proposal would tend to attract and undesirable element to the district."[87]

Jesse Epstein and SHA officials reverted back to the high modernist strategies that proved successful over the previous three years when faced with opposition. He brought out the most recent *Real Property Inventory*– conducted in late 1939– to show that the blighted state of the Warren Avenue site: 75.5% of dwellings were designated 'substandard'; fully 67% needed major repairs or were 'unfit for use'; and dwelling owners only occupied 6.1% of the units. These figures far surpassed city percentages and looked similar to the percentages on Profanity Hill.[88] Epstein presented a map of the proposed area so that council members and the public could see that it represented a very small area, contained less than 300 residents, and would be well-positioned in relation to schools and playgrounds (image 3.7). When the prospects of City Council approval looked dim, Ellis Ash informed the city council's public grounds committee that he had been authorized by federal officials to build a field house on the site as well, which would be open to all the children of the neighborhood.[89]

After months of "civic controversy" over the proposed project, Ash met with city council members in late November to tell them that the Warren Avenue plans had been "dropped" and that the funds would be used to make a three-and-a-half square block extension to the Yesler project to house in-migrant war workers.[90] Nowhere in the record is there explicit mention of

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[87] Seattle Master Builders Inc. to Seattle City Council, May 23, 1940, #166312, CF-CMA; "Attorney Puts Defense Ahead of Housing," *Seattle Times*, June 5, 1940.
[88] Chairman of the Housing Authority of the City of Seattle C.W. Coplen to the Seattle City Council, October, 26, 1940, #167908, CF-SMA.
[89] "Warren Avenue Fieldhouse in Housing Project," *Seattle Times*, June 12, 1940.
[90] "Dunham Heads Clubs' Advisers," *Seattle* Times, November 29, 1940; Carl Cooper, "Yesler Housing Area Widened," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* December 3, 1940; "City O.K.'s More Land for Houses," *Seattle Times*, December 3, 1940.

race as a factor in real estate– and city council–opposition to the Warren Avenue project. Aside from the Central Federation Club's fear of "undesirable elements" and a comment by Associate Editor of the *Seattle Times* that accused the SHA of wanting "to establish a permanent slum district," most of the opposition mentioned a desire to wait and see what would become of Yesler Terrace and its residents before initiating additional projects.[91] Yet, the fact that the Warren Avenue area housed predominantly white workers and relief families is significant when placed alongside Hoyt's– and by extension, FHA's– racialized assessments of property value, loan risk, and suitability for federal loan insurance programs. Recall Hoyt's instructions to the Springfield Chamber of Commerce: draw a circle with a "blue pencil around all blocks in which there are more than 10% negroes or race other than white;" these would be least attractive for living and loan purposes. It was no accident that the first scale in the *Real Property Inventory* ran from 0.1%-9.9% "race other than white;" no need for a blue pencil (image 3.8). When real estate interests expressed a desire to wait and "see what results were being achieved" in Yesler Terrace, they were expressing a desire to see if the SHA could 'whiten' the area through occupancy rules or scoring systems and thereby make it– and the surrounding neighborhoods– more valuable. While the real estate interests may have acknowledged that there existed other factors (owner-occupancy rates, rents, vacant tracts, etc.) depressing the value of Warren Avenue properties, these could be fixed through the private sector. But introducing, in the words of the FHA's 1936 *Underwriting Manual*, "inharmonious racial groups" could not be corrected; it would be the beginning of an "infiltration" that inevitably and steadily led to decline.[92]

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[91] "Attorney Puts Defense Ahead of Housing;" "Speaking for the Times. Comment by James A. Woods, Associate Editor," November 11, 1940.

[92] Federal Housing Administration, *Underwriting Manual: Underwriting and Valuation Procedure Under Title II of the National Housing Act With Revisions to April 1, 1936* (Washington, D.C.), Part II, Section 2, Rating of Location. With the defense and war mobilizations between 1940 and 1943, real estate interests wee not able to prevent further SHA construction. Chapter 4 argues that they still tried to control the location of these projects and steer them away from land areas that they had a financial stake in.

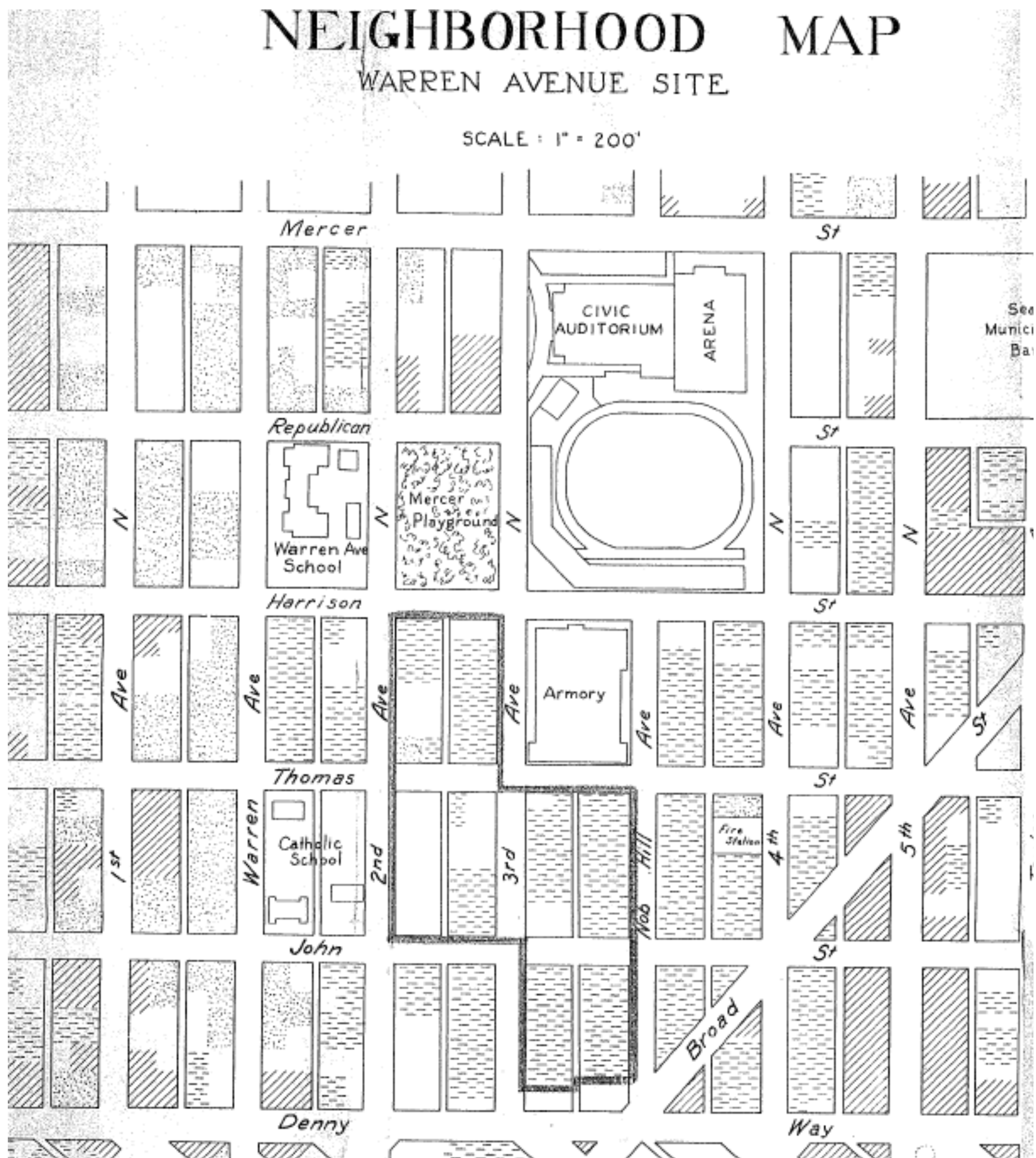

Image 3.7. SHA's proposed Warren Avenue site, 1940 (outlined). *Source:* Comptroller Files, Seattle Municipal Archive

SHA officials didn't give many specifics concerning the racial dimensions of its eligibility and occupancy rules to real estate interests or the general public during the summer and fall of 1940. Irene Burns Miller concentrated on the relocation of residents. Not surprising, given the racial geographies and ideologies just mentioned, Miller found it most difficult to relocate "a Negro girl," "two Negro maids" who handed out information about the whereabouts of the relocated "houses of prostitution," "Filipinos with white wives," and "a Mexican family of seven (with an eighth expected momentarily)."[93] But Miller discussed the general USHA eligibility rules about returning to the new dwellings on Yesler Terrace with the residents she relocated; Jesse Epstein and Ellis Ash gave that information to the press. Applicants had to be the 'head of a family' and a U.S. citizen currently living in substandard housing and earning less than $1,200 a year. They also had to agree to allow Miller to visit their current residence in order to assess their "housekeeping standards."[94] In September 1940, at a weekly staff meeting, Jesse Epstein announced that "that there would be no discrimination, no segregation" when selecting and placing tenants at Yesler Terrace. "We have an opportunity to prove that Negroes and white can live side by side in harmony," Miller remembered him saying years later.[95] Epstein genuinely fashioned Yesler Terrace a social and democratic experiment in placemaking–throughout the 1940s he took great pride in SHA's efforts at racial integration in its projects. But the SHA never intended a policy of "no discrimination." Although he did not like the word

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[93] Miller, "Research Report Series," 4, 6. Note that the "Mexican" family did not appear on the SHA's official count of residents to be relocated, so they might have been designated as "white."
[94] Miller, *Profanity Hill*, 19.
[95] Howard Droker, "Interview with Jesse Epstein, March 13, 1973" in Howard Droker Papers, University of Washington Special Collections; Miller, *Profanity Hill*, 63.

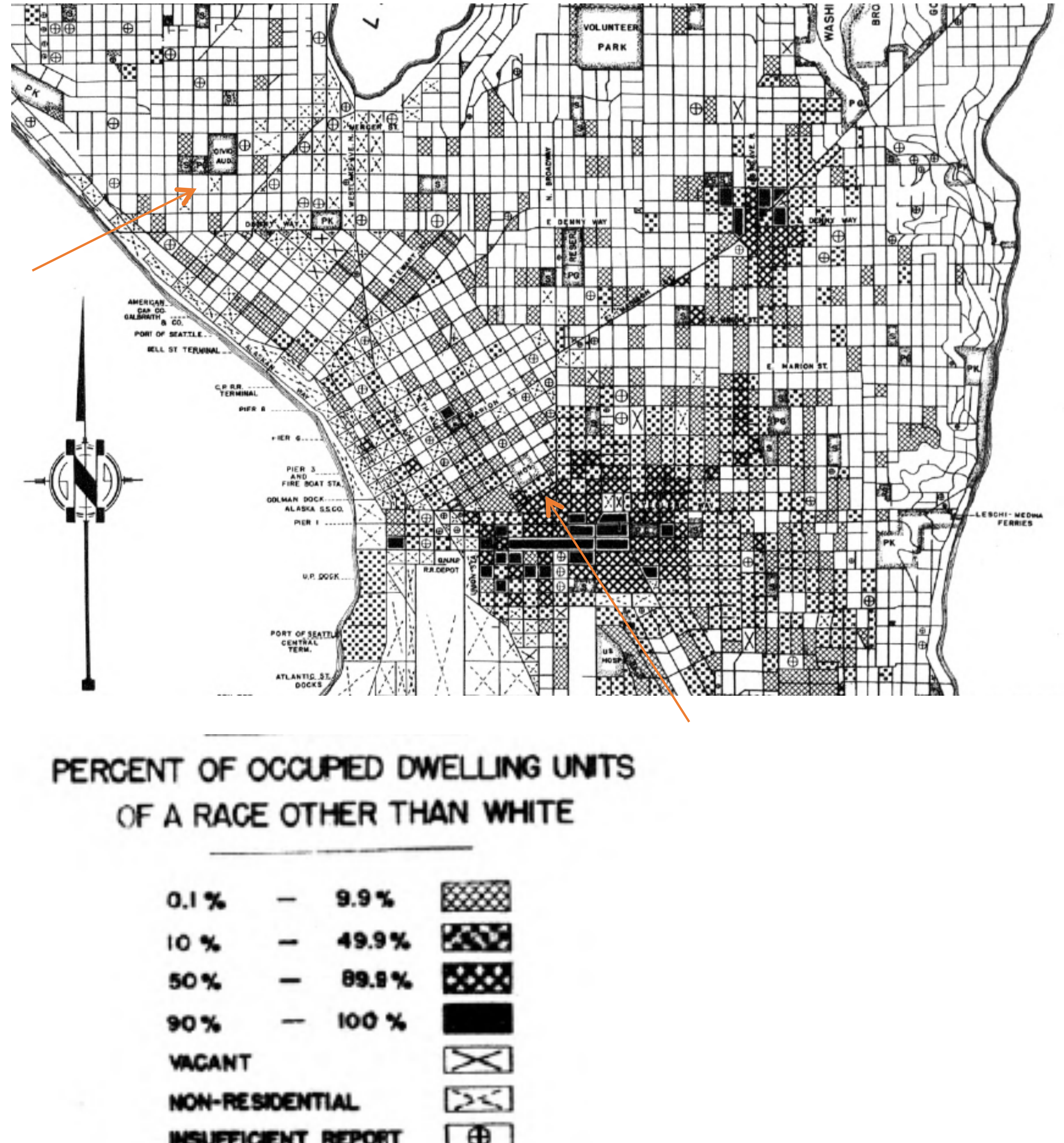

Image 3.8. Partial map, *Real Property Inventory* (1939-1940). Profanity Hill, lower center. Warren Avenue, upper left.

'quota,' he believed that "we must limit the number of Negroes if we are to achieve integration;" there was no mention of other ethnoracial groups.[96] Epstein later explained that he did not ask the SHA Board to put the 'non-discrimination' policy in writing because he feared that it might generate a backlash– consideration of quotas or even an explicit policy of segregation. To many of Profanity Hill's black residents, however, this silence produced anxiety, and rumors began to circulate about the SHA's intentions. In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, James C. Scott dubs the circulation of these kinds of rumors 'hidden transcripts,' private conversations that appear just 'offstage' but play a significant role:

> Rumor thrives most […] in situations in which events of vital importance to people's interests are occurring and in which no reliable information– or only ambiguous information– is available. […] If each hearer of a rumor repeats it twice, then a series of ten tellings will produce more than a thousand hearers of the tale. More astonishing than its speed, however, is the elaboration of rumor.[97]

Rumors spread and become embellished just 'offstage' and then, on occasion, one of the hearers makes the hidden transcript public. In November 1940, a black resident of the hill named Goldie Turner entered the SHA office to sign up for a place in the new Yesler Terrace. As Irene Burns Miller remembered the conversation:

> 'We aren't taking applications yet, Mr. Turner; I will take your name and let you know when we start interviewing. The homes will be for families only…do you have a family?'
>
> 'None of your Goddamned business…but I live alone…self-supporting, too. I work for a Chinese gambler…you sent me one of them thirty-day letters…come by to say I ain't movin' until I get a written guarantee I can come back.' […]
>
> 'I'm sorry, Mr. Turner, we don't have application forms yet. Anyway, Yesler Terrace is being built for families…folks with kids, married couples, brothers and

[96] *Ibid.*
[97] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 144-145.

> sisters. It's a government rule…we'll have to disappoint a lot of single people like yourself. Perhaps, someday…'
>
> 'Shit, someday!' He jumped up and began to shout: "Most of the folk on the hill is single, ain't they? And, colored?'
>
> I nodded.
>
> 'Might have guessed you'd find a way to keep us out…guess we ain't good enough for them new houses. Government rule…bullshit! You're goin' to hear about this, you bitch!'[98]

On the one hand, this public transcript of the argument between Miller and Goldie Turner (as told by Miller) fits very well into the SHA's official narrative of the moral character of residents on Profanity Hill. Turner is a gambler; speaks in a colloquial and agitated manner, frequently cussing and raising his voice; he is distrustful, suspicious of authority, and vengeful. On the other hand, we might see through Miller's linguistic flourishes and recognize that Turner was making public what was, no doubt, a long-held, but hidden, sentiment. Perhaps the thirty-day notice letter was the final straw that brought Turner into the office; perhaps he had been rehearsing what he wanted to say to Miller for weeks; perhaps he had been in on some of the rumors circulating amongst the "colored" residents of the hill.[99] Turner's final vow of revenge ('You're goin' to hear about this, you bitch!') is a particularly daring public expression of what had been a hidden transcript: "The first open statement of a hidden transcript, a declaration that breaches the etiquette of power relations, that breaks an apparently calm surface of silence and consent, carries the force of a symbolic declaration of war."[100]

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[98] Miller, *Profanity Hill,* 77.

[99] Other rumors, pre-dating this one, circulated about employment discrimination on the third and final *Real Property Survey* sponsored by the SHA and the Works Progress Administration and about Irene Burns Miller's desire to sterilize the most libidinous men on Profanity Hill.

[100] Turner's interaction with Miller is strikingly similar to a scene in George Eliot's novel *Adam Bede* analyzed in James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 8.

We might imagine that Turner finalized his declaration by exiting the SHA relocation office and walking a few blocks north to 13th Ave and Remington to the offices of the *Northwest Enterprise* to make the transcript even more public. Miller remembered that the headline in the following week's paper read: "HOUSING AUTHORITY DISCRIMINATES AGAINST NEGROES."[101] In actuality, the headline was stronger and a call to action: "Race Prejudice And Discrimination Must Be Destroyed." The article, written by editor-publisher Edward I. Robinson, claimed that "[e]vidence of efforts to discourage Negroes desiring to make application in the Yessler [sic] Way Housing Project, has poured into the office of the Northwest Enterprise so often we can no longer remain silent." With a literary flair equal to Miller, Robinson wrote that acts of prejudice and discrimination

> have raised their ugly heads from the day the government appraisers hammered down the value of all properties held by Negroes, poor whites and Japanese, sinking its fangs deeper and deeper, dragging its victims throughout their efforts to relocate on the quiet avenues of tolerant districts, down, down to their last stand.[102]

Jesse Epstein, with the help of Bernard Squires, executive secretary of the Seattle Urban League and an advisor to the SHA, organized a public meeting to discuss the matter.[103] According to Epstein's oral history, between 1000 and 1500 black Seattleites gathered at a local church to hear his response to the allegations in a meeting that he described as "very heated."[104] Perhaps to his surprise, the crowd itself was not in full agreement about how the SHA could best serve black residents eligible for Yesler Terrace:

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[101] Miller, *Profanity Hill,* 5 and 75.
[102] E.I.R., "Race Prejudice And Discrimination Must Be Destroyed," *Northwest Enterprise*, November 8, 1940.
[103] Miller, *Profanity Hill*, 77; Ted Wood, "Bernard E. Squires to Assist Local Housing Commission," *Northwest Enterprise,* August 10, 1939.
[104] Droker, "Interview with Jesse Epstein." The turn-out is especially impressive when one realizes that according to the 1940 Census there were only 3,789 black residents in Seattle. This is one indication of how pervasive and deep the skepticism of SHA ran.

> Some of the blacks thought there should be buildings assigned to their race. Others thought there should be sections assigned. Others thought there ought to be a quota. There was a great deal of discussion and some heated argument.[105]

In Epstein's memory thirty-three years after the fact, he stressed that the vast majority of attendees left applauding and satisfied by Epstein's assurances that "all applicants would be treated alike."[106] Other descriptions and memories of the event differ from Epstein's rosy recollections. Miller remembered that "the mass meeting might have turned into a riot had it not been for the skillful chairman [of the meeting], a Negro physician." The meeting only broke up, Miller remembered, when the physician persuaded those in attendance to agree to an outside investigation by USHA officials from the Washington D.C. office. Indeed, Dr. Frank S. Horne, Robert Weaver's lieutenant on race relations at the USHA, came to Seattle two weeks later to meet with Epstein, black leaders, as well as Urban League and NAACP members. According to Miller, Horne convinced "the colored community that the Housing Authority was sincere in its commitment to a non-discriminatory policy." Thereafter public opposition waned, even though we can imagine that private disagreements continued about what a 'non-discriminatory policy' might look like in practice; segregated buildings, segregated sections in buildings, a site-based quota, or full integration all remained possibilities.[107] Moreover, we can imagine that some remained skeptical that the SHA was actually adopting a 'non-discriminatory policy' at all, even if they believed that race would not be the expressed reason for their exclusion.

By all public accounts, the SHA followed the USHA's site selection, demolition, relocation, and return policies; it did not displace "minority racial groups" from a "stable" neighborhood; it demolished many dwelling units occupied by non-white groups, but it made all

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[105] *Ibid.*
[106] *Ibid.*
[107] Miller, *Profanity Hill*, 77.

units available to former residents that fit within the criteria for return; and it secured the relocation of all non-white residents displaced by the demolition. Yet, the demographics of Yesler Terrace differed dramatically from that of Profanity Hill. The first families moved into Yesler Terrace in November 1941 and all 690 units were occupied by August 1942. The low-rise buildings, "functionally arranged" into "community units," housed 2,185 residents: 490 white families, 27 Negro families, 5 Chinese families, and 3 families of 'other non-white races.' The Japanese-American residents that resided in the project at the start of 1942, of course, had been incarcerated and sent to camps in the interior West. Only 25 Profanity Hill families returned to Yesler Terrace. The records are unclear about the number of families who expressed a desire to return, but SHA officials claimed that many of the Profanity Hill families "were alien, or families with income above the maximum of $1,200" and therefore not eligible.[108]

Conclusion

The civic educational efforts of Jesse Epstein had mixed results. On the one hand, he ably used housing survey methods and data– as well as his connections to federal funds– to convince the Governor that there did indeed exist slums in Washington and that state enabling legislation was indeed needed. Following Catherine Bauer's lead, he also he deftly alternated between moral, democratic, and economic arguments and used a range of popular media– theater, radio, and newspapers– to grow public awareness and public agitation for public housing.

On the other hand, these educational efforts were continually confounded by race. Seattle real estate interests, who had long manipulated and managed race and racism in an effort to increase property values as evidenced by restrictive covenants in the 1910s and 1920s, now had a

[108] Seattle Housing Authority, *Third Annual Report of the Housing Authority* (Seattle: SHA, 1943); "$15,000,000 Housing Projects Here Will Be Finished in September," *Seattle Times*, January 18, 1942.

powerful new ecological theory about race and the directionality of the spread of 'blight.' The ideas of Homer Hoyt, codified in FHA underwriting manuals and publications, prompted real estate interests to 'buy into' public housing interventions in the city *only if* those interventions had the potential to 'whiten' areas around neighborhoods and property that they held a financial stake in. Otherwise, no matter the physical condition of the existing properties and land, real estate interests wouldn't risk the 'racial infiltrations' that public housing might bring. For their part, SHA officials courted real estate approval and remained relatively silent about race, unwilling to risk the survival of public housing by making race visible. Understandably, this silence caused apprehension, anxiety, and mistrust amongst black residents of Profanity Hill. Only when they publicly pressed the SHA on the issue did Epstein announce his 'non-discrimination' policy. Epstein believed that the SHA crafted a viable 'non-discrimination' policy, but he and the SHA still held on to a racial ideology that there existed a certain 'racial tipping point' after which public housing was doomed to failure.

The civic educational efforts of Jesse Epstein created the possibility of public housing in Seattle. He envisioned– and fought for– public housing designed as a 'whole community' like Catherine Bauer, with educational and social spaces that provided supposedly new and better opportunities for children and families. In Epstein's mind, the plan might have been to create a democratic place, but the SHA erected this whole community after clearing an already-existing ethnoracially diverse place and then restricting return.

With the onset of war, Epstein and the SHA would face new challenges and opportunities to bring a similar educative neighborhood model to the defense housing projects constructed near Boeing and the other war production plants in the southeastern and southwestern edge of the city. The war brought Epstein and the SHA into a new form of racial-

spatial politics. But the federal government's added financial outlays for community, recreational, and educational facilities also brought Epstein closer to being able to realize Clarence Perry's neighborhood unit scheme, with a school as the physical and social heart of a self-sustaining and democratically-run community.

Chapter Four

Facilitating Production: Federal Policy and the Construction of Whole Communities During Wartime, 1940-1945

As the first residents started to move into Yesler Terrace in November 1941, the *Seattle Times* announced a new city housing crisis. Under a headline that read "55,000 'Invade' Seattle from Many States," the *Times* presented a photographic triptych: six children from five different Northern Plains and Rocky Mountain states playing in a trailer camp near Boeing's main plant; an auto-camp along East Marginal Way with cows grazing nearby; and a line of men at the downtown YMCA seeking rooms for rent.[1] The chairman of Mayor Millikan's Committee on Defense Housing recognized the challenge of finding suitable housing for the waves of in-migrants, but as the vice president of a mortgage firm, he could hardly contain his enthusiasm. "This thing isn't tapering off yet, you know. The government wants us to find ways to house more and more people," Arthur VanderSys told the paper, "because the more labor we can show them we can accommodate, the more defense contracts we will get, just like that and as fast as we can handle them."[2]

Between 1940 and 1944, tens of thousands of men and women streamed into Seattle and its surrounding suburbs to work at the Boeing plants, Pacific Car and Foundry, the Todd and Seattle-Tacoma shipbuilding companies, as well as twenty-seven other shipyards and ancillary industrial and mechanical shops. The total Seattle metropolitan population grew by more than 80,000 (18%) in just four years, with the total number of residents involved in the labor force increasing by just over 70,000. Almost half (46%) of in-migrants to the metropolitan area resided

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[1] "55,000 'Invade' Seattle from Many States," *Seattle Times*, November 30, 1941.
[2] "More Defense Workers Coming," *Seattle Times*, November 30, 1941.

within the Seattle city limits and nearly two-thirds of the newcomers to the labor force found work within the city (see Table 4.1).

In this chapter, I build on the work of other (sub)urban historians in arguing that the World War II period was a significant shaper of metropolitan geographies in industrial production centers. Historian Marilyn Johnson makes the provocative claim that "[i]n order to facilitate defense production, the federal government intervened in the urbanization process, assuming an unprecedented role in the construction and rearrangement of residential neighborhoods."[3] Johnson and other western historians have contended that this federal intervention was particularly intense in the West Coast defense centers of San Diego, Los Angeles, Oakland, Portland, and Seattle because of the explosive growth in the population and the sudden and expansive growth of (sub)urban settlement. The *process* of federal intervention was similar across these West Coast cities, but federal intervention produced different forms of urbanism: dense developments in the primarily shipbuilding (sub)urban areas of Oakland and Portland and scattered, lower density "suburban industrial clusters" in the aircraft production centers of San Diego, Los Angeles, and Seattle.[4]

While the role of federal policy and federal funding in the development of West Coast cities was significant, it was not simply imposed on a prostrate society. As in other cities, Seattle government agencies, real estate interests, and resident groups argued over the best use of federal funding. What kind of housing should be built, where, and by whom? What, if any, design

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[3] Marilyn Johnson, "Urban Arsenals: War Housing and Social Change in Richmond and Oakland, California, 1941-1945," *Pacific Historical Review* 60 (1991): 285.
[4] Marilyn Johnson, *The Second Gold Rush: Oakland and the East Bay in World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), chapter 4; Nash, *The American West Transformed*; Rudy Pearson, "'A Menace to the Neighborhood': Housing and African Americans in Portland, 1941-1945," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 102 (2001): 155-179; Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles*, chapter 4. The phrase "suburban industrial cluster" is Fred Viehe's in "Black Gold Suburbs: The Influence of the Extractive Industry on the Suburbanization of Los Angeles, 1890-1930," *Journal of Urban History* 8 (1981): 3-26.

principles should guide the necessarily rapid construction efforts? Should builders assume the responsibility to relate new housing construction to social and educational services and institutions? Moreover, what forms of education and social services should be provided to new residents, in what settings, and by whom?

In the answers to these questions, one aspect of Seattle's wartime development appeared distinct. Unlike the other West Coast production centers, which either had no public housing authority (Portland, San Diego) or a weak public housing authority dominated by real estate interests (Oakland, Los Angeles County), Seattle had an assertive public housing authority with a

Table 4.1. Age and Status of Resident Population for Seattle Metropolitan Area and Seattle City, 1944 and 1940

Age and Status	Seattle Metropolitan District		Seattle City	
	1944 (% change over 1940)	1940	1944 (% change over 1940)	1940
Total population[5]	535,464 (18%)	452,639	406,764 (10%)	368,302
Population, 14 and over	433,692 (14%)	380,364	337,788 (8%)	313,033
14 and over, in labor force	274,716 (34%)	204,414	217,548 (27%)	170,991
14 and over, in school	15,984 (-51%)	32,932	13,608 (50%)	27,177
Population, 14 and under	108,720 (39%)	78,133	74,088 (24%)	59,867
Population, under 5	43,452 (67%)	25,994	29,700 (51%)	19,633

[5] Since the statistics in this chart are taken from two different Census tables, you will notice that 14 year olds occupy two categories: "Population, 14 and over" and "Population, 14 and under."

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population*, ser. CA-2, *Characteristics of the Population, Labor Force, Families, and Housing*, no. 8, "Puget Sound Congested Production Area, June 1944," Table 2 "Age of the Resident Population, by Sex, for Puget Sound Area, Seattle and Tacoma Metropolitan Districts and Seattle City: 1944 and 1940" and Table 8 "Employment Status of the Resident Population 14 Years Old and Over, by Sex, for Puget Sound Area, Seattle and Tacoma Metropolitan Districts and Seattle City: June, 1944 and March, 1940"

liberal social vision that asserted a role for the public sector in creating hospitable urban environments. The animus for public housing changed during the 1940s; the need to integrate in-migrants into a new city in order to boost industrial production superseded the largely moralist impulses of the 1930s that sought to bring light to blight. But as defense mobilizations began, Jesse Epstein and other SHA officials asserted the viability of the SHA as a builder– not only of housing to meet the immediate needs of waves of in-migrant defense workers, but of new neighborhoods that would last for decades after the war. In fact, wartime federal public housing policy forced a greater degree of collaboration between the SHA and the Seattle School District– which also claimed a responsibility for boosting wartime production– and this collaboration allowed Jesse Epstein to more fully realize the vision of the 'neighborhood unit' or the 'whole community' that had circulated amongst public housers for decades.

This is not to say that public housing became less contentious during the 1940s– locally or nationally– but organizations representing the (nominally) private housing sector had to tread more carefully. They still argued that they could and should build the vast majority of new housing in the United States, but they also heard the calls from local industrial and military leaders for quick construction near industrial and military sites. Instead of objecting outright to public housing for defense workers, local real estate interests attempted to restrict the locations of public housing to less profitable land, while helping to secure federal legislation and funding for their own neighborhood construction in areas they deemed more likely to generate immediate

and long-term profit. Therefore, the housing policies of the 1940s continued the two-tier policy framework begun in the 1930s, but the spatial, racial, educational, and economic impact of wartime housing policy played out on a much wider geographic scale in Seattle than during the previous decade. These wartime policies shaped the contours and directionality of (sub)urban development, school construction, and school populations for decades.

Continuing the Two-Tiered Federal Housing Policy Framework

Between 1940 and 1942, Congress amended or enacted four pieces of federal legislation that guided the construction of housing and the arrangement of residential neighborhoods in war production centers. This federal legislation built on the two-tiered policy precedents of the New Deal: very visible, contentious, but penurious federal allocations to localities for public housing construction on the one hand and less visible federal dollars flowing to buttress a robust private housing market on the other.[6] Similar to the housing politics of the previous decade, attempts during the 1940s to expand the scope and monetary allocations to the public 'lower tier' were met with protestations from private sector building interests who then pushed for a concomitant increase in federal allocations to the 'upper tier.'

The first piece of defense housing legislation amended the United States Housing Act of 1937, the federal government's most prominent mechanism of 'lower tier' New Deal housing policy. As historian Sarah Jo Peterson has shown, the 1940 amendment marked a significant departure from the requirements and intents of the original legislation. Unlike low-cost 'slum-clearance' housing, defense housing needed to be located near industrial production sites, which most often meant construction on the periphery of cities, rather than in central city 'slums.' The

[6] Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

amendment also instructed that the United States Housing Authority and its local affiliates devote any remaining unmarked funds to the construction of housing for defense and war workers, thereby requiring the cessation of building for low-wage workers not connected to defense industries or the military.[7] Nationally, approximately $290 million were expended under this amendment; Seattle built 467 housing units through this appropriation.[8]

Only four months later, in October 1940, in recognition that the "housing shortage, already severe, is continuing to grow," Congress passed the second major piece of defense housing legislation. The Lanham Act provided an initial allocation of $150 million to construct housing in areas where there was "an acute shortage" that might "impede national defense activities."[9] A caveat in the bill, however, dictated that Lanham Act funds could only be distributed after the federal Defense Housing Coordinator determined that adequate housing could not "be provided by private capital."[10] This caveat gave rise to numerous 'defense housing commissions' sponsored by private building interests in cities across the country. Seattle's Committee on Defense Housing, for example, organized home registration offices that listed available rooms for rent, encouraged single-family home conversion to multiple-family use, and found vacant stores to convert into residential spaces. Berhnard Dahl, president of Seattle Master Builders, was forthright about private builders' interest: "the program [of the Committee on Defense Housing] will provide housing for defense workers, thereby reducing the number of government housing units which might otherwise be built."[11]

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[7] Sarah Jo Peterson, *Planning the Home Front: Building Bombers and Communities at Willow Run* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 143-152.
[8] *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 1942, Volume 11 (New York: Random House, 1948), 129; Seattle Housing Authority, *Seventh Annual Report of the Housing Authority of the City of Seattle* (SHA: Seattle, 1946).
[9] Federal Works Agency, *Second Annual Report* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1941), 27; Lanham Act of 1940, Pub. L. No. 76-849, 54 Stat. 1125 (1940).
[10] Lanham Act of 1940.
[11] "Housing Officer to Speak Here," *Seattle Times*, October 26, 1941.

Despite efforts by private sector-laden defense housing commissions, the federal Defense Housing Coordinator most often *did* recognize that private capital could not provide the needed housing units. So, in another significant departure from New Deal housing legislation, the Lanham Act gave a federal official the final say in determining local need and then passing that determination onto another federal agency to initiate building activity. The Act assigned responsibility for site selection, housing and landscape design, and final construction directly to the Federal Works Agency (FWA), which could then delegate these responsibilities to a local or federal public agency that it deemed suitable. This gave the federal government unprecedented control over the design of housing developments, even in cities like San Diego and Portland that neither had public housing authorities nor were particularly keen on developing permanent public housing sites. Both the Defense Housing Coordinator, Charles Palmer, and the FWA Administrator, John Carmody, were members of that strand of New Dealers who supported grand public works projects, circulated within networks of public housers and social reformers, and yet also vowed that the state would never compete with private industry.[12] In comments reminiscent of Clarence Perry, members of the RPAA, or Catherine Bauer, Palmer insisted that American (defense) workers had "a right to expect homes, not just shelter" in the cities in which they had come to work. Therefore, he and Carmody stressed a social and communal design of Lanham Act developments that included community facilities, green space, and a street and sidewalk pattern that encouraged pedestrian use and neighborly encounters.[13]

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[12] Charles Palmer developed his national public housing networks while serving as the president of the National Association of Housing Officials in the 1930s. Previous to that, he worked as a real estate developer in Atlanta. John Carmody served as the head of the Rural Electrification Administration. Although a staunch supporter of public power, he expressed less support for public works if private capital could do the job.
[13] Quote in Peterson, 148.

Congress demonstrated its support for these community design features in June 1941, when it amended the Lanham Act to include $150 million for the construction of community public service facilities and the purchase of materials and equipment "necessary to the health, safety, or welfare of persons engaged in national-defense activities."[14] Under the revised bill, localities could receive federal funds for building and furnishing of hospitals, recreational facilities, community centers, and schools in areas where these facilities could not "otherwise be provided when needed, or could not be provided without the imposition of an increased excessive tax burden."[15] The fiercest floor debates about the amendment concentrated on the control of federally-funded school construction during the war and the disposition of sites after the war's end. Thus, as in much of New Deal and wartime social legislation, the bill contained explicit language to allay the fears of those that saw it as a federal attempt to circumvent local– and often, racialized– traditions of control. While Section 203 of the amendment contained a non-discrimination clause, it also assured legislators that "[n]o department or agency of the United States shall exercise any supervision or control over any school" or "prescribe or affect its administration, personnel, curriculum, instruction, methods of instruction, or materials for instruction."[16] A subsequent section also deferred to local control of the disposition of any community facilities built by Lanham funds, only requiring, in vague language that facilities "be disposed of as promptly as may be advantageous under the circumstances and in the public interest."[17]

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[14] Revision to the Lanham Act of 1940, Pub. L. No. 77-137, 55 Stat. 361 (1941). The original Lanham Act only stated that 'community facilities' could not exceed 3 percent of the total cost of the project, but did not designate specific money for such facilities.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid.* This can be read as a classic Rooseveltian compromise to appease Southern Democrats. Although he does not address the Lanham Act specifically, this compromise is well-documented in Ira Katnelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: Liveright, 2013.

[17] Revision to the Lanham Act of 1940.

Such legislative concern about post-war disposition resurfaced a month later when Roosevelt requested an additional $300 million for Lanham Act funding to build 75,000 more units of public defense housing.[18] Under the terms of the original Lanham Act, the federal government owned all of the housing produced by Lanham funding, and local authorities simply managed and operated the projects. Unlike the Congressional deference to local control in relation to Lanham schools and community facilities, House members balked at giving local housing authorities similar control after the completion of the war. As Sarah Jo Peterson finds, Congressional opponents of New Deal public housing feared that the expansion of Lanham funding was a backdoor push to promote and build public housing under the guise of the defense emergency. Therefore, they added two significant amendments in July 1941: one requiring Lanham housing be sold "as expeditiously as possible" at the end of the emergency and another mandating that localities obtain Congressional approval if they wanted to turn defense housing into "subsidized housing for persons of low-income" after the war's end.[19]

The third piece of defense housing legislation also attempted to appease Congressional opponents of public housing. In March 1941, the Urgent Deficiency Appropriation Act gave the President funds and the authority to order the construction by a federal agency of *temporary* housing facilities "where by reason of national defense activities, a shortage of housing exist […] and where it is not practicable under the [Lanham] Act […], or through private enterprise to meet the immediate need for emergency housing."[20] Appropriations under this Act totaled $308 million and most of it was allocated to federal agencies attending to the housing needs in rural

[18] Throughout this chapter, I use the phrases 'public defense housing' and 'Lanham Act housing' interchangeably.
[19] Sarah Jo Peterson, *Planning the Home Front,* 108.
[20] Urgent Deficiency Appropriation Act, Pub. L. No. 9, 55 Stat 14 (1941).

areas (the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Farm Security Administration).[21] But by 1942, the idea that *temporary* housing units– trailers, mobile homes, Quonset huts– could be built or arranged in (sub)urban areas as alternatives to permanent public defense housing developments caused Congress to again amend the Lanham Act to allow Lanham funds to be used for temporary construction. As we will see in the case of Seattle, this final amendment to the Lanham Act emboldened private builders and real estate interests to organize city officials and city residents around a plan that would force the Seattle Housing Authority to concentrate on temporary housing construction and management.

The Lanham Act (and its subsequent amendments) constituted, by far, the most influential piece of 'lower tier' wartime housing legislation. It provided $1.5 billion to fund the construction of most of the 275,000 permanent and 225,000 temporary housing units built during the defense and war period, as well as the funds for the construction and operation of thousands of recreation facilities, community centers, and nursery and elementary schools. In Seattle, under the Lanham Act, the Seattle Housing Authority constructed 2,700 new permanent housing units in three 'whole communities,' nearly 2,300 temporary units in eight projects, and nine community centers. The SHA, together with the Seattle Public Schools, constructed and operated three elementary schools; nine nursery schools, play centers, and youth centers; and at least one youth-centered medical clinic in SHA housing sites.[22] In other words, the Lanham Act provided the opportunity for the SHA to more fully realize a vision of 'education in design terms.'

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[21] A fascinating case study of FSA temporary housing construction for both black and white labor in the 'atomic city' of Oak Ridge, Tennessee can be found in Kelsey Fields, "Temporary Housing: How Defense Housing Shortages Spurred the Creation of Housing Legislation and Shaped the Landscape of America," (unpublished paper, Middle Tennessee State University, 2011).

[22] Seattle Housing Authority, *Seventh Annual Report of the Housing Authority of the City of Seattle* (SHA: Seattle, 1946); Minutes of the Seattle School District, 19 March 1943. Record Group 29, Seattle Schools Archive; Memo from Worth McClure, "Seattle Public Schools, Extended School Services," 3 June 1943; "Application for Lanham Act Funds for Continuance of the Nursery Schools, Child Care Centers, and Youth Centers," 14 April 1944, Superintendent's Office Correspondences, A1978-15, Box, 7, Seattle Schools Archive.

Taken as a whole, the three pieces of 'lower tier' legislation– the Defense Housing Amendment, the Lanham Act, and the Urgent Deficiency Appropriation Act– dramatically increased government spending on, and the number of housing units produced by, public housing agencies. However, this federal expenditure still paled in comparison to the government's support of the 'upper tier' of housing policy that gave hundreds of thousands of eligible workers access to financial instruments that incentivized individual homeownership. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which had operated as the 'upper tier' of federal housing policy since 1934, again received the lion's share of federal housing expenditures– more than $5 billion between 1940-1945. While more than half of this total represented a continuation of FHA's practice of insuring mortgages and financing repairs and improvements on *existing* homes that met FHA underwriting guidelines, more than $1.7 billion went to the construction of *new* housing developments for defense and war workers under an amendment to the 1934 Housing Act. Title VI, as the amendment was known when it passed through Congress in March 1941, constituted the fourth important piece of wartime housing legislation.

Under Title VI, Seattle developers, like those in 145 other industrial areas with acute housing shortages, could receive federal mortgage commitments up to 90 percent of the valuation of the entire development as long as its housing met FHA standards and could be obtained through a mortgage of $4,000 or less by defense workers in authorized industries earning less than $3,000 a year. Such cost limitations meshed with the part of the FHA's mission that encouraged architects and private builders and developers to attend to the lower-middle ends of the market through small home design and construction.[23] Ostensibly, the Title VI mortgage

[23] U.S. Federal Housing Administration, *Eighth Annual Report* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1942), 6. Subsequent amendments to Title VI throughout the war period increased the principal amount of individual mortgages on single family homes to $4,500. Title VI also covered two-, three-, and four- family dwellings, but about 95% of new

guarantees were federal-sponsored loans to developers; they reduced the up-front cost to builders and meant that they did not need to invest much of their own capital throughout the entire construction and development process. Title VI was a boon to (white) home-seeking defense workers as well, allowing them to move into Title VI-insured developments without any cash down-payment; the developer held the title to the property until the buyer's monthly payments accrued to ten percent of the home's assessed value.[24]

While the initial New Deal FHA legislation and the post-war FHA and VA mortgage insurance programs receive most of scholarly attention, Title VI was crucial to (sub)urban development in the Seattle metropolitan area and similar defense areas. Over the four-year life of the Title VI program, Washington state's industrial areas received over $65 million in Title VI mortgage commitments– the seventh most in the nation– and the 14,193 new-home Title VI mortgages insured in Seattle and surrounding defense areas surpassed the total amount of FHA mortgages insured statewide between 1935-1941.[25] Title VI represented the 'upper tier' of wartime housing policy not because it financed the construction of large or expensive suburban homes for the white, middle or professional classes. In this case, the 'upper tier' consisted of the planning and construction of small houses– often using standardized materials and assembly line techniques developed to produce high quality and low cost– marketed to 'blue collar' workers who worked in suburban defense plants during the day.

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construction in Seattle and nationwide was on single-family dwellings. On previous FHA concerns with small house construction, see U.S. Federal Housing Administration, *Principles of Planning Small Houses* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1937). This text was updated several times throughout the 1940s.

[24] The best contemporary description of Title VI is "Building for Defense: FHA Boosts Private Housing," *The Architectural Forum* 74 (May 1941): 346, 56. For mention of how Title VI fit within the history of the FHA, see the classic treatment in Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), chapter 13.

[25] For total Title VI mortgages see, U.S. Federal Housing Administration, *Twelfth Annual Report* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1946), Table 26, "State Distribution of War Housing Mortgages." For pre-war (Title II) mortgages, see U.S. Federal Housing Administration, *Eighth Annual Report*, Table 12 "State Distribution of New and Existing Home Mortgages."

I have presented these four pieces of housing legislation as distinct in this section. However, the titles and details of this legislation most likely escaped the attention of all but the most careful policy observers. But the large normative questions that the legislation addressed– questions about housing, community development, and the directionality of (sub)urban growth– could be seen or heard in the debates in the local and national press, in the chambers of city hall, in the offices of builders and real estate developers, and in the meeting rooms of various city agencies. During the defense and war periods, Jesse Epstein once again appeared as the champion for public housing in Seattle. But in the press and in public meetings– and behind the scenes, we can imagine– Albert Balch, a radio station executive turned real estate developer, often appeared in opposition. Balch was the fiercest advocate for private sector housing development generally, and Title VI specifically. Like Epstein, Balch carried impressive credentials. At the turn of the decade, Balch sat on the Seattle City Planning Commission, was the chairman of the Seattle Municipal League's Housing Committee, and served as the vice-president of the Seattle Real Estate Board (SREB) until he was voted president of the organization in late 1941. Balch also developed national connections as a representative of Seattle real estate to the conventions of the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) and through his involvement in a *LIFE* magazine and *Architectural Forum* promotion on new land use and architectural techniques for small single family home production. In the spring of 1941, Balch and Los Angeles developer Fritz Burns founded the Home Builders' Institute of America, a subsidiary of NAREB focused on lobbying local, state, and federal officials in the interests of developers and large-scale homebuilders and was named to a panel

advising the editors of *The Architectural Forum* on "post-war problems to be faced by the building industry."[26]

In what follows, I trace the battles between Epstein and Balch over the local implementation of federal policies to plan and build 'suburban industrial clusters' on the northeast perimeter of the city near the Sand Point Naval Air Station and in the southeast and southwest sections of the city in proximity to Seattle's Boeing plants. These battles illuminate the sharp contrasts between the attempts to realize the economic value of schools and education in design and the attempts to realize the democratic potential of schools and education in design.

Defense Housing and the Geographies and Rhetoric of Race

Reacting to a Seattle Housing Authority plan to construct 150-200 housing units near the Naval Air Station at Sand Point, on the city's northeast municipal border, Albert Balch told the *Seattle Times* in July 1940*,* "We have confidence in the [City] Council and in the Navy, but, frankly, we have no confidence in the Housing Authority. We want the Navy to control the project, not the Housing Authority."[27]

As the chairman of the Municipal League's housing commission, Balch joined members of the Seattle Real Estate Board, the Apartment Operators' Association, the Western Retail Lumberman's Association, the Seattle Master Builders, the Central Federated Clubs, and the editors of the *Seattle Times* in opposing the plan.[28] The feud over the Warren Avenue low-cost

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[26] "Albert Balch, Oath of Office, City Planning Commission, June 4, 1936" in SMA-CF 151232; "Balch Named on Advisory Group," *Seattle Times*, June 29, 1941; "Local Realtors at Convention," *Seattle Times*, November 2, 1941; "More Private Buildings of Homes Expected," *Seattle Times*, January 16, 1942. Los Angeles developer Fritz Burns and his Title VI Westchester development is examined in Greg Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles*, 135-152.
[27] "Council Act, to Protect City, May Kill Sand Point Housing," *Seattle* Times, Sept 10, 1940.
[28] "200 Sand Point Homes Planned," *Seattle Times*, July 30, 1940.

housing project (discussed in Chapter 3) remained a front-page affair when news broke that the commandant of the Naval Air Station had been in discussions with Jesse Epstein about preliminary plans for the construction of a defense housing project when Congress made funds available under the Defense Housing Act. The protesting organizations attempted to convince the Seattle City Council and the public that the Sand Point and Warren Avenue projects were intimately connected, even though they were authorized under distinct federal legislation and intended to serve distinct populations. In letters to the City Council and editorials of protest, they tied the two projects together and suggested that the proposed Sand Point project was simply a ploy by the SHA to grow its own power and expand "the low-cost housing racket" to the city's northeast corner.[29] But they had to walk a fine rhetorical line, opposing the involvement of the SHA while not appearing unpatriotic or as hindering the defense effort. They did this by employing a powerful rhetorical turn of phrase to highlight their objections to the SHA. Instead of the agency responsible for 'slum-clearance,' opponents began referring to the SHA as 'slum promoters.' On the one hand, they saw Epstein going out of his way in his various housing survey efforts to catalogue and bring to the public's attention the 'slum conditions' on Yesler Hill, in the Warren Avenue district, and in the Hooverville shacks along the waterfront. The often-irreverent James A. Woods, associate editor of the *Seattle Times* whose front page musings "Speaking for the Times" reached tens of thousands of readers, captured this sentiment at the height of the Sand Point debate. Woods told his readers that they might be surprised to learn that Epstein had sent a report to the head of the United States Housing Authority identifying Seattle as "a city of shacks." Your "idea of Seattle as a city of homes," Woods wrote, "is now

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[29] "Speaking for the Times: Comment by James A. Woods, Associate Editor," *Seattle Times*, November 11, 1940; Resolution of Seattle Real Estate Board submitted to Seattle City Council, 5 September 1940; Central Federated Clubs to Seattle City Council, 26 September 1940.

pronounced a delusion."[30] If Jesse Epstein had his way, Woods intimated, even modest single-family homes– perhaps those of readers– would be categorized as shacks and slums and be subject to demolition and replacement by large, social housing projects under the power-hungry gaze of SHA officials.

On the other hand, the 'slum promoters' label intended to suggest that the SHA, through its housing projects, would bring 'slum conditions' to new parts of the city. Even when this claim did not explicitly reference a race or class 'invasion,' most could read between the lines and follow the argument that 'slum conditions' would be a drag on the private housing market and threaten the property rights of individual homeowners. The areas around the Sand Point Naval Air Station had recently grown into a residential district, James A. Woods reported to his readers, with some of the single-family homes "on estates of considerable expanse; most of them on small sites. Nothing can have been farther from the minds of these home builders and owners than an intrusion of low-cost housing. […] [W]e cannot believe that many of them, however enthusiastic about national defense, will welcome the housing project."[31] Of course, these homeowners most likely did not anticipate or particularly welcome the $4 million expansion of the Naval Air Station that, over the previous few years, nearly doubled the size of its runways, facilities, and personnel either, but Woods chose not to mention this intrusion on area homeowners' property fortunes. Instead, Woods, Balch, and other SHA opponents, eager not to appear unpatriotic in the public's eyes, advocated strict occupancy rules at any housing project to be built near Sand Point. The Seattle Real Estate Board expressed their strong opposition "to construction of <u>any</u> housing for, or later to be used by, workers, mechanics, non-commissioned officers or others attached to the Sandpoint Naval Air Station" and proposed that the City

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[30] "Speaking for the Times," *Seattle Times*, September 20, 1940.
[31] "Speaking for the Times," *Seattle Times*, August 29, 1940.

Council attach amendments to any agreement with the SHA that would forever limit its housing in the area to "married, enlisted men of the Navy only, whose income does not exceed $85.00 per month."[32]

The other rhetorical strategy used by opponents of SHA's involvement at Sand Point– which they would use consistently throughout the subsequent five years– consisted of visualizing a post-war future when defense and military activity waned. Unless stopped by public pressure, Woods argued, the defense housing that was built to serve national defense would "have to be given over to low-income families [which] is precisely what the people of Seattle do not wish to have done."[33] These 'people of Seattle,' Woods predicted, would see through the "trickery" of the Seattle Housing Authority's defense housing "scheme" and realize it as just another maneuver in its "low-cost housing game."[34] He vowed that Seattle voters would also see to the removal in the next election of any council member that agreed to play the SHA's game.

The Seattle City Council bowed to the pressure of real estate interests, just as they did in relation to the Warren Avenue proposal. But this time, instead of rejecting the plans outright, they agreed to the conditions set out by Woods, Balch, and the opposition groups. They limited occupancy at Sand Point to enlisted, married men and secured what essentially was a guarantee that the project would never be turned over to a civilian, low-cost housing project.[35] The SHA's $560,000, 200-unit Sand Point project broke ground in November 1940 under these constrained conditions.

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[32] Resolution of Seattle Real Estate Board submitted to Seattle City Council, 5 September 1940.
[33] "Speaking for the Times," *Seattle Times*, September 20, 1940.
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] "Clubs Oppose Project Change," *Seattle Times*, September 26, 1940; "Council Act, to Protect City, Kill Sand Point Housing"; Central Federated Clubs to Seattle City Council, 26 September 1940. The normal agreement between a housing authority and a municipality required that the latter extend city services for a period of sixty years, while the former would make yearly payments 'in lieu of taxes.' In the Sand Point case, the Seattle City Council only agreed to extend city services in lieu of taxes for the duration of the war emergency,

The following July, when the Federal Works Agency designated the SHA as its construction agent for Seattle projects authorized under the Lanham Act, these rhetorical strategies of the opposition began to re-circulate. However, under the Lanham Act, the SHA no longer had to approach the Seattle City Council for their approval to site and build; it was no longer a city agency, it was now under the direction of the federal government. With this new authority, we can imagine that Jesse Epstein got some pleasure out of writing the following letter to the Council, notifying them about the SHA's development plans for Rainier Vista, its first Lanham Act project:

> This is to formally advise you that the Seattle Housing Authority has been selected by the Federal Works Administration to act as his agent for the development of a 500 dwelling unit Lanham Act defense housing project in the City of Seattle. This is further to advise that the enclosed-described property has just been approved as the site of the project. You will note that most of it is owned by the City of Seattle. […] It is an inflexible rule of the Federal Works Administrator that all land for Lanham Act projects be acquired through condemnation, utilizing Federal eminent domain power and procedure.[36]

Epstein informed the City Council that they could accept the enclosed appraisal for the property or they could seek arbitration, but the property *would* be used for Lanham Act housing and *would* be planned, constructed, and operated by the Seattle Housing Authority. "In view of the fact that we are working under very stringent time requirements," Epstein concluded, "we would appreciate your earliest possible decision."[37]

This new, more aggressive approach hit its first major snag in the SHA's plan for its second Lanham Act site, what would become known as High Point in West Seattle (see image 4.1 for the location of SHA projects between 1940 and 1943). When first announced in August 1941, private builders and area homeowners aired the usual concerns over the style and quality

[36] Jesse Epstein to Seattle City Council, 14 July 1941, SMA-CF, #170730.
[37] *Ibid.*

of construction of the planned development and often imagined a future portrait of their district as a "ghost town" or a "tenement section" after the defense workers returned home after the war. On occasion, these concerns joined with publicly professed racial fears, as in the statement of West Seattle resident and 'lumberman' J.S. Whiting who claimed at a public meeting in September that the "project should not be built here because of its undesirable structure [and] undesirable people it would attract," by which he meant "[t]he colored and foreign element."[38] A group of local businessmen and homeowners– loosely organized under the Southwest Club Council, the Delridge Community Club, and the West Seattle Commercial Club– applied "terrific" pressure on Jesse Epstein and the SHA to amend its racial integration stance and make the High Point project exclusively white.[39]

Epstein later recalled "many meetings, many pressure groups, many phone calls, [and] some threats" as he settled on the construction plans and schedules for High Point and the third Lanham Act project at Holly Park in southeast Seattle.[40] He personally travelled to public meetings in both districts and outlined five factors that gave the sites priority over others that had been proposed. According to both the FWA and the SHA, the sites were the "largest remaining vacant areas," which would allow the SHA to "proceed with speed," and the topography of the areas were such that "when completed [the project sites] will provide residents with a commanding view of Elliot Bay." In addition, and despite the vacancy of the land, the FWA and the SHA found that both sites had well-developed infrastructure: "unexcelled transportation facilities to Seattle's major defense industries, its shipbuilding plants of Harbor Island, and the

[38] "Pros & Cons of Housing Project: What Local Business Thinks."
[39] Howard Droker, "Interview with Jesse Epstein, March 13, 1973," Howard Droker Papers, Box 1, University of Washington Special Collections; "Defense Housing Project Discussed at Meeting," *West Seattle Herald*, September 4, 1941; "Housing Project is Club Topic," *West Seattle Herald*, September 11, 1941.
[40] Droker, "Interview."

Boeing airplane plants;" recreational facilities that "were considered exceptional good;" and close "[p]roximity to adequate school facilities."[41]

This last claim about the adequacy of school facilities became a major point of contention in the winter of 1941-1942 when the SHA announced that it planned on expanding the footprint of the High Point project to include land owned by the Seattle School District. The district had purchased the tract in question in 1927 to locate a junior high school once the area contained a population large enough to support it. But that population never materialized, and when presented with Epstein's curt and business-like letter informing the district that the FWA had approved the 14-acre site for a High Point extension, the counsel for the district's Committee on Buildings and Grounds gave the "opinion that it would be a good thing to sell it."[42] West Seattle residents did not agree with such an assessment. The announcement of the sale of the school land became public in January 1942 at the same time as the general plans for the extension of the High Point project. Over the subsequent months, the "ire in West Seattle," as one journalist called it, wove the housing and schooling issues together. "Originally it was announced this was to be a 700-unit project," F. Clyde Dunn, editor of the *West Seattle Herald* and vice-president of the West Seattle Commercial Club told the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. "Then an additional 250 units was added and now we learn that still another 250 units are planned" on land "long held as the ideal location for a new school building. The people of West Seattle are firm and unanimous in their determination to see that this tract is kept for the purpose for which it has for years been

[41] "700 Unit Defense Housing Project for West Seattle," *West Seattle Herald*, August 21, 1941; several snippets of articles from unnamed newspapers about the projects are also contained in Box 2, Volume 1 "Scapbooks," the Jesse Epstein Papers, University of Washington Special Collections.
[42] Homer Davis to [Seattle School District's] Board of Directors, 22 August 1941, School Board Correspondences, Buildings and Grounds, A.A4.07, Seattle School District Archives.

intended."[43] Importantly, the same groups that had lobbied the SHA for racially segregated housing at the initial High Point project turned their attention to the school situation in hopes that they could at least prevent the project's extension by retaining control over the school site, which would thereby decrease the availability of housing for the 'colored and foreign element.'

For three months, between January and March 1942, the West Seattle delegation made weekly treks to the school district office and to meetings of the school board in order to make their case. They succeeded in securing a special committee to further investigate both the legality of federal condemnation of school district land and the school-age population forecasts for the area. By March, this committee had convinced the Board to adopt a resolution stating that it wanted to retain the property, "but members pointed out that the board could not prevent the *government's taking* of the site."[44] Washington state's congressional delegation, which had been contacted by both the school board and the West Seattle group as a potential mediator of the conflict, expressed sympathy with the petitioners, but ultimately sided with federal and local housing authorities who believed that "when the security of our Nation may well hinge on the ships and planes now being built in Seattle, satisfactory and convenient homes for the men [sic] building those ships and planes assumes a transcendent importance."[45] By the end of May, the West Seattle group conceded defeat. Their racialized attempts to prevent the construction and extension of High Point failed, but they managed to place the issue of the adequacy of extant school facilities and the plans for additional school facilities on the agenda of both the Seattle Housing Authority and the Seattle School District.

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[43] "Home Project Arouse Ire in West Seattle," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, January, 13, 1942. The opposition to the High Point extensions occupy several pages in Box 2, Volume 2 "Press Clippings," Jesse Epstein Papers, University of Washington Special Collections.
[44] "US Takes Over West Side Land," *Seattle Times*, March 20, 1942. Emphasis mine. Given its history with the SHA, it is no surprise that the *Seattle Times* would use such language to describe the SHA's action.
[45] Leon Keyserling to Senator Wallgren, 2 March 1942, School Board Correspondences, Buildings and Grounds, A.A4.07, Seattle School District Archives.

By the end of 1942, the SHA had fully or nearly completed over 3,000 housing units under either the Defense Housing Act or the Lanham Act. Once made available, the units were quickly occupied, predominantly– but not exclusively– by white in-migrants following latitudinal lines from the Central, Rocky Mountain, and West North Central states. During the latter half of 1942 until the end of the war, however, orders to increase industrial and defense production caused Boeing and shipyard companies to begin integrating their workforce and intensifying their recruiting efforts in the American South. The increase in African American employment in defense-related industries– Boeing alone had 1,600 black workers in 1945– also enabled African American occupancy in SHA defense housing.[46] At the close of 1942, there were only ten African American families living in defense housing, but these numbers steadily increased with the concomitant rise in defense employment. By February 1945, Jesse Epstein proudly reported in his *Fifth Annual Report* that the SHA "successfully continued its policy of not segregating families in the projects by race" and showed a steady increase in both applications and placements. Epstein compared the proportion of African American (9.5%) and total 'non-white' (10.4%) residents in SHA housing to the 1944 census figures showing that in the city of Seattle the population was only 1.3% African American and 2.2% 'non-white.'[47] But these numbers hid as well as revealed SHA policies.

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[46] For the latitudinal migration pattern to western defense production centers, see Johnson, *Second Gold Rush*, p. 58. For African American employment patterns, see Quintard Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community*, chapter 6; Joseph Cohen, *The Minority Races in Seattle During and Since the War* (Washington, D.C.: National Housing Agency, Office of the Administrator, 1946). This latter report documents that the "first significant entrance" of African American workers into the defense industries occurred in the summer of 1942 with "local Negroes" working as laborers in the shipyards. The National Youth Administration sponsored a group of young African American workers to come to Seattle to train at Boeing in mid-1943 and recruiting efforts in the American South intensified in July 1943. The 1,600 black workers at Boeing in 1945 is especially striking when compared to the fact that the company had *no* African American employees until Florise Spearman was hired as a stenographer in January 1942 and the fact that the entire African American population of Seattle was 3,789 in 1940.

[47] Seattle Housing Authority, *Fifth Annual Report of the Housing Authority of the City of Seattle* (Seattle: SHA, 1945).

For one, the increased black migration to Seattle's defense industries also corresponded to Lanham Act amendments that allowed for the construction of temporary defense housing. Just as the first black workers came to the city "en masse," as one federal housing report put it, the SHA switched from permanent to temporary housing construction, under heavy pressure from private builders to do so. The 1943 construction program consisted entirely of temporary housing facilities: 700 units at Duwamish Bend, 450 at Delridge, 188 at Stadium Homes, 40 at Minor Avenue, as well as several gender-segregated dormitories serving single defense workers. Like the permanent construction, the SHA prioritized proximity to industrial plants and thus the majority of temporary housing could be found in the southeast and the southwest of the city (see image 4.1).[48] The only exception to this spatial concentration is the Cedarvale Homes, located in the northeast, close to the SHA's Sand Point Homes and the Naval Air Station. This temporary project, also constructed during 1943, was only open to Navy enlisted men and their families. Unlike other SHA housing, and because of these occupancy rules, Cedarvale continued to have a significant amount of vacancies throughout the war. That this project should be opened to defense workers clamoring for sufficient housing in other parts of the city does not appear to have been discussed.[49]

In addition, behind the prideful public statements about the integration of its defense housing projects were worries that the increase in African American migration and occupancy would reach a critical tipping point when – following the sociological and real estate logic of the day– white residents would leave and 'non-white' residents would fill the vacancies; the fear of

[48] Seattle Housing Authority, *Fourth Annual Report of the Housing Authority of the City of Seattle* (Seattle: SHA, 1944).
[49] "Cedarvale Open to Navy Folk, Sand Point Project Has 138 Vacancies," *Seattle Times*, February 20, 1944. Other housing projects outside of Seattle with vacancies were considered first. Certainly there were racial considerations to this policy.

the so-called ‘invasion’ and ‘succession’ process that the Chicago sociologists managed to naturalize. In his 1973 oral history interview with Howard Droker, Jesse Epstein recalled that this concern was especially acute at the Duwamish Bend temporary project.

> My people called me. They said, ‘We’re up to 35% [black occupancy at Duwamish Bend]. At the rate we’re going, and because most of the recruitment is from the South, we’re going to end up with what you never wanted: a black project. What do we do?’ I said, ‘we have to house the people. We’ll send the people there because they can’t go anyplace else, and we’ll have to face the problem when it comes. And it was faced by the end of the war. One project was up to maybe 40%, and I really was worried, that despite of the best intentions, and the best policy, and the reason was that housing throughout the city was not available, this was the only source– *the only source*– for black people except for crowding in with other families in the Central Area.[50]

Recall that during conversations about the initial occupancy of Yesler Terace in 1940, Epstein came out in support of a limit on non-white occupancy (thought to be around 20 percent) as a strategy to “achieve integration.” While he feared that the ‘revolutionary’ possibilities of residential integration would be destabilized with a higher percentage of non-white residents, he seemed to admit in this 1973 interview that these worries were unfounded; a majority of the conflicts in defense housing did not occur in the Duwamish Bend project, but in the dormitories for single men and “did not seem to be racial in nature.”[51]

Epstein’s extended quotation above also highlights the constrained residential opportunities for African American migrants to the city during the war– the choice was either defense housing or the older, overcrowded, and overpriced housing options in the city’s Central District. A 1947 University of Washington thesis by Katherine Grant Pankey detailed what many

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[50] Howard Droker, “Interview with Jesse Epstein, March 13, 1973,” Audio recording #2, starting at 13:10, transcription mine. The Droker interviews have now been digitized by UW Special Collections and can be heard here: http://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/ohc/id/369/show/365

[51] Miller, *Profanity Hill*, p. 62; Droker, “Interview,” Audio recording #2.

Seattle residents knew intuitively or through participation and what most in-migrants must have quickly come to know: that areas outside the Jackson and Madison Street districts contained racially restrictive covenants written into deeds. Pankey's work remains a fascinating glimpse into this moment when many of the Seattle covenants were set to expire and when a national debate about both their legality and morality was working its way to the U.S. Supreme Court. She chose to focus on the origins of the covenants during the 1920s building boom in a neighborhood she knew intimately– the Capitol Hill District– and effectively argued that white fear of black (middle class) residential expansion into the neighborhood caused a wave of covenant adoptions: 38 neighborhood agreements involving 964 home owners, 183 blocks, and 958 lots between June 1927 and December 1928.[52] Pankey believed that her historical research contributed needed local evidence to those taking action against restrictive covenants: "[t]eachers in their classrooms, lawyers in their cases on behalf of home-seekers, ministers in their pulpits, artists and writers in their mediums, housewives in their shopping encounters, veterans in their organizations, parents in their Parent-Teacher Associations, workers in their unions, in short every person who believes in fair play."[53]

Yet, during the war and not far from the campus of the University of Washington where Pankey was set to study, racially restrictive covenants were actually expanding to new developments constructed by the private sector using federal FHA Title VI funds. The largest of these developments, 'Wedgwood,' was the work of Albert Balch and his new business partner, Maury Setzer. They broke ground on the 40-acre project in July 1941, almost four months after Congress and the President added Title VI to the National Housing Act and the same day as

[52] Katherine Grant Pankey, "Restrictive Covenants in Seattle: A Study in Race Relations" (Bachelor's Thesis, University of Washington, 1947).
[53] *Ibid.*

Jesse Epstein was writing the Seattle City Council about acquiring the Rainier Vista site through the powers of eminent domain for the city's first Lanham Act project. True to the tradition of 'upper tier' federal housing policy, there were neither contentious debates in the local press or in city hall about the plans and design of Wedgwood nor overarching concerns over the advisability of government financing of housing construction. In fact, the only mention of the design, financing, and future occupancy at Wedgwood came in the form of a *Seattle Times* article that was actually a news release written by Albert Balch himself to drum up commercial interest.[54]

Balch had landed at the center of Seattle real estate after the successful platting, development, promotion, and expansion of a tract just north of the Seattle city-line named 'View Ridge.' Using the promotional skills learned in radio, Balch and his first business partner Ralph Jones continually sent planning and construction updates to the local newspapers in order to draw interest in the new development even in hard times. As one neighborhood historian wrote after an oral history interview with Ralph Jones, "There was such a dearth of upbeat stories during the economic depression years of the 1930's, that something new and hopeful like Balch & Jones' development project was of interest. Balch & Jones even drew crowds to celebratory bonfires after clearing some of the lots."[55] The aptly named View Ridge, which afforded vistas of Lake Washington and the Cascade Range from every lot, gained local notoriety because of Balch's publicity work and even achieved some national fame in 1940 as one of the sites for the construction of a model *LIFE* magazine home designed by the 'traditional' New England architect, Royal Barry Wills (see image 4.2 and 4.3).[56]

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[54] "Work Starts in Wedgewood [sic] Area," *Seattle Times*, July 13, 1941
[55] Valerie Bunn, "Albert Balch, Part Three: Learning Real Estate in View Ridge," http://wedgwoodinseattlehistory.com/2013/05/10/albert-balch-part-three-learning-real-estate-in-view-ridge/, *accessed* May 28, 2015.
[56] *Ibid.*

The Title VI development at Wedgwood aimed to confirm the claim put forward by Albert Balch and Los Angeles developer Fritz Burns that affordable, well-designed single-family housing could be built by the private sector during and after the defense emergency. Balch adopted the term "community builder" to describe his work, and in 1941 changed the name of one of his construction companies to Albert Balch Community Builders, Inc.[57] In his now-classic treatment, *The Rise of Community Builders*, historian Marc Weiss defines the moniker and describes its significance:

> The community builders were subdividers who changed the nature of American land development […]. They did this initially by taking very large tracts of land and slowly improving them, section by section, for lot sales and home construction. Strict long-term deed restrictions were imposed on all lot and home purchasers, establishing uniform building lines, front and side yards, standards for lot coverage and building size, minimum housing standards and construction costs, non-Caucasian racial exclusion, and other features. […] Public thoroughfares included curved streets, cul-de-sacs, and wide boulevards and parkways. Often special areas were set aside for retail and office buildings, apartments, parks and recreation facilities, churches and schools. […] Prior to the 1940s, the market for most 'community builder' subdivisions was high-income. In the post-World War II era, many of the features of community building were extended to developments for middle-income homebuyers.[58]

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[57] "Albert Balch: Community Builder," n.p.
[58] Marc Weiss, *The Rise of the Community Builders*, 45.

Left, image 4.2: Ralph Jones, partner of Albert Balch, shows model of the LIFE magazine home to be built in the View Ridge Addition. Below, image 4.3: the model itself, which could be purchased for $1 as part of a LIFE magazine Christmas promotion in 1940 "for planning" and "for fun!"

Although Balch claimed 'community builder' status, his early 1940s plans for Wedgwood only selectively incorporated these principles. He and Maury Setzer did purchase a large tract– 40 acres that had been owned by Seattle University as a potential campus site– and set about building fifty homes at a time. For architectural uniformity and a "consistency of scale", they adopted a 'Colonial' and 'Cape Cod' style, with each house being about the same height, size, and having a similar set-back from the neighborhood's curvilinear streets. A deed prohibition on front-yard fences was an avowed attempt to retain what Balch imagined as the overall feeling of a welcoming New England village community.[59] Also keeping with the attributes of 'community builders,' other sections of the deed determined exactly who would be welcomed into the village.

[59] Valerie Bunn, "Albert Balch, Part Four: A New Development in Wedgwood," http://wedgwoodinseattlehistory.com/2013/05/17/albert-balch-part-four-a-new-development-in-wedgwood/, accessed June 6, 2015. My knowledge of Wedgwood has been significantly shaped by the informative blog about the neighborhood, http://wedgwoodinseattlehistory.com/. As the blog title suggests, neighborhood historian Valerie Bunn aims to put Wedgwood in the context of Seattle history. My approach is to try to put Balch and Wedgwood in a national context and I take a more critical approach, especially in relation to the area's racialized development.

Balch's View Ridge and Wedgwood developments both contained racially restrictive covenants in the deeds of every property. They read:

> No race or nationality other than those of the White or Caucasian race shall use or occupy any dwelling on any lot except that this covenant does not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race or nationality employed by an owner or tenant.

The language in these covenants was more comprehensive than those examined by Pankey in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of the 1920s, revealing what might be called micro-geographies of the history of white racial fear. The restrictions on Capitol Hill expressed a particular concern about the northward movement of African American families into the neighborhood; most of the covenants were promises not to sell, rent, or lease to "Negroes, or any person or persons of the Negro blood."[60] The covenants in Balch's new subdivisions, in the quickly developing northeast section of the city, were vows not to allow the sale or use by any person identified as not white unless those persons filled a subservient social and class position as domestic workers. It is not hard to see the connections between Balch's and other developers' earlier activism around occupancy rules at the Sand Point and Cedar Vale defense housing projects and the racially restrictive covenants in these subdivisions (image 4.4).

[60] The *Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project* has done a valuable service to historians and the public by compiling lists of racially restrictive covenants across the Seattle metropolitan area. There remains the possibility of doing a micro-geography of the history of white racial fear by examining the historical and spatial patterns of the language used to racialize. Interesting patterns also might be found in relation to economic class and the allowance of non-white occupants to property if they were domestic workers.

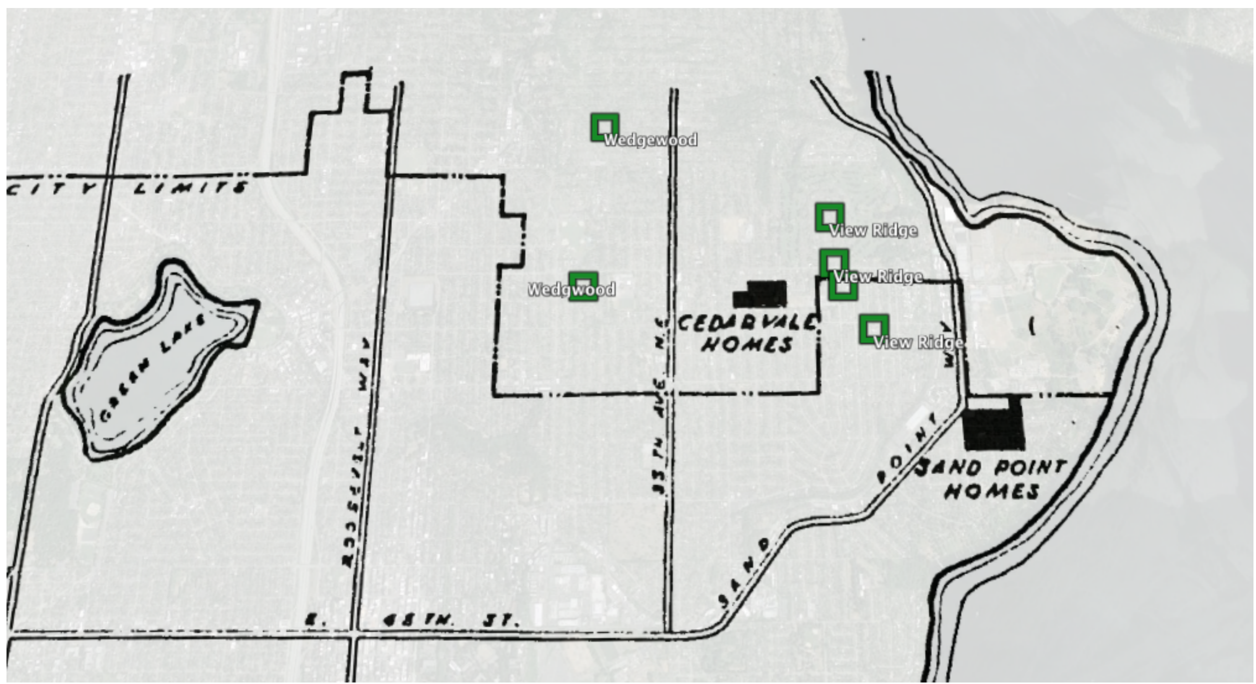

Image 4.4. Locations of View Ridge and Wedgwood developments and additions with restrictive covenants in relation to SHA defense housing developments at Sand Point and Cedar Vale. Sources: Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, *Seattle Housing Authority, Fourth Annual Report (1944). The SHA map was rubber-sheeted using GoogleEarth.*

Strikingly, the part of the community builders' creed absent from Balch's neighborhood designs were the land allocations for schools, parks, and playgrounds, even though his advertisements for the neighborhood recognized that these features added value and appeal. The earliest real estate advertisement for Wedgwood appeared in August 1941 (image 4.5), only a month and a half after he and Setzer broke ground. Obviously, since the houses had yet to be built and the area landscaped, there was little to advertise outside of the promise of being a "well-planned community" proximal to institutions like the University and to the Bryant school, accessible via public transportation, and protected by restrictive covenants (without mention of race). As Wedgwood developed, so did the advertising. By January 1942, with building and selling well underway, Balch trumpeted the demand for Wedgwood created by affordable prices and the

exclusivity of the neighborhood (image 4.6). The emphasis in the advertisements of this period was the intangible character of the area, rather than its relation to infrastructural and institutional elements. Wedgwood consisted of "friendly neighbors" of "high class" and "fine children"; the residential setting itself was "park-like" thereby eliding the need for an actual park; and Balch assured potential homebuyers that while other parts of the city were undergoing demographic changes due to defense in-migration, Wedgwood would have a "continuing identity" as an enviable and exclusive enclave.

Balch's protests against SHA involvement in housing in the area, his use of racially restrictive covenants in the two developments of View Ridge and Wedgwood, and his promotion of these developments as 'planned communities' even though communal spaces (parks, playgrounds, schools) nowhere appeared in the design, were all acts of territorial control motivated by profit. Balch and his business partners staked their claim on northeast Seattle as a province of whiteness. And, even though the Title VI requirements for Wedgwood contained

WEDGWOOD is a well planned community near finest schools, near University, rapid express busses, protected by restrictions.

Above, image 4.5: Early advertisement for Wedgwood highlighting institutional proximity and access issues, August 31, 1941. Right, image 4.6, later advertisement for Wedgwood highlighting neighborhood character, January 18, 1942.

Wedgwood

Prices Are Still $4,950-$5,150 BUT HURRY! The prices won't stay, neither will the houses. Only 8 left.
BELOW reproduction cost they are the outstanding values of the day. Based on purchasing materials for 100 houses, May 1941. They are the most marvelous values we know how to make.
Neighborhood is the most important consideration in buying a home. Friendly neighbors, finest class of home buyers; beautiful natural surroundings; fine children; large park-like setting, with continuing identity and enviable northeast location, on the highest point on 35th Ave. N. E. are exclusive features of Wedgwood.

initial upper income limits for residents, the covenants and advertisements suggest that Balch foresaw a post-war Wedgwood as the home of the same upwardly mobile, affluent, white residents as View Ridge. The covenants included the same language about 'domestic servants' as View Ridge and the promotional language about houses in Wedgwood being occupied by the "finest class of home buyers" gave clear indications about this ideal post-war future.

Balch maximized the platting and sale of residential tracts in Wedgwood– and thereby his profit– by choosing not to conform to the community building principles that he claimed to champion. Instead of allocating space for parks, playfields, and schools in the original design, the construction of these communal and educational spaces were driven by Wedgwood and View Ridge resident organization and petition in the post-war period. Once both neighborhoods had been annexed by the City of Seattle, residents organized to convince the school district and city that school overcrowding and lack of park space required city action through its powers of eminent domain. As a result, Seattle condemned land originally developed by Balch and associates for use as the View Ridge School (1948), the Dahl Playfield (1949), and the Wedgwood School (1955).[61]

On the other side of the city, in the midst of the war emergency, the public housing being constructed by the Seattle Housing Authority did incorporate communal and educational spaces within its design.

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[61] Valerie Bunn, "The Beginnings of Wedgwood School," accessed June 14, 2015, http://wedgwoodinseattlehistory.com/2012/11/26/the-beginnings-of-wedgwood-school/; Valerie Bunn, "Dahl Playfield in Wedgwood, accessed June 14, 2015, http://wedgwoodinseattlehistory.com/2012/05/03/dahl-playfield-in-wedgwood/; Valerie Bunn, "Parks in Wedgwood, accessed June 14, 2015, http://wedgwoodinseattlehistory.com/2012/03/15/parks-in-wedgwood/.

Designing Defense Housing in Whole Communities

Defense workers began moving into the Seattle Housing Authority's permanent Lanham Act projects in stages during 1942: Rainier Vista and High Point in late March, the High Point Addition and Extension in July and August, and Holly Park in November. Despite the construction sights and sounds that met the earliest residents, the sites themselves would have satisfied those public housers like Catherine Bauer who had been influenced by European models. Not only were the projects located on the city's edge like the European projects feted by Bauer in Modern Housing, but they stayed true to the modernist and neighborhood unit principles despite the exigencies of the defense emergency. Like Yesler Terrace, each of the projects contained low-rise, garden apartment style living spaces, functionally arranged to give residents access to interior paths leading to common spaces or perimeter roadways. The large acreage of the project sites– between 90 and 120 acres– and the continued use of landscape architects like Butler Sturtevant meant that the one- and two-story residential units, the community buildings, and the recreational spaces could be set within a landscape of mature tree stands and sculpted sightlines. Despite the housing crisis, SHA officials and architects remained committed to a low-density layout (see table 4.2).

There was a federal influence on design too, of course. In the design standards for Lanham Act housing developments published in February 1942, the Federal Works Agency argued that residential design would impact industrial production and the overall war effort:

> In defense projects it is important that space should be available for tenant activities of a social recreative, and educational nature. Many tenants will be newcomers, without local ties, and their happiness (which is the best insurance

> against high labor and tenant turnover) will depend on the new friendships they will form.[62]

Its prescriptions for building friendships and community through design included general statements about the inclusion of playrooms for small children and reading rooms in the projects' community buildings as well as humorously minute suggestions about the placement of sandboxes and the benefits of "a tree with low branches suitable for climbing" as "an attractive addition to play equipment."[63] In other words, the urban conditions brought about by the rapid migration to production centers provided another test for the viability of public housing and educative neighborhood design.

However, the suburban sites and the wartime conditions presented SHA officials with challenges that they did not have in their planning of Yesler Terrace. At Yesler Terrace, ample school facilities in the surrounding neighborhood absorbed the children of new residents and a park and playground were within walking distance of the site. While school facilities did exist in proximity to the Lanham Act sites, they would not be sufficient to educate the children of in-migrants unless they operated on double or triple shifts, which to the progressive Seattle educational establishment would likely depress the quality of education for all. In addition, the fact that increasing numbers of mothers were entering the defense workforce created a pressing need for the SHA to plan and help coordinate nursery schooling for small children as well as supervised after school educational and recreational activities for school-aged children.

Realizing the need for school facilities, nursery school provision, and after school care was, of course, easier than actually providing them, and the SHA ran into two difficulties when

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[62] Federal Works Agency, "Standards for Defense Housing, Lanham Act Projects, Community Facilities," February 1, 1942, Records of the National Planning Board, Records of Division A, Records of the Youth and Education Unit, National Archives, College Park, MD.

[63] *Ibid*., p. 12.

trying to turn educational and recreational plans into reality. First, and not unique to the SHA, the Lanham Act's community facilities amendments created a bureaucratic nightmare, with federal, state, and local agencies working toward similar ends, but all operating under different legislative directives and constraints.[64] Second, Jesse Epstein had angered some members of the Seattle School Board when the SHA used the federal government's eminent domain powers to condemn Seattle School land for the construction of the High Point Addition.

Table 4.2: The Suburbanization of Lanham Act sites, with comparison to Yesler Terrace and Wedgwood

Site (year/legislation)	**Total Acreage**	**Number of units**	**Kind of units**	**Units per acre**
Rainier Vista (1942/Lanham Act)	90 acres	500 units	231 one-story buildings; duplexes and triplexes	5.56
High Point (inclusive of extension and addition) (1942/Lanham Act)	120 acres	1300 units	~400 buildings; duplexes and triplexes	10.83
Holly Park (1942/Lanham Act)	108 acres	900 units	339 one-story and two-story duplexes; four-plexes	8.33
Yesler Terrace (1941/Housing Act)	43 acres	690 units	84 one- and two-story buildings, 3 to 22 units each	16.04
Wedgwood (1942/Title VI)	40 acres	200 units	Single family	5.0

[64] Karen Anderson used the phrase "bureaucratic nightmare" to describe Lanham Act child-care provisions, but as we will see, the phrase fits well in relation to all aspects of the implementation of the Lanham Act community facilities amendments. Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women During World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 122.

This latter jurisdictional boundary squabble proved easier to remedy than the former, even though the offended school board members did make coordinated school site planning difficult in the first few months of 1942. For example, in early January, as the dispute over the West Seattle land was reaching a climax, school officials recognized an "immediate need for school construction in Beacon Hill and West Seattle because of the housing projects to be built."[65] When school superintendent Worth McClure recommended that the Board "solicit the assistance and influence of the local housing authority in approaching the City Council for a building site," the Board instead directed the Committee on Buildings and Grounds to look into negotiations with the Park Board on the use of its property as a future school site.[66] As petty as the dispute may have seemed to Epstein and SHA officials, they knew that they needed the expertise and assistance of school officials if they were to accomplish their goal of providing adequate educational, recreational, and social programming for civilian war workers, especially in-migrant families with few local ties. Therefore, Epstein penned a letter to the school board in mid-March expressing "deep regret that any differences of opinion should have arisen" over the High Point site and he hoped the two public agencies could work together over the following months and years to solve the common problems presented by the war emergency.[67] The letter, read before the Board and entered into the minutes, did not mend fences completely, but it did serve as a strategic and public means to move the relationship forward. In many ways, it actually

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[65] Minutes of the Seattle School Board, 9 January 1942, Seattle Schools Archive.
[66] *Ibid.*
[67] Jesse Epstein to Seattle Board of Education, 13 March 1942, Minutes of the Seattle School Board, Seattle Schools Archives.

took the ‘federal bureaucratic nightmare’ surrounding the implementation of the Lanham Act community facilities amendments to force coordination and collaboration.[68]

The nightmare began with attempts to gain federal funds for the construction of school sites to serve the Lanham Act projects. Superintendent Worth McClure received conflicting advice from federal officials about the type of school facilities that could be built under Lanham Act provisions and the conditions under which they could be built. At first, during the February 1942 School Administrators’ convention in San Francisco, US Commissioner of Education John Studebaker and other members of the US Office of Education staff informed McClure that federal funds for permanent school construction could only be provided on a 75-25% federal-to-local matching basis. With this information, the school board approved placing an emergency 3-mill levy on the March ballot, which the Board estimated would produce approximately $600,000 for matching funds on the construction of new school sites.[69] Only after voters approved the levy did McClure and the Seattle School Board receive word from the Federal Works Agency that all school construction had to be temporary in nature and that no federal financial aid would be forthcoming unless “the fullest use has been made of present facilities on the basis of 100% overcrowding, defined to mean operation on a double session basis.”[70]

Angered by the conflicting information, McClure at once took to the local press. Using population projections from the school district and the housing authority, McClure demonstrated that once the defense housing projects reached capacity, the nearby schools would indeed be overcrowded. Perhaps for effect– and it did grab the headline at the Seattle Times– McClure

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[68] As an example of the School Board’s reluctance to move the relationship forward, a majority of members still insisted on taking the SHA to district court to contest the land valuation ascribed to the High Point site by the SHA.
[69] Minutes of the Seattle School Board, 6 February 1942, Seattle Schools Archive; Minutes of the Seattle School Board, 13 March 1942, Seattle Schools Archives; “School Grant Up to Voters,” *Seattle Times,* February 18, 1942.
[70] Minutes of the Seattle School Board, 12 June 1942, Seattle Schools Archive.

argued that unless new schools were built, the five-room Van Asselt school across the street from the Holly Park project "would have to operate on a 24-hour basis to handle all the pupils expected to register."[71] The Hughes School, in West Seattle, would not have to operate on quadruple shifts like Van Asselt, but it would have to run double shifts for students in and around the High Point project, even after some of these students were transported to Gatewood and Cooper schools nearly a mile away. All of the elementary schools near Rainier Vista– John Muir, Hawthorne, Columbia, and Whitworth schools– were ending the 1941-1942 school year at capacity. In order to accommodate the 500 additional children expected to reside at Rainier Vista the following school year, double or triple shifts would be required at one or more of these buildings as well, McClure claimed. Unlike other defense production cities, the Seattle Board never seriously entertained multiple shifts, arguing that they were neither "good from an educational standpoint" nor good from a social standpoint since pupils "would have more time to 'run the streets'" and get into trouble.[72] Instead, following the directions of the regional director of the Federal Works Agency who declared that "idea of 'education as usual' must be tossed into the 'scrapheap' along with 'business as usual,'" the Board considered the construction of "a new type of permanent portable" classroom and the use of local garages before finally reaching out to the Seattle Housing Authority to inquire about possible space within the projects themselves.[73]

Eager to make amends for the High Point kerfuffle, Jesse Epstein agreed to the idea of using the community buildings at the three sites as classrooms, but the 1942-1943 school year began with only the auditorium of High Point in use by the school district as a kindergarten.[74]

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[71] "24-Hr. Day to Handle Pupils," *Seattle Times*, June 14, 1942.
[72] *Ibid.*; "Board Opposes Double Sessions," *Seattle Times*, June 27, 1942.
[73] "Board Opposes Double Sessions," *Seattle Times*, June 27, 1942; "Schools Facing Portable Use," *Seattle Times*, June 21, 1942; "For Housing-Project Classrooms," *Seattle* Times, July 19, 1942.
[74] "For Housing-Project Classrooms," *Seattle* Times, July 19, 1942; Nile Thompson and Carolyn Marr, "High Point," in *Building for Learning*, 135-137.

Otherwise, the district cobbled together accommodations for the additional students from the defense housing projects: they constructed six portables at Van Asselt for the Holly Park children; began the school day at Gatewood and Cooper an hour later so that elementary students from the High Point project could be bussed to the school; and evenly distributed the Rainier Vista students amongst the four nearby schools, increasing class size but not to a point requiring multiple sessions.

Near the end of the '42-'43 school year, and as the SHA initiated the construction program for its temporary Lanham Act housing projects, the school district once again applied to the Federal Works Agency; this time requesting almost $400,000 for 42 temporary classrooms or portables to be located in or near SHA projects. The district's application called for the FWA to pick up nearly all of the construction costs, as the 3-mill levy agreed to by Seattle voters the previous year earmarked the tax funds for permanent construction.[75] In late April 1943, the FWA notified the district that it was rejecting its application for school construction funds, arguing that the district's "unwillingness to contribute any portion of the cost of this project is based upon the assumption that the construction will be of a very temporary character."[76] In essence, the FWA was quibbling over the definitions of 'temporary.' It understood 'temporary' as having a "life expectancy of approximately thirty years," which to many Seattle voters would not likely fit the description of 'temporary' and therefore it would allow the district to contribute matching funds while not abandoning the intent of the voters when they passed the 3-mill levy. An exasperated Worth McClure responded to the Assistant Regional Director of the FWA,

> The Seattle School District has done everything possible to accommodate children coming into this community. As stated in our [application], more than nine thousand children have already been brought into this community and served by

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[75] Minutes of the Seattle School District, 23 April 1943, Seattle School District Archives.
[76] Report from Assistant Superintendent Fleming entered into Minutes of the Seattle School District, 23 April 1943, Seattle School District Archives.

> the local public schools. These pupils have been accommodated within present classrooms and with such equipment as the District had at its disposal.[77]

The FWA could not change its definition of 'temporary' in order to suit its own ends, McClure continued. Seattle had proved that it could accommodate the schooling needs of those in-migrants to the permanent projects (although it did strain the system); it now needed temporary school buildings to meet the needs of the temporary housing that was then be erected by the SHA near defense plants. The district had followed all the rules of the FWA, it had selected one of the FWA's standard temporary school plans so that there would be "no delay because of specifications and structural details" and it had shown that district had "no legal way to finance school housing and equipment" to "meet temporary exigencies growing out of the war emergency."[78] McClure essentially closed the letter by rejecting the FWA's rejection and urging the agency to reconsider. A week later, after meeting with the regional administrator and the associate director of the FWA, McClure secured assurances that the district's initial application would be approved and forwarded "on to Washington as quickly as possible."[79] After more than a year of wrangling over Lanham Act funding for school construction, McClure likely took the phrase 'as quickly as possible' with a grain of salt. True to form, McClure received word of final approval via a wire from Congressman Warren Magnuson on August 20th, four months after initial approval and less than two weeks before the start of the 1943-1944 school year.[80]

The funds would eventually go toward the construction of a 12-room school at the High Point project, kindergarten and first grade classrooms at Rainier Vista, a 16-room school at the Duwamish Bend temporary housing project, a 5-room addition to the Colman School to serve

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[77] *Ibid.*
[78] *Ibid.*
[79] Minutes of the Seattle School Board, 30 April 1943, Seattle Schools Archive.
[80] Minutes of the Seattle School Board, 20 August 1943, Seattle Schools Archive.

families in the Stadium Homes temporary project, and 3-room additions to Cooper and Van Asselt schools. But since the latest 'federal bureaucratic nightmare' meant that these new school facilities would not be ready for some time after the beginning of the school year, the district and the SHA once again discussed locating classrooms in SHA buildings.

Unlike the previous year, there were no viable alternatives. In-migration to Seattle was reaching a peak and the SHA's temporary housing units were similarly situated near defense plants and therefore within the same school attendance areas as the three permanent projects. As the temporary projects filled with families and small children, there no longer was a way to creatively distribute students to existing schools and McClure and the school board continued to reject proposals for multiple sessions. Therefore, the district and the SHA made plans to utilize dwelling units in the housing projects for instructional purposes, with McClure authorizing the installation of school furniture and equipment so as to at least give the units a school-like appearance. Even this proved difficult in such a short period of time; one teacher at High Point recalled more than 300 students doing their work during the first few days of school on the floor while they waited for desks to arrive.[81] After building and supply delays, the room additions to previous existing schools opened to in-migrant students in February and March 1944, but the new buildings at High Point and Duwamish Bend did not open until the following school year.

McClure's frustration with the federal bureaucracy was not limited to the delays in elementary school construction. Parallel to the wrangling over matching funds and the definitions of school building type ran a debate about the federal responsibility for funding the expansion of the school system to cover nursery schools, day care centers, and youth centers in order to accommodate and promote the increased employment of mothers in the defense

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[81] *Ibid.*, Thompson and Marr, "High Point."

industries. Like many cities, nursery schools in Seattle were not a new phenomenon; by the start of the war, the city had seven Works Progress Administration (WPA) nursery schools operating in Seattle school buildings and three privately-operated schools serving about 350 children. But by late 1942, 75,000 Seattle women were employed in the defense industries, and the demand for child care services, especially amongst in-migrant women with few or no social or familial relations in the area, became urgent.[82] In addition to the greater demand, reports from Seattle and other defense production centers suggested that the WPA and private day nurseries carried a 'charity stigma' and were often located a significant distance away from defense housing and defense production sites.[83]

While the provision of child care facilities and personnel certainly fell within the community facilities provisions of the Lanham Acts, interagency disputes between the Federal Works Agency on one side and the Federal Security Agency, the Children's Bureau, and the US Office of Education on the other, delayed and severely curtailed allocations of Lanham Act funds for child care until the spring of 1943. As detailed by historian William Tuttle, the dispute came to a head in the beginning of the year when the War-Area Child Care Bill of 1943 (known as the Thomas Bill) reached the floor of both Houses. Debates swirled on the floor and in the local and national press over whether women with children under fourteen should be allowed to work if other sources of labor had not been exhausted; over the proper arrangement of federal, state, and local supervision; and over the idea that day care outside the home would endanger parental authority and threaten the mother-child relationship.[84]

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[82] Anderson, "Wartime Women," 125; Memo from Worth McClure, "Appointment of Nursery School Supervisor," 19 November 1942, Superintendent's Office, Correspondences, Seattle Schools Archive.
[83] "Great Need Found for Child Centers," *The New York Times*, November 6, 1943.
[84] William Tuttle, "Rosie the Riveter and her Latchkey Children: What Americans Can Learn about Child Day Care from the Second World War," *Child Welfare* 74 (1995), 96-97; Anderson, "Wartime Women," p. 124; "Day Care Bill for Children Lags," *The New York Times*, November 6, 1943; "Needed: Daytime Mothers," *The New York Times*, December 13, 1942.

Yet, these interagency ideological squabbles did not resolve the acute needs of Seattle's working mothers and families, who had submitted thousands of applications for child care by the end of 1942. Because Washington state law prohibited the use of regular school district levy funds and state emergency school funds for pre-school age children, McClure and Seattle school officials again cobbled together a response to "the babies on our doorstop." The district obtained a $10,000 grant from the Seattle-King County War Chest in the fall of 1942 for the underwriting of seven additional nursery school centers– including one at Yesler Terrace and one at High Point– with plans to open twenty more if and when Lanham Act monies became available.[85] In an effort to expedite Lanham allocations, and as the acting president of the American Association of School Administrators, McClure testified to a House Committee alongside US Commissioner of Education John Studebaker in June 1943. Given his position, his co-testifier, and his recent experience trying to secure federal funding for school construction, it was not surprising that McClure urged members of the House to distribute funding through federal and state education agencies rather than through the Federal Works Agency. McClure spoke carefully: "These people [of the FWA] are excellent people. There is nothing of what I say that should apply to any of the people, but it is not to their discredit that they are not familiar with the operation of schools nor with the school laws." McClure went on to argue that federal and state education officials did know the operation of schools and the vagaries of various state school laws and therefore were in an excellent position to judge local educational applications and expedite funding for the provision of services.[86] Congress granted McClure one of his wishes; in

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[85] Quote from Anderson, "Wartime Women," 130; Memo from Worth McClure, "Appointment of Nursery School Supervisor," 19 November 1942; "Public Nurseries Help Parents; 500 'Defense Children' Cared For," *Seattle Times*, November 2, 1942.
[86] "Hearings Before the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, House of Representatives, on the Amendment of Title II of 'An Act to Expedite the Provision of Housing in Connection with National Defense, and for Other Purposes,' As Amended to Authorize the Appropriation of Additional Funds for Community Facilities," June 3, 4, 8, 1943 (Washington: GPO, 1943).

July 1943, Congress appropriated and expedited additional funds to the Lanham Act for child care services in war production areas, but the Federal Works Agency retained control over allocations.

In Seattle, the school district controlled teacher hiring, training, and professional development as well as the curriculum development and management of its nursery school program. Even though some school board members (John Reid and John Shorrett most vociferously) regarded it as only a wartime expedient done for patriotic and production purposes, the incorporation of nursery schools into the system, marked a significant expansion. Even the Seattle Times, which early in 1942 had called on defense industries not to hire women with children under fourteen because of the prospects of motherless child delinquents, praised the "rigid schedule of play, cod-liver oil, sleep and balanced meals" that assured working mothers that their "child will be safe and happy under another person's care."[87]

In preparation for the summer months of 1943, and "following assurance of Federal [Lanham] funds," the school district also expanded to offer "a program of children's play centers for the benefit of the children of working mothers."[88] In many ways, this constituted a joint venture between the school district, the park board, and the SHA– each operating sites specific to their agency while coordinating across agencies regarding programming and staffing. While the nursery school program in Seattle had been successful in attracting employed mothers of young children, McClure on numerous occasions worried that working mothers did not recognize "the moral hazards which will confront their [older] children unless advantage is taken of the opportunities for competent supervision which are offered by the schools and other agencies

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[87] "Children Receive Expert Care," *Seattle Times*, November 23, 1943; "Public Nurseries Help Parents."
[88] Worth McClure to Seattle School District Board of Directors, 11 June 1943, Superintendent's Office, Correspondences, Seattle Schools Archive.

during the summer months."[89] After soliciting help with publicity from parent-teacher associations, managers at war industries, and the daily and community press, twenty-four play centers for children between the ages of five and fourteen opened in school sites near temporary defense housing projects and defense plants. Combined with the twenty-six nursery schools, the school district served around 1400 students between the ages of two and fourteen with mothers in the defense workforce who were willing and able to pay the fifty cents a day charge.[90] The programs' positive enrollment figures, as well as very public fears of juvenile delinquency– captured perfectly by a sensationalized account of the 'Wolf Pack' gang in nearby Renton that Newsweek identified as the "juvenile-delinquency shocker of the year"– caused the school district to expand its programming once more during the 1943-1944 school year to include youth centers for teenagers.[91] True to form, the Federal Works Agency at first rejected the district's $728,000 application for Lanham Act funds because of what it understood to be a low local matching amount. After another round of negotiations, which included the prospect of raising the per day fee at all child and youth care sites, the FWA relented and agreed to the allocation. Over the course of that school year, twenty-four nurseries, twenty-six after school child care centers, and twenty youth centers served almost 5,700 children and youth. By the summer of 1944, the youth centers were the most popular facet of the school district's expanded services, with more than 3,200 participants, partly because the centers were open to all youth, not just those with mothers in the defense industries.[92]

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[89] *Ibid.*; Memo from Worth McClure, "The Educational Picture in April, 1943," Superintendent's Office, Correspondences, Seattle Schools Archive.
[90] "7 New Nursery Schools to Open," *Seattle Times*, June 20, 1943; "Housing Areas Schools Short."
[91] Anderson, "Wartime Mothers," 96; "Schools Seeking Child-Care Fund," *Seattle Times*, April 15, 1944; "76 Child Care Centers to Run," *Seattle Times*, June 11, 1944.
[92] Worth McClure to Seattle School District Board of Directors, 14 April 1944, Superintendent's Office, Correspondences, Seattle Schools Archive.

Historian Karen Anderson rightly claims that the wartime expansion of public schooling to include nursery schools and child care left a mixed legacy. On the one hand, even in a city like Seattle with an educational establishment committed to the possibilities of public child care, the Seattle programs only served a fraction of working mothers (9% according to a survey by the Women's Bureau). On the other hand, with almost $52 million of federal expenditures throughout the country, "the wartime effort represented the largest commitment to public child care in the nation's history."[93] Anderson also finds a growing responsiveness by local officials and a greater receptiveness by parents, children, and youth just as the war came to end. By the war's end, questions emerged about the continuation of federal and local support for such an expansive notion of educational responsibility once the wartime rationale of child care for labor recruitment and retention waned. In August 1945, Seattle's new Superintendent Samuel Fleming sketched the significant educational experiences of the war years and wondered aloud how they might fit into "the schools of tomorrow."

> When a need developed for institutional care for the children from families where both mother and father were employed, the schools accepted the responsibility. […] These new responsibilities thrust upon the schools have been successfully. They arose as a consequence of the emergency. To what extent they will become permanent is something the public will have to determine. The schools have acted as the agent of the public to meet the need. Certain it is that they have their implications for public education. Whether they are continued or not, the public schools have learned much of importance through their experience with them.[94]

Although rather vague and noncommittal, Fleming did leave open the possibility of the 'schools of tomorrow' continuing to serve children as young as two and extending beyond the normal school day and normal school year. Without the emergency conditions of the war– the rapid

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[93] Anderson, "Wartime Mothers," 144, 146.
[94] Fleming to School Board, 2 August 1945.

increase in population and the availability of expansive federal funds– this kind of educational expansion within the school district would have been unfathomable.

Importantly, the war period not only expanded the conception of education within the school district; it allowed Jesse Epstein and SHA officials to more fully realize the public housers' vision of a publicly-financed whole community. By the end of the war, three grade schools had been constructed within SHA housing sites; the school district operated nine child care centers (nurseries and play centers combined); the Seattle Public Library established nine branch libraries; and the Parks Department ran five recreational programs during the summer months and over the course of the school year. Even though the SHA and the school district did not always agree, the Lanham Act– and the frustrations with its implementation through the FWA– brought the agencies together. Near the end of the war, the SHA at least, claimed that it had developed "fine working relationships" and a "splendid spirit of cooperation" with other city agencies, including the school district.[95] And yet the SHA also recognized that its residents had agency as well; that residents created educational, recreational, and social places and activities of their own. The Projector, a monthly newspaper started by SHA residents in January 1944, detailed this 'grassroots organizing': sewing circles, craft groups, holiday dances, theater groups, film nights, cooking schools, book clubs, and interagency and inter-housing project sports teams all organized and led by residents.[96]

In its Sixth Annual Report (1946), SHA officials used some of the photographs and text from The Projector to boast about both the formal, agency-organized and the informal, resident-organized offerings at its sites. As I will discuss further in the concluding chapter, they also used

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[95] Seattle Housing Authority, *Fourth Annual Report.*

[96] The collection of all thirteen issues of *The Projector* can be accessed at the Hugh and Jane Ferguson Seattle Room of the central branch of the Seattle Public Library.

'isotypes' for the first time to visually communicate to a broad audience the high levels of resident participation in these offerings. In a four-page spread, under the large banner headline "Children Came First….But Adult Participation Was Important Also," the SHA also discussed the political self-organizing within the projects, highlighting that the adult resident councils formed in four of the projects had "been eminently successful" in pressuring the agency and city departments for civic improvements like "better street lighting, fire protection, transportation, improvement of roads, etc."[97] While officials in the Sixth Annual Report applauded resident organizing, they also contended that the SHA's commitment to neighborhood design principles– especially, but not exclusively, in its permanent sites– created the kind of environment that fostered such a diverse range of educational, recreational, and social opportunities. SHA housing was designed around a theme, the Report claimed, "[t]o build a community and integrate its members into the stream of a progressive area."[98] The war years had proved, officials claimed, that building such a complete and educative neighborhood could have the profound effects that progressive and New Deal housers anticipated: "less absenteeism on the job […] decrease in juvenile delinquency; better health for residents; better care for children."[99] These effects were even more significant, they argued in words and in images, because of the SHA's 'non-discrimination policy' where "farmers, businessmen, laboring men, housewives, Alaskan Indians and Alabama Negroes" worked alongside each other in defense plants, and lived beside each other in defense housing. Their children learned and played together in the new on-site school facilities, the new school additions, and within the SHA's community buildings and recreation areas. Interestingly, however, when extolling its policy of 'non-discrimination' as "democracy at

[97] Seattle Housing Authority, *Housing the People: Sixth Annual Report* (Seattle: SHA, 1946), n.p.
[98] *Ibid.*
[99] *Ibid.*

work," the Report did not mention the demographics of the Duwamish Bend project– which Epstein had worried was becoming 'too black'– and instead illuminated Holly Park (94.8 percent white), the Taylor Avenue Homes (95.7 percent white) and the Stadium Homes, which was "31.4 per cent Negro," but located near the historic center of the Seattle African American community.[100]

Conclusion

In Seattle civic memory, Jesse Epstein continues to be remembered for his role in the construction of Yesler Terrace and in making it the nation's 'first integrated public housing project.' This claim fits into the prominent historical narrative of Seattle's racial progressivism and exceptionalism, even though it is untrue; a number of PWA housing projects in the early 1930s were integrated and Los Angeles' public housing authority made the same claim at the time.[101] Undoubtedly, Epstein's 'non-discriminatory' stance at Yesler Terrace was significant, even if constrained. But by focusing on Yesler Terrace, civic memory tends to overlook Epstein's commitment to the construction of education-centric defense housing projects on the southeast and southwest periphery of the city– perhaps a more 'radical' project. Despite the exigency of war and rapid population growth, Epstein and SHA officials remained committed to a vision of social and *public* housing on expansive landscaped grounds, with educational and community facilities open to project residents and the residents of surrounding neighborhoods. The creation of these more democratic places stood in contrast to the economic places being

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[100] *Ibid.*

[101] Epstein and the construction of Yesler Terrace re-emerged in public memory and the local press in the fall of 2012, as the area once again became slated for 'renewal' in the form of a new, high-density, mixed-income, and mixed-use development. See, for example, Dominic Black, "The Radical Roots of Yesler Terrace," November 16, 2012, http://kuow.org/post/radical-roots-yesler-terrace; Dominic Black, "From Profanity Hill to Yesler Terrace," *KUOW.org*, January 13, 2013, http://kuow.org/post/profanity-hill-yesler-terrace. For a limited critique see, Charles Mudede, "The Twilight of Yesler Terrace: The End of the Ghetto That Wasn't," *The Stranger*, February 6, 2013.

constructed in the northeast part of the city by Albert Balch and colleagues in the Seattle Real Estate Board and under the sanction of FHA's Title VI program. SHA defense housing had a goal of bringing heterogeneous groups of in-migrants together through educational and community programming– in areas such as West Seattle with little recent histories of ethnoracial heterogeneity– while Balch included very few public spaces and marketed Wedgwood as the 'finest' because it assured privacy and homogeneity and thus, the continuation of market value. While not a part of the Wedgwood project itself, the proximal schools were marketed as 'the finest;' the children that would attend those schools were marketed as 'the finest,' and the racially restrictive covenants would assure the economic and racial continuity of the place. Without SHA construction, Wedgwood-like economic places would have been made throughout the entire Seattle suburban landscape, restricting non-white housing and educational options entirely to the Central District and the older neighborhoods around Yesler Terrace. As we will see in the following chapter, when the SHA temporary projects gradually closed in the decade after V-J Day, these question of non-white housing and educational options re-emerged.

Jesse Epstein left the Seattle Housing Authority in June 1945 to become the Director of Region VII of the Federal Public Housing Authority. During the immediate post-war period, the new SHA leadership under Charles W. Ross tried to promote Epstein's vision of public housing as the quintessential educative neighborhood through a variety of different media. While post-war state and federal housing policies reflected this belief in the potential of education-centric neighborhoods, these policies increasingly viewed education in design terms as a means to create economic– and racially segregated– places.

Chapter Five

The 'Neighborhood Unit' Comes Home to Roost: Post-war Redevelopment and the Continued Battles Over Placemaking, 1945-1955

"We have come a long way in the past few decades," Catherine Bauer announced to begin her contribution to the November 1945 *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* special issue on "Building the Future City."[1] Real progress had been made in convincing American planners, architects, real estate interests, politicians, and the broader public of the value of building 'whole communities' or 'neighborhood units.' There also existed wide acceptance of the idea that the state could foster the building of these kinds of communities or neighborhoods, within the upper tier of housing policy through underwriting rules and subdivision regulations as well as in the lower tier through minimum standard requirements and provisions for community facilities in public housing developments. Remarkably perhaps, state intervention in the building industry and housing markets became sacrosanct in just over a decade of New Deal and wartime policy; there was little question of returning to *laissez faire* methods. These constituted major policy successes for placemakers of all stripes.

Yet, while the technical, legal, and financial aspects of home building and neighborhood design had been secured, Bauer claimed that fundamental civic questions about what constituted a 'good neighborhood' had been either "neglected while we argued about cul-de-sacs" or had been answered in socially and politically retrogressive ways.[2] The democratic placemakers had ultimately failed during the New Deal and war periods, Bauer concluded. Crucially, they failed to secure wide acceptance of the neighborhood as a site of social, economic, and physical-

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[1] Catherine Bauer, "Good Neighborhoods," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 242 (November, 1945), 104.

[2] *Ibid.*, 104-105.

architectural heterogeneity. But the post-war period provided opportunities to correct past mistakes.

This concluding chapter examines some of these failures, successes, and possibilities as seen by Bauer and other democratic placemakers nationally and in Seattle in the decade after the end of the war. The chapter begins with the failure of democratic placemakers' regional plans for garden cities within the Columbia Basin. Instead of a healthy mix of commercial, light industrial, cultural, educational, and residential buildings and activities in new urban constellations, the landscape was reconstructed into large corporate farms with a racialized labor force, and the hydroelectric power that was to enable the judicious spread of urban communities was diverted to the industrial interests of war production centers. The chapter then turns to the most significant post-war urban policy, so-called 'urban redevelopment.' Although Washington state did not pass enabling legislation for this public-private redevelopment scheme until 1957– eight years after the passage of the federal act– the Seattle Planning Commission, the local and national network of real estate interests, and the school district collaborated during the late 1940s to divide the city into school-centric neighborhoods and schools. Although the Seattle Housing Authority was not invited to participate in early urban redevelopment plans, the disposition of its temporary and permanent Lanham Act projects would shift Seattle's racial landscape once again and cause a growing concern amongst civil rights leaders that planning school-centric neighborhoods was simply a tool to advance racially segregated living and educational arrangements.

Catherine Bauer and other democratic placemakers joined in these civil rights concerns. Bauer contended that a renewed commitment to "a broad and progressive civic philosophy" had to begin by attacking– unequivocally– the use of the school-centric neighborhood design as a tool for racial, class, and religious segregation. It had to re-develop and promote a vision–

unequivocally– that American democratic citizenship and leadership *required* residential and educational integration. When properly allied with post-war school construction policies and (extra)curriculum development, Bauer still believed that the fields of planning and education could challenge the "real estate mythology" that required "complete neighborhood homogeneity."[3] These activities in the decade after the war would lay the foundation for some planners and housers to join with educators and urban residents in the civil rights movements of the post-*Brown* era.

The Failures of Democratic Placemaking in the Columbia River Basin

Chapter two described the plans for the Columbia River Basin submitted by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission in the mid-1930s as containing both economic and civic aspirations for the region. Hydroelectric power and irrigation would be a boon to industrial-agricultural development *and* would "facilitate the attainment in some degree of broad social objectives."[4] But, by the early 1950s, it was clear that the social objectives inherent within the Garden City dreams of Catherine Bauer and Lewis Mumford would never be realized. As historian Richard White argued in *The Organic Machine*, the plans became just another tool for capitalist agricultural accumulation and the re-creation of racialized labor and living hierarchies:

> The Columbia Basin Project did not so much eliminate the punishing tasks of rural life as redistribute them. By 1952, 97 percent of the farms in the BPA [Bonneville Power Administration] service area had electricity. Electricity reduced the labor of farm owners and their families, but on the irrigated land it created, migrant workers took over hard and often dangerous work. Dams had created the opportunity for new, electrified family farms, but Mexican and Mexican-American seasonal workers labored in their fields for wages. They often

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[3] Catherine Bauer, "Housing Policy and the Educational System," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 302 (November 1955), 23.

[4] National Resources Committee, *Regional Planning,*153.

> lived in farm labor camps that made unelectrified farmhouses seem bastions of comfort.[5]

In his study of the Bracero program in the Pacific Northwest, historian Erasmo Gamboa is more specific. During the mid to late 1930s, the New Deal Farm Security Administration (FSA) erected permanent 'farm family camps' for white Midwestern migrants looking to re-establish or 'rehabilitate' themselves as farmers in the Northwest. While not the garden cities or urban constellations that Bauer and Mumford would call for, these camps of decent housing and community equipment represented an intermediate step between the difficult and isolating conditions on Midwestern farms and a civic future in resettled areas on the Columbia River Basin. Less than a decade later, between 1943 and 1947, these camps passed from the FSA to the War Food Administration and they changed in name and purpose. They came to be known as "farm labor supply centers" and, as Gamboa argued, the camps "were no longer seen as agencies of social rehabilitation and instead served as labor storehouses to meet the war shortages and nothing more."[6] This transformation was emblematic of the newly electrified region; "[t]he government abandoned any pretense of decentralization, small family farms, or rural reforms" and instead transferred large amounts of cheap power to Boeing and Kaiser, to other production plants in Seattle and Portland, to the top-secret project at Hanford, and to the several aluminum smelters supplying the metal to the war effort.[7]

State intervention in the Columbia Basin had proved profitable to agribusiness and corporate interests. In this way, William King's and Elmer Fullenwider's textbook *The Pacific Northwest: Its Resources and Industries* contributed to the reduction of the region to its

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[5] White, *The Organic Machine*, p. 71.
[6] Erasmo Gamboa, *Mexican Labor and World War II: Braceros in the Pacific Northwest, 1942-1947* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 91.
[7] White, *The Organic Machine*, 72-75.

economic and production capabilities. Seattle Superintendent Worth McClure continued to celebrate *The Pacific Northwest* into the 1940s and recognized that Seattle's "pioneer[ing]" work on "natural resource education" was "being tremendously emphasized by World War developments."[8] The use of the textbook tapered off near the end of the war, as the Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission and its educational arm shuttered due to a loss of the financial support and guidance of its 'parent agency,' the National Resources Planning Board (NRPB). The NRPB fell victim to a highly-publicized conservative backlash early in 1943 and the federated system of planning at the national, regional, and state scales began to crumble soon after.[9]

The failures of democratic placemakers to maintain an imprint on Columbia Basin developments during the war period, combined with the loss of this federated infrastructure to support plans for the regional constellations of urban centers, caused post-war democratic placemakers to concentrate their attention and energies on the central cities and its expanding suburbs. In the decade after the war, civic and economic placemakers both came to speak the language of "urban redevelopment."

"Urban Redevelopment" and Seattle's New Neighborhood Visions

In Seattle, as in cities throughout the country, 'post-war planning' became a common refrain amongst politicians, real estate and commercial interests, public housers, school officials, and African American civic leaders during the first half of the 1940s. Two primary concerns

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[8] Minutes of the Meeting of the Seattle School Board, 6 February 1942, Seattle Schools Archive.
[9] Brinkley, "The National Resources Planning Board and the Reconstruction of Planning," p. 181; Charles McKinley, *Uncle Sam in the Pacific Northwest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), 466. McKinley notes that another regional planning agency gained consideration in 1944, but without the federal influence holding it together, this regional group "died of state particularism, gubernatorial changes, and indifference."

motivated planners and policy-makers thinking and discussions. First, they were worried about a return of massive unemployment and economic depression once war production slowed and industrial plants, war workers, and returning soldiers reconverted to a peacetime economy. Unemployment and economic depression had been the experience immediately after World War I, and policy-makers vowed to have construction projects and public works programs at the ready. Second, they feared the continuation of the process of suburbanization. Unlike cities in other parts of the country where home construction essentially stopped during the war period, in Seattle, as we saw in chapter 4, new construction for defense workers stretched the urban footprint in all directions. Although the Seattle Planning Commission had been concerned about "the shifting of population from the center to the outskirts leaving [behind] what we are forced to call blighted areas," since the early 1930s, this concern reached a fevered pitch in the 1940s.[10]

The reasons for the concerns over the process of suburbanization-blight differed amongst these various actors. Politicians viewed suburbanization largely in relation to municipal dollars-and-cents; each move to a suburb represented the flight of tax revenue to the suburbs and the blight left behind meant increased tax delinquencies alongside the need for increased municipal spending for police, fire, and social services. Real estate interests, armed with the microbial and life cycle language of Homer Hoyt, painted an ominous picture of the cancerous spread of blight throughout the city proper, which would infect and drain almost all of the value out of city property. Downtown commercial interests echoed the real estate developers and added a concern for the loss of city resident spending power to new suburban shopping centers. Public housers, of course, were concerned about the living conditions– and the moral and physical health– in the blighted areas left behind by suburban movers. School officials expressed concern over the loss

[10] Seattle Planning Commission, *Annual Report of the City Planning Commission* (Seattle: SPC, 1931).

of property tax revenue for school operations at the same time as they needed to build additional school facilities to meet the needs of a shifting population within the school district boundaries. African American civic leaders, knowing that black Seattleites would most likely be barred from suburban developments, worried that the blighted housing and schooling conditions left behind would disproportionately affect African American residents and would then be used by racist real estate interests to claim that African American residents were the *cause of* the blight (thereby confirming their racialized assessments of real estate patterns).[11]

These concerns over suburbanization-blight– combined with labor's desire for post-war employment guarantees in the building and construction trades– created a significant coalition of strange bedfellows, all focused on "urban redevelopment." Many of these same actors had come together to support the construction of Yesler Terrace in the late 1930s, but as we saw in chapters 3 and 4, that collaboration was short-lived. "Urban redevelopment" promised to re-establish these ties.

The brainchild of the National Association of Real Estate Board's (NAREB) Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), "urban redevelopment" called for state or federal loans to a city agency with the authority to acquire and clear blighted areas and then sell or lease the property to public or private developers at below market value. The FHA published *A Handbook on Urban Redevelopment for Cities in the United States* in 1941 and urban redevelopment legislation made its way to the New York legislature later that year and to

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[11] On the pervasiveness of these worries in cities across the country, see Robert Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 317-380. For Seattle concerns, see Lucile McDonald, "Creation of a Greater Seattle," *Seattle Times*, April 15, 1945; Seattle Planning Commission, *Annual Report of the City Planning Commission* (Seattle: SPC, 1949); Memorandum from Samuel Fleming to Seattle School Board, "Status of the Building Program," 1 December 1950, Superintendent Files, Seattle Public Schools Archive; George C. Myers, "Impact of Demographic and Ecological Change on Public Schools in the Seattle Metropolitan Area," in Calvin F. Schmid and Vincent A. Miller (eds.), *Population Trends and Educational Change* (Seattle: Washington State Census Board, 1960), 76-84; Taylor, *The Forging of a Black Community*, 179-182.

the halls of the U.S. Senate in two bills during the 1943 session. Although Congress shelved the federal legislation until 1949, the Urban Land Institute pressed ahead on the state and local levels; by the end of World War II, twenty states had passed urban redevelopment enabling legislation and it was under consideration in several other states. Of the twenty, eight states passed laws consistent with the economic placemaker desires of the ULI.

These laws created new local redevelopment agencies– wholly separate from the public housing authority– and stipulated only that the agency's assembled and cleared land be used "in accordance with a comprehensive plan and with the objective of securing the highest and best use of the area."[12] The 'highest and best use' most often meant the most profitable for the developer or the real estate interests of surrounding neighborhoods; redevelopment agencies in cities like Pittsburgh and Chicago cleared blighted neighborhoods to construct downtown commercial office space, convention centers, sports stadium and arenas, parkways, and University and hospital campus expansions.[13] To the ULI and other economic placemakers, the prospect of substantial profits would incentivize developers to enter the downtown real estate market instead of building on the suburban fringe and the prospect of luring white middle and upper class residents back into the city would encourage public officials to support private redevelopment as it would ultimately benefit municipal and school district coffers.

Seattle Mayor William Devin, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, and the Seattle Planning Commission drew on the FHA *Handbook*, the Urban Land Institute's model legislation, and the example of other state enabling legislation to formulate its own "Urban Redevelopment

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[12] Fogelson, *Downtown*, p. 360-380; Marc A. Weiss, "The Origins and Legacy of Urban Renewal," in J. Paul Mitchell, *Federal Housing Policy & Programs: Past and Present* (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research, 1985), 253-275.

[13] *Ibid.*; Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race & Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), chapter 4.

Act" in 1947. The legislation immediately faced opposition from rural state legislators and Washington State Republicans, the latter equating an expansion of municipal eminent domain powers with big government and a state Communist take-over of the city. As such, the Act failed to even get consideration on the state floor during the 1947 session.[14] Undeterred, Mayor Devin used a section of the new city charter that gave the Seattle Planning Commission much broader powers and greater funding, and formed a redevelopment council in March 1948 consisting of city and county real estate interests and planners, transit and highway officials, the University of Washington, and the Seattle School District.[15] These were fairly common participants in urban redevelopment agencies nationwide, but the Seattle Planning Commission did not include one municipal agency common in other cities. The Seattle Housing Authority was conspicuously absent from the table, an indication that the mayor and planning commission saw no future for additional public housing construction in the city's redevelopment plans.

The initial goal of the council was to have a representative from each invited organization "prepare a general outline of the planning program of the organization he represented" and then together discuss "the factors requiring coordination with other agencies."[16] Without state redevelopment enabling legislation, no Seattle city agency had the eminent domain powers necessary to assemble, clear, and re-sell land for redevelopment. Therefore, the Seattle Planning Commission concentrated on what they *could* do: create a framework that could guide new construction in ways that they thought would prevent blight and that could guide redevelopment

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[14] Seattle Planning Commission, *Annual Report* (1949). On the state Republicans sweep into office in 1946 and its effect on municipal and regional governance proposals, see Matthew Klingle, *Emerald City*, chapter 7.
[15] The text of the new charter section, adopted in March 1946, read: "It shall be the duty of [the Seattle Planning] Commission to aid the Legislative Authority of the city from time to time by preparing, adapting, and revising, in an advisory capacity, such plans for the development of the city as its present and future needs may require."
[16] Seattle Planning Commission, *Annual Report* (1949).

once redevelopment legislation gained state authorization. The Seattle Planning Commission adopted a familiar neighborhood and community planning framework (image 5.1).

> The word 'Neighborhood' as used in planning, is a residential area with sufficient population (3,500 to 8,000) to support and fully use such common amenities as the elementary school, and indoor recreational facilities, playground, and local shopping center, conveniently located within ¼ to ½ mile distance from the furthest home.[17]

A "logically grouped number of neighborhoods" formed a community district of between 20,000 and 40,000 residents, enough to support a junior high school, a playfield-park, branch library, and an indoor community recreation center, and a major shopping area. Ideally, existing or proposed primary thoroughfares would not bisect neighborhood or community districts, but would, in fact, form the boundaries around communities.[18] A grouping of two or three community districts would form "multi-communities" housing a senior high school with an enrollment of between one and two thousand.

Between 1948 and 1951, heeding survey requests from the City Council, the Joint School-Park Staff Committee on post-war construction for the study of particular parts of the city, the Planning Commission engaged in the task of developing more specific standards by which to measure the adequacy of recreational and educational facilities. As they did this, they began to divide the entire city into what they deemed 'logical' neighborhood and community units, irrespective of existing neighborhood names or existing school attendance boundaries. As a general rule, they came to believe that a neighborhood elementary school would serve an enrollment of between 350-700 and contain a gym and auditorium open for 'wider use.' Five acres or more of playground and park space should be made available in any given neighborhood

[17] Seattle Planning Commission, *Southeast Seattle Recreation Report* (Seattle: SPC, 1950), 3.
[18] Seattle Planning Commission, *Annual Report of the Seattle Planning Commission* (Seattle: SPC, 1951).

as well, within ¼ to ½ mile walk of every residence. Ideally, each community grouping would contain a junior high school with an enrollment of between 750-1200 and ten to thirty acres of playfield and park space within a mile to a mile and a half of every residence.

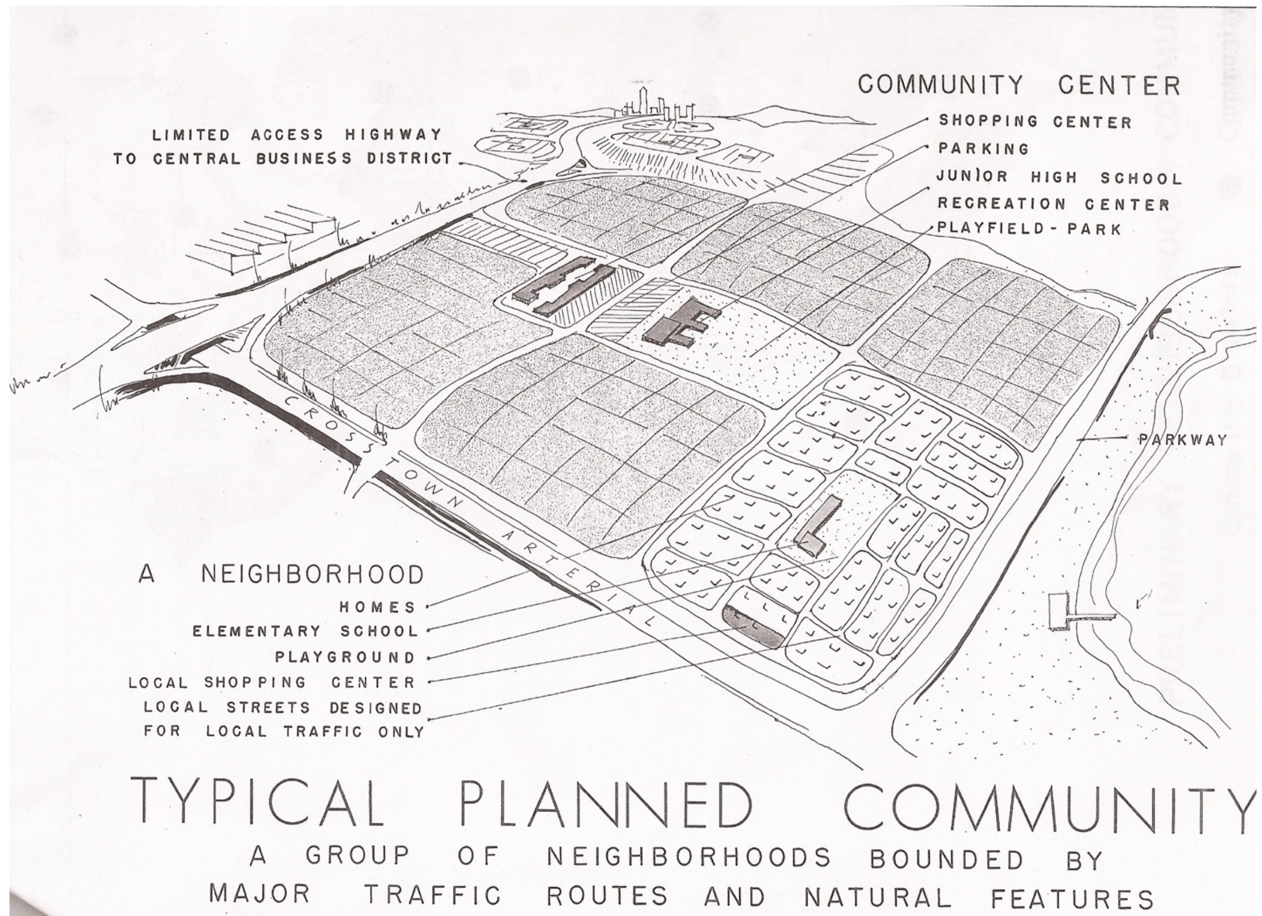

Image 5.1. Seattle Planning Commission's appropriation of Clarence Perry's 'neighborhood unit' and Catherine Bauer's 'whole community' framework. *Source:* Seattle Planning Commission, *Annual Report* (1949).

In April 1950, for the first time, Seattle Superintendent Samuel Fleming made a specific request to the Planning Commission to "assist in some of our problems of school locations" in the fast-growing Northeast section of Seattle by the Sand Point Naval Air Base (discussed in

chapter 4).[19] Four elementary schools served what the Planning Commission had defined in a 1948 study as "the Northeast Community District" with a combined enrollment of 3,531, a figure that exceeded both the school district's and the planning commission's ideal school capacity.[20] While population projections forecasted a decline in enrollment because of a decline in birth rates, the Commission also analyzed the number of elementary age children living more than a ½ mile from an existing school, as well as the topography, transit service, and major arterials of the community district (image 5.2). As a result of this analysis, the Commission proposed that the community district be broken into five neighborhood units and that an additional elementary school be constructed in what they delimited as the Wedgwood neighborhood, so as to accommodate the pupils living outside the ½ mile range of the other four neighborhood schools (image 5.3).[21] Since there did not exist any vacant land in Wedgwood on which to build, the Commission submitted to the school district several potential sites that "approach the desirable features of centrality, minimum size, and reasonable cost."[22] Since these site suggestions were not made public, there is no way to tell whether the school district accepted any of the specific recommendations, but a 16-room portable school opened in Wedgwood in the fall of 1953 and a permanent school was completed on the same site in the spring of 1955.

The recreational and educational surveys completed between 1948 and 1951, in addition to a number of separate studies on the city's thoroughfare plans and population projections done in conjunction with various municipal and state agencies, laid the foundation for the unveiling of

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[19] Seattle Planning Commission, *Wedgwood Elementary School Study* (Seattle: SPC, 1951), p. 1.

[20] As mentioned previously, the ideal upper limit of an elementary school for the Planning Commission was 700, while for the school district it was 875.

[21] In the tradition of city and regional planners throughout this dissertation, the Seattle Planning Commission did not concern themselves with boundaries already created; although Albert Balch's original Wedgwood development and its subsequent additions occupied much of what the Planning Commission delimited as 'Wedgwood,' they were not co-terminus.

[22] Seattle Planning Commission, *Wedgwood Elementary School Study*, p. 14.

the Planning Commission's "Preliminary Community and Neighborhood Plan," for the entire city in April 1952. The Plan envisioned "71 neighborhoods and 15 community districts," organized around schools, recreation sites, and community centers. The Plan would "assure that

Image 5.2. Seattle Planning Commission analysis of children residing outside of a ½ mile of existing schools.

Image 5.3. Seattle Planning Commission suggested neighborhood unit boundary lines. *Source:* Seattle Planning Commission, *Wedgwood Elementary School Study* (1951).

each new home, school, factory, store, highway, or recreation area will be a positive step towards a better city" (image 5.4).[23]

[23] *Ibid.;* Seattle Planning Commission, *Capitol Hill-Broadway Recreational Study* (Seattle: SPC, 1948); Seattle Planning Commission, *Proposed Recreational Area at East 80th and 25th N.E.* (Seattle: SPC, 1948); Seattle Planning Commission, *Proposed Recreational Development for the Magnolia Community* (Seattle: SPC, 1949); Seattle Planning Commission, *Southeast Seattle Recreation Report*.

Because schools played such "a vital role in the neighborhood and community plan," planning commission members began to meet more regularly with Seattle school district officials during 1952 to create maps "indicating the age and adequacy of present schools, the priority for acquisition of new sites and which schools should be abandoned in the future."[24] Over the course of 1953 and 1954, the Commission also collaborated with the school district to produce thirteen additional studies of elementary school site locations within the Commission's neighborhood units that either lacked an elementary school entirely or lacked a modern school with an auditorium, gymnasium, and adjoining park or playground space for neighborhood use.[25]

The 1952 'Neighborhood and Community Plan' marked the first time that Clarence Perry's neighborhood unit scheme had been applied to an entire city in the Pacific Northwest (Portland would follow in 1957), thereby codifying the mutually constitutive relationship between education and housing in the (re)organization of the post-war city.[26] For democratic placemakers, the Plan reflected and expanded upon two of their priorities. First, it recognized that the accessibility of public educational and recreational spaces could combat the urban tendency toward anomie and anonymity by providing opportunities at two scales; a wider community identity could be instilled through participation in wider city library and parks programming, while neighborhood identity formed around the neighborhood elementary school. Second, the framework provided democratic placemakers a means to assess the equality of the provision of educational and recreational facilities since "each neighborhood and community in

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[24] Seattle Planning Commission, *Annual Report of the Seattle Planning Commission* (Seattle: SPC, 1952).
[25] Seattle Planning Commission, *Annual Report of the Seattle Planning Commission: New Horizons for Seattle* (Seattle: SPC, 1953). The 1953 school site studies included: Windermere, Matthews Heights, South Delridge, Riverview, Maple Leaf, South Beacon, and Rainier Heights). The 1954 studies included: Southwest Seattle, Cedar Park, Sand Point, Fairmount, North Greenwood, Dunlap, and Pinehurst.
[26] For the history of the Portland Planning Commission's use of neighborhood unit planning as a tool for school (re)location, highway construction, and neighborhood redevelopment, see Carl Abbott, *Portland,* chapter 9, especially pgs.183-190.

Seattle should eventually be supplied on an equable basis" with such facilities.[27] Economic placemakers also supported an equable distribution of schools, playgrounds, parks, and community centers, as they recognized that "[o]ne of the most significant factors in the preservation of [property] values in the provision of adequate educational and recreational facilities, properly located so as to serve all age groups, within accessible distance from home."[28]

Nationally, Perry's neighborhood planning model enjoyed a renaissance in the decade after the war, especially within planning departments in states (unlike Washington) that had passed urban redevelopment legislation. In trying to account for this sudden renaissance, several prominent planners began to question whether there were racial motivations behind neighborhood planning. Most famously, in a two-part series on the neighborhood unit in the July and August 1948 issues of *The Journal of Housing*, the publication of the National Association of Housing Officials (NAHO), Chicago planner Reginald Isaacs made a bold claim:

> With the acceptance of the 'neighborhood' concept, many housing and city planners and real estaters seized upon it as a means of avoiding an equitable solution to the housing problem of racial and ethnic groups. They advised that cities should, throughout action of their planning commissions, be divided into self-contained "neighborhoods," each occupied by a homogeneous population. Within these established physical boundaries, local associations would be formed that would be capable of building up so strong a community life within the residential cell that it would be capable of resisting the tendencies to depreciation and disintegration that might take place in the city about it. It is questioned, in view of these hypothetical cities composed of such perfect parts, just might what be left to be 'resisted.' Traffic and transit– or 'inharmonious people?'"[29]

Isaacs believed that neighborhood resistance focused around the latter and he marshaled the history of the neighborhood concept as evidence. He wrote, "it is interesting to speculate on the

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[27] Seattle Planning Commission, *Annual Report of the Seattle Planning Commission* (Seattle: SPC, 1952).
[28] *Ibid.*, 12.
[29] Reginald Isaacs, "The 'Neighborhood Unit' Is a Tool for Segregation," *Journal of Housing* 5, no. 8 (1948), 215.

fact that the 'neighborhood' concept gained its initial impetus concurrently with the first major Negro migration since the Civil War to northern cities."[30] He continued into the present by showing the high coincidence of Chicago's "foreign born and Negro groupings" with the Planning Commission's neighborhood boundaries and intimated that this represented an effort to curb white flight from the city by ensuring racially separate neighborhoods and neighborhood schools in the immediate aftermath of the Supreme Court ruling in *Shelley* in 1948 that ruled racially restrictive covenants as unenforceable by law. Quoting "a confidential federal housing agency report" from 1944, Isaacs found that Chicago real estate developers and economic placemakers on the Planning Commission desired a means to create racially homogeneous and neighborhood-controlled schools where the "hiring of teaching personnel, the establishment of educational policies, and so on" would be "subject of the approval of the neighborhood improvement association and the local parent and teacher association." In this way, "the mediocrity of many big city schools could be alleviated in those better neighborhoods where the people were really interested in the problem."[31] To Isaacs, democratic placemakers needed to reject such sentiments as abandonments of concern for the educational quality of the *entire system* and needed to loudly declare that "the task of the planner in a democratic society [is] to break down [neighborhood] barriers and facilitate integration of all people."[32] Democratic placemakers needed to abandon the planned 'neighborhood' concept– with its nostalgia for an imagined community from a simpler age, its "promise of community facilities made easily accessible to toddler and adult alike," and its lure of self-governance– in favor of a more expansive and heterogeneous concept. Isaacs' articles were short on details, but he believed that

[30] *Ibid.*
[31] *Ibid.*, 216. Interesting to compare these statements to the proposals for Local School Councils in Chicago Schools forty years later.
[32] *Ibid.*, 215.

the time was ripe for a reconceptualization of planning, as post-war suburbanization and urban redevelopment would affect the social and spatial organization of the city for decades to come.[33]

Isaacs' articles were the housing profession's equivalent to George Counts' dare to progressive educators in 1932; Isaacs rebuked a foundational tenet of the profession and thus challenged practitioners to re-consider their claims of progressivism, liberalism, and democracy. Like Counts' challenge to educators, Isaacs' statements produced a hefty response; vigorous defenses of the neighborhood unit as well as confessions of agreement with Isaacs could be read in subsequent special sections of the *Journal of Housing* and heard in the meeting halls at NAHO's annual meeting in October at the Olympic Hotel in Seattle.[34]

The 1948 NAHO conference also featured discussions and tours of the Seattle Housing Authority's low-rent project at Yesler Terrace; its permanent defense housing projects at Rainier Vista, High Point, and Holly Park; and some of the temporary defense housing projects throughout the metropolitan area. At the time, the SHA, like public housing agencies across the country, faced an uncertain future. For a number of reasons, this uncertainty was especially acute in war production centers like Seattle.

First, veterans returned to Seattle to find a crowded housing market. Therefore, under federal amendments to the Lanham Act, they received preference when dwelling units opened in any of the SHA's temporary and permanent defense projects.[35] This marked another significant

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[33] *Ibid.,* 215; Reginald Isaacs, "Are Urban Neighborhoods Possible?" *Journal of Housing* 5, no. 7 (1948), 177-180. It bears mention that Isaacs was the lead planner for the Michael Reece Hospital on the South Side of Chicago, one of the private entities involved in Chicago's early redevelopment projects. While he continually pressed Chicago redevelopment agencies to make plans for the relocation of African American residents from the area, he certainly still believed in the heavy hand of planning as a tool for slum clearance and urban renewal. See Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, chapter 4.

[34] James Dahir, "Neighborhood Planning is a 'Three-in-One Job," *Journal of Housing* 5, no. 10 (1948), 270-272; "'Neighborhood' Concept is Submitted to Questioning," *Journal of Housing* 5, no. 11 (1948), 299-304. NAHO's 15th annual meeting in Seattle in October 1948 was its first on the west coast.

[35] "Amendment to Title V of the Lanham Act," Pub. L. 79-292 (December 31, 1945).

shift away from the SHA's original purpose of housing and improving the conditions of low-wage workers. Second, stipulations in the original Lanham Act– included to placate southern Democrats and anti-public housers– did not automatically transfer defense housing sites to the local housing authorities once the war came to a close. The original legislation required local housing authorities to petition both local government and then gain Congressional approval to receive title to the properties. Without such local and federal authorization, the permanent projects could be sold on the private market on a veterans' preference basis for individual ownership or could be sold to investors on bids for large-scale private rental purposes. Third, public housing agencies, including the SHA, were uncertain what role– if any– they would have in "urban redevelopment." Would the SHA gain a seat at Seattle's 'urban redevelopment' table– and secure additional public housing sites– or would it be relegated to warehousing residents displaced by private redevelopment projects in Seattle's urban core? Just as Jesse Epstein and SHA officials had done in the late 1930s, the new Executive Director Charles W. Ross (former assistant to Epstein) devised a public education plan to keep the vision of public housing alive in the city. Instead of turning to the theater and the radio as Epstein had done, SHA officials attempted to create what one architectural historian calls "a universally accessible, quasi-technical, and persuasive visual language for communicating ideas about the built environment to the public."[36] In the decade after the war, they did this through publications and film.

"This is Public Housing" (Once Again)

The SHA's publications between 1946 and 1954 remain stunning documents to this day. They represented a significant departure from previous publications in both method of

[36] Andrew Shanken, *194X,* 26.

communication and content. The change in presentation and content reflected a change in purpose: from primarily communicating to SHA supporters about the agency's activities and statistics to educating city leaders and a broader public about the social, moral, and civic value of a robust public housing program. As mentioned above, this was done out of sheer necessity; this was the SHA's strategy to secure its future.

Drawing on some visual communication innovations of federal government agencies and private advertising, the Seattle Housing Authority's post-war publications attempted to tell the SHA story in an "interesting and readable form."[37] Such readability, they hoped, would convince city leaders and city residents that the permanent defense housing projects should be transferred to the SHA and that the SHA should be involved in any Seattle urban redevelopment plans. In terms of content, SHA publications during these years forwarded three arguments about the viability of the organization as an actor in post-war urban redevelopment.

First, the SHA argued that in its brief existence it had developed an enviable 'track record' of providing for the needs of families under a range of different conditions. In a two-page spread in its 1946 publication, *Housing the People*, the SHA simply listed, in large font, that it had successfully and honorably done its job during the war emergency. It made the herculean task of constructing new modern housing for thousands of in-migrants look simple because it focused on three jobs, which were bulleted in the publication: "to give the people homes; but more- to help keep them happy; to keep them healthy."[38] These bulleted statements replaced text-heavy explanations of the SHA's mission and history, and appeared alongside photographs

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[37] Seattle Housing Authority, *This is Public Housing: 10th Anniversary Report with Which is Combined the 9th Annual Report* (Seattle: SHA, 1950). In order to present information in an "interesting and readable form," the SHA stated that for budgetary reasons it would have to alternate between the visual annual reports and the purely statistical reports.
[38] Seattle Housing Authority, *Housing the People: Sixth Annual Report* (Seattle: SHA, 1946).

of a white girl swinging on an SHA swing set; a young white man seated at a community room table surrounded by a gaggle of white children (one in boy scout attire) standing and listening in rapt attention; a young white father, mother, and baby staring into the distance (their bright future?); and a Rockwellian portrait of a young wife in a striped housedress and apron pouring a glass of lemonade to her husband seated at the dining room table (image 5.4). For readers interested in learning the details, the opposite page contained ten paragraphs explaining the SHA's provision of activities and services that kept residents 'happy and healthy.' For those not interested in reading this smaller print, subsequent pages provided statistical evidence showing that residents must have been satisfied with these services because they kept participating in them. But SHA officials did not present this statistical information in a traditional chart. They used a "method of pictoral statistics" called the ISOTYPE (International System Of TYpographic Picture Education), which was developed in Europe in the 1920s and made its way into a number of social journals (e.g. *Survey Graphic*) and New Deal agency publications in the late 1930s (including the United States Housing Authority's *What the Housing Act Can Do for Your City*, 1938).[39] Through unique but standardized symbols– what originator Otto Neurath called "amount pictures" or "number fact pictures"– the SHA visually communicated resident participation in social, recreational, and educational activities (image 5.5).[40] The publication's message seemed clear: if post-war city leaders and democratic placemakers were genuine in their desire to create a more livable and democratic city, the SHA's experience during the war would be invaluable.

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[39] Shanken, *194X*, p. 27.
[40] Otto Neurath, *International Picture Language: The First Rules of Isotype* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1936).

In its 1948 publication, *A Place to Live*, SHA officials continued this line of argument. However, because circumstances (and federal policy) had changed in ways that brought an increasing number of returning veterans into Seattle's Lanham Act projects, the publication stressed its ability to adjust and cater to a new population. *A Place to Live* opens with a simple line-sketch of a seated soldier in the midst of a battlefield, longingly reading a letter from home. The next page announces what "his dream was" during those long nights on the European or

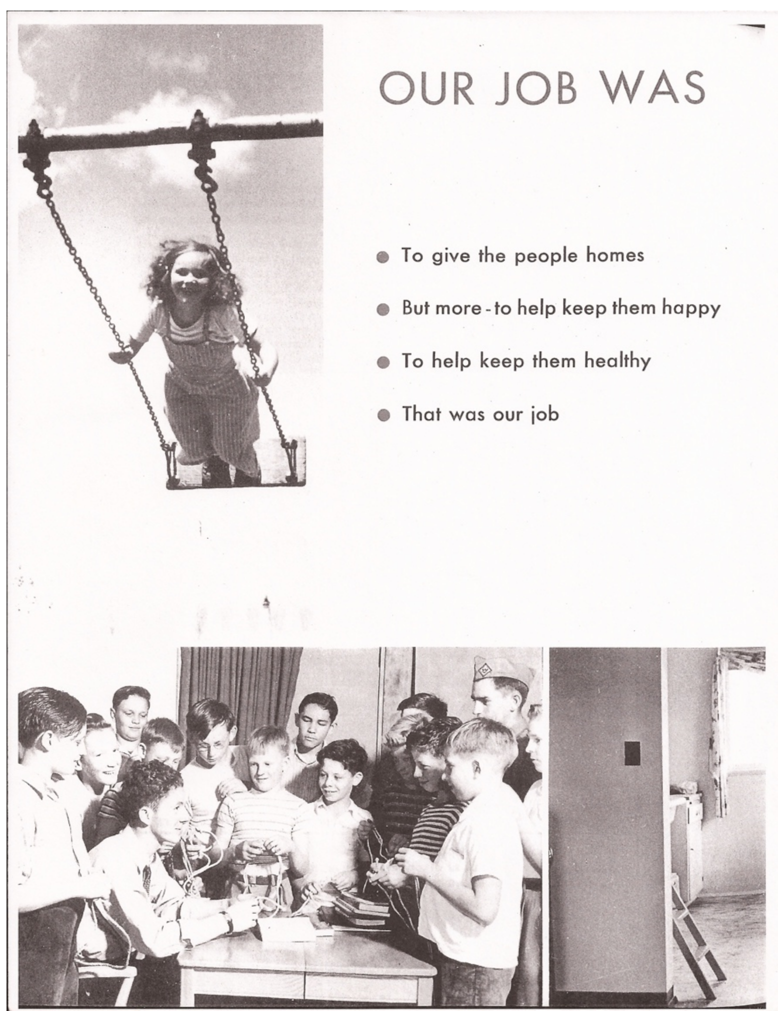

Image 5.4. Seattle Housing Authority, *Housing the People* (1946).

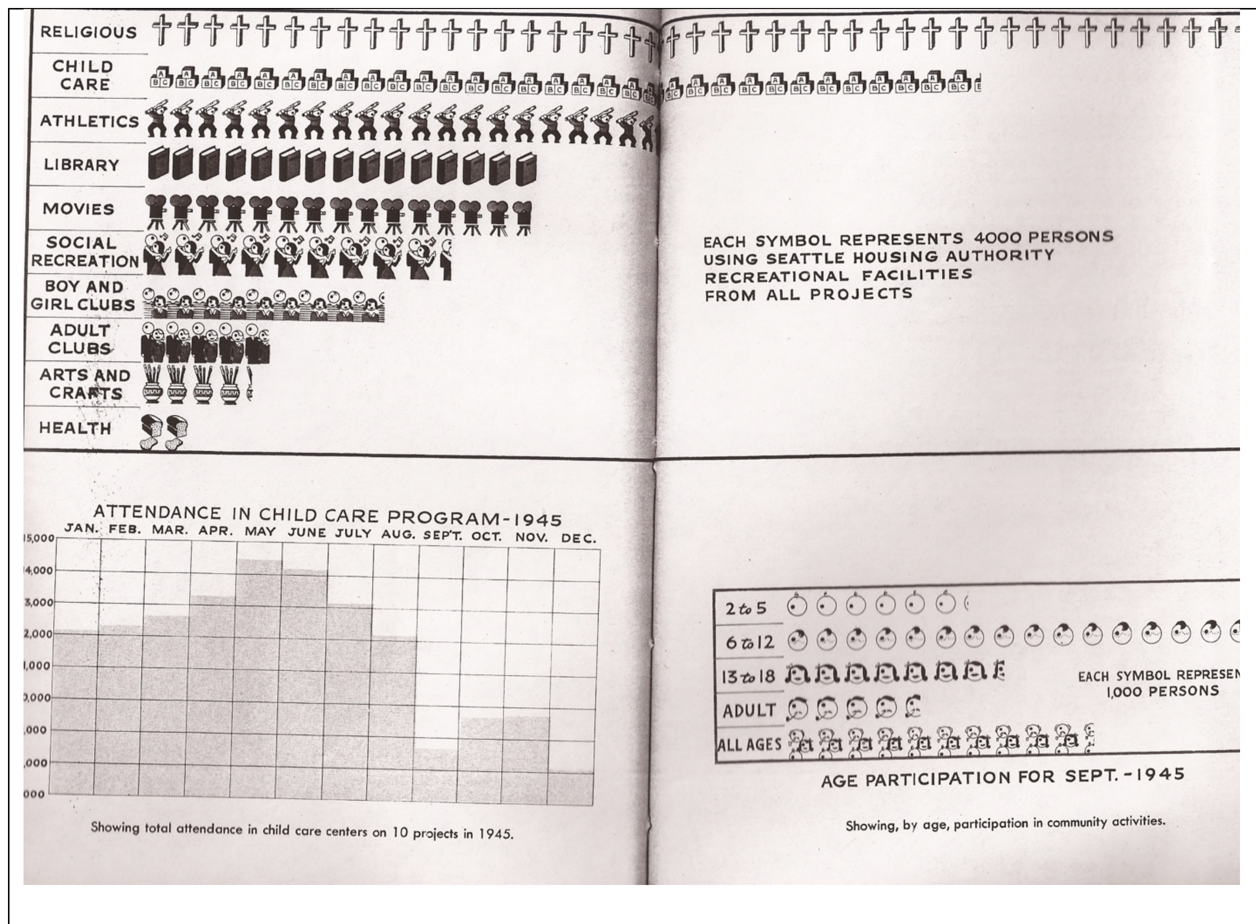

Image 5.5. SHA 'ISOTYPE' related to participation in social, recreational, and educational activities. Seattle Housing Authority, *Housing the People* (1946).

South Pacific front lines; a photograph of a single-family home with a large front yard occupies three-fourths of the page. But a number of housing and population issues in Seattle constrained his options: increased housing demands from families, not enough new construction starts to satisfy demand, low wages upon return, and escalating house prices among them. When the veteran turned to public housing as a last resort, the publication continues, he and his family became pleasantly surprised that Seattle's Lanham Act housing could meet their needs.

Returning to the simple sketch figures from the publication's opening, *A Place to Live* identified the "7 Needs of Families"– grade schools, parks & playgrounds, a Community House,

safe neighborhoods, a teen-age building, a nursery school, and a shopping center– before proudly announcing "Permanent Housing Has All 7!" (image 5.6).[41] Even though the claim that these elements could be found in all the permanent sites was a somewhat dubious one, the intention is clear, and it formed the basis of the SHA's second argument to city leaders and the public about the agency's post-war value.[42] Here, SHA officials were making the argument that the SHA– more than any other public *or private* entity– knew how to build complete neighborhood units. The "7 Needs" identified were not arbitrary selections; they were identical to the wildly popular *You and Your Neighborhood*, a 1944 citizen's guide to planning developed by architects Oscar Stonorov and Louis Kahn and advertised in such widely-circulating publications as the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Life Magazine*, the *New York Times*, and publicized in a newsreel and a radio broadcast featuring Catherine Bauer.[43] If the Mayor's Office and the Seattle Planning Commission wanted to build neighborhood units as part of an urban redevelopment project when (or if) state enabling legislation passed into law, the SHA had the expertise and the interagency connections to fully realize the neighborhood vision.

The third argument employed by the SHA to gain credibility as a player in post-war urban housing was directed toward those involved in civil rights issues and/or those fearful of racial unrest: the Urban League, the NAACP, and Mayor Devin's Civic Unity Committee. The SHA's policy of 'non-discrimination' appeared in each of its publications in the decade after the war. The cover image on *Housing the People* (1946) depicted two white and two Chinese

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[41] See Shanken, *194X*, chapter 3; Oscar Stonorov and Louis Kahn, *You and Your Neighborhood : A Primer for Neighborhood Planning* (New York: Revere Copper and Brass, 1944),
[42] For example, Holly Park did not have a grade school; the Community Center in all three projects served as the "Teen-Age Building;" and by 1948, the nursery school at Holly Park had shuttered. Shopping areas were proximal to– but not within– the projects.
[43] Shanken, *194X*, p. 132.

American children on either side of an African American girl along the picket fence at Yesler Terrace. Within the publication, photographs showing integrated activities amongst adults,

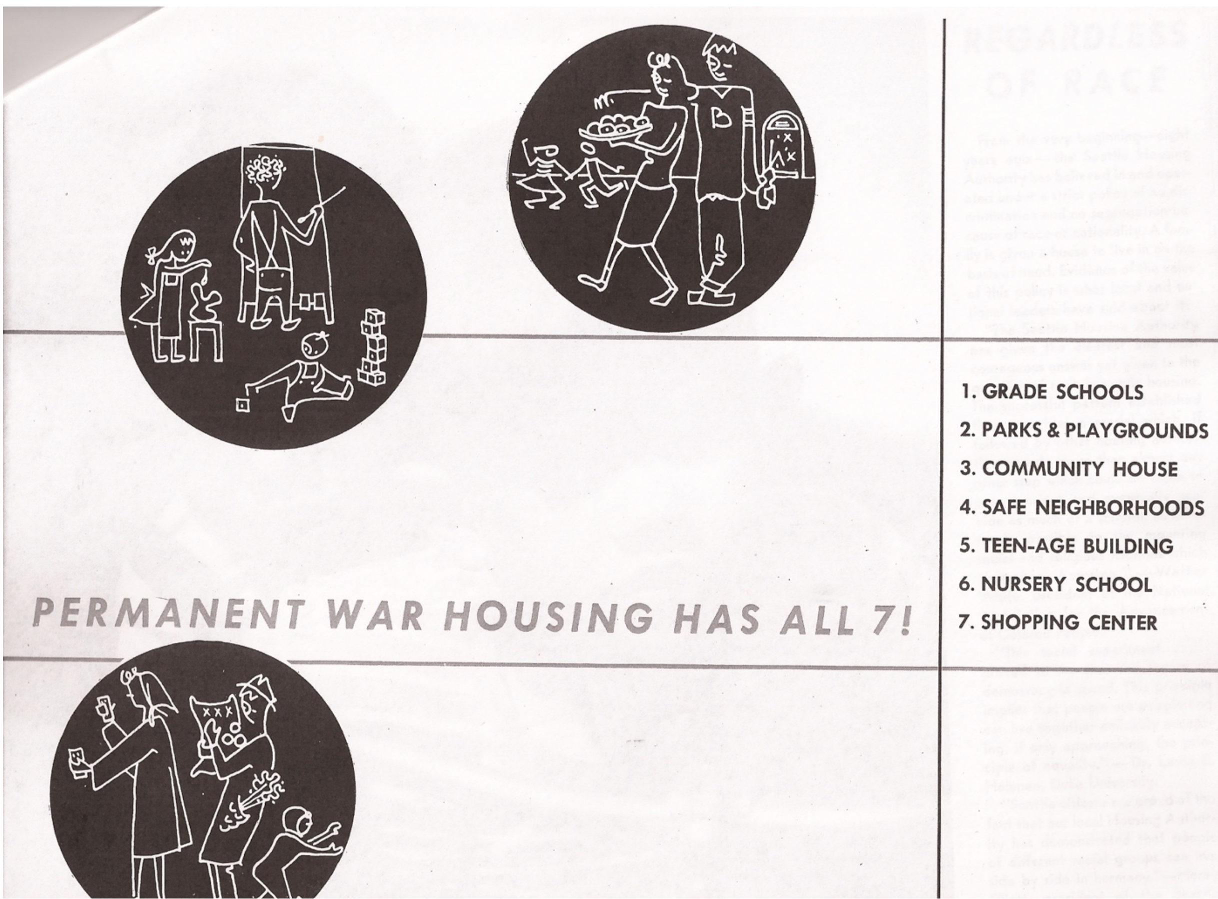

Image 5.6. Seattle Housing Authority, *A Place To Live* (1947)

children, and teenagers were placed along text that read (again in large type): "Non-Discrimination is Democracy At Work," with bulleted text proclaiming that "[i]n every war housing project, all men lived side by side [,] without conflict or disturbance [,] proving that racial harmony is possible."[44] In *A Place to Live*, SHA officials included quotations from prominent local and national leaders and researchers, including one from NAACP president

[44] SHA, *Housing the People.*

Walter White declaring that "[t]he Seattle Housing Authority had given the clearest and most courageous answer yet given to the question of race in public housing."[45] The quotations were set beside a large image of a black and white toddler riding together on a single tricycle. Finally, in its 10th anniversary publication entitled *This is Public Housing* (1950), SHA officials returned to the trope of children as leading the racial integration efforts by including a whole page photograph of an African American male youth literally leading a throng of mostly white children and adults toward the camera. Staged or not, these photographs attempted to provide a counter to the image of racial conflict and rebellions that the public had seen throughout the war: in Detroit, Harlem, Los Angeles, and at Seattle's Fort Lawton army base.

However, like Jesse Epstein before him, Charles W. Ross tried to assuage local leaders and a wider public through these publications that its 'non-discrimination' and 'integration' policies would never translate to racial parity in terms of the residential population; it would never risk turning into a "ghetto" like the public housing in the cities of the East. All of the group images in the publications were careful to show that white children, youth, and families still held firm population majorities within SHA housing. But these attempts to assuage a white public's anxieties masked some of SHA officials' own anxieties.

In July 1948, Ross sponsored a survey of the housing plans, income, and occupations of families living in its temporary Lanham projects. Although the original Lanham Act required the removal of all temporary structures within two years of a Presidential declaration of the end of the war emergency, Congress extended the removal deadline, first from July 1949 to January 1950, and then for successive periods until the final deadline of July 1, 1954.[46] Because of these

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[45] SHA, *A Place to Live.*
[46] Seattle Housing Authority, "A Report on Temporary Housing," March, 1953 in SPL-Hugh and Jane Ferguson Seattle Room Special Collections.

congressional extensions and the fluctuating private housing market, the SHA gradually shuttered its temporary projects throughout the period. Ross's survey of residents found that 78% of white families and 86% of black families in the temporary projects did not have monthly salaries high enough to support the purchase of a home in Seattle's real estate market. It also found that Seattle's rental market– even in new apartment buildings constructed through a federal program to provide rental housing for war workers and veterans– discriminated against African American applicants: "most, if not all, of these private projects will not accept Negro tenants."[47] The report concluded, "[t]here is, in fact, no available supply of private rental housing for Negroes in Seattle at any price."[48] The discrimination on the private market resulted in fewer African American war workers and veterans moving out of the temporary projects (only 33% compared to 68% of white families in 1948). For those African American families that did move during 1948, 44% moved into one of the three permanent Lanham Act projects, while the comparable percentage for all other families was 24.8%.[49] If this demographic trend continued when all 3,600 of the temporary dwelling units were removed, SHA officials worried that the permanent projects could reach a racial 'tipping point' and start a chain of events that would result in the creation of a Seattle 'ghetto' and a loss in the agency's political and public support.

To combat these fears of the future, the SHA used its tenth anniversary and the passage of the federal Housing Act of 1949 renewing modest funding for low-rent public housing construction, to invite Seattle politicians and the public to look back at what it accomplished at Yesler Terrace. In fact, the tenth anniversary publication appeared immediately after the Seattle City Council passed an ordinance declaring a need for additional public housing and as the

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[47] Seattle Housing Authority, "Characteristics and Housing Plans of Families in Temporary Public Housing Projects—Seattle July-August, 1948," in SPL-Hugh and Jane Ferguson Seattle Room Special Collections.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] *Ibid.*

"Seattle Home Ownership Council" gathered the ten thousand signatures needed to put the extension of public housing on the March 1950 ballot. *This is Public Housing* opened with a reminder of the SHA's accomplishments and an appeal to the city's citizens:

> To the Mayor…the Council, and the Citizens of Seattle…this Tenth Anniversary Reports marks a span that began with community concern for the housing problems of low-income families unable to afford decent housing and ends with the same concern again becoming dominant in our community. The intervening years brought *diversion* to war housing, then to veterans emergency housing. But as the decade closes, there is *opportunity* to return to those first goals– and there is need to bring our community thinking clearly into focus once more on the real purposes and aims of public housing. We hope that 'This is Public Housing' will fulfill this purpose and help each citizen judge for himself what part of public housing can and should play in meeting basic community problems and continuing housing needs.[50]

For the first time since 1939 it argued, Seattle had the opportunity to "secure additional low-rent homes for low-income families" and "to get rid of bad housing which in the years ahead will become a spreading blight." Seattle could do the first by transferring the 2,700 permanent housing units at Holly Park, Rainier Vista, and High Point to low-rent use or it could "do both by repeating the story of Yesler Terrace under the Housing Act of 1949," otherwise known as urban redevelopment.[51] Coinciding with the release of *It Happened on Yesler Hill*– the silent film tracing the "declension and renewal" of Profanity Hill-Yesler Terrace that had been shelved during the war period– the 1950 publication represented a strategic call to all the democratic placemakers who still believed that public housing and the proper environment could transform

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[50] Seattle Housing Authority, *This is Public Housing: 10th Anniversary Report With Which is Combined the 9th Annual Report* (Seattle: SHA, 1950).
[51] *Ibid.*

the huddled, indistinguishable masses into responsible, nurturing, and playful family units with new opportunities to succeed (image 5.7).[52]

The results of the SHA publicity campaign were mixed. Seattle voters rejected by a wide margin the expansion of public housing, largely swayed by economic placemakers' claims that

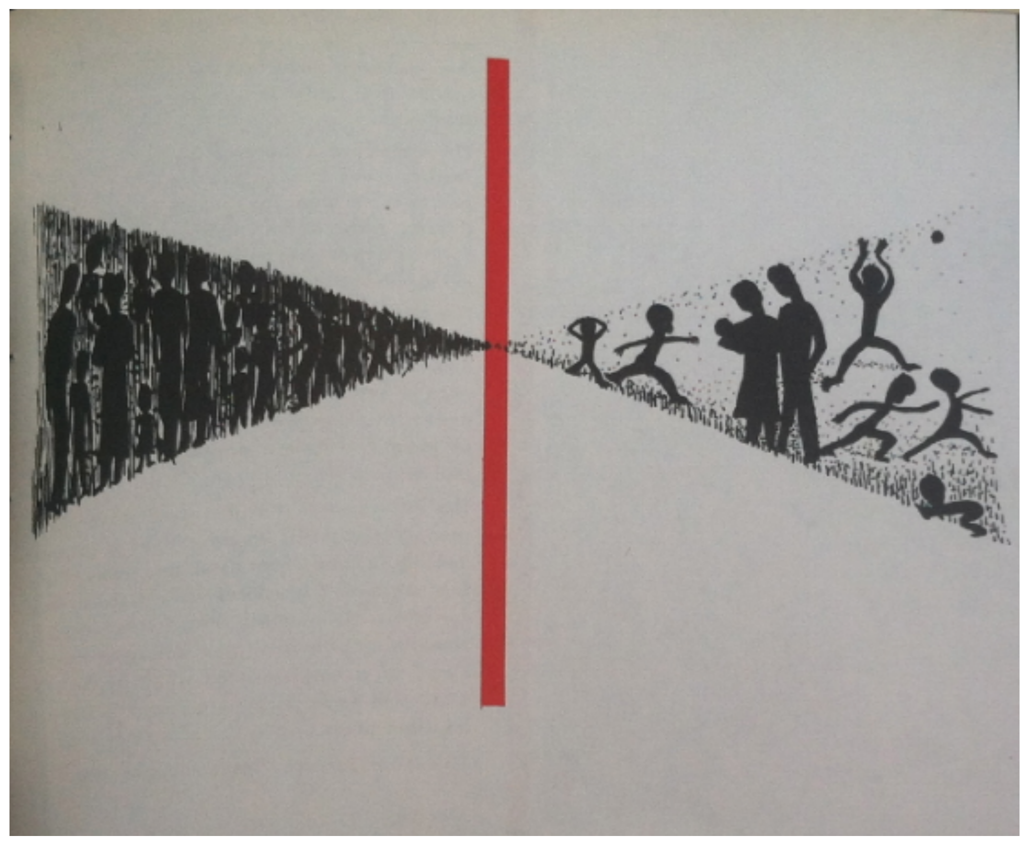

Image 5.7. The transformative potential of public housing. *Source:* Seattle Housing Authority, *This is Public Housing* (1950)

this represented the creeping spread of "a program of socialized housing."[53] However, soon after, the city and the housing authority entered into a cooperation agreement that would transfer the three permanent Lanham Act sites to the SHA once the federal government approved of the disposition. Because of events on the Korean peninsula, the final federal approval did not come until June of 1953, at which point the SHA began its final push toward closing the temporary

[52] Carl Abbott, "*Our Cities* and *The City*, 105.
[53] "Referendum on Housing Issue Is Prepared," *Seattle Times*, October 26, 1949; "Complete City Voting Tabulated," *Seattle Times*, March 15, 1950.

projects and reinstated its income eligibility rules and its elaborate scoring system to judge applicant housing needs at Holly Park, Rainier Vista, and High Point. In other words, the SHA returned to its original mission.

In March 1953, Charles Ross called for another survey of the housing options available to the nearly 1,100 families that would be forced to vacate the temporary projects. The survey followed all of these families through September 1954 to assess the locations and types of housing secured. Of the 189 African American families moving out of the temporary projects, 117 (62%) found private housing. However, racism amongst private sellers as well as the racialized real estate mythology of property values, meant that all but one family moved into a one and a half square mile area in Seattle's Central District. The lone African American family moving to the Seattle suburbs "went to live at the place of domestic employment." White families and "other minority families" relocated to a much wider area both in the city and the surrounding suburbs. Meanwhile, of the 72 African American families that moved into public housing, fully 66% moved into the Rainier Vista and Holly Park projects in Southeast Seattle.[54] These findings pointed to a widening and hardening racial geography that would have implications for civil rights activism for decades to come.

The SHA's post-war civic education campaign proved only modestly successful. Because of the caveats in the original Lanham Act– which were included to appease Southern Democrats who opposed both public housing and the possibilities of race-mixing as forms of socialistic social experimentation– the SHA had to continually fight just retain control over the three permanent projects. While the projects themselves were made to be democratic places– with

[54] Seattle Housing Authority, "Locations and Ownership of Housing Obtained by 1,093 Families Moving From Seattle Temporary Housing Units- March 1953 through Sept. 1954," in SPL-Hugh and Jane Ferguson Seattle Room Special Collections.

central schools and informal educative spaces designed to bring heterogeneous groups of people together– the economic placemaking model dominated everywhere else. The racial calculus of real estate exchange values blocked African American movement to places outside the permanent projects and the Central District and the urban redevelopment plans being prepared by the city and the Seattle Planning Commission seemed likely to be guided by that same calculus.

Conclusion

Several months after the Supreme Court's *Brown II* decision calling on southern schools to establish non-discriminatory admissions policies "with all deliberate speed," Catherine Bauer penned another article for the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Entitled "Housing Policy and the Educational System," Bauer urged educators and "educational authorities" to understand the previous two decades of federal housing policy, because the housing field would be the new frontier on which racial justice battles would be fought, especially in the North and West. Bauer acknowledged that her own participation in the spread of the 'whole community' and 'neighborhood unit' idea over the previous two decades had been used to segregate large swaths of areas in cities and in the suburbs. Like Reginald Isaacs seven years prior, Bauer appealed to democratic placemakers to confront the real estate mythology of homogeneity "long embodied in minute detail in every handbook for subdividers, whether from private or public sources."[55] Unlike Isaacs, who largely put his faith in fellow planners to abandon the neighborhood concept and create a more heterogeneous planning model, Bauer put her faith in educators, education, and "bona fide citizen participation in the planning and housing process at the neighborhood level."[56]

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[55] Bauer, "Housing Policy and the Educational System," 23.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

Since many new comprehensive city plans, new subdivisions, public housing projects, and residential urban redevelopment projects were crafted using school-centric neighborhood design principles, Bauer argued that "the responsibility for solving these knotty problems [of neighborhood race segregation] falls in part on educational leaders."[57] Specifically, she suggested three possible actions that they could undertake. First, leaders could push the educational system to take on a more robust role in educating adults about the process of urban development and redevelopment so that citizens could organize and become a "dynamic force" in "secur[ing] new housing and better community facilities," as well as resisting the racist and myopic views of economic placemakers. She even suggested elsewhere that Stonorov and Kahn's *You and Your Neighborhood: A Primer* could be the foundational text for this adult education extra-curriculum.[58]

Second, in a lovely reversal of northern and western city school district proposals for compensatory education to acclimate newly arrived black (southern) children to the city, Bauer suggested that a kind of compensatory education was needed in the all-white "one-class dormitory suburb." Bauer aligned herself with a growing cadre of democratic placemakers who took a critical cultural view of the Levittowns, the Panorama Cities, and the Park Forests sprawling out along expanding federally-funded highway systems. Her compensatory suburban curriculum would counter the stultifying "pressures for conformity" and "anti-intellectualism" of the suburbs and interrupt suburban families' "tendency to view the city and the world from a rather insular perspective."[59] The educational system had a choice: "either reflect and rationalize

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[57] *Ibid.*
[58] Bauer, "Good Neighborhoods," p. 114.
[59] Bauer, "Housing Policy and the Educational System," p. 24.

the community's inherent limitations *or* try in some measure to compensate for them."[60] Bauer urged educators to do the latter.

Lastly, Bauer suggested that school districts could lead the fight against segregation by redrawing attendance boundaries so as to encourage the heterogeneity of the student population. On this point, she followed the logic of *Brown* and the psychological and sociological literature of the time in arguing that the democratic roots of public education impelled schools to "train children to live successfully in a highly variegated world."[61] Preparation for living in an ethnoracially diverse world would require positive action on the part of the school district for a time. But with adult education providing the tools for bona fide participation in urban policy, with compensatory education in the suburbs to widen the outlook of the next generation, and with heterogeneous city classrooms fostering intercultural understanding, cities and city neighborhoods would themselves begin to change. "Housing and redevelopment policies can serve any kind of purpose with respect to race relations," Bauer concluded. She urged educators to join the ranks of democratic placemakers fighting against racial segregation because she noted, ominously, that in the wrong hands housing and redevelopment policies could "be used to get around the Supreme Court."[62]

By and large, Seattle planners and educational leaders did not heed Bauer's call. The Washington legislature did not pass urban redevelopment enabling legislation until 1957, eight years after the federal Housing Act of 1949 codified urban redevelopment as the nation's new direction in housing policy. Although the Seattle Planning Commission had been frustrated by the delay– they had lobbied alongside the National Association of Real Estate Boards over three

[60] *Ibid.*
[61] *Ibid.*
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

different legislative sessions– they kept their eyes on urban redevelopment activities in other cities throughout the country while forging ahead with their collaborative work with the parks department and school district on the implementation of the "Neighborhood and Community Plan." In particular, Seattle planners and educators watched Chicago policies and practices.

An article from the *Puget Sound Observer*, a short-lived Seattle African American newspaper, appeared on the desk of Superintendent Ernest Campbell in February 1958 with the headline "Majority of Chicago Schools Segregated De Facto, Reports NAACP." The article detailed an NAACP analysis that found a growing trend toward racial segregation in Chicago schools, with fully 91% of the city's 355 elementary schools at least 90% white or 90% black. Although the article did not discuss neighborhood planning per se, the NAACP found that housing segregation and attendance boundaries were the causes of segregated schooling. The fact of segregated schooling produced undesirable conditions in the predominantly black schools, over-and-above the segregated environment: the NAACP named overcrowding, double shifts, and inexperienced teachers as the three most pressing.[63]

A note in red pencil at the top of the newspaper clipping alerted Superintendent Campbell to the Chicago findings. While the red note was not signed, it likely came from Lewis Watts, Executive Secretary of the Urban League, or one of the members of the Urban League's recently-formed School Committee. As in Chicago, civil rights organizations in Seattle began to call attention to the "growing racial imbalance in a number of schools located in Seattle's central area."[64] Indeed, the neighborhood school attendance boundaries, which aligned with the "Neighborhood and Community Plan," produced six neighborhood schools in the central area

[63] "Majority of Chicago Schools Segregated De Facto, Reports NAACP," *Puget Sound Observer*, February 19, 1958.
[64] Aaron Gilmartin (Chairman, Urban League School Committee) to Superintendent Ernest Campbell, 30 October 1958, Superintendent's Office/Fleming & Campbell, Box 45, Seattle Schools Archive.

that were over 59% African American by 1957. Only three other schools in the entire city had enrollment of 20% of more: the nearby Stevens Elementary, Bailey Gatzert, and the school in the High Point housing project in West Seattle. Like Chicago and other cities in the 'north,' the Seattle Urban League's concerns were not just about student enrollment demographics. They expressed concern over the post-war tendency of the school district– guided by the Planning Commission and the comprehensive city plan– to devote the vast majority of school construction and expansion funding to the newer northeast and southeast parts of the city, leaving central area schools overcrowded and in need of physical plant improvements. They noted that the school district's 'commitment' to the neighborhood school concept seemed racially-dependent (image 5.5). On the one hand, the district installed portable classrooms at the central area's Minor school (72.8% African American) to serve its neighborhood while there existed empty seats at the Lowell School (0.4% African American), just a mile away. Yet, on the other hand, the district permitted the transfer of white students from the Harrison neighborhood school (75.6% African American) to the McGilvra neighborhood school just to the north (0.6% African American).

The Urban League urged immediate action to provide "more equitable racial distribution in Seattle Schools," even if that meant repudiating the policy of neighborhood schooling enshrined in the 1952 "Neighborhood and Community" plan. The Seattle Mayor's Office, Parks Department, and Planning Commission also requested school district action in 1958, although for different reasons. Still committed to the comprehensive plan, and newly-empowered by state urban redevelopment enabling legislation, these agencies sought the school district's assistance in the city's first urban renewal projects at the Cherry Hill and Yesler-Atlantic neighborhoods. A new period of neighborhood planning would begin in 1958, with local residents and civil rights organizations demanding to be heard and planners remaining steadfast in their belief that urban

redevelopment using neighborhood unit design principles could usher in a new era of educational and social equality.

Conclusion

Learning Place has made the case that a history of planning ideals and practice can tie the histories of education and the histories of housing together. As such, the period of the field of planning's rise deserves closer attention. I conclude *Learning Place* with two claims.

First, the concept of the neighborhood became a central idea in the formation and implementation of social policy. Schooling and education were often discussed as part of, or in relation to, this broader social policy formation and conversation and not as a separate entity entirely. Consistently, over the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s appeared in the visions, the maps, and the designs of planners who looked to restore "order through a fundamental reconstruction of the social and built form of vast realms of human endeavor."[65] The neighborhood or the 'whole community' emerged as the fundamental unit of this fundamental reconstruction, and planners and policy makers sought to build these forms in order to address the perceived or actual needs of residents. Whereas historian Tracy Steffes has argued that Progressive era urban school reforms constituted American preeminent "social policy choice," I have argued in this dissertation that the planning and building of neighborhood and community units took up that mantle between 1934 and 1955.[66]

Every aspect of the ideal neighborhood was designed from the top down with the child and the family in mind: from the functional arrangement of rooms and the sun-facing orientation of the home; to the designs of streets and paths to encourage children walking and biking to school; to the provision of parks and playgrounds within easy access of all homes; to the clustering of educational, community, and civic buildings at the center. Every promotion of the

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[65] Zipp, "The Roots and Routes of Urban Renewal," 367.
[66] Steffes, *School, Society, and State*, 14.

new neighborhood unit contained images and/or descriptions of the improvements that such environments would produce in families and children. Planning advocates contended that neighborhoods would re-establish primary contacts, encourage civic participation in place-based organizations, foster collective responsibilities for the care and safety of children, prevent juvenile delinquency, and promote healthy living. The neighborhood became a perceived panacea for all social ills; a position once reserved for the urban school as social center.

This is not to suggest that the transformative vision of schooling– at an individual and a social level– disappeared within policy circles during this period. Of course it did not, as chapter two and the extant historical literature on the battles over curriculum and pedagogical direction certainly make clear. However, planners began to articulate– and New Deal and wartime policy makers began to act on– a vision of the school as one educational and socializing institution within an encompassing neighborhood design.

Although Congress repeatedly defeated ‘general aid to education’ bills during the 1930s and 1940s (in 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1946, and 1948), ideas about– and funds for– education and schooling permeated all New Deal and wartime planning and housing legislation and entered into the policies of agencies that such legislation created. Lewis Mumford, Catherine Bauer, Clarence Stein, and other members of the RPAA successfully lobbied Governor-turned-President Roosevelt to create an executive-level planning infrastructure to discuss the feasibility of de-centering and re-centering of population within constellations of neighborhoods containing schools and a whole range of cultural, aesthetic, and recreational institutions. Even though implementation fell drastically short of this vision, New Deal national and state planning boards became substantive actors in educational issues– from rural school consolidation and

construction to curriculum development– buoyed by their self-promotion as analysts of the objective data of planning.

The National Housing Act of 1934 and the Housing Act of 1937, which created the upper and lower tiers of New Deal housing policy, codified the neighborhood unit as an ideal type. The former bill established the Federal Housing Administration, whose underwriting manuals encouraged public officials, private builders, and homeowners' associations to clearly demarcate neighborhood boundaries as racial boundaries and to assure the "presence and quality" of neighborhood schools in order for homeowners to obtain the best mortgage ratings and lending rates. The federal government, thus, heavily incentivized school construction and boundary creation around racially segregated schooling dating all the way back to the mid-1930s. The United States Housing Authority, the result of the politicking of Catherine Bauer and Senator Robert Wagner, drew on Bauer's knowledge of European municipal housing models in order to secure a place for educational and community centers in low-rent public housing. But Bauer's democratic vision was confounded by a series of Congressional compromises on the location of public housing and the selection of residents, which had the effect of equating public housing with slum clearance, residential displacement, and racial reconstruction and racial boundary creation.

Bauer's vision gained fuller legislative potential with the passage of the Lanham Act in 1940, which provided for the construction and operation of defense housing and school buildings in suburban areas near manufacturing centers in areas impacted by defense and war production. In terms of educational policy, the Lanham Act set two precedents: 1) it laid the foundation for

targeted federal 'impact aid' to particular cities and sub-sections of cities, and 2) it recognized nursery school and after-school education as a legitimate federal concern and responsibility.[67]

The Housing Act of 1949 encouraged the division of entire cities into self-contained neighborhoods, managed from above and guided by a comprehensive city plan. Planners promoted a co-operation between public school, parks, and transportation officials in an effort to show the public that the city was actively envisioning a future city where each neighborhood had a degree of 'paper equality': equal access to transportation routes, parks, playgrounds, community centers and schools. Within each neighborhood, however, the Housing Act gave city planners and allied interest groups incentives to discover 'higher uses' for the land and act with the power of eminent domain to realize them. Schools and other public facilities also played a role in these redevelopment plans in two ways, 1) the presence or prospect of a school or parks could lure private re-developers into an area, and 2) the provision of a school, parks, and/or public facilities could serve as the local contribution to the redevelopment project.

Taken together, new schools and other educational spaces, which historically had been fitted in gradually as a town grew and as residents and small-scale landowners demanded, increasingly became tied to public and private neighborhood construction and comprehensive planning during this period. Thus, decision making concerning school siting, construction, and attendance boundary creation expanded to include not only elected school boards, but large-scale 'community builders,' public housing officials, and city and regional planning commissioners. Also, these decisions were no longer simply 'local' decisions; they often intersected with and grew out of the federal housing and planning policies influenced by translocal interest networks

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[67] Carl Kaestle, "Federal Aid to Education Since World War II: Purposes and Politics" in Center on Education Policy, *The Future of the Federal Role in Elementary and Secondary Education*, 13-35.

like the National Association of Real Estate Boards and transnational intellectual currents like Catherine Bauer's modern housing.

The second claim is that there are important particularities of place that provide variation to the overarching historical narrative of the relationships between education and urban planning in the creation and maintenance of racial segregation. We cannot lose these particularities– whether they be in the form of early African American resistance to slum clearance and the discourse of blight and the discourse of family regeneration or be in the form of the Seattle Housing Authority continually arguing that their social experiment in integrated neighborhoods should be a model for the rest of the city and country. *Learning Place* provides a much needed (non-Californian) West Coast case of the ideal plans and actual construction of neighborhoods between the mid-1930s and mid-1950s. Because planners understood both the Pacific Northwest region and the city of Seattle to be new places– in contrast to the more established places of the East Coast– they held that the areas were ripe for social and spatial experimentation. I argue that this orientation, along with the work of the Seattle Housing Authority, created the tension that lies at the heart of this study: the tension between *economic* and *democratic* placemakers.

I argue that in Seattle the democratic vision of planned neighborhoods as sites of heterogeneous cooperation and 'bona fide' participation in the activities, institutions, and futures of the place often was lost to real estate interests, a racial economic calculus, and white racial fear. Economic placemakers relied on the 'science of real estate' and the urban life cycle that they first learned through FHA manuals, but which had a foundation in the racialized theories of Homer Hoyt and some Chicago School sociologists to argue that homeowners needed to cooperate and participate, but only to the extent that this assured neighborhoods and neighborhood school homogeneity. Yet, the Seattle Housing Authority *did* provide a modest

counter to this idea of the neighborhood as a set of exchange values that needed protection. With a neighborhood removed from the market, designed from a 'social point of view,' and a non-discrimination policy secured by the early protests of African American residents, the housing authority *did* encourage heterogeneous cooperation, the participation in the governance of the neighborhood, and the inclusion of non-residents in educational and recreational activities. The expansion of Seattle Housing Authority construction during the war period brought many non-white workers to the fringes of the city to live; their children attending integrated schools. The post-war racial calculus of economic placemakers again blocked non-white, especially African American, Seattleites from most parts of the city, but a significant number stayed or moved to the Seattle public housing on the periphery. How long would the democratic vision of public housing hold? To what extent did open housing organizing occur in public housing relative to the the traditionally black neighborhoods of the Central District? These are questions for a book yet to be written.

It is my belief that seeing the history of education through the history of planning will expand the field's vision of the policy domains and the neighborhood organizing campaigns that created, re-created, and opposed neighborhood-based educational and social service provision. The questions– who should participate? under what terms? and for what ends?– will dominate both the fields of education and planning during the following decades. How can families and community members be civically educated in order to participate in both educational and planning decision-making? What should be the response if most educators and planners continue to plan from the top down and for economic and stratifying ends? These questions, which grew out of the period between 1934-1955, would take on a new urgency for education and planning

policy makers as well as neighborhood residents and civil rights leaders during the subsequent decades of urban renewal.

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    National Resources Planning Board Files

National Archives– College Park
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Russell Sage Foundation
    Clarence Perry Papers
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Seattle Municipal Archives
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Seattle Public Library- Hugh and Jane Ferguson Seattle Room Special Collections
    Seattle Housing Authority Reports

Seattle School District
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    Roy Lubove Papers (unprocessed collection).

University of Pennsylvania Libraries
    Lewis Mumford Papers

NEWSPAPERS

New York Times

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