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Expansion and Exclusion: A Case Study of Gentrification in Church Hill

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

By

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Abstract

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This thesis explores the gentrification process in Church Hill, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Richmond, Virginia. After World War II, Richmond residents knew Church Hill mostly for its crime rate and dilapidated housing. The white, middle-class flight to the suburbs left the remaining residents, mostly African American, to experience decades of disinvestment. Church Hill was considered a neighborhood to avoid for much of the late twentieth century. Yet, Church Hill is currently one of the most desired neighborhoods in Richmond, particularly for young professionals. This thesis seeks to explain the reasons why there has been such a dramatic change in the perception of Church Hill and whether revitalization can occur without causing gentrification. Chapter 1 explores the top-down efforts of the Historic Richmond Foundation, a non-profit organization, and the Model Neighborhood Program, a federal program. Chapter 2 explores revitalization efforts by various non-profits organizations as each tried to work with community members. Chapter 3 explores the reasons why young professionals are moving into Church Hill and the impact of gentrification on the neighborhood.

Introduction

A young, white person looking for a house in Richmond will almost certainly look in the neighborhood Church Hill in the eastern portion of Richmond. The namesake of the neighborhood is the iconic St. John's Church where Patrick Henry gave his rousing "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" speech. Gas street lamps line cobblestone streets that overlook the skyline of Richmond as well as the James River. Church Hill boasts one of the most scenic views in the entire city. In addition to history and scenery, some of the most popular restaurants in Richmond are at the fingertips of residents in Church Hill. In November 2014, the *New York Times* featured an article on several Church Hill restaurants; new bakeries, coffee shops, and restaurants are regularly springing up in the neighborhood. Today, Church Hill is a largely desirable neighborhood to live in for its commercial businesses, walkability, history, and scenery; yet, these amenities are concentrated in the southern portion of the neighborhood. When white Richmonders use the term Church Hill they are likely picturing this portion of the neighborhood. Additionally, many white Richmonders use the terms Church Hill North, Upper Church Hill, or name the letter streets to designate a different part of Church Hill. Florine Allen recalled the demarcation all the way back to the early twentieth century: "Well, see white people lived after you cross M Street. You hardly found any blacks. From M to Broad was all white."[1] Almost one hundred years later, a young white couple looking to buy a house in Church Hill received warnings not to go past M street.[2] It would be easy to assume from this that the neighborhood has simply not changed over time; however, upon closer examination, Church Hill residents experienced a series of population shifts, beginning during the 1950s that permanently affected the shape of the neighborhood today.

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[1] Florine M. Allen, interviewed by Linda McGowen, n.d., transcript, Church Hill Oral History Collection, James Cabell Branch Library Special Collections, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.
[2] Stefan Kling, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, February 22, 2016, Richmond, VA.

After World War II, Church Hill experienced a large out-migration as residents with resources, most of them whites, moved to suburban communities. As a result, Church Hill became a neighborhood with almost entirely low-income, African American residents. In 1956, a non-profit organization, the Historic Richmond Foundation, formed to restore the neighborhood surrounding St. John's Church. The word restore typically conveys a favorable connotation; yet, in this context restore also meant pushing out one group of people to allow room for another group. The Historic Richmond Foundation intentionally sought the removal of African American renters so that white renters could move into the restored houses on East Grace Street. The creation of a white, middle-class enclave within a blighted neighborhood is often referred to as gentrification. The expectation in a gentrified neighborhood is that over time more and more white middle-class residents will move into the neighborhood, causing all property values to rise. Additionally, new amenities and services accompany the white residents, altering the native culture of the neighborhood. The Historic Richmond Foundation initially restored only one block; nevertheless, the HRF's actions had multiple, lasting effects on the neighborhood. Rather than work on the entire Church Hill neighborhood, the Historic Richmond Foundation set its own boundary of what defined Church Hill, operated within that framework, and encouraged everyone else to adopt its boundary. To this day, the local geographic vernacular of Church Hill versus Church Hill North signifies a neighborhood divided by race, a division that can be traced to the Historic Richmond Foundation.

The first attempt by the city of Richmond to renew the "other" Church Hill was the Model Neighborhood Program in 1968. Church Hill received millions of dollars in funding from the federal government through President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty program. The Model Neighborhood Program tried to combat the many social ills in Church Hill at the time;

including, crime, unemployment, and dilapidated housing. By 1974, when President Nixon ended the Model Neighborhood Program, Church Hill had virtually no improvements. The withdrawal of federal funds reinforced the steady decline of this part of Church Hill. Top-down urban renewal efforts gave way to a new revitalization movement that struggled to combat the growing stigma of the neighborhood.

The shift from renewal by political elites in the 1950s and 1960s to community-driven revitalization efforts in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s promised improvements for more neighborhood residents through inclusive revitalization; yet, Church Hill did not experience a dramatic transformation. In fact, conditions worsened to such an extent that the City sold some dilapidated houses for just one dollar. Various non-profit organizations proliferated each with a different angle on how to bring about change but ultimately all centered on restoring houses. The Church Hill Area Revitalization Team, Upper Church Hill Restoration Society, and the Better Housing Coalition all sought to ameliorate the blighted conditions of Church Hill. Each organization worked to help all residents of Church Hill, regardless of race. Despite the good intentions of these non-profit organizations, Church Hill saw only slow improvements. Today though, Church Hill is considered a prime residential neighborhood for young professional. Is Church Hill now the ultimate neighborhood comeback story? After decades of crime, drugs, and dilapidated homes, how did such a dramatic transformation occur in Church Hill? Property values are up in the neighborhood, drugs and crime are down, and businesses are thriving. The dramatic success of Church Hill is due to gentrification, a process that can be traced to the Historic Richmond Foundation in 1956.

In the last decade, Church Hill has dramatically transformed. As crime decreased, the gentrified St. John's Church area spread northward. The boundary on Broad Street shifted north,

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first to Marshall Street and now to M Street. Some predict it will eventually be at Nine Mile Road. Church Hill North is on the precipice of change, and many predict the entire neighborhood will be gentrified within ten years. Property values might rise so high that young professionals can no longer afford to live in Church Hill period. In fact, the Better Housing Coalition, a non-profit organization that builds affordable housing, has said its time in the neighborhood is ending as the property values are too high already.

Church Hill is widely known for Patrick Henry and St. John's Church; yet, few know it as the home of L. Douglas Wilder, the first African American governor, or the home of Dr. Jean Harris, the first African American to graduate from the Medical College of Virginia. There is an important history to tell in the neighborhood of Church Hill. There are African American neighborhoods in Richmond, such as Jackson Ward and Fulton that are well-known for the massive destruction done there by those with power. African American residents in Church Hill have not experienced the city completely razing their neighborhood, but they certainly have experienced a historically tight-knit community changed. Church Hill has gone through a dramatic transformation where a neighborhood considered to be extremely dilapidated and dangerous in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s is now a prestigious neighborhood boasting some of the best amenities in the city. Yet, these amenities cater to the middle-class population in Church Hill and offer little to meet the basic needs of low-income residents in the northern section of Church Hill.
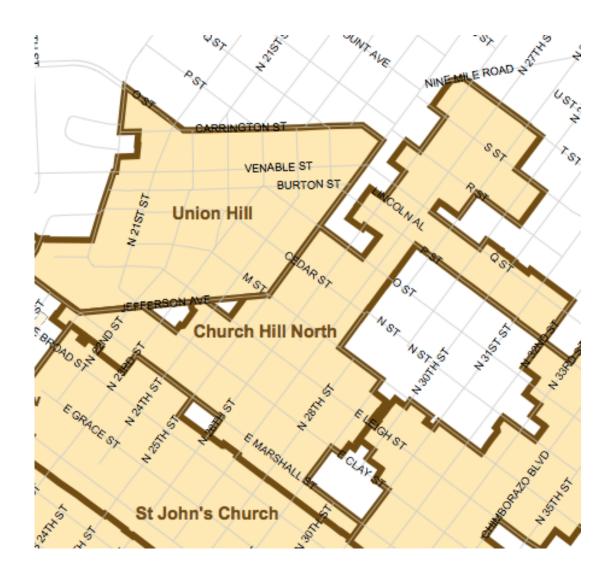
Image One: The Historic Richmond Foundation's "pilot block" where they began initial renovations was between 23rd and 24th on East Grace Street. The St. John's Church area indicates the portion of Church Hill directly influenced by the Historic Richmond Foundation. "Maps of the Church Hill North Historic District," Church Hill People's News, accessed April 27, 2015, http://chpn.net/news/2009/09/03/the-church-hill-north-historic-district_8873/#map

Chapter 1: Renewal in Church Hill

"Well, I would just like to say that I think that Church Hill is one of the finest places to live, I've never lived any other place, and I lived and grew up and worked, church life and marriage life, all have been right in Church Hill, East End, and I won't live anywhere else now because in my closing years I want to go from Church Hill to Heaven."[3] Florine M. Allen's description of her eighty-two years in Church Hill encapsulates many longtime residents' sense of the unique, close-knit community of the Richmond neighborhood. She was certainly not alone in her portrayal of Church Hill. Oral histories conducted by Akida T. Mensah in 1982 overflow with affection for the blocks in the eastern portion of Richmond as residents, mainly African Americans, reminisced about their lives in the early twentieth century. Yet when residents discussed current conditions, their descriptions changed dramatically. No longer did they detail relationships amongst neighbors; rather, many listed the deteriorating physical and social conditions in the neighborhood. Many of the interviewees viewed their neighborhood at its nadir in the 1980s. Yet between the 1950s and 1970s, Richmond's Church Hill neighborhood had received aid first from a private organization and then from a government program. With such concerted efforts to renew Church Hill, why did residents describe a neighborhood left in ruins?

Church Hill is the "oldest intact neighborhood in Richmond."[4] In 1737, William Mayo surveyed land in what is now Richmond for William Byrd II; the land stretched from the north bank of the James River to the foot of Church Hill.[5] Byrd subsequently donated the materials and land to build St. John's Church, the most celebrated landmark of Church Hill.[6] On March 20, 1775, Patrick Henry gave his famous "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" speech at the Second

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[3] Allen, interview.
[4] "St. John's Church District," Historic Richmond, accessed April 27, 2015, http://historicrichmond.com/.
[5] Virginius Dabney, *Richmond: The Story of a City* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976), 13.
[6] "St. John's Church District," Historic Richmond, accessed April 27, 2015, http://historicrichmond.com/.

Virginia Convention, at the only place large enough in town: St. John's Church.[7] This church, a great American landmark, elevated the status of the neighborhood.

Historically, Church Hill also boasted a diverse population. "In the antebellum era it contained a few very wealthy people, many middle-class professionals, immigrants from Europe, free blacks, and slaves."[8] Church Hill's close location to Rockett's landing allowed workers convenient access from their homes to employment at the docks and factories. Working-class residents tended to reside in the northern section of Church Hill, often referred to as Shedtown. "The neighborhood was home to mule drivers, store clerks, factory workers, carriage makers, painters, machine operators, engineers, and laborers."[9] The southern end of Church Hill had larger houses made of brick. For example, in 1801, John Adams built a beautiful house on Church Hill that John Van Lew later purchased and expanded to become one of the grandest homes in the entire city; his daughter, Elizabeth Van Lew, famously spied for the Union during the Civil War while living in the house.[10] The economic and racial diversity that characterized Church Hill shifted after World War II.

By the mid-twentieth century, Church Hill residents, mainly white, moved to the suburbs of Richmond leaving behind the historic houses in Church Hill. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* ran an article entitled "Along Memory Lane on Old Church Hill" that demonstrated how many people left the neighborhood: "Go where you will in any section of our city and you will find people that formerly lived on Church Hill."[11] Statistics illustrate how enticing the suburbs became for residents in the city of Richmond after 1945. "The rate of growth followed a

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[7] Marguerite Crumley & John G. Zehmer, *Church Hill: The St. John's Church Historic District* (Little Compton, RI: Fort Church Publishers Inc, 1991),8.
[8] Marguerite Crumley & John G. Zehmer, *Church Hill: The St. John's Church Historic District,* 11.
[9] Ibid., 168.
[10] US Department of Interior, *Church Hill North Historic District 1997 Nomination,* p. 27, accessed February 29, 2016, http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Cities/Richmond/Church_Hill_North_HD_textlist.htm.
[11] George Seaton, "Along Memory Lane on Old Church Hill,"*Richmond Times-Dispatch,* May 12, 1935.

generally consistent trend to produce a peak population of 230,310 in 1950. Between 1950 and 1960 the population diminished by 10,352 persons or 4.5%."[12] The population also shifted along racial lines. "Between 1950 and 1960 the nonwhite population increased 26% and the white population decreased 20%.[13] This flight to the suburbs after World War II changed the housing pattern to what many scholars call the filtering model. Those that lived in nice housing in the cities moved to the suburbs for more space. "In this way, decent housing filters down and is left behind for lower-income families; the worst housing drops out of the market to abandonment or demolition."[14] More Richmond residents moved to the newly developed suburbs on the west side of the city. As a result, with poorer people occupying older houses they could not afford to keep up, the housing stock in Church Hill declined. Melinda Skinner grew up in Windsor Farms and recalled asking her father while driving through Church Hill in the early 1950s, "why isn't there any grass in front of the houses?" Instead of grass, she remembered litter and mongrel dogs in front of houses.[15]

The Historic Richmond Foundation, a nonprofit organization, and the Model Neighborhood Program, a federal program, each worked to restore the neighborhood at different times; furthermore, they both sought to curb social conditions each group perceived as detrimental. Church Hill is unique in the urban history landscape because, in one small neighborhood, both preservationists and planners attempted to reshape the neighborhood physically and socially without destroying its historic buildings. Additionally, each group

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[12] City of Richmond & Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, *Community Renewal Program* (Richmond, VA, 1966), 15.
[13] Ibid., 1
[14] Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 1996), 56.
[15] Melinda Skinner, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond,Virginia, May 15, 2015.

worked within frameworks of race, class, and history that ultimately explain why the neighborhood never experienced full restoration.

Historiography

Urban renewal is a relatively recent term in urban history as President Truman first introduced the concept with the Housing Act of 1949. Truman summarized what the new act could accomplish: "It equips the federal government for the first time, with effective means for aiding cities in the vital task of clearing slums and rebuilding blighted areas."[16] Truman portrayed urban renewal as a neighborhood improvement plan, but urban planners rarely placed the well-being of neighborhood residents first. Indeed, they typically approached projects with a conviction that cities had nothing to offer anymore, resulting in mass bulldozing and clearance rather than restoration. Urban renewal projects most often resulted in displacement of residents; many of whom were justly enraged as they watched private developers label their homes slums to acquire prized real estate.[17] Indeed, "livable working-class neighborhoods were torn down along with genuine slums."[18] Planners never addressed how racially motivated their actions were. For example, in Chicago, when a federal court ordered the Chicago Housing Authority to build housing projects in white neighborhoods, the CHA simply stopped building. In Chicago, African American neighborhoods comprised 70 percent of the areas selected for clearance.[19] Neighborhood preservationist groups developed in response to urban planners' bulldozing

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[16] Harry S. Truman,"Statement by the President Upon Signing the Housing Act of 1949," July 15, 1949. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=13246.

[17] For instance, in one neighborhood the initial report planned for 500 units, but ten years later there were only 22 units built exclusively for the elderly. Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 163.

[18] Benjamin Ross, *Dead End: Suburban Sprawl and the Rebirth of American Urbanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 53.

[19] Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto,* 274.

historically significant areas. Church Hill is rare because the planners and preservationists both worked to improve the neighborhood, although never interacting with the other. Even so, they both worked within an unquestioned, segregated framework.

Urban historians examine how government and private enterprise utilized urban renewal as a means to control minority populations. Jane Jacobs wrote one of the first scholarly monographs on urban renewal and pushed back against the overwhelming praise for urban renewal by the public in the early 1960s. Jacobs called attention to the billions of dollars spent on clearing slums that accomplished little to nothing.[20] Jacobs emphasized how important it is to embrace the diverse uses in cities, not separate spaces; thus, she argued against massive housing projects and suburban development where homogeneity rules above mixed use.[21]

Martin Anderson quickly followed Jacobs with his work on the government's destructive power to cities during urban renewal.[22] He asked the provocative question: "Should the individual property rights of some people be sacrificed so that their land can be appropriated and sold by the government to other private individuals who will put it to a 'higher and better' use?"[23]Anderson's question exposed the class prejudice and exploitation inherent in urban renewal plans. Anderson's book made an urgent call for urban renewal to end immediately, and he said that only private enterprises should continue future projects.

Writing with two additional decades of perspective, Arnold Hirsch contends private enterprise bore just as much responsibility for the destruction of cities as the federal government. Hirsch specifically examines Chicago's urban renewal program and how the planners in Chicago set the mold for others to emulate around the nation. The Metropolitan Housing and Planning

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[20] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), 4.
[21] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 144.
[22] Martin Anderson, *The Federal Bulldozer* (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1964).
[23] Martin Anderson, *The Federal Bulldozer,* 5.

Council, a private group, developed the pattern followed throughout the nation whereby it would clear the land at its own expense, and make the land available to private redevelopers at a fraction of the original cost."[24] Most residents targeted by urban renewal could not afford to return afterward to their old neighborhood. As a solution to the excessive number of people displaced, the government built high-rise housing projects in isolated areas, as the Chicago example showed.[25] Thus, housing projects became a consequence of urban renewal wherein the impoverished experienced isolation unparalleled in their former neighborhoods.

Michael B. Katz agrees with Hirsch that the government and planners never really sought to end poverty; rather, the goal was to isolate and control poverty.[26] Katz argues the uniqueness of urban poverty in the twentieth century is the spatial distribution of poverty. Before suburbia claimed the upper and middle classes, the poor and the rich lived relatively close together within a city, but, residents now experienced segregated neighborhoods in total isolation.[27] Because urban renewal plans rarely rebuilt as much housing as they tore down, residents had only the option of the projects and even greater isolation.

William Julius Wilson expands Katz's argument to say that urban poverty is more complicated than isolation and segregation; one "must consider the way in which other changes in society have interactions with segregation to produce the dramatic social transformation of inner-city neighborhoods."[28] Wilson argues many factors coupled with segregation result in

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[24] Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto,* 104.
[25] Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 10.
[26] Michael B. Katz, *Improving Poor People: The Welfare State, the "Underclass," and Urban Schools as History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).
[27] Michael B. Katz, *Improving Poor People*, 80-81.
[28] William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 16.

increased joblessness amongst African Americans in the inner cities.[29] Wilson maintains that the key to breaking the perpetual cycle of urban poverty is more employment opportunities.

E. Michael Jones continues the urban renewal conversation with intensified rhetoric.[30] Jones argues that after World War II the government's actions should be classified as social engineering. Jones argues that government-approved housing policies enabled middle-class residents to move to the suburbs but denied access for poor minorities; thereby, social engineering an extremely segregated housing system. According to Jones, the government wanted the same level of control as it had over the military in World War II.[31] It may appear natural for people to move to the suburbs, but Jones and other scholars agree the massive outmigration to the suburbs would not have happened without government policies. Indeed the disinvestment in cities cannot be fully understood without discussion of the intentional investment in suburbs.

Suburbanization

Lewis Mumford summarized suburban development as "that smug Victorian phrase 'We keep ourselves to ourselves.'"[32] Suburbia offered an escape from the diverse city to a segregated environment divided by class and racial lines. Suburbanization exploded after World War II across the nation, largely due to federal legislation.[33] On June 27, 1934, Congress authorized the Federal Housing Authority with the intention to use private enterprise to stimulate building

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[29] William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears,* 24.

[30] E. Michael Jones, *The Slaughter of Cities: Urban Renewal as Ethnic Cleansing* (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2004).

[31] E. Michael Jones, *The Slaughter of Cities,* 187.

[32] Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1961), 561.

[33] Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 208.

development and relieve unemployment.[34] The FHA does not build or loan money; rather, it

entices private lenders by guaranteeing payment of loans made by the private lenders.[35] It is

noteworthy that the FHA insures single-family houses rather than multi-family buildings; thus,

creating a pro-suburban impetus to the detriment of inner cities.[36] Additionally, Congress

authorized the Home Owners Loan Corporation on June 19, 1933, to protect homeowners from

foreclosure. HOLC systematized the mortgage loan process and ultimately shifted people's

perceptions of the feasibility of owning a home.[37] "And as the percentage of families who were

homeowners increased from 44 percent in 1934 to 63 percent in 1972, the American suburb was

transformed from an affluent preserve into the normal expectation of the middle class."[38] Scholar

Lizbeth Cohen explains suburbanization was not the first time Americans experienced owning

property, but it was the first time that the majority of Americans owned property.[39] Suburban

living became a status symbol where those with enough resources could escape the city. By

1980, 40 million people lived in the suburbs.[40] This may appear as a natural process based on

individual choice, but in reality the government created the segregation of the suburbs.

"Government policy might have prevented it, but it didn't try. In a sense, our government did

half its job: it provided the means of escape from the city-- highways and cheap home loans--

while neglecting to allocate those means fairly."[41] The suburban phenomenon explains why

Church Hill rapidly declined in the 1950s. Dr. Horace Hicks remembered, "You know back in

the old days we used to say any man as soon as he got a good position and made a little money

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[34] Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 203.
[35] Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier,* 204.
[36] Ibid., 206.
[37] Ibid.,196.
[38] Ibid., 215-216.
[39] Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York:Vintage Books, 2003),196.
[40] Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier,* 4.
[41] Andres Duany, Elzabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation: The Rise and Sprawl of the American Dream* (New York: North Point Press, 200), 130.

he automatically moved out on Monument Avenue or out on the Boulevard...Then when desegregation came along every white person that could get out of Church Hill moved."[42] Suburban life created a paradox. On one hand, "we are a nation that values privacy and individualism down to our very core, and the suburbs give us that."[43] Yet, as scholar Irving Allen notes, the suburbs offer an "illusion of homogeneity."[44] Vibrant ethnic neighborhoods in cities did not transition well to the suburbs.[45] The suburbs created a new status symbol for the middle-class that divided people based on class and race; those that remained in cities paid the largest price as they experienced increased neglect.

Inner cities suffered disinvestment while the suburbs benefited from government investment. After World War II, cities stopped building smaller, affordable houses for lower-income families; thus, affordable housing came in the form of abandoned, neglected, or government-subsidized housing. Typically, the only new houses constructed in the cities during the 1950s and 1960s were massive subsidized housing projects, further concentrating and isolating the poor. In Richmond, suburban development expanded westward, leaving Church Hill, the far eastern suburb, ignored. From 1952-1962 the city of Richmond built four massive housing projects in the northernmost section of Church Hill; thereby, densely concentrating the impoverished.[46] In the 1970s, African Americans with the resources moved out of inner cities, similarly to the pattern of whites in the 1950s and 1960s, in large part thanks to the Fair Housing

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[42] Dr. Horace Hicks, interviewed by Akida T. Mensah, September 14, 1982, transcript, Church Hill Oral History Collection, James Cabell Branch Library Special Collections, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.
[43] Leigh Gallager, *The End of the Suburbs: Where the American Dream is Moving* (New York: Penguin Group, 2013), 192.
[44] Irving Allen "The Ideology of Dense Neighborhood Redevelopment" in *Gentrification, Displacement, and Neighborhood Revitalization,* eds., J. John Palen and Bruce London (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984) 32.
[45] E. Michael Jones, *The Slaughter of Cities,* 190.
[46] *Church Hill Revitalization Plan* (Richmond, VA, 1980), 3.

Act of 1968.[47] By 1980, 23.3 percent of African Americans lived in the suburbs across the

nation.[48] Ultimately, even if suburbanization had not reflected racist housing policies and

homogenized different ethnic groups, it encouraged a middle-class exodus from the city and

isolated the impoverished that remained in the city. It is not surprising that scholar Kenneth

Jackson equates the importance of the suburbanization movement with European immigrants

coming through Ellis Island.[49] As it did elsewhere, suburbanization in Richmond contributed to

the dilapidation of houses and the homogenization of residents in Church Hill.

 Overall, urban history scholars agree that urban renewal and suburbanization were never

just about housing; rather, they were about control. Scholars vary in assessing the agents

responsible and to what degree. While most scholars focus on the process of urban renewal in

larger cities, the smaller city of Richmond also experienced the destructive power of urban

renewal as middle-class residents moved out of the city to the suburbs.

Richmond Urban Renewal

 Church Hill residents only had to look down the hill to the southeast at the demolished

neighborhood of Fulton or walk around Jackson Ward to see what the Richmond City Council

was capable of doing to a neighborhood in the name of urban renewal. City leaders of Richmond

expressed a similar perspective as planners around the nation: "Urban renewal, in its broadest

sense, offers a unique opportunity to start over-- to renew-- to correct mistakes of the past."[50]

Jackson Ward used to be considered the Harlem of the South; a vibrant neighborhood filled with

black-owned businesses. When African American and working-class white residents caught

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[47] Wilson, *When Work Disappears,* 38.
[48] Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier,* 301.
[49] Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier,* 190.
[50] City of Richmond & Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, *Community Renewal Program,* 1.

wind of a city plan to cut through the neighborhood with the proposed Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike, they successfully led opposition to the plan in two referenda, one in 1950 and again in 1951. However, the Richmond City Council ignored the democratic process, and, in 1953, voted for a toll highway by asking the legislature to create an "authority" to build the road. An authority fell under the General Assembly's jurisdiction; thereby, removing residents' voice in the debate.[51] The Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike split Jackson Ward into two parts separated by the highway and displaced former residents throughout the city. The limited data on the effects of the Turnpike reflects the lack of concern about them on the part of city officials.[52] Thus, Richmond City Council bulldozed an entire community.

In 1966, Richmond city officials prepared information about each neighborhood in the *Community Renewal Program*; in the Fulton neighborhood, located just down the hill from Church Hill, words such as clearance and dislocation appeared.[53] Not coincidentally, Fulton was an African American neighborhood. By 1976, the city completely destroyed the brick townhouses, churches, schools, and stores that once lined the streets of the Fulton neighborhood.[54] Although the media labeled Fulton a slum, before destruction its residents had one of the highest home ownership rates for working class families in the city.[55] Thus, Fulton is an excellent example of the power of language in creating stigmas of neighborhoods. By terming Fulton a slum, city officials gained support to bulldoze buildings in order to clear space for future industry despite the reality that Fulton was a well-established community.[56]

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[51] Christopher Silver, *Twentieth Century Richmond* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 192.
[52] Christopher Silver, *Twentieth Century Richmond,* 196.
[53] City of Richmond & Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, *Community Renewal Program, 94.*
[54] Christopher Silver, *Twentieth Century Richmond,* 306.
[55] 30 percent of Fulton residents owned their own homes. Christopher Silver, *Twentieth Century Richmond,* 261.
[56] Christopher Silver, *Twentieth Century Richmond,* 262.

In light of the destruction of Fulton and Jackson Ward, why did city officials spare Church Hill, also an African American neighborhood, during the urban renewal era? The *Community Renewal Program* sheds light on the city commissioners' reasoning: "In the Historic Zone around St. John's Church there are more than 70 buildings which were built before 1865." It went on to say, "Few American cities have so many historic buildings in so compact an area," but warned, "the success of conservation efforts in one area can be severely handicapped by the influence of adjacent blight."[57] City leaders made clear the goal was to protect the property values of the HRF's work; thus, the renewal of Church Hill was undertaken always with an eye to improving protection for the St. John's area. The connection to the history of the neighborhood changed the city leaders' perspective on the value of the neighborhood. This is a significant story because on one hand it shows how powerfully influential physical buildings are; yet, on the other hand, how little consideration city officials gave to African American residents in the neighborhood. Residents, like Florine Allen, who lived in Church Hill their entire lives were never decisive factors in any city report; rather, St. John's Church remained the largest factor in justifying restoring houses rather than demolishing them.

Housing Discrimination & Deterioration in Church Hill

City officials could easily term African American neighborhoods, such as Fulton, as slums since most homes had fallen into dilapidation by the 1970s, but this result was from systemic discrimination that went far beyond individual control. Beginning in the 1930s, minority residents had little chance of receiving a loan to buy a house. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation developed a scale in the 1930s to highlight reliable areas for mortgage loans versus neighborhoods where loans were likely to result in foreclosures. The scale ranged from A-D with

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[57] City of Richmond & Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, *Community Renewal Program,* 90.

corresponding colors. Areas labeled "A" were colored green and indicated the most secure

neighborhoods for mortgage loans. At the other extreme, areas labeled "D" were colored red and

indicated high-risk neighborhoods. The denial of funds by financial institutions to residents

because their neighborhood fell in the red portion of a map became known as redlining. A

University of Richmond digital history project explains how racially motivated HOLC's

assessments were: "Each and every African American area in Richmond was assigned a grade of

D marking it as a fully declined area. Of the dozen D areas in Richmond, only two were not

African American."[58] Even African American veterans struggled to receive loans upon returning

from fighting in World War II; the VA mortgage program required a private bank to approve

each loan. Banks had no incentive to practice equality.[59] In *Gentrification,* the authors describe

an African American couple in 1977 who tried sixty-one different banks to get a loan; they

finally were approved but only because they had a personal connection with an employee.[60]

In Church Hill, HOLC listed zero favorable influence and under inhabitants said,

"Infiltration of Negroes with a population of 80% Negro and increasing."[61] For comparison,

HOLC listed the inhabitants of Hampton Gardens, Tuckahoe, and Windsor Farms, the newer

suburban West End, simply as the "best people."[62] Thus, the redlining of Church Hill made it

virtually impossible for minority residents to receive loans to buy houses. "Between 1910 and

1920, African-American homeownership in Richmond increased 22.5 percent from 1,646 owner-

occupied homes to 2,015."[63] HOLC's discriminatory measures explain why the increase in

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[58] "Redlining Richmond," Digital Scholarship Lab, University of Richmond, accessed March 20, 2015, http://dsl.richmond.edu/holc/pages/intro.
[59] Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic,* 170.
[60] Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, Elvin Wyly, *Gentrification* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 29.
[61] "Redlining Richmond," Digital Scholarship Lab, University of Richmond, accessed March 20, 2015, http://dsl.richmond.edu/holc/pages/intro.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Steven J. Hoffman, *Race, Class, and Power in the Building of Richmond, 1870-1920* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2004), 167.

home ownership stopped. In 1942, only 5-15 percent of Church Hill residents owned their houses.[64] Scholar Michael Katz summarizes redlining as a process that "hastened the deterioration of city neighborhoods by starving them of capital for homeownership."[65] Banks denied African American residents mortgage loans based on their neighborhood, neighborhoods suffered from lack of home ownership, and African American residents received the blame for all urban problems.[66] Ted Thornton, field representative of the Virginia Department of Welfare & Institutions explained in 1968, "tenants do not keep up their property and the real estate agents feel the area is a poor investment."[67] But later he conceded discrimination was also at play, "banks sometimes will not make loans for improvements in Church Hill."[68] Thornton's comments diluted the very real discrimination that had been in place since the 1930s with redlining. Since African American residents rarely owned their own houses, white Richmonders assumed they cared little for their properties. Yet, Dr. Jean Harris described her personal observation of what happened in the neighborhood when African Americans owned their houses in Church Hill: "Very few blacks owned their homes and to this day those homes which were black homes still stand out because those were the homes that were maintained in as good repair as possible."[69] African American residents desired owning their own house but policies prevented most from doing so.

Renters frequently grappled with absentee landlords who had allowed houses to deteriorate or remain substandard. For instance, as late as 1946, over 50 percent of Church Hill

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[64] Richmond City Planning Commission, "A master plan for the physical development of the city," (Richmond, Virginia 1946), 109. Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.

[65] Michael Katz, *Improving Poor People,* 83.

[66] George R. Metcalf, *From Little Rock to Boston : The History of School Desegregation* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1983), 134.

[67] Bill Harwood, "Chimborazo Group Helps in Home Improvements," *Richmond News Leader*, February 3, 1968.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Dr. Jean Harris, interviewed by Akida T. Mensah, September 29, 1982, transcript, Church Hill Oral History Collection, James Cabell Branch Library Special Collections, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.

residents did not have flush toilets.[70] Landlords exploited a "captive rental market" where

residents feared eviction if they reported substandard conditions.[71] One African American renter

said, "I don't mind if the rent goes up. I want to have a better home and not be ashamed of it. I

want to live like others."[72] The increased number of people leaving Church Hill in the 1940s and

1950s also contributed to more dilapidated homes. As a result, "less affluent households move

into the housing these higher-income families leave behind and in turn leave their former

housing for even poorer households-- and so on down the economic ladder."[73] The result?

Scholar Wilson explained the serious ramifications whereby abandoned buildings offer a place

for crime and drug usage to proliferate.[74] Who would take seriously the deterioration of housing

in Church Hill?

Historic Richmond Foundation

In 1956, a group of white Richmonders formed the Historic Richmond Foundation;

members aimed to restore the historic houses surrounding St. John's Church, the site of Patrick

Henry's "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" speech. They began with the "pilot block"

between 23rd and 24th on East Grace Street.[75] In 1957, the City Council approved the St. John's

Church Old and Historic District. They also established the Commission of Architectural Review

where any exterior changes must be first approved by the CAR; thereby, preserving the

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[70] Richmond City Planning Commission, *Master Plan* (1946), 110.
[71] Church Hill Neighborhood Grant Application, April 1968, Box-Folder 2-3, p. 17, Bruce V. English Papers Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.
[72] Bill Harwood, "Chimborazo Group Helps in Home Improvements," *Richmond News Leader*, February 3, 1968.
[73] Michael H. Schill and Richard P. Nathan, *Revitalizing American Cities* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983), 13.
[74] Wilson, *When Work Disappears*, 46.
[75] Robert Andrews, "Movement for Restoration of Houses in Church Hill is Gaining Momentum," *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* January 26, 1958.

architectural integrity of all the buildings in the historic zone.[76] In addition to restoring houses

surrounding St. John's Church, Historic Richmond Foundation also sought to make Church Hill

a tourist destination comparable to neighborhoods in other cities such as Beacon Hill in Boston

or Georgetown in Washington.[77]

Image Two: Richmond Newspapers, "2200 East Grace Street," July 26, 1973, Valentine
Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

The HRF's primary goal in Church Hill was the preservation of the area surrounding St.

John's Church. Furthermore, St. John's Church represents an influential moment in American

history.[78] In a pamphlet published in 1957, the HRF emphatically wrote, "THE FIRST

OBJECTIVE IS TO PROVIDE A PROPER SETTING FOR HISTORIC ST. JOHN'S

CHURCH."[79] The use of all capitalized letters conveyed the urgency that HRF members felt. B.

Walton Turnbull, the practical president of the HRF, strategically connected the organization's

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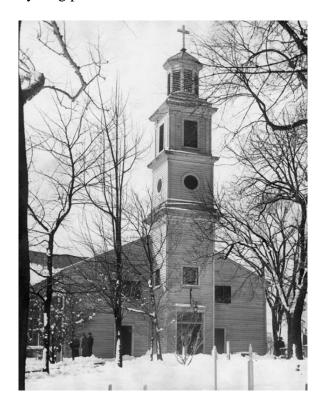[76] Marguerite Crumley & John G. Zehmer, *Church Hill: The St. John's Church Historic District*, 11.
[77] *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Sunday, May 21, 1961.
[78] Ibid.
[79] *Church Hill Project of Historic Richmond Foundation*, 1957, Valentine Museum.

project to a much larger legacy: "The houses offer a connection with Old Richmond [and] Patrick Henry, the brilliant young patriot of the American Revolution."[80]

Image Three: Richmond Newspapers, "St. John's Church in Snow," March 10, 1947, Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

HRF members also identified with the legacy of the Confederacy. One Historic Richmond Foundation pamphlet celebrated Church Hill's role in the Civil War: "These streets echoed with guns from the Seven Days Battles in 1862."[81] Historic Richmond Foundation members rooted their goals in an exclusive heritage that sought to re-establish a white enclave in Church Hill. The Historic Richmond Foundation followed a clear strategy based on realtor Morton Thalhimer's recommendations. "He feels that we are not concentrating our buying sufficiently about St. John's Church," a memo told HRF members, and "that in a neighborhood 99% colored the only way to reverse this trend is by concentrated buying and concentrated reversion to white

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[80] *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Sunday, May 21, 1961. Valentine Museum Church Hill Newspaper Clippings Folder, Richmond, VA.
[81] Marguerite Crumley & John G. Zehmer, *Church Hill: The St. John's Church Historic District*, 22.

occupancy."[82] HRF members engaged in a massive effort, at the expense of African American

tenants, to create their particular vision of who should live next to St. John's Church.

In addition to preserving the St. John's area of Church Hill, HRF members also aimed to

turn that neighborhood into a tourist destination. The research chief of the local Valentine

Museum predicted, "Richmond could turn Church Hill into a tourist attraction equal to Colonial

Williamsburg."[83] When Mrs. S. Henry Edmunds, director of the Historic Charleston

Foundation, visited Church Hill she said, "In five years, I'll bet your Church Hill is another

Georgetown."[84] At the time, small houses in Georgetown were being sold for $200,000.

Edmunds said, "Such an astounding leap in property price tags shows what Cinderella slum

districts can be."[85] In order to achieve the goal of turning Church Hill into a tourist destination,

HRF members decided the demographic of the residents needed to change. Mrs. Ralph Catterall,

secretary of the Historic Richmond Foundation, wrote to Fitzgerald Bemiss, member of the

General Assembly, requesting that he introduce a bill for the state to purchase the block directly

across from St. John's. Catterall explained the necessity for such an action, "St. John's is a

principal tourist attraction and that it is humiliating (as well as poor business) to have visitors see

the ugliness and neglect that now afflict the neighborhood."[86] Her closing revealed that African

Americans would pay a price for the Historic Richmond Foundation's work. "The St. John's area

is changing so fast that we feel it is vitally important to act quickly. Just last week a plan to open

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[82] "Historic Richmond Foundation Memorandum," April 17, 1957, Elizabeth Scott Bocock Papers, Box-Folder 6-7, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.
[83] Gay Friddell, "Research Chief Envisions Church Hill as Tourist Attraction," *Richmond News Leader*, January 7, 1958.
[84] Rose Bennett, "Driving Drives People From Suburbia to City," *Richmond News Leader*, October 24, 1963.
[85] Ibid.
[86] "Letter from Mrs. Ralph Catterall to Mr. Fitzgerald Bemiss, January 23, 1958, Elizabeth Scott Bocock Papers, Box-Folder 6-7, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.

a Negro dance hall in one of the Broad Street buildings opposite the Church was reported."[87]

Today, there is no trace that businesses of any sort once stood across from St. John's Church.

Instead, Patrick Henry Park offers a few benches for visitors to sit and admire the beauty of St.

John's Church. Patrick Henry Park is representative of the HRF's legacy in Church Hill in

creating space for white residents and visitors even if it meant thwarting black-owned businesses.

HRF members blatantly expressed their desire to change who occupied the pilot block.

Dr. Wyndham Bolling Blanton, President of the HRF said, "'The success of the Church Hill

project depends greatly on the type of persons who will invest in or occupy the area's old

homes.'"[88] Mary Wingfield Scott, founding member of the HRF and author of *Old Richmond*

Neighborhoods, agreed, "'What they need up there are people of a professional class-- such as

doctors or lawyers-- who are willing to live there and pioneer instead of worrying about where

they ought to live.'"[89] The Historic Richmond Foundation's correspondence indicates

discrimination guided policy. Mrs. Catterall sent Richard S. Reynolds a letter on behalf of the

Board about his recently acquired property, 2300 E. Grace Street. "The Negro tenants at 2300 are

said to be drunk and disorderly to such an extent that there is danger of our losing our good

occupants at 2302 and 2306." She further suggested he remodel the building into three

apartments to "get responsible white tenants." If that option did not suit Mr. Reynolds, she

offered another plan, "If you would be willing, now to turn the house over to us, we would board

it up until we could raise funds to renovate it." Catterall's closing left no confusion as to the

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[87] Ibid.

[88] Robert Andrews, "Movement for Restoration of Houses in Church Hill is Gaining Momentum," *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* January 26, 1958.

[89] Ibid.

intent of the Historic Richmond Foundation, "The essential thing is to get the colored tenants out."[90]

The HRF practiced exclusion in their language as well as their preservation of houses, seeking to distinguish and separate the area of their work from the rest of the neighborhood. Mary Wingfield Scott wrote to the editor of the *News Leader*: "I wish you could persuade the headline-writers of the *News Leader* that everything east of the C&O tracks is not Church Hill. Robberies reported recently on Venable and far north on 22nd were no more Church Hill than they were on Monument Avenue. Church Hill is bounded by 21st, Franklin, 30th, and Jefferson Avenue."[91] Scott's language was not new; seventeen years prior she expressed the same sentiment, "By 'Church Hill' we mean the section immediately around St. John's Church which was separated formerly from Union Hill to the north by a deep gully running where Jefferson Avenue now is."[92] Scott used Church Hill Proper to differentiate from the rest of Church Hill, which she considered north of Broad Street and occupied by African American residents. Interestingly, the section of Church Hill north of Broad Street had "the largest collection of antebellum houses in Richmond."[93] Thus, the HRF's work was not strictly an architectural endeavor; the restoration of Church Hill had deep racial implications. Less than a mile separated the corner of Venable and 22nd Street from St. John's Church, but Scott was correct. The two areas might as well have been at opposite ends of the city. The HRF's work triggered a physical transformation of houses south of Broad Street, but only white residents were invited to partake in the benefits of the neighborhood. Similar work to the Historic Richmond Foundation

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[90] "Letter from Mrs. Ralph Catterall to Mr. Richard S. Reynolds," December 15, 1957, Elizabeth Scott Bocock Papers, Box-Folder 6-7, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.

[91] Mary Wingfield Scott, "Define Boundaries of Church Hill," *Richmond News Leader*, November 9, 1959.

[92] Mary Wingfield Scott, "Old Neighborhoods of Richmond: Church Hill of the Nineteenth Century," *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* November 8, 1942.

[93] *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 18, 1954, Richmond Public Library Church Hill Newspaper Clippings Folder, Richmond, VA.

commonly occurred nationwide and in other countries; in 1964, sociologist Ruth Glass coined a

term to describe what residents of major cities such as Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and

Boston witnessed in their neighborhoods; gentrification.

Gentrification is typically defined as the process where current residents can no longer

afford to stay in their houses because of the rising property taxes after homes are rehabilitated in

a neighborhood. Scholars agree Ruth Glass first came up with the term. She described the

process of gentrification as "one by one, many of the working-class quarters of London have

been invaded by the middle classes--upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages-- two

rooms up and two down-- have been taken over, when their leases have expired and have

become elegant, expensive residences."[94] She goes on to say, "once this process of

'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class

occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed."[95] The HRF's

work resulted in all the elements Glass described. The population of the St. John's area changed

along racial and class lines; furthermore, property values of the houses dramatically increased.

"The assessed value of the Church Hill restoration area has increased 673 percent, compared with

a 282 percent increase for the city as a whole and a 167 per cent increase for the area

surrounding the restored section," the *Times-Dispatch* reported in 1981.[96] Additionally, residents

in St. John's Historic District no longer needed any assistance from the city, unlike those in the

remainder of Church Hill. Scholar Robert Beauregard explained how gentrification could be

appealing for a local government: "It stands to benefit from the dislocation of lower-class groups

which burden it through social programs, and from the replacement by middle-class consumers

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[94] Ruth Glass, "Aspects of Change" in *Centre for Urban Studies Report No. 3: London*, edited by Centre for Urban Studies (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1964), xviii.
[95] Ruth Glass, "Aspects of Change," xviii.
[96] "Foundation: Future in Past," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 1, 1981.

whose income will circulate in the local economy and whose investments will enhance the tax base."[97] Thus, the city of Richmond stood to gain from gentrification and did not hurry to enact any policies to protect displaced residents. By 1968, the HRF received over $3 million in private donations and restored twenty-nine houses.[98] Melinda Skinner and her husband rented one of the HRF's renovated houses. Skinner recalled that the HRF hesitated to sell houses because they did not want to lose control. When the HRF decided to sell a few houses, interested buyers had to sit down with HRF board members. Skinner said this process was to ensure the "right kind of people" owned houses on the block.[99] The HRF maintained an exclusionary heritage where white, professional residents occupied their renovated houses.

Why was the Historic Richmond Foundation unable to achieve their second goal of transforming Church Hill into a tourist destination? In 1965, B. Walton Turnbull, president of the HRF, said, "'The businessmen of the community have got to perceive it as an opportunity, because for all practical purposes Church Hill had died. The small entrepreneur is needed down there to put the area back on its feet.'"[100] While the HRF succeeded in getting white residents into a portion of the neighborhood, it was not enough to combat the larger stigma of the neighborhood. The HRF might have set in motion an entire white sweep of Church Hill; instead, Richmond saw intense flight out to the suburbs in the 1960s due to desegregation.

In 1956, white Richmonders confronted both housing and education issues as they perceived the status quo potentially shifting. On February 13, 1956, Senator Harry Byrd delivered a speech in a Richmond hotel calling all white Virginians to resist the federal mandate

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[97] Robert A. Beauregard "Chaos and Complexity of Gentrification" in *Gentrification of the City*, eds. Neil Smith and Peter Williams (Winchester, Mass: Allen & Unwin Inc., 1986), 51.
[98] "Old House Going Up--Again,"*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 5, 1968.
[99] Melinda Skinner, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, May 15, 2015.
[100] *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* March 7, 1965, Valentine Museum Church Hill Newspaper Clippings Folder, Richmond, VA.

to desegregate schools. Byrd used the term "massive resistance" for the first time while giving

this speech.[101] Virginia leaders promoted massive resistance and as a result public schools closed

throughout the state rather than integrate. One local Richmond newspaper, the *News Leader,*

requested donations for a private school fund for white students.[102] Scholar George Metcalf

noted the decision to close schools reflected that whites wanted to retain their white ethnicity,

even at the cost of an education for some children as not everyone could afford private school.[103]

Not every white person believed in massive resistance, but the dissenters practiced silence on the

matter. Massive resistance failed as a viable strategy, and schools in Richmond did have to begin

desegregating, which provoked white flight to the suburbs. Thus, the draw of the suburbs as a

haven from living and schooling with other ethnicities left the city of Richmond stagnant. Thus,

the Historic Richmond Foundation's gentrifying work halted with just the St. John's Historic

District transformed. The onus for restoring the "other" Church Hill fell on public programs

sponsored by government agencies while the Historic Richmond held tightly to their exclusivity

and only slowly extended the blocks of their Church Hill.

Model Neighborhood Program

In 1968, the Richmond City Planning Commission completed the Model Neighborhood

Planning Grant application with Church Hill as the chosen neighborhood to receive federal

funds.[104] President Lyndon B. Johnson started the Model Neighborhood Program as a nationwide

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[101] George Lewis, *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2006), 1-3.
[102] Benjamin Muse, *Virginia's Massive Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), 75.
[103] George R. Metcalf, *From Little Rock to Boston : The History of School Desegregation* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1983), Chapter 9.
[104] Church Hill Neighborhood Grant Application, April 1968, Part 1-A, p. 1, Box 2, Bruce V. English papers, Library of Virginia.

endeavor to curb urban decline as part of the War on Poverty.[105] City leaders knew Richmond was changing; the application listed major concerns for the city of Richmond such as population shrinkage, inability to expand city limits, high-income families moving to Henrico and Chesterfield counties, low-income families from rural areas moving into the city, and the resegregation of neighborhoods.[106] City leaders expressed hope that the Model Neighborhood Program federal funds would ameliorate the growing decline in the City, particularly at "a time when the City is rejecting its Capitol of the Confederacy complex and adopting contemporary approaches to social and physical City ills."[107] Thus, the Model Neighborhood Program represented a turning point for Richmond. The City did not have the financial means to adequately support a new low-income population that required aid from the municipal government; furthermore, city leaders wanted to shed the old discriminatory practices and enter into a new phase of urban planning.

City leaders selected Church Hill as the target area for the Model Neighborhood Program and with good reason. The 1960 census listed 34.6 percent of Church Hill homes as substandard compared to 21 percent in the city of Richmond. The application stated, "porches are caved, buildings are not weather tight," and further detailed that "many young men on the streets in the mid-afternoon indicated an unemployment problem. In some area there are no curbs, sidewalk drainage structures."[108] The application reflected the convoluted nature of urban renewal.[109] Housing, unemployment, and crime presented themselves as intermingled issues that the City

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[105] The Model Neighborhood Program was a subset of the Model Cities Program.
[106] Church Hill Neighborhood Grant Application, April 1968, Part 3-A, p. 1, Box 2, Bruce V. English papers, Library of Virginia.
[107] Church Hill Neighborhood Grant Application, April 1968, Part 3-A, p. 3, Box 2, Bruce V. English papers, Library of Virginia.
[108] Church Hill Neighborhood Grant Application, April 1968, Part 7-B, p. 3, Box 2, Bruce V. English papers, Library of Virginia.
[109] Church Hill Neighborhood Grant Application, April 1968, Part 1-A, p. 1, Box 2, Bruce V. English papers, Library of Virginia.

needed to address. In a printed booklet, the HRF reassured their intended audience that "new public housing and new schools being built north of St. John's will relieve housing pressures caused by toll road demolitions that brought crowding and slum conditions into the historic area."[110] Indeed Creighton Court, Mosby Court, Fairfield Court, and Whitcomb Court served to concentrate and isolate the impoverished in north Church Hill; it would take decades for urban planners to realize that massive subsidized housing projects compound social problems. "The second rule of affordable housing, so often ignored, is that it should not be concentrated in large quantities. Rather, it should be distributed among market-rate housing, as sparsely as possible in order to avoid neighborhood blight and reinforce positive behavior."[111] Dilapidated housing coupled with subsidized housing projects contributed to the stigma of Church Hill as a blighted neighborhood to avoid. Don Coleman, current Vice Chair of the Richmond School Board, cited this departure of middle-class African American residents as a central factor in Church Hill's deterioration. Coleman said, "What hurt the East End was the exodus of the black middle class. What remained was a disproportionate number of people living in poverty without enough black middle class to engage with."[112] The MNP application noted Church Hill as a transient community where newly married African American couples as well as newcomers to Richmond moved out of Church Hill as soon as they had the resources to do so. [113] Mary Turnbull said, "We've asked our black friends about moving over here. But they say that Church Hill is what blacks have always wanted to get *away from.*"[114] Thus, the economically and racially diverse

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[110] *Church Hill Project of Historic Richmond Foundation*, 1.
[111] Andres Duany, Elzabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation,* 53
[112] John Murden, "High on the Hill, *Style Weekly,* September 24, 2013, http://www.styleweekly.com/richmond/high-on-the-hill/Content?oid=1957386, accessed February 12, 2016.
[113] Church Hill Neighborhood Grant Application, April 1968, Part 3-A, p. 5, Box 2, Bruce V. English papers, Library of Virginia.
[114] Jane Hall, "Up On Church Hill: Remaking a Neighborhood," *Richmond Mercury*, June 27, 1973.

Church Hill of the early twentieth century faded with only a low-income population remaining by the 1970s, in need of help.

One would assume residents embraced a program designed to help their neighborhood. Indeed, five hundred local Church Hill residents came to the first conference about the Model Neighborhood Program; yet, the records indicated many felt ambivalent at best about the prospect of another urban renewal campaign.[115] In fact, most people attended to fight against another urban renewal campaign. Many persons displaced from Jackson Ward moved to Church Hill and did not trust planners' promises. A social worker described the tenuous situation in the Model Neighborhood Program application, "It is felt that the high concentration of one ethnic group that has been shuttled about the city in the 'name of progress' and the economic oppression coupled with family breakdown has created a situation which has 'powder keg' potential with effective agitation."[116] African American residents knew all too well that urban renewal is a national story of how "people who lacked credentials would have their houses torn down by people who had them."[117] Civic participation waned quickly, although that was only one of many problems for the Church Hill MNP board.

The MNP board stretched itself thin by trying to take on all of the issues in Church Hill at the same time. The board identified housing as the primary concern, but the programs actually centered on the youth of Church Hill. The MNP board established a summer youth program that employed over six hundred youth.[118] A proposal for an East End football program never

[115] Church Hill Neighborhood Grant Application, April 1968, Part 1-A, p. 8, Box 2, Bruce V. English papers, Library of Virginia.
[116] Church Hill Neighborhood Grant Application, April 1968, Part 3-B p. 70, Box 2, Bruce V. English papers, Library of Virginia.
[117] E. Michael Jones, *The Slaughter of Cities,* 227.
[118] *Richmond News Leader,* November 14, 1969, Valentine Museum Church Hill Newspaper Clippings Folder, Richmond, VA.

materialized. The MNP joined forces with WRVA radio to create an anti-dropout campaign.[119]

The MNP board listed many problems within Church Hill, but quickly ended up with a longer

list of problems within its own organization. In April 1970, MNP board members compiled a list

of reasons why they were not making progress in Church Hill. They listed apathy on the part of

local residents, and they also listed apathy on the part of their own board members.[120] The

executive secretary, Mr. Manning, quit citing lack of cooperation amongst members.[121] Even

worse, an employee for the MNP, Rosalie Clark was fired after she spoke up about a misuse of

funds.[122] Eventually, a grand jury investigated the MNP board's alleged misuse of the $10

million federal funds. The *News Leader* reported that, "as a result of the probe, eight persons,

most of whom were private contractors, were indicted. Three were convicted on charges relating

to theft and were fined. Charges against the others were dropped and dismissed."[123] By 1974,

the MNP accomplished very little with housing improvements in Church Hill: "Five homes were

rehabilitated, twenty-four painted, and nineteen prefab homes were built."[124] Many were

dismayed and surprised at the minute results with such massive funds at the MNP board's

disposal. The MNP board struggled to make concrete changes; however, the systemic

discrimination against Church Hill residents also explain why Church Hill did not transform. "A

principal reason for lack of singe family constructions, of course, is the next to impossible

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[119] Ibid.

[120] The full list of problems identified were: "lack of understanding and/or interest in MCP, confusion as to exact role of Policy Board, lack of commitment on part of Policy Board, lack of believe in the possibility of their own power to bring abut change, existence of sub-groups within in the policy board who have conflicting goals, lack of technical knowledge about how to bring about a change, lack of immediate and tangible results, lack of understanding of group procedures and organizational processes, confusion on part of sub-committees as to their relation to Policy Board." Model Neighborhood Policy Board Meeting, Minutes, April 27, 1970, Box 3, Bruce V. English papers, Library of Virginia.

[121] Church HIll Model Neighborhood Policy Board Meeting, Minutes, April 14, 1970, Box 3, Bruce V. English papers, Library of Virginia.

[122] Dean Levi, "Aging Church Hill Houses Lure Young White Remodelers," *Richmond News Leader*, November 9, 1972.

[123] "Suit File to Make 'Hill' Probe Public,"*Richmond News Leader*, August 25, 1979.

[124] "Church Hill Today" in *Commonwealth: The Magazine of Virginia* (February 1979), 32.

chance for most of the residents in the MN to obtain financing for new construction or even the purchase of an existing structure. Both the poverty of the majority of residents and reluctance of banks and lending institutions to finance projects in the MN--considered an undesirable investment area-- keep investment money out of the area."[125] The Nixon administration preferred revenue sharing wherein states received large lump sums to delegate with fewer restrictions; thus, in 1974, the transition to revenue sharing resulted in a loss of funding for the Model Neighborhood Program.[126] The Community Development Block Grant program emerged then as the primary means for cities to receive federal funds in order to improve housing and other needs for residents.[127] The Model Neighborhood Program ultimately failed to lessen the divide between the St. John's Historic District and the remainder of Church Hill.

Implications

When Akida T. Mensah interviewed John Sweat, a long-time teacher at George Mason, he asked, "We have a great deal of emphasis being placed on St. John's Church and restoration of the area around St. John's Church...are there comparable kinds of restoration or points of interest specifically related to the black community that you could cite that also have the kind of influence of instilling pride in an individual?"[128] Mensah's question confirmed the Historic Richmond Foundation's work excluded the black community but had also become the point of comparison for the rest of the neighborhood. Mensah's question further highlighted that

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[125] John Young, Preliminary Outline of First-Year Action Plan," April 29, 1970, Part 2-A, p. 6, Box 4, Bruce V. English papers, Library of Virginia.
[126] *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* February 19, 1973, Richmond Public Library Church Hill Newspaper Clippings Folder, Richmond, VA.
[127] United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Community Block Development Grant Program," accessed February 5, 2016, http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs.
[128] John Sweat, interviewed by Akida T. Mensah, May 7, 1982, transcript, Church Hill Oral History Project, James Cabell Branch Library Special Collections, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.

preservation efforts held implications for the pride of individuals. Thus, the HRF's restoration of the St. John's area reflected the status quo of white hegemony. The heritage that the HRF members wanted to preserve was a heritage where Patrick Henry declared the need for freedom but not freedom for the enslaved; rather, American freedom was at the expense of the enslaved. Similarly, the HRF's restoration work was at the expense of African American tenants who were pushed out of their houses. The legacy of Patrick Henry paradoxically saved Church Hill from the bulldozer, but it also destroyed potential for an integrated neighborhood. "It is perhaps this westward expansion of Richmond that allowed Church Hill North to survive the twentieth century largely unscathed by intrusive modern construction."[129] The neighborhood could have been decimated like Fulton without something of value to Richmond City Council members, but the efforts of the Historic Richmond Foundation also returned the racial divide to the neighborhood.

Church Hill provides a microcosm of the national urban renewal story. Private organizations with enough money accomplished their goals at the cost of poorer residents, almost always African Americans. As scholar E. Michael Jones notes, "The purpose of urban renewal was, in other words, to change behavior by changing buildings."[130] In Church Hill a non-profit organization and a federal program attempted change. Urban planners failed to restore many homes for those outside of the Historic Richmond Foundation's domain in the Model Neighborhood Program. Planners also failed to see improvements in social conditions such as crimes, drugs, and dropout rates which were supposed to change as a result of the massive influx of funds to renew the neighborhood. The Historic Richmond Foundation succeeded in changing the population surrounding St. John's Church to the same population Patrick Henry and other

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[129] US Department of Interior, *Church Hill North Historic District 1997 Nomination,* p. 26, accessed February 29, 2016, http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Cities/Richmond/Church_Hill_North_HD_textlist.htm.
[130] E. Michael Jones, *The Slaughter of Cities,* 179.

patriots had in mind when they fought in the Revolutionary War. They set in motion

unquestioned gentrification of the neighborhood.

Chapter 2: Revitalization in Church Hill

While the Historic Richmond Foundation's preservationist work increased the property

value of houses in a portion of Church Hill, the neighborhood as a whole experienced

disinvestment throughout the late twentieth century. Thus, very little appeared to change

throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s in Church Hill; yet, disinvestment is a key factor in

gentrification. Scholar Neil Smith calls this process the devalorization cycle which leads to a rent

gap; a term defined, according to Smith, as the difference between actual ground rent and the

potential ground rent based on the location and land use.[131] The wider the rent gap becomes the

greater opportunity for gentrification. "When this rent gap becomes sufficiently wide to enable a

developer to purchase the old structure, rehabilitate it, make mortgage and interest payments, and

still make a satisfactory return on the sale or rental of the renovated building, then a

neighborhood is ripe for gentrification."[132] Gentrification is often thought of as a spontaneous or

natural event, but in actuality the lack of funds from financial institutions prepare a

neighborhood for the potential to gentrify. Disinvestment and gentrification are both intentional

acts that do not randomly occur. Richmond experienced much higher disinvestment compared to

neighboring Henrico County and Chesterfield County.[133] According to the 1979 Home Mortgage

Disclosure Act, "Richmond had 42% of the population of the three jurisdictions in 1978, but

received only 19% of the mortgages."[134] Furthermore, "In total money made available, the

Richmond financial institutions provided nearly $800 in Chesterfield County for every man,

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[131] Neil Smith and Michele LeFaivre "A Class Analysis of Gentrification" in *Gentrification, Displacement, and Neighborhood Revitalization,* eds., J. John Palen and Bruce London (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984), 48-49.
[132] Neil Smith and Michele LeFaivre "A Class Analysis of Gentrification," 49.
[133] The 1979 Home Mortgage Disclosure Act further recorded that in Henrico County 1/36 housing units received a loan, 1/20 housing units in Chesterfield County, and 1/82 housing units in Richmond City. Only one of the 69 census tracts in Richmond City had a level of home mortgage activity equal to the average in the surrounding counties." "Base data," 1979 Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, Box-folder 18.2, Richmond Urban Institute Archives, M 258, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.
[134] Ibid.

woman, and child in 1979; $500, in Henrico County; and $200, in Richmond City."[135] Therefore,

Richmond experienced a loss of funds which had repercussions for the social and economic

behavior of residents living in the city.

Reverend Robert K. Taylor, of Fourth Baptist Church, aptly summarized the

ramifications of neglect in Church Hill, "'And when you neglect an area in one sense, then it is

going to call attention to itself in another sense: crime, drugs, the need for more police.'"[136] By

the 1970s, Church Hill residents called attention to themselves in all of the ways Taylor

identified. One harrowing estimate said, "40% of the city's abandoned housing was in the

Church Hill area and unemployment runs nearly twice as high as the average for the city as a

whole."[137] A local owner of a dry cleaning store installed bulletproof class and everyday opened

the store with a gun in hand.[138] An eighty-one year old resident said, "'It looks like you can't

trust no one,'" and as proof would not give a name for fear someone might retaliate.[139] In 1976,

Mrs. Betsy Smith's class at George Mason Elementary wrote to Richmond City Council

members requesting that the city tear down homes on N. 28th Street so the school could build a

playground. "Among their lists of the block's detriments are rats, broken glass, sticks, bricks,

beer cans, wine bottles, junk, and tires."[140] These startling descriptions were not unique to

Church Hill and Richmond. Thanks to the development of suburbia, most cities disintegrated in

the 1970s with an out-migration of thirteen million people.[141] City leaders, Historic Richmond

Foundation, and several non-profit organizations emerged to try and revitalize Church Hill.

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[135] Ibid.

[136] Tim Wheeler, "Church Hill: Gaslight Affluence, Poverty Share Streets"*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 7, 1977.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Rush Loving, "Hammers Bang, Sanders Grind As Church Hill Gets New Look," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 21, 1976.

[141] Leigh Gallagher, *The End of the Suburbs,* 44.

Image Four: Richmond Newspapers, "Jason Maldano, City Worker, Spears Litter in Chimborazo Park On Church Hill," April 20, 1976, Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

Revitalization efforts differed from urban renewal in that people no longer assumed the government would be able to fix everything. James Elam Jr., Church Hill activist, wrote to A. Howe Todd, Chairman of the City Strategy Team, looking for funds from the city. "'We know the city can't give us big money. You have far too many needs for money at present in the transitional area. But the city--- and the strategy team-- can give the people of Church Hill a chance to see if they can develope [sic] something for themselves.'"[142] Elam's statement reflected a shift in expectations. Throughout the urban renewal era, the government and private enterprises made decisions without any input from residents, almost always causing disruption of communities. Revitalization relied more on local activists rather than a top-down approach to

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[142] Advisory Committee to the Church Hill Area Revitalization Team, January 12, 1979, Box-folder 17.10, Richmond Urban Institute Archives, M 258, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University

restore neighborhoods. In 1989, a report listed six non-profit organizations all focused on the northern portion of Church Hill.[143]

Revitalization efforts differed from gentrification in that activists typically expressed an awareness of displacement and have the goal of benefitting the entire neighborhood. Ben Campbell, a minister and activist in Church Hill, pointed out that many young white couples moving into the neighborhood in the 1970s wanted to separate from elements of gentrification. "Most of the young white couples expressed concern about whites taking over the neighborhood. The 2300 Club is the most obvious example of it. Rich whites come and have an all-white club in the middle of a black neighborhood."[144] Doug Deaton lived in Church Hill for three years and said, "The last thing we want is for this to be an upper-class, lily-white neighborhood. It's important to make a neighborhood like this work to show other people in Richmond that it can work."[145] Indeed the history of Church Hill gave hope that in Richmond, the former capital of the Confederacy, a mixed group of people could live and interact with each other. Yet, statistics revealed that the neighborhood continued down a segregated path. "In 1950, the neighborhood has a total population of 8,843 persons, and a racial mix of 62% black and 38% white. By 1980, Upper Church Hill had a total population of 3,590 and a racial composition of 95% black and 5% white."[146] In addition to a declining population, Church Hill faced a debilitating stigma. One resident who actually wanted to live in Church Hill had to tell the credit union a loan was for

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[143] The organizations were: North of Broad Concerned Citizens Group, Church Hill Neighborhood Improvement Team, Church Hill Area Revitalization Team, Asbury Action Team, Bowler-Mason Historic Area Association, and Upper Church Hill Restoration Society. Due to complete lack of resources on most of these organizations, this paper will look at the Church Hill Area Revitalization Team and Upper Church Hill Restoration Society. Kimberly Chen, "A Future From the Past: A Housing and Historic Preservation Plan for the Upper Church Hill Neighborhood," prepared for the VCU Department of Urban Studies and Planning (May 11, 1989), 27-29.
[144] Jane Hall, "Up on Church Hill: Re-making a neighborhood," *Richmond Mercury,* June 27, 1973.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Kimberly Chen, "A Future From the Past: A Housing and Historic Preservation Pan for the Upper Church Hill Neighborhood," 21.

antique furniture rather than buying a house.[147] Revitalization efforts attempted to overcome the stigma of Church Hill and create a neighborhood people wanted to live in again.

Historiography

"No matter what reason is believed, it has been accepted in many quarters that Church Hill has an incurable malignancy, that it cannot be saved but must die and be reborn. It must go the way of other hard-core poverty neighborhoods in many American cities."[148] The dismal estimation of Church Hill made by the *Times-Dispatch* reflected a common ideology that if cities did not rebound after urban renewal, they would never improve. Thus, scholars Michael Schill and Richard Nathan offered a relatively new perspective in the early 1980s that older cities could be revitalized. Schill and Nathan argue revitalization efforts were so critical for cities that it was even worth the cost of displacement. Cities benefit from the increased tax revenue from stable, middle-class families. [149] Schill and Nathan encourage homeowners in deteriorating neighborhoods to stay, and possibly reap the greatest benefits if their neighborhood revitalized.[150] Their study found displaced households, by and large, did not end up living in worse situations.[151] They also point out that revitalization happens at a dramatically slower pace than urban renewal efforts because the government plays a much smaller role; thus, massive population shifts no longer occur like in the 1950s and 1960s where entire African American communities were displaced.[152] Nevertheless, Schill and Nathan still emphasize that municipal

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[147] Ann Holiday, *Richmond News Leader*, February 19, 1986.
[148] Bill Miller, "Group Hopes to Effect Cure for Church Hill," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 7, 1979.
[149] Michael H. Schill and Richard P. Nathan, *Revitalizing America's Cities* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983), 5.
[150] Michael H. Schill and Richard P. Nathan, *Revitalizing America's Cities,* 138.
[151] Ibid., 112.
[152] Ibid., 188.

governments need to enact policies that lessen displacement and encourage more low-income

housing.[153]

In contrast, scholars Neil Smith and Michele LeFaivre detail many costs of revitalization.

Smith and LeFaivre note gentrifiers often move into working class communities that are not

slums and devitalize the neighborhoods in the name of revitalization. Thus, a neighborhood is

changed that arguably never needed to experience change. "Summer chairs on the sidewalk,

televisions out on the stoop, and children's street games are replaced with herringbone

pavements, fake gas lamps, wrought iron window railings, and a deathly hush on the street."[154]

Smith and LeFaivre emphasize in these situations that capital investment experiences

revitalization, not neighborhood communities.[155] Financial institutions, developers, and white

middle class professionals benefit from neighborhood revitalization, not native residents.[156]

Smith elsewhere likens this process to settlement of an urban frontier where middle-class people

saw the city as void of inhabitants just as the settlers disregarded Native Americans on the

original frontier; furthermore, Smith encourages working-class residents to regain control of their

neighborhoods through the political arena.[157] He also observes that the gentrification process

changed since Ruth Glass first defined it twenty years before; Smith contends gentrification

began as individuals rehabilitating houses, but businesses intentionally offer amenities such as

wine bars to bring in a specific class of people to the neighborhood.[158] Thus, the process of

individuals pioneering the rehabilitation of historic houses in the 1960s turned into a business

endeavor that fundamentally altered the neighborhood culture.

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[153] Ibid., 8.
[154] Neil Smith and Michele LeFaivre "A Class Analysis of Gentrification" in *Gentrification, Displacement, and Neighborhood Revitalization,* 61.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid., 54.
[157] Ibid., 34.
[158] Ibid., 39.

Scholar Irving Allen examines the practical, preferential, and ideological reasons people move into cities; specifically, Allen focuses on the appeal of cultural and ethnic diversity to residents.[159] He calls it "remarkable" that city residents classify diversity as a positive aspect of urban living.[160] Allen identifies people embracing diversity as a distinct break from previous generations who rejected cities for suburban living. Allen contends both suburbanites and urbanites are nostalgic for the past, just in different ways.[161] The suburban home and car are being replaced by "chic row houses and Victorian frames."[162] Similarly to the other scholars, Allen makes clear that as long as leaders view gentrification as a natural process of capitalism, no one will address the rampant social inequalities.[163]

Peter Marcuse examines how intertwined gentrification and abandonment are as a process. Marcuse warns city leaders who might encourage gentrification as a way to solve abandonment that this is not correct thinking. Marcus studies New York City and how Manhattan gained both poor and rich residents while the Bronx lost both; thus, as gentrification occurs in one neighborhood and attracts many residents, city leaders should be aware that abandonment by many classes could be taking place in another neighborhood.[164] "Gentrification can thus exist side by side with abandonment; each contributed to the other, as their populations move (or are forced to move) in reverse directions, and both contribute to displacements."[165]

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[159] Irving Allen "The Ideology of Dense Neighborhood Redevelopment" in *Gentrification, Displacement, and Neighborhood Revitalization,* eds., J. John Palen and Bruce London (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984), 30.

[160] Irving Allen "The Ideology of Dense Neighborhood Redevelopment," 33.

[161] Ibid., 36.

[162] Ibid., 35.

[163] Ibid., 40.

[164] Peter Marcuse "Abandonment, Gentrification, and Displacement: The Linkages in New York City" in *Gentrification of the City*, eds. Neil Smith and Peter Williams (Winchester, Mass: Allen & Unwin Inc., 1986), 169.

[165] Peter Marcuse "Abandonment, gentrification, and displacement: the linkages in New York City" in *Gentrification of the City*, 171.

Marcuse contends gentrification does not solve abandonment. The economic shift away from the manufacturing to the service industry leaves low-income residents with little opportunity. [166]

Revitalization & Richmond City

As the nation transitioned from urban renewal's sweeping changes to more modest revitalization efforts, the city of Richmond experienced one of its greatest political changes. In 1977, the citizens of Richmond saw the city's first black mayor, Henry Marsh III, elected by an African American majority City Council.[167] This was certainly monumental for any city, but it was especially so for Richmond given the events of the preceding decade. In 1969, the city of Richmond annexed twenty-three square miles of Chesterfield County in order to keep a strong political white majority. "The area has a population of over 44,000 persons, and was 97 percent white."[168] Two years later a resident of Creighton Court in Church Hill filed a lawsuit against the city for challenging the annexation as a violation of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.[169] While the case advanced, federal courts prohibited the city of Richmond from holding City Council elections until the matter was settled; no City Council elections were held from 1970-1977. The city of Richmond opted to keep the annexation and change the former at-large electoral system to nine single-member districts.[170] In the first election under the new system, five African American members were elected to City Council, and Henry Marsh III became the first African American Mayor of Richmond.[171]

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[166] Ibid., 154.
[167] Ronald Wilson, "Richmond's 6th Street Marketplace Assessment of a Failed Festival Market," (September 1989), 19, Mary Tyler Freeman Cheek McClenahan Papers, Box 37, M 302, Special Collection and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.
[168] Ben Campbell, *Richmond's Unhealed History* (Richmond, Virginia: Brandylane Publishers, Inc., 2012), 171.
[169] Ben Campbell, *Richmond's Unhealed History*, 172.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid., 174.

What followed was a series of conflicts between city hall, headed by Mayor Marsh, and

Main Street and white businessmen. One of the first attempts to bridge the racial divide in the

city was the Richmond Renaissance organization, a non-profit organization designed to help

revitalize Richmond, specifically downtown Richmond, including Broad Street as well as Main

Street. Scholar Peter Marcuse noted one way to identify signs of gentrification is to look where

the government is directing funds. "The use of Urban Development Action Grant funds for

midtown hotel development, the financing of the Convention Center, and the various tax

incentive programs, are all typical of actions fostering gentrification."[172] Marcuse's assessment

perfectly described city leaders' plan, called Project One, throughout the 1980s. The City used

over $4 million in Urban Development Action Grant funds, $1 million in Community

Development Block Grant funds, $2 million in Housing and Urban Development Section 108

funds, and $7 million in Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority funds to revitalize

downtown Richmond.[173] The funds developed a downtown Marriott Hotel, the Richmond

Convention Center, and new office space.[174] The Richmond Renaissance headed up the Sixth

Street Marketplace project, a complex designed as essentially a downtown mall with enough

space for one hundred shops.[175] The most significant aspect of the Marketplace design was an

enclosed bridge connecting the Armory, north of Broad, and major department stores, south of

Broad.[176] The bridge aimed to physically and symbolically connect the historically African

American portion of the city with the white portion. Sixth Street Marketplace opened on

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[172] Peter Marcuse, "Abandonment, Gentrification, and Displacement: The Linkages in New York City" in
Gentrification of the City, 174.
[173] Ronald Wilson, "Richmond's 6th Street Marktplace Assessment of a Failed Festival Market," 29.
[174] Ronald Wilson, "Richmond's 6th Street Marketplace," 20.
[175] Harry M. Ward, *Richmond: An Illustrated History*, 326.
[176] Marie Tyler-McGraw, *At the Falls: Richmond, Virginia, and Its People* (Chapel Hill: University of North
Caroline Press, 1994), 305.

September 18, 1985 but within two years lost $1 million.[177] The attempted downtown

revitalization fell flat, and the additional goal to bring racial reconciliation to Richmond failed to

gain interest as well. "The construction of a bridge over Broad Street was a noble gesture. It held

great political and social meaning for the citizens of Richmond. However, the result of this

gesture was an inefficient, and inflexible building unable to adjust its tenants mix to meet the

needs of its customers."[178] Ultimately, the project was deemed a failure because people preferred

shopping in suburbia and found the city's identification with blacks too strong a mental barrier

for white shoppers to break.[179] Thus, the significant attempt by business leaders to set an

example of racial reconciliation and through downtown revitalization never gained enough

momentum to sustain economic development or seriously impact the racial divide in the city of

Richmond. These efforts provide a backdrop to revitalization plans in Church Hill in the 1980s.

In addition to the massive downtown project, city commissioners produced an updated

Master Plan that detailed each neighborhood's needs.[180] City commissioners never explicitly

stated they wanted to gentrify the Church Hill neighborhood, but they did indicate that St. John's

District was the point of comparison. "The future of the St. John's Church Historic District

appears bright... Church Hill core neighborhood surrounding the Historic District still suffers

from the deteriorating effects of age and lack of maintenance."[181] For the City, modeling a

revitalization plan after the HRF likely seemed a better alternative than urban renewal's practice

of simply bulldozing blighted houses. The City indicated a new commitment to revitalization

over bulldozing houses. "Historic preservation should be used creatively and sensitively as a tool

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[177] Ronald Wilson, "Richmond's 6th Street Marketplace," 39.
[178] Ibid., 47.
[179] Ibid., 54.
[180] City commissioners: Michael Clark, Dr. Arnold R. Henderson, Sanford Bond, Clifton B. Jeter, Ben R. Johns, Jr., Henry W. Richardson, Jack C. Sharpe, Susanne L. Shilling, Manuel Deese.
[181] Department of Planning and Community Development, *Master Plan* (Richmond,VA: Nov. 1982), 144.

for neighborhood revitalization."[182] The *Master Plan* encouraged rehabilitation wherever

possible with minimal displacement of residents, something rarely of concern during urban

renewal.[183] While the *Master Plan* stated, "housing activities should focus primarily on the

rehabilitation of the existing housing stock rather than on clearance and new construction," the

reality was that demolition frequently occurred.[184] Leo J. Cantor, Richmond's Commissioner of

Buildings, "estimated that the city has paid to demolish about 300 buildings during the past four-

and-a-half years. We probably influenced owners to demolish as least 200 per year during that

time."[185] David Herring, long-time resident of Church Hill, remembered the city bulldozing

houses in the northern portion of Church Hill on a weekly basis in the late 1980s.[186] Thus, the

city of Richmond ultimately did not end up acting very differently under the new *Master Plan*

than under urban renewal.

The city commissioners seemed to admit they lacked power to stem the wave of

demolition without serious help from other sources. The *Master Plan* stated, "Ironically, it

appears that the loss of units to abandonment and demolition will probably not be slowed

without significant neighborhood improvement and private investment in rehabilitation."[187]

Clearly, the City would not be able to transform Church Hill by itself. The Historic Richmond

Foundation began to shift its vision to revitalize Church Hill beyond the originally restored area.

Three other major non-profit organizations emerged, the Church Hill Area Revitalization Team,

Upper Church Hill Restoration Society, and the Better Housing Coalition, to bring positive and

meaningful changes to Church Hill without disrupting the community by demolition or

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[182] Department of Planning and Community Development, *Master Plan,* 53.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid.
[185] *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 13, 1980, Richmond Public Library Church Hill Newspaper Clippings Folder, Richmond, VA.
[186] David Herring, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, May 1, 2015.
[187] Department of Planning and Community Development, *Master Plan,* 161.

gentrification. Interestingly, each non-profit acknowledged there were two "Church Hills" within one neighborhood. People employed different terms such as north of Broad, Upper Church Hill, and Church Hill North, but all distinguished between the section of Church Hill riddled with vacant houses, crime, and drugs from the gentrified houses surrounding St. John's Church.

Church Hill Area Revitalization Team

The City Department of Planning and Community Development applied for funds for "preparing strategies for housing and neighborhood improvement and historic preservation" from the Virginia Historic Landmark Commission.[188] The VHLC approved Richmond and gave a grant of $30,000. Mayor Henry Marsh then formed the Church Hill Area Revitalization Team to take charge of using the funds for helping the neighborhood.[189] In January 1979, the Church Hill Area Revitalization Team officially formed with the approval by City Council.[190] Church Hill certainly needed outside help by 1979. According to Don Coleman, current Vice Chair of the Richmond School Board, 1979 was the year heroin and crack became embedded in the neighborhood.[191] In addition to an increase in drugs, every census tract in Church Hill lost population between 1970 and 1978.[192] CHART members aimed to physically restore Church Hill as well as to reverse trends of poverty.

In many ways, CHART's actions were in response to what had happened before in the neighborhood. "The founders of CHART believe the raze-and-rebuild treatment cures the problem on a particular piece of real estate but that it does nothing to solve the real problem. The

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[188] *Church Hill Revitalization Plan*, 5.
[189] Ibid.
[190] James H. Elam Jr to Mayor Henry L. Marsh, January 26, 1979, Box-folder 17.10, Richmond Urban Institute Archives, M 258, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University
[191] John Murden, "High on the Hill," *Style Weekly,* September 24, 2013, accessed January 22, 2016, http://www.styleweekly.com/richmond/high-on-the-hill/Content?oid=1957386.
[192] *Church Hill Revitalization Plan*, 8.

poor remain, unchanged, having simply been moved to other sections of the city."[193] CHART

members wanted to eradicate the social ills of poverty in addition to encouraging the physical

rehabilitation of houses. They also aimed to ensure no tenants were displaced as the Historic

Richmond Foundation had done in 1956.[194] Despite the stigma of Church Hill by 1979, James

Elam, member of CHART, expressed hope, "'Five or ten years of dedicated hard work and we

can turn Church Hill around and make it the kind of place you want to live in. We got no

business being poor (while) sitting on gold.'"[195] Another way in which CHART responded to

those that went before them was the fact that it operated with only a $30,000 grant from the

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission and made that public knowledge. The *Times-Dispatch*

reported: "They regard the absence of money as a good thing in the aftermath of the Model

Neighborhoods debacle."[196] The Model Neighborhood Program failed so miserably that now the

higher amount of money one had now correlated with a greater chance to misuse the funds. The

Model Neighborhood Program also showed that no amount of money guaranteed success. Thus,

CHART members knew the success of neighborhood revitalization required elements beyond

money.

The *Church Hill Revitalization Plan* provided a thorough plan for CHART to tackle

neighborhood improvement. The plan listed several attractive qualities of Church Hill: proximity

to downtown, affordability, and the architecture. On the other hand, the major limitations in the

neighborhood were the large number of dilapidated houses and bad reputation of Church Hill.

"This perception is changing somewhat as the influx of new middle income homeowners in the

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[193] Bill Miller, "Group Hopes to Effect Cure for Church Hill," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 7, 1979.
[194] *Church Hill Revitalization Plan*, 5.
[195] Bill Miller, "Group Hopes to Effect Cure for Church Hill," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 7, 1979.
[196] Ibid.

St. John's Historic District demonstrates."[197] Yet, the other side of Church Hill suffered from

major out-migration. "Interestingly from 1970 to 1980, the number of blacks in Upper Church

Hill declined by 46% or 2,961 persons and the number of whites increased, for the first in 30

years by 62%. In absolute numbers, it was in increase of only 7 persons."[198] Homeownership in

Church Hill still proved nearly impossible because of HOLC's redlining maps. "This area is

viewed as a 'high risk" area by banks and savings and loans, and as a result, these institutions are

reluctant to provide loans for home purchases or improvements."[199] Yet, the new plan essentially

recommended that CHART emulate the Historic Richmond Foundation's method to get people

into houses: apply to the Department of Housing and Urban Development or city for a grant, buy

homes, restore them, and then sell them to new owners.[200] Any organization in Church Hill, to be

sure, needed to address the glaring issue of vacant houses. The plan recommended providing

government assistance to landowners to improve properties so they would not have to charge

tenants more rent to pay for the physical repairs.[201] Another recommendation included listing

buildings on the National Register of Historic Places so the City could not use federal money to

demolish vacant buildings, and to make available tax incentives to homeowners to improve their

properties.[202] Homeowners of dilapidated buildings likely paid in taxes only $75-200; thus, they

easily could afford to keep their properties while waiting for the property value to increase.[203]

Richmond had approved one housing improvement program, Conservation Area Program, to

revitalize neighborhoods. "The requirements of this program state that neighborhoods must have

a minimum average age of at least 20 years, be able to declare that 50% of the houses are

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[197] *Church Hill Revitalization Plan*,8.
[198] Kimberly Chen, "A Future From the Past: A Housing and Historic Preservation Plan for the Upper Church Hill Neighborhood," 21.
[199] *Church Hill Revitalization Plan*, 32.
[200] Ibid., 24.
[201] Ibid., 26.
[202] Ibid., 31.
[203] Ibid., 12.

deteriorated, and be at least 60% owner occupied in order to be considered for the program."[204] The Conservation Area Program reflects a very stringent policy because most dilapidated neighborhoods needed help but did not have sixty percent homeownership to qualify. The policy illustrates how certain neighborhoods might benefit at the expense of others; the Conservation Area Program demonstrated a lack of concern for improving neighborhoods for renters.

CHART members did not misuse money; rather, they struggled to find cooperative partners in the city. The CHART mission statement represented the shift from urban renewal to revitalization well. "This plan is based on the assumption that any successful revitalization program will require the participation of the neighborhood residents, government and the private sector working together toward a common purpose."[205] CHART members tried to embody collaboration; yet, members never found their footing with city officials. CHART members wanted more input in the neighborhood against competing organizations than Mayor Marsh was willing to give.[206] CHART members also criticized the people selected for the city's Strategy Team that would decide how to spend six million dollars in the Community Development Block Grant program, the major source of revenue for revitalization. Collie Burton, CHART director, called attention to the fact that the Strategy Team included several employees of Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority as well as the city manager, both entities that would benefit from CDBG money.[207] CHART then turned to the Historic Richmond Foundation to serve as a consultant to the organization.[208]

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[204] Ibid., 22.

[205] Ibid., 1.

[206] Notes on Meeting with Mayor Henry Marsh and the Chart Board, n.d., Box-folder 18.4, Richmond Urban Institute Archives, M 258, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University

[207] "Church Hill Group Charges Strategy Team Conflicts," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 15, 1981.

[208] The focus of the CHART records in Special Collections at VCU are mainly focused on the work of Ben Campbell starting a subcommittee of CHART to work on establishing a nursing home in Church Hill.

Historic Richmond Foundation

When the Historic Richmond Foundation worked to transform the St. John's District in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, the organization made it clear it would only focus on a narrow portion of Church Hill. Yet, the HRF decided in the 1980s to pursue revitalization in the rest of Church Hill. "Nationwide the trend is for preservation because it now costs less than new construction, because of the craze for history and nostalgia and the search for roots, and because preservation is now seen as the best way to revitalize inner cities to which people are returning. In Richmond particularly things are turning our way."[209] The Church Hill North Committee took charge of the expansion effort north of Broad Street. Michael Gold, Historic Richmond Foundation Director, admitted that the policy of the Historic Richmond Foundation for years had been to "displace black faces for white faces."[210] The HRF in the 1980s expressed a commitment to helping everyone in the neighborhood. "Michael Gold, HRF's director, said they wanted to study two facets of the neighborhood: why younger people were leaving their neighborhood and the effects of revitalization in displacing tenants."[211] The HRF Planning Committee expressed genuine interest in providing low-income financing for the interested buyers.[212] Michael Gold announced in a CHART board meeting that the HRF was looking to purchase homes that even the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority would find too deteriorated to buy. Also, the HRF sought to counter the ill effects of gentrification for current residents. "The Foundation will receive a $50,000 low-interest loan from the National Trust and will establish a pool of

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[209] Presidents Message, May 21, 1981, Box-folder 6.2, Elisabeth Scott Bocock Papers, M 260, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.

[210] Minutes of CHART Board, December 11, 1979, p. 2, Box-folder 17.11, Richmond Urban Institute Archives, M 258, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.

[211] Bill Miller, "Group Hopes to Effect Cure for Church Hill," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 7, 1979.

[212] Historic Church Hill North Committee Meeting Minutes, March 2, 1983, p.1, Box-folder 6.4, Elisabeth Scott Bocock Papers, M 260, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University

funds for increased real estate taxes, which are due to improvement to the area."[213] By 1981,

"HRF acquired 1/2 of houses of a major property-owner north of Broad. The Foundation now

owns 28 houses in this area. These will be offered initially through local people and through

neighborhood churches and associations."[214] By February 1983, the HRF sold three properties

and had eleven under contract.[215] The HRF's commitment to revitalization of the "other" side of

Church Hill without taking advantage of low-income residents showed remarkable progress

since its inception Nevertheless, scholar Neil Smith's description of gentrification mirrored

HRF's actions even in the 1980s. "The economic geography of gentrification is not random;

developers do not just plunge into the heart of slum opportunity, but tend to take it piece by

piece. Rugged pioneersmanship is tempered by financial caution. Developers have a vivid block-

by-block sense of where the frontier lies."[216] Smith's definition of gentrification juxtaposed with

the HRF's explicitly stated good intentions begs the question: can revitalization occur without

causing gentrification?

The HRF initially targeted young professionals but had to readjust their strategy. "We

thought our market was young professionals. Therefore we have concentrated on print media for

exposure. It may be that our market is upwardly mobile blue-collar. We should now target radio

and TV."[217] This admission indicates the HRF wanted to continue with the same demographic

that had filled the houses on East Grace Street in the 1960s. The HRF decided to acquire

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[213] Historic Richmond Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, Box-folder 6.2, Elisabeth Scott Bocock Papers, M 260, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University

[214] Historic Richmond Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, Box-folder 6.2, Elisabeth Scott Bocock Papers, M 260, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.

[215] Historic Church Hill North Committee Meeting Minutes, Feb 10, 1983, p.2, Box-folder 6.4, Elisabeth Scott Bocock Papers, M 260, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.

[216] Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the revanchist city* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 1996), 23.

[217] Historic Richmond Foundation Marketing Notes, n.d., Box-folder 6.5, Elisabeth Scott Bocock Papers, M 260, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.

National Register nominations for the houses in north Church Hill attract homebuyers. Gold

admitted in a letter to the chairman of the Church Hill North Committee that, "I'm still not sure

whether National Register status will really sell the houses, but I guess it's time to try and get

that moving all the same."[218] By 1984, the HRF sold 26 houses, completed 20 renovations, and

started 9 more.[219] The HRF proudly stated their work in Church Hill North "has been the

catalyst for other renovation that took place because of the activity HRF generated."[220] The

Upper Church Hill Restoration Society never acknowledged the HRF as a catalyst but it did

continue similar work in Church Hill north of Broad Street.

Upper Church Hill Restoration Society

While the HRF reluctantly explored acquiring historic designations, the Upper Church

Hill Restoration Society adopted historic designation as the mission of the organization. In the

late 1980s, residents formed the Upper Church Hill Restoration Society with the goal of securing

the "inclusion of the Church Hill North area in the National Register of Historic Places and the

Virginia Landmarks Register."[221] Members felt a deep urgency as the city continued to bulldoze

blighted houses. "Almost 1,000 units disappeared from Church Hill's housing stock as the result

of fire, demolition, and abandonment."[222] But how could a mere plaque on a house help the

neighborhood? The Upper Church Hill Restoration Society explained that, "besides the potential

tax credits and federal money, the designations are primarily an honor denoting the significance

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[218] Letter from Mike Gold to Jeff Rawn, January 30, 1984, Box-folder 6.5, Elisabeth Scott Bocock Papers, M 260, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.
[219] Historic Richmond Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting, November 9, 1984, Box-folder 6.5, Elisabeth Scott Bocock Papers, M 260, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.
[220] Historic Richmond Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting, November 9, 1984, Box-folder 6.5, Elisabeth Scott Bocock Papers, M 260, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.
[221] Michael Paul Williams, "Church Hill Group Seeks Designation,"*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 27, 1990.
[222] *Church Hill Revitalization Plan*, 7.

and worth of the area."[223] In other words, members of the Upper Church Hill Restoration Society

wanted to bridge the gap between the two sides of Church Hill. The designation would highlight

that both sides of Church Hill across Broad Street are historically significant and of value, not

just the St. John's Historic District. In addition to historic designation, the Upper Church Hill

Restoration Society applied for Community Development Block Grant funds to install brick

sidewalks and Victorian street lamps, features present in the southern portion of Church Hill.[224]

The Upper Church Hill Restoration Society actively worked to equalize the perception of the two

sides of Church Hill rather than work within a segregated framework.

Since Upper Church Hill held one of the "nation's largest supplies of antebellum frame

houses," it would seem an easy task to acquire the historic designation. Ninety percent of all

Church Hill North buildings were built by 1900.[225] The neighborhood boasts the oldest

commercial building, the Wills Store, built in 1811 and located at 401 N. 27th Street. Twelve

other Federal-style buildings built between 1810-1839 are in Church Hill North, and,

additionally, two hundred structures built between 1840-1865 in the Greek Revival Style

survived there.[226] The abundance of historical houses in need of protection from the City did not

make the Upper Church Hill Restoration Society's goal popular amongst longtime residents.[227]

Why would residents oppose a program to bring attention to the value of a forgotten

neighborhood? Opposition came largely from African American residents who had experienced

decades of improvement plans made at their expense.

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[223] Michael Paul Williams, "Meeting on Designating Historic Area Tension-filled,"*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, December 5, 1990.
[224] Kimberly Chen, "A Future From the Past: A Housing and Historic Preservation Plan for the Upper Church Hill Neighborhood," 29.
[225] US Department of Interior, *Church Hill North Historic District 1997 Nomination,* p. 31, accessed February 29, 2016, http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Cities/Richmond/Church_Hill_North_HD_textlist.htm.
[226] US Department of Interior, *Church Hill North Historic District 1997 Nomination,* p. 27, accessed February 29, 2016, http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Cities/Richmond/Church_Hill_North_HD_textlist.htm.
[227] *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 27, 1988, Valentine Museum Church Hill Newspaper Clippings Folder, Richmond, VA.

A plan proposed largely by white residents was, by itself, likely to cause suspicion and mistrust amongst African American residents. An African American resident described her experience as whited moved into Church Hill: "We asked the city to clean up the alley, and they said they couldn't do it. You'll notice the alley's cleaned up now...And now the code inspector came out and told us the building had to be rewired to bring the building up to code. None of these buildings have ever been up to code before."[228] Long-time residents voiced concern that the historic designation would cause property taxes to rise, giving them no other choice but to move.[229] Emma Cole, one of the few African American residents who resisted leaving East Grace Street when the Historic Richmond Foundation began its work there, acknowledged to a reporter from the *Times-Dispatch* the complications of the situation: "'Taxes are higher than ever before, then again, 'the block is a better block now because it was run down. It was really bad off.'"[230] Furthermore, the *Times-Dispatch* reported "many opponents of the designation began to characterize supporters as 'come-heres' trying to impose their will on long-time residents."[231] Thus, the record of discrimination and inaction by the city until whites moved into the neighborhood, a typical characteristics of gentrification, left many longtime residents disinclined to move forward with a plan favored by white newcomers.

The Upper Church Hill Restoration Society supported a proposal for a Church Hill North Old and Historic District introduced by City Councilwoman Claudette Black McDaniel in the summer of 1990. Councilman Henry Marsh III ardently opposed the proposal because McDaniel

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[228] Jane Hall, "Up on Church Hill: Re-making a Neighborhood," *Richmond Mercury*, June 27, 1973.
[229] Michael Paul Williams, "Church Hill Group Seeks Designation,"*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 27, 1990.
[230] Michael Paul Williams, "Church Hill-Neighbors See Changes Differently," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 14, 1990.
[231] Michael Paul Williams, "Meeting on Designating Historic Area Tension-filled,"*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, December 5, 1990.

would leave office in July and Church Hill was not her district.[232] Marsh advocated a postponement for a committee to conduct more research before moving forward.[233]

In the following months, tensions grew even more heated over the historic designation proposal. Proponents of the historic designation argued there was no reason to delay because continued dilapidation in Upper Church Hill would most likely send more residents out of their houses sooner than increased property taxes later.[234] Proponents also noted that city officials could protect residents if property values increased.[235] Kimberly Chen, an architectural historian, compiled a report which illuminated the dire situation for Upper Church Hill. "According to Ms. Chen's report, population has declined by 5,000 over the past 30 years, a 60 percent drop. More than 250 buildings have been demolished over the past 20 years."[236] Mark Lindsey, vice president of the Upper Church Hill Restoration Society, wrote in an editorial that if gentrification were occurring Upper Church Hill would not have 32 percent vacant houses in Upper Church Hill.[237] Lindsey correctly observed, "The historic district issue has been one steeped in emotion, misconceptions, and mistrust."[238] The Upper Church Hill Restoration Society suffered the consequence of the Historic Richmond Foundation's work that did in fact cause gentrification; African American residents did not trust their plan.

No matter the rationale for the designation, the division fell along racial lines, and that garnered the media's attention. The *Times-Dispatch* reported that at an August public meeting to discuss the designation, "White residents in favor of the historic district sat on one side of

[232] Paul Bradley, "New Church Hill District Stirs Divisions," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 14,1990.
[233] Rick Sauder, "Councilman to Seek More Time to Resolve Church Hill Conflict," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 29, 1990.
[234] Paul Bradley, "New Church Hill District Stirs Divisions," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 14,1990.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Mark S. Lindsey, "No Easy Answers in Upper Church Hill," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 5, 1990.
[238] Ibid.

council chambers; blacks opposing the district sat on the other."[239] One opponent of the historic district, Reginald Malone, expressed his frustration, "'It's tantamount to a hostile takeover. I don't think that anything will really work because there has been a moral wrong.'"[240] Malone's intense language seemed to convey decades of repressed emotion in a community finally having an outlet. Dorothy Allen, long-time African American resident, said, "'I'm getting worn down, but somebody has to come out and keep track of what's going on. I don't care how tired I get, I'm going to stick with it because I think it's wrong.'"[241] Clearly, the designation ran along deeper lines for residents than the physical structure of houses. Many residents also opposed the logistical restrictions of the designation since they would have to receive approval from the Commission of Architectural Review to make changes to the exterior or to demolish any structures.[242]

More than one hundred opponents of the historic designation marched from Church Hill across the Martin Luther King Bridge to the city council meeting on October 22, 1990. Reginald Malone said the purpose of the march was to show "'we're tired of people coming into our neighborhood and telling us what to do.'"[243] Twelve of those that marched across the bridge spoke in favor of the repeal. The *News Leader* reported that "black and white residents confronted each other with loud, angry words just a few feet from the council platform," and further detailed the climax of the night, "the last speaker against the district, the Reverend Rodger Hall Reed, president of the Richmond Chapter of the NAACP boomed into the

[239] Rick Sauder, "Councilman to Seek More Time to Resolve Church Hill Conflict," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 29, 1990.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Joseph Williams, "Church Hill Group Sues Over Decisions," *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* November 20, 1990.
[243] "Protest March of Church Hill District Set," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 17, 1990.

microphone, 'We SHALL overcome!'"[244] City Council repealed the historic designation in a 5-4 vote.[245] The vote hinged on Councilman William I. Golding Sr. of District 9. He had previously favored the historic designation, announced he would abstain from voting on the repeal, but then voted for the repeal.[246] Ultimately, the heated argument over the historic designation reflected that, once again, there was much more at stake than physical houses.

Decades of African American residents pushed around the city of Richmond by various groups left residents absolutely resistant to a program that Upper Church Hill Restoration Society members believed would help them. "Upper Church Hill has become polarized along racial and economic lines because of the imbalances and conflicts caused by gentrification and the controversy surrounding the attempt to establish a City Old and Historic District in the neighborhood."[247] Several ministers organized a joint service one month after the repeal of the historic designation. Dr. Edward D. McCrary of Mount Carmel Baptist Church gave a sermon in which he said, "The day is gone when one group will define and decide how another group is going to act."[248] McCrary's wording indicated the repeal represented a triumph for the African American community after being pushed around by the white community. On the other side, Upper Church Hill Restoration Society members experienced the frustration of having people severely misinterpret their goal.[249] Members of the Upper Church Hill Restoration Society believed that "opponents are being misled by self-serving politicians and trouble-making

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[244] *Richmond News Leader,* October 23, 1990, Richmond Public Library Church Hill Newspaper Clippings Folder, Richmond, VA.

[245] Ibid.

[246] Ibid.

[247] Kimberly Chen, "A Future From the Past: A Housing and Historic Preservation Plan for the Upper Church Hill Neighborhood," 37.

[248] Michael Paul Williams, "Service Seen as First Step to Heal Church Hill Wounds," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 24, 1990.

[249] David Herring, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, May 1, 2015.

outsiders."[250] Ultimately, they wanted Church Hill North to gain an equal status with the St.

John's Historic District. Nevertheless, the racist policy of the Historic Richmond Foundation's

early gentrification left African American residents cautious of any plan endorsed by white

residents. Upper Church Hill became a conservation district which limited the restriction on

residents; furthermore, the *Times-Dispatch* reported, "Now, people in the community are happy

the dispute is behind them. Most agree that the racial climate is good."[251] While some may have

felt the racial climate returned to normal, the disparity between Upper Church Hill and the

gentrified St. John's District did not lessen. The Upper Church Hill Restoration Society members

did not achieve their main goal to equalize the two sides of Church Hill.

Better Housing Coalition

The Better Housing Coalition formed in 1988 with the stated goal to put first-time

homebuyers in houses.[252] Martin Howle, employee of the Better Housing Coalition, explained

the group's perspective that "the strongest neighborhoods have the strongest pattern of home

ownership. It's consistency.'"[253] The Better Housing Coalition acquires donations and grants to

lessen the cost of housing and to assist homebuyers.[254] The Better Housing Coalition also

assisted renters, a group typically ignored.[255] Additionally, they build new houses that have an

architectural style similar to the historical neighborhood, which provides an important element of

dignity to residents of those new houses. "Above all, affordable housing should not look

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[250] Michael Paul Williams, "Meeting on Designating Historic Area Tension-filled," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, December 5, 1990.
[251] *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, December 7, 1994, Richmond Public Library Church Hill Newspaper Clippings Folder, Richmond, VA.
[252] John Murden, "Almost 90 houses by Better Housing Coalition," August 8, 2008, *Church Hill People's News,* accessed February 15, 2016, http://chpn.net/news/2008/08/08/almost-90-houses-by-better-housing-coalition_1973/
[253] Alex Welch, "Church Hill is Being Hammered into Shape," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 7, 1994.
[254] Brandon Shulleeta,"Park Dedicated in Church Hill," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 14, 2007.
[255] Doug Childers, "New Life in Church Hill- An Old Industrial Area in Richmond Will Become a Mix of Housing Options," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 12, 2008.

different from market-rate housing. The last thing the poor need is a home that stigmatizes them as such, when all they really want is what they perceive the middle class already has."[256] One of the earliest success stories of the Better Housing Coalition was the Jefferson Mews development. Twenty-nine townhouses comprise Jefferson Mews, in which BHC combined building on the vacant lots and rehabilitating abandoned houses.[257] The Better Housing Coalition's mission to provide affordable and attractive housing to low-income homebuyers proved difficult to bring to fruition in the 1990s because of the rising crime rate in Church Hill. Greta Harris current Director of the Better Housing Coalition, recalled how difficult revitalization in the late 1980s and early 1990s was in Church Hill because of the crack epidemic. She said drug dealers frequently made sales in the open, mainly on Jefferson Avenue.[258] Thus, revitalization efforts struggled to gain traction as crime swept the neighborhood.

Implications

Crime became the center of attention for Church Hill throughout the 1990s. The *Times-Dispatch* reported in summer 1990 a three-hour community meeting of one hundred Church Hill residents to discuss crime in the neighborhood. Residents voiced major concerns of "street-corner drug dealing, gunfire in front of their homes, assaults, robberies, and murders."[259] By 1994, the crime and violence intensified so much that Governor George Allen authorized additional state troopers to concentrate on Church Hill.[260] Allen assigned the state troopers to focus particularly on drug activities. Allen described the need for a change, "'We cannot

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[256] Andres Duany, Elzabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation,* 52.
[257] "Residents and Community Leaders Join Forces to Celebrate Renewal of Church Hill," *Richmond Voice*, September 26, 1995.
[258] Greta Harris and David Herring, (lecture, Better Housing Coalition, Richmond,Virginia, September 10, 2015).
[259] Rick Sauder, "City Officials Ask Residents' Help in Driving Crime from Church Hill, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 10, 1990.
[260] Wynne Woolley, "Troopers to Help Police in City Areas- Church Hill. Blackwell, and Afton Avenue Targeted," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 3, 1994.

continue to force law-abiding citizens of Virginia to be imprisoned in their homes while violent criminals run free on our streets. We must stop the bleeding.'"[261] It is not surprising that very few people wanted to move to Church Hill during this period. In 1994, the city of Richmond received a loan in the amount of $700,000 from the state for rehabilitation of deteriorated homes. The city used a portion to purchase the homes at 716-720 N. 25th Street in Church Hill. These houses were sold for one dollar to homebuyers with the understanding that they would renovate the houses.[262]

Image Five: Richmond Newspapers, "Murder Scene," March 13, 1989, Valentine Museum,

Richmond, Virginia.

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[261] Ibid.
[262] Gordon Hickey, "Something Old/Something New-State Loan to Help Fix Up Three Church Hill Houses," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, December 21, 1994.

In 1995, the *Richmond Voice* described Church Hill as "one of the city's most distressed communities, marked by dilapidated housing and vacant lots."[263] The description could have been written in any of the previous four decades; yet, the increased trade in drugs added a different edge to the neighborhood than seen before.

A strategic committee appointed by City Council in 1989 compiled statistics that revealed the transition from marijuana to hard drugs in the 1980s. Arrests for the sale and possession of marijuana declined from 1,030 in 1985 to 483 in 1989, but arrests for opium, cocaine, and derivatives increased from 366 in 1985 to 1,065 in 1989. From 1970-1989 there was a 154 percent increase in jail population in the Richmond City Jail.[264] In 1994, a car pulled up to Kimberly Grocery, a common site for drug dealing located at the corner of 30th and S, and multiple gunmen fired into a crowd of people; several were injured and taken to VCU Medical Center for treatment.[265] In 1996, the Richmond police joined forces with the FBI to arrest ten dealers of crack cocaine in Church Hill after a two year undercover investigation. The *Times-Dispatch* reported some of those arrested migrated from Jamaica, and then came to Richmond because of the city's market for cocaine.[266] One of the most unfortunate examples of the situation of Richmond in the 1990s was the arrest of Councilman Chuck Richardson for selling heroin at a home in Henrico County.[267] Richardson had served on city council since 1977, and many Richmond residents viewed him as a hero.[268] At the same time, one resident described his

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[263] "Residents and Community Leaders Join Forces to Celebrate Renewal of Church Hill, *Richmond Voice*, September 26, 1995.

[264] East End Strategy Team, Richmond Tomorrow (1989), p. 10-1, Virginia Historical Society.

[265] Mark Holmberg, "At Least 3 Hurt in Shooting-Gunmen Open Fire on Crowd at Church Hill Corner," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 23, 1994.

[266] Alan Cooper, "10 Arrested in Alleged Crack Cocaine Ring," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 10, 1996.

[267] "Richmond Official Quits after Drug Charges," September 19, 1995, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/1995/09/19/us/richmond-official-quits-after-drug-charges.html

[268] Ibid.

perception that those in authority often contributed to the crime problem. Samuel Jackson said, "Police often take as long as 45 minutes to respond to calls. Also, he said police have ransacked homes he owns when he called to report suspected drug dealing. He said police kicked in a door and ruined $5,000 worth of repairs he had made to a property."[269] Melinda Skinner recalled an increase in murders in the 1980s, but they did not happen south of Broad Street.[270] The St. John's Historic District continued to be distinct from the rest of Church Hill. As crime and drugs engulfed Richmond in the 1990s, Church Hill's long-associated stigma as a dangerous neighborhood increased despite the efforts of many non-profit organizations.

Revitalization did not immediately transform Church Hill as a whole. Instead the foreboding words of one Church Hill resident, Dan Herrington, rang true in the 1990s, "'When Richmond loses its historic architecture, all we will have left to make Richmond famous is its rising murder rate.'"[271] Fortunately, the many revitalization efforts staved off complete demolition of the historic architecture in Church Hill North. In comparing the Historic Richmond Foundation's efforts in 1956 and the various non-profit organizations in the latter decades of the twentieth century, gentrification reappears as the effortless, transformative process. Scholar Neil Smith points out gentrification is appealing for governments because it takes very little investment.[272] "The larger redevelopment projects are obviously the result of corporate capital and the state, making them easy targets of working-class opposition. Gentrification, on the other hand, can be portrayed with very little effort as almost a public service."[273] The early work of the Historic Richmond Foundation brought in a white middle-class demographic that reinforced a

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[269] Rick Sauder, "City Officials Ask Residents' Help in Driving Crime from Church Hill, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 10, 1990.
[270] Melinda Skinner, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, May 15, 2015.
[271] Rick Sauder, "Councilman to Seek More Time to Resolve Church Hill Conflict," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 29, 1990.
[272] Neil Smith and Michele LeFaivre, "A Class Analysis of Gentrification," in *Gentrification, Displacement, and Neighborhood Revitalization,* 61.
[273] Ibid., 61.

segregated housing pattern. The revitalization efforts in the decades following showed that many

people hoped to live in a diverse neighborhood, much like the original Church Hill; however, the

housing discrimination toward African Americans resulted in a deep mistrust and suspicion of

the white residents coming into the neighborhood. The non-profit organizations certainly helped

the housing market in Church Hill; however, by the 1990s the stigma of the crime in the

neighborhood proved stronger in keeping residents away. At the close of the twentieth century,

Church Hill appeared to have little hope of making a comeback. Revitalization efforts had barely

disrupted the status quo of a white, middle-class neighborhood south of Broad Street, and a

predominantly low-income, African American neighborhood north of Broad Street.

Chapter Three: Gentrification in Church Hill

In the 1980s and 1990s, Church Hill was riddled with crime and drugs; yet, by 2011, the *Times-Dispatch* could describe Church Hill as a peaceful, attractive neighborhood. "Church Hill's amenities include top-rated restaurants, three large parks, community gardens and a dog park. The area also hosts annual street festivals and is only a short distance from the James River and the Canal Walk."[274] Within the last ten years, longtime residents have noticed a change in their surroundings. When asked the most noticeable change he has seen in the neighborhood, John Murden responded, "right away a lot less people getting shot."[275] Stephen Jenkins first looked to move to Church Hill ten years ago but waited several years until the neighborhood appeared less rough.[276] Catherine Illian's memories of the neighborhood thirteen years ago confirm how serious crime was: "There was a shooting, someone was shot, and the dead body was in the street the whole day. It was just uncovered in the street." She described another gruesome event: "A couple bought a house and the day they went to close on the house they found a dead body in the lawn." The *Times-Dispatch* reported a burglary where the resident stabbed the intruder in the shoulder, and he later died from the wounds. The resident's family would not identify themselves for fear of retaliation but wanted to apologize to the intruder's family.[277] Aside from crime, very few businesses existed in Church Hill ten years ago. A *Times-Dispatch* article as recently as 2004 promoted St. John's Church as a tourist destination but suggested McDonald's down the hill for lunch afterward, revealing the lack of options in the

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[274] Doug Childers, "Church Hill: 'City Living, in a Close-Knit Community," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 11, 2011.

[275] John Murden, interviewed by Ama Ansah, Tom Emmons, and Miranda Rosenblum, October 4, 2014, http://arts.vcu.edu/madeinchurchhill/2014/12/09/john-and-calvin-murden/, accessed February 7, 2016.

[276] Stephen Jenkins, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, October 14, 2015.

[277] Luz Lazo, "Family is Sorry That Intruder is Dead," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 14, 2008.

neighborhood.[278] Stephen Weir, resident of Church Hill since 2008, said there was only one coffee shop when he first moved into the neighborhood. He also remembered the prevailing problem for Church Hill, "There were entire blocks that didn't have anyone living in the houses."[279] Residents no longer associate Church Hill with crime, lack of retail, and abandoned houses; rather, they offer glowing reviews of all the amenities in the neighborhood.

The Church Hill Area Revitalization Team predicted in 1978 that one day the neighborhood would attract residents. "We believe that Church Hill, whose core is largely a 19th Century neighborhood, has an excellent prognosis as a city of the 21st Century. It is close in, with excellent public transport, increasingly good social services, and is close to shopping and employment, it is attractive and historic. A new hospital is being built. There are good ane [sic] improving schools. Many of the major black churches are located there. The mayor lives there."[280] CHART's prediction reflected an assumption that African American residents would continue to be the predominant residential demographic of the neighborhood and failed to take into account how gentrification could alter the neighborhood. Since 2005, the white population in the city of Richmond increased by thirty percent.[281] "In 2000 13 census tracts in Richmond were over 95 percent black, but by 2013 only 4 of these census tracts were still over 95 percent black."[282] Thus, more white residents are moving or staying in the city, and they are not doing so for the reasons CHART predicted such as transportation, social services, hospitals, or schools.

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[278] Jay Strafford, "Why It's Called Church Hill- St. John's, Where Patrick Henry Argued for Freedom from England, Has Witnessed a Lot of History," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 8, 2004.

[279] Stephen and Stacey Weir, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, February 14, 2016.

[280] "A proposal to the Isaiah Committee of St. Paul's Episcopal Church," p.1, November 28, 1978, Box-folder 17.10, Richmond Urban Institute Archives, M 258, Special Collections and Archives, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University.

[281] Hamilton Lombard, "Richmond's quiet transformation," *StatChat,* April 7, 2015, accessed March 11, 2016, http://statchatva.org/2015/04/07/richmonds-quiet-transformation/#more-6904.

[282] Hamilton Lombard, "Richmond's quiet transformation," *StatChat.*

The census confirms a different population started moving into the southern portion of Church Hill in 2000. According to the 2000 census, the St. John's area census tract and two adjacent census tracts showed 25-50 percent of residents having college education after decades of only 0-25 percent of residents with a college education. The 2000 census also lists median home values in the St. John's area ranging from $100,000 to $249,999. In 2007, the number of crime incidents dropped below four hundred and continued a steady decline each year thereafter.[283] By 2010, the 20-34 age range comprised 58.4 percent of the population.[284] The combination of younger, more educated residents, rising property values, and decreased crime are all characteristics of a gentrified neighborhood.

Young professionals are moving into the neighborhood because of factors such as the location, its history, and growing number of small businesses; furthermore, to many, urban living offers a more appealing lifestyle than the suburbs. Indeed, young professionals seem to be attracted to the symbolic idea of what Church Hill represents more than anything else. Church Hill itself will likely not hold many of these young professionals for long after they have children, and in time the neighborhood could change yet again. Previous scholarship categorized gentrifiers as retired or childless people who did not have to think about the quality of public schools and planned to stay permanently. The young professional group who plan to have children while in Church Hill and who then must grapple with the quality of public schools is a recent development. Scholarship is needed to address the implications of this new type of gentrification. This chapter is a tentative start to such scholarship.

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[283] Richmond Police Department, Crime Incident Information Center, last modified September 1, 2009, accessed February 26, 2016, http://eservices.ci.richmond.va.us/applications/crimeinfo/index.asp.
[284] U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Census Tract Profile," accessed February 25, 2016, http://www.richmondgov.com/CensusData/index.aspx.

Historiography

Pam Michael, assistant director of the Historic Richmond Foundation, expressed a common perception that gentrification should be expected: "'Every other neighborhood has experienced gentrification of 35 years, too...a natural gentrification that occurs in all neighborhoods.'"[285] Most scholars, however, argue that gentrification is anything but natural. It is a result of an intentional process, and scholars consistently examine whether the benefits of gentrification outweigh the costs. More recently, some scholars consider whether the term gentrification is applicable anymore for the residential patters of the twenty-first century.

Andres Duany in "Three Cheers for 'Gentrification'" argues the term gentrification has been so misconstrued that some people are not moving into cities simply because they are afraid to cause gentrification. This damages cities because the result is a "monoculture of poverty."[286] Duany argues the real issue is a lack of traditional housing; thus, the scarcity of such housing is the reason why property values skyrocket in historic neighborhoods.[287] Duany recommends middle-class residents move into cities because "gentrification rebalances a concentration of poverty by providing the tax base, rub-off work ethic, and political effectiveness of a middle class, and in the process improves the quality of life for all of community's residents."[288] Duany argues "force-fed" gentrification, mainly downtown revitalization projects, usually do not improve cities nearly as well as middle-class families moving into city neighborhoods. Thus, Duany contends gentrification at its best is spontaneous, but Duany does not address the ways in

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[285] Michael Paul Williams, "Church Hill- Neighbors See Changes Differently," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 14, 1990.

[286] Andres Duany, "Three Cheers for 'Gentrification,'" *The American Enterprise Institute*, 12, no. 3 (Apr/May 2001): 37, http:// search. Proquest.com .library.vcu.edu /docview/225401088?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo (accessed February 10, 2016).

[287] Andres Duany, "Three Cheers for 'Gentrification,'" 37-39.

[288] Ibid., 37.

which failed downtown revitalization plans can lay the foundation for future gentrification.[289] He

further describes gentrification as a multiple-step process with different waves of people;

gentrification begins with the marginalized, then baby boomers, then developers; thus, Duany

does not identify young professionals expecting to have children as a gentrifying group in his

analysis. Overall, Duany praises gentrification and concludes "people should not be prevented

from profiting on the natural appreciation of their neighborhoods."[290] According to Duany, there

are many befits to gentrification, but he fails to adequately measure the costs of gentrification.

Lance Freeman heavily relies for his work on interviews with African American residents

who stayed after gentrification occurred in their Brooklyn or Harlem neighborhoods. According

to Freeman, longtime residents expressed the same sentiment that "as the complexion of the

neighborhood lightens, amenities, and services will improve, and this was viewed as an accepted

law of urban living."[291] However, the cost, which coincides with increased amenities, is a loss of

culture for longtime residents. Freeman argues there is a distinct loss of social norms as white

middle-class residents move in and decide the acceptable behavior in the neighborhood. For

example, groups of men who used to socialize on a street corner experience more police coming

by after white middle-class residents move into the neighborhood, and they stop their socializing

there.[292] Thus, Freeman's title, *There Goes the 'Hood,* represents his argument that there is a

serious cost to African American residents who stay in the neighborhood when it is gentrified.

Freeman agrees the term gentrification, because it does not seem to be determined by race, is

misrepresentative because if middle-class African Americans were to stay in a neighborhood or

move in, no one recognizes them as impacting the neighborhood. "To be sure, there are outward

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[289] Ibid.
[290] Ibid., 39.
[291] Lance Freeman, *There Goes The 'Hood,* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 98.
[292] Freeman, *There Goes the 'Hood,* 155.

trappings of class in urban America-- one's address, one's clothes, the car one drives, one's

diction, and occupation, to name a few. But for a number of reasons none of these make the same

type of mental imprint as a white face in a predominantly black community."[293] Furthermore,

there is no way of distinguishing if a white couple were to move into a neighborhood simply

because it is what they can afford. As Freeman states, a white face in a black neighborhood

automatically denotes gentrification, which is a limited perspective. Despite many costs,

Freeman does not discount the benefits of gentrification. He concludes gentrification is an

immensely complicated process as many longtime residents embrace the new amenities in their

neighborhood and, at the same time, resent the change in culture.[294]

David Maurrasse also interviewed residents of Harlem to show the agency of longtime

residents in enduring both neighborhood decline and gentrification. He agrees with Freeman that

gentrification results in ample costs for native residents: "When policy stimulates urban

disinvestment, low-income people are left behind, and when it stimulates inner-city investment,

low-income people are hanging on to stick around."[295] Maurrasse asks, is it possible to invest in

the inner city without it being at the expense of those already living there? Maurrasse criticizes

development efforts for not empowering residents and calls for a higher standard beyond the

current status quo of development.[296] Maurrasse offers one practical recommendation for

municipal governments to allow residents veto power on development projects before they

begin.[297] Maurrasse aptly summarizes that in a gentrifying neighborhood low-income residents

find themselves in much closer proximity to those with wealth, but this proximity does not

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[293] Ibid., 88.
[294] Ibid., 85.
[295] David Maurrasse, *Listening to Harlem:Gentrification, Community, Business* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 12.
[296] David Maurrasse, *Listening to Harlem*, 11.
[297] Ibid., 55.

translate to more opportunities for low-income residents, which, for him is the most critical issue.[298]

More recently, Alan Ehrenhalt posits that gentrification is no longer a fitting term for the process of young professionals moving to cities because a much larger movement is taking place than pockets of individuals moving into dilapidated neighborhoods to rehabilitate houses.[299] Instead, a broader phenomenon than gentrification is occurring, and he argues demographic inversion is a more suitable term than gentrification.[300] Ehrenhalt defines demographic inversion as "the rearrangement of living patterns across an entire metropolitan area, all taking place at roughly the same time."[301] Ehrenhalt predicts cities will eventually look more like they did in the early twentieth century, and the suburban model of the late twentieth century will fade in popularity because more affluent people are choosing now to live near the urban center.[302] In turn, low-income residents and immigrants increasingly are moving to the suburbs. "From 2000 to 2010, the number of poor in the suburbs or the nation's largest metro areas grew by 53 percent to a record 15.3 million."[303] Ehrenhalt believes some African American middle-class residents will move to the city, but the census indicates this is mainly a white middle-class movement.[304] Ehrenhalt's theory certainly lifts pressure off of middle-class residents' shoulders that they are causing gentrification by moving into cities as Andres Duany claims; according to Ehrenhalt, they simply are following a larger cultural trend.

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[298] Ibid., 44.
[299] Alan Ehrenhalt, *The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City* (New York:Alfred A. Knopf, 2012)*,* 233
[300] Alan Ehrenhalt, *The Great Inversion,* 17.
[301] Ibid.
[302] Ibid., 61.
[303] Leigh Gallager, *The End of the Suburbs: Where the American Dream Is Moving* (New York: Penguin Group, 2013), 177.
[304] Alan Ehrenhalt, *The Great Inversion,* 230.

Scholar Andrew Busch explores gentrification in Austin, Texas, where the municipal government played a role in driving gentrification to reap the benefits of a large middle-class base. "Gentrification is about more than housing. It is the leading edge of a municipally-sponsored new urbanity, where the central city is remade to attract people who consume more, pay more taxes, and desire urban lifestyles." Busch calls for municipal leaders to put structures and policies in place to protect vulnerable residents, such as, freezing property taxes in gentrifying neighborhoods for longtime residents. Interestingly, Busch argues, contrary to Duaney, that there is not enough low-income housing in cities, leaving people without viable options.[305]

The scholarship reflects a continual examination of the costs and benefits of gentrification, but also a debate has emerged whether the term itself, first coined in 1964, is applicable now. Gentrification is a complex term with many different interpretations. For example, one white middle-class homeowner in Church Hill said he and his wife contributed to gentrification in the neighborhood. When asked to explain further, he answered: "We're young, we're millennials, we're more well-educated, we appreciate different things, we're looking for different things in the neighborhood, the things that we're excited about in Church Hill aren't necessarily the things that people who historically lived in this neighborhood would be excited about."[306] He aptly described a current stereotype of a gentrifier: young, well-educated, and possessing distinct consumer interests. But are he and his wife gentrifiers of Church Hill? It depends on the interpretation of gentrification. The authors of *Gentrification* define the term as

[305] Andrew Busch, "Crossing Over: Sustainability, New Urbanism, and Gentrification in Austin, Texas," *Southern Spaces,* August 19, 2015, http://southernspaces.org/2015/crossing-over-sustainability-new-urbanism-and-gentrification-austin-texas (accessed January 13, 2016).
[306] Stefan and Lara Kling, interview by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, February 22, 2016.

"nothing more and nothing less than the neighborhood expression of class inequality."[307] Traditionally, the definition of gentrification has meant the displacement of low-income residents with the intention to rehabilitate houses in order to increase property values. Church Hill makes an interesting case study of gentrification because it fits both interpretations of the process.

Gentrification in Church Hill

The Historic Richmond Foundation removed black tenants in order to bring white residents into the neighborhood; thus, a young, white professional couple moving into Church Hill today indirectly reaps the benefit of a sound housing investment thanks to the HRF's work sixty years ago. Additionally, the northern portion of Church Hill remains an impoverished neighborhood with abandoned housing, loitering, and housing projects while the southern portion boasts expensive restaurants and beautiful parks. A clear divide exists between the two sides of Church Hill. Young professionals move to Church Hill for the location, history, small businesses, and appeal of urban living over the suburbs.

Not only is Church Hill minutes away from downtown Richmond, it also offers spectacular views of the entire city and the James River. *The New York Times* article described the neighborhood as one with decades of crime, "but undervalued real estate and unparalleled views of downtown and the James River have drawn a fiercely loyal, self-starter set of residents."[308] Richard Campanella, a geographer at the Tulane School of Architecture, argues that in order for middle-class professionals to move into an urban neighborhood, the

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[307] Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, Elvin Wyly, *Gentrification* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 80.
[308] Carrie Nieman Culpeper, "Shopping and Eating Amid History in Richmond, Va," *New York Times,* November 19, 2014, accessed January 22, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/23/travel/shopping-and-eating-amid-history-in-richmond-va.html?_r=0.

neighborhood needs to be in close proximity to an already gentrified area.[309] In 1989, the *Times-Dispatch* attributed growth in Church Hill to "new development in Shockoe Bottom, bringing more restaurants, night spots, and other amenities, has helped boost resale values. The Tobacco Row housing project and financing for a floodwall are examples of major investment in the Bottom."[310] Thus, Shockoe Bottom's development increased the attractiveness to Church Hill. Church Hill is also within walking distance to downtown. Lara Kling cited the ability to walk downtown from her Church Hill house as one of her favorite parts of living in the neighborhood.[311]

Image Six: Richmond Newspapers, "Downtown Skyline from Church Hill," November 7, 1987, Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

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[309] Richard Campanella, "Gentrification and Its Discontents: Notes from New Orleans, March 1, 2013, accessed January 13, 2016, http://www.newgeography.com/content/003526-gentrification-and-its-discontents-notes-new-orleans

[310] Paula Crawford Squires, "From Top To Bottom- New Vitality is Helping Church Hill," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 30, 1989.

[311] Stefan and Lara Kling, interview by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, February 22, 2016.

Hilary Bleckley also spoke about the walkability of Church Hill as one of her favorite things. "There's something really nice about being able to walk. There's a post office two blocks away, there's a hair salon three blocks away, there's a bank right in the corner. There really is, there's an amazing park with an incredible view. I feel like there's something about that's the way it's supposed to be not in your car all the time." The proximity of Church Hill to downtown Richmond and Shockoe Bottom make the neighborhood appealing.

Another important factor causing young professionals to move into the neighborhood is the same reason that the HRF's interest began in 1956: the history of Church Hill. Richard Campanella argues the second factor that must exist in order for young professionals to move into a neighborhood in the city is that it must be historic.[312] Indeed, Andrew Bleckley, current resident of Church Hill, "loved the vibe of Church Hill because it felt like Charleston."[313] When asked how he would describe Church Hill, Bleckley said, "I think I usually describe it based on St. John's... I can pinpoint Church Hill's place in history with them with that story. I can say we live a block and a half from St. John's."[314] Stefan Kling also said he would describe his neighborhood as "the first neighborhood in Richmond, and I live three blocks away from where Patrick Henry gave the 'Give Me Liberty of Give Me Death' speech." Another resident of Church Hill, Eric Jenvey, said, "There's something romantic about the area that we're in because we've got the cobblestone street, and the oil lamps. I don't think that's the reason you should buy a house, but it doesn't hurt."[315] Thus, the history of Church Hill provides an added amenity for young professionals that is absent in younger Richmond neighborhoods.

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[312] Richard Campanella, "Gentrification and Its Discontents: Notes from New Orleans, March 1, 2013, accessed January 13, 2016, http://www.newgeography.com/content/003526-gentrification-and-its-discontents-notes-new-orleans
[313] Andrew and Hillary Bleckley, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, January 21, 2016.
[314] Stefan and Lara Kling, interview by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, February 22, 2016.
[315] Eric and Leigh Anne Jenvey, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, February 7, 2016.

In 1965, B. Walton Turnball predicted that new businesses would be the most critical

factor for sustained growth in Church Hill, and currently small businesses are the most

recognizable characteristic of the neighborhood.[316] In November 2014, the *New York Times*

featured an article on several Church Hill businesses: The Roosevelt restaurant, Sub Rosa

Bakery, Union Market, and Proper Pie Co.[317] In December 2015, *Travel and Leisure* ranked

Richmond as third in the list of best places to travel in 2016.[318] Scholar Maurasse noted, "A key

aspect of the gentrification process is the conscious effort of businesses to cater to a more

affluent clientele."[319] Two bakeries located five blocks apart indicate a strong middle-class

clientele in Church Hill; a considerable change from the 1990s when drugs were the primary

business exchange. Catherine Illian said when she moved to the neighborhood thirteen years ago,

people outside of Church Hill would usually say "I'm sorry" when she said where she lived, but

five or six years ago, people started responding very enthusiastically when she said she lives in

Church Hill. Illian credits the shift in people's perceptions to the reputations of the small

businesses in the neighborhood.[320] Leigh Anne Jenvey cited the small businesses as one of the

reasons she and her husband moved to the neighborhood, "Church Hill is growing and not just

housing, but I think there's a lot more retail, things that people can do here which is one of the

reasons we like living in the city because we can walk to places and get to things."[321] Eric

Jenvey added that originally they wanted to live in the Fan but now see Church Hill as the place

to be. "The restaurants and businesses that are around here, it's definitely an upward trajectory

[316] Linda Anne Murphy, "Restoration of Church Hill Called Practical," *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* March 7, 1965.
[317] Carrie Nieman, Culpeper, "Shopping and Eating Amid History in Richmond, Va," *New York Times,* November 19, 2014, accessed January 20, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/23/travel/shopping-and-eating-amid-history-in-richmond-va.html?_r=0.
[318] "Best Places to Travel in 2016," *Travel and Leisure,* December 1, 2015, accessed January 22, 2016, http://www.travelandleisure.com/slideshows/best-places-to-travel-in-2016/49.
[319] David Maurrasse, *Listening to Harlem,* 65.
[320] Catherine Illian, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, February 8, 2016.
[321] Eric and Leigh Anne Jenvey, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, February 7, 2016.

compared to the Fan."[322] Stefan Kling believes Church Hill offers more than any other

Richmond neighborhood, "It's already a destination in the city, but I think it will just be more

like that. I think that other types of businesses will open up; barbers and hair shops and ideally

it's not just a food place but a place where people can drive up and walk around and go to shops

and stuff; bookstores, novelty shops, or whatever." Small businesses, rather than large

corporations, typically are the first to come into neighborhoods previously deprived of capital,

but these businesses often target middle-class consumers, leaving native residents without

necessities.[323]

Kirsten Gray, longtime resident of Church Hill, makes the important distinction that

businesses did exist in Church Hill in the 1980s, they just offered different services. "What's

changed is back then I couldn't get like a homemade muffin or pie or a fancy coffee. But I could

actually get my shoes fixed. I could buy clothing to wear, like the more necessities were actually

available."[324] Church Hill is considered a food desert as there are only corner stores and small

markets for residents to buy food; grocery stores typically target areas where residents earn

higher incomes.[325] Most young professionals living there voluntarily bring up that Church Hill is

a food desert, which reflects an awareness of a major inequality in the neighborhood, but they

can drive out of Church Hill to grocery stores in other neighborhoods. The one grocery store in

Church Hill is closest to the southern portion of Church Hill, but most interviewees preferred

driving to grocery stores farther away for a better selection. Residents in the northern section of

Church Hill have no easy way to get to that one grocery store. Lindsay Parks, a white resident in

Church Hill North, said her least favorite thing about the neighborhood is lack of services. "The

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[322] Ibid.

[323] Kirsten Gray, interviewed by Ama Ansah, Tom Emmons, and Miranda Rosenblum, October 4, 2014, accessed February 7, 2016. http://arts.vcu.edu/madeinchurchhill/2015/01/13/kirsten-gray/.

[324] David Maurrasse, *The Great Inversion*, 68.

[325] Louis Llovio, "'Food deserts' challenge area residents," *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* January 23, 2011.

accessibility of things is really limited like fresh food, gas, there's not a bank...there's not places where you can get things."[326] Lindsay acknowledged there are restaurants but for the Church Hill North community there is a major lack of necessities. The grocery store dilemma is symptomatic of the larger problem of gentrification, in that small businesses attract young, middle-class professionals into the neighborhood but often offer little for longtime residents.

While the location, history, and small businesses make Church Hill an attractive neighborhood for young professionals, Church Hill also represents a stronger counter to suburban life. Scholar Irving Allen notes, "If the older generation looked to the suburbs for romantic middle-class communities that represented a new way of life, some members of the younger generation may well be looking to the cities for romantic middle-class communities that represent an alternative to the suburbs."[327] Lindsay Parks confirmed Allen's supposition. "I don't see myself in the suburbs. We both grew up in the suburbs which is ironic. We see ourselves established in our family in the city."[328] Ehrenhalt observes, "The people who are moving downtown are doing so in part to escape the real or virtual 'gatedness' of suburban life."[329] Currently, the pattern seems to be that young professionals move within the city to different neighborhoods, but they do not plan to stay permanently in the city. This period of gentrification in Church Hill represents a shift from the pattern in the 1980s.

Scholars previously described gentrifiers as a very different group than the current trend. Schill and Nathan described the gentrifying population as "households composed of an older married couple and children in from suburban locations are not uncommon," they added, "these newcomers plan to live in the neighborhood permanently and are thus concerned with preserving

[326] Lindsay Parks, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, March 4, 2016.
[327] Irving Allen "The Ideology of Dense Neighborhood Redevelopment" in *Gentrification, Displacement, and Neighborhood Revitalization,* 35.
[328] Lindsay Parks, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, March 4, 2016.
[329] Alan Ehrenhalt, *The Great Inversion,* 19.

values."[330] Scholar Robert Beauregard also identified gentrifiers as different from what is seen in Church Hill, The ostensibly prototypical gentrifier is a single-person or two-person household comprised of affluent professionals without children."[331] Scholars agreed that a common denominator amongst gentrifiers is that city public schools do not affect their residential decisions. Scholars Bruce London and J. John Palen noted, "Relatively affluent young, child-free couples, who need not worry about the quality of inner-city schools and the shortage of playgrounds, are more likely to choose to live in the city, close to places of work and adult recreation."[332] Indeed, the current residential pattern in Church Hill highlights a different movement from that described in previous scholarship on gentrification. Retired couples without kids, the so-called empty-nesters, are not moving in droves to Church Hill; rather, young professionals who want to take advantage of nice restaurants, walking around, and coffee shops move to Church Hill. They also marry and look forward to having children; thus, they do have to think about the quality of schools. Ultimately, the difficulty with schools is not enough of a barrier to keep young professionals from experiencing urban living.

Most young professionals have looked at neighborhoods throughout Richmond, and those who settled on Church Hill often did so because it is more affordable than the Fan neighborhood in the West End of Richmond. Scholar Matthew Lassiter defined Richmond's Fan neighborhood accurately as a national example of an "island suburb." He defines an island suburb as "a cluster of upper-middle-class and wealthy white neighborhoods located inside the city limits and protected by exclusionary zoning policies from racial integration and socioeconomic

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[330] Michael H. Schill and Richard P. Nathan, *Revitalizing America's Cities,* 29.
[331] Robert Beauregard, "The Chaos and Complexity of Gentrification" in *Gentrification of the City*, eds. Neil Smith and Peter Williams (Winchester, Mass: Allen & Unwin Inc., 1986), 37.
[332] Bruce London and John J. Palen "Introduction" in *Gentrification, Displacement, and Neighborhood Revitalization,* eds., J. John Palen and Bruce London (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984), 15.

diversity."[333] Many young professionals desire to live in the Fan, but find it too expensive. Since many of these young professionals choose to live in Church Hill instead, it signals Church Hill has similar island suburb qualities. The Bleckleys, a young white professional couple, said it was not that they were set on living in Church Hill; rather, they looked at neighborhoods in every corner of the city of Richmond-- Northside, Southside, the Fan, and Church Hill. They narrowed it down to the Fan and Church Hill but chose Church Hill because it was more affordable. "The Fan was a bit out of our price range for the amount of house you got." Thus, Church Hill is a less expensive version of the Fan that offers the same amenities of a rich history, central location, and great restaurants. The Klings, also a young white professional couple, looked in the Fan as well but felt it was crowded and busy. The Fan and Church Hill represent the mindset that most young professionals carry into urban living, as explained by scholar Neil Smith, "It embodies a search for diversity as long as it is highly ordered, and a glorification of the past as long as it is safely brought into the present."[334] Most of the couples initially wanted the Fan but came to see Church Hill as a more peaceful and affordable option. Thus, Church Hill represents one viable option among many Richmond neighborhoods, but no one considered the suburbs outside the city search for a house.

While Church Hill is one of the more diverse neighborhoods in Richmond, the residential pattern is highly stratified; thus, residents do not necessarily interact with diverse people on a regular basis. In the southern portion of Church Hill, most blocks have 0-10 percent African American residents while the northern portion is 90-100 percent African American.[335] Yet, residents often speak of the neighborhood as a diverse one. Jenvey said he would not want to

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[333] Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 13.

[334] Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier,* 114.

[335] U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Race: Black of African American Alone, 2010," accessed February 25, 2016, http://www.richmondgov.com/CensusData/index.aspx.

move to the suburbs and enjoys living in a city because "you just get more perspective when you

live in a city than if you live in a neighborhood where people look like you."[336] Yet, Jenvey lives

south of Broad where the population is 90 percent white. Scholar Irving Allen addresses the

misnomer that cities are more diverse than suburbs; he explains it is just a matter of density.

"The high density and high visibility of many groups at the center of the city allows one to see

the diversity."[337] The effects of the Historic Richmond Foundation intentionally establishing a

white enclave are still evident today. Rather than a melting pot, Church Hill is segregated by race

and class lines. The more affluent, white portion of the neighborhood is steadily expanding

northward. Thus, residents who live in the southern portion are able to experience diversity when

they choose to experience it, perhaps the greatest indicator of a gentrified neighborhood. Lara

Kling expressed disappointment in the way the neighborhood feels so divided. She said, "There's

a library probably four blocks north of us, but in between here and there is a stretch of road that I

would not feel comfortable walking on...it might be totally fine for me to walk there and nothing

might ever happen and it might just be my perception of what that stretch of street looks like."[338]

Eric Jenvey observed the City also plays into the divide between the two sides of the

neighborhood by catering to residents south of Broad Street over residents in a housing project.

"I was driving through Mosby yesterday and there were leaves. We're talking right now in

February and there were tons of leaves in their parking lots...we got our leaves cleaned out

months ago." Lindsay Parks, a white resident in Church Hill North, believed perceptions of her

neighborhood are unfair. "There's a lot trash on the ground, there is crime, and there's all these

things happening, but there's a beautiful community underneath all that, that I don't feel is talked

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[336] Eric and Leigh Anne Jenvey, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, February 7, 2016.
[337] Irving Allen, The Ideology of Dense Neighborhood Redevelopment" in *Gentrification, Displacement, and Neighborhood Revitalization,* 32.
[338] Stefan and Lara Kling, interview by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, February 22, 2016.

about." A divided neighborhood is the reality for current Church Hill residents; the level at

which residents of one side interact with the other side varies. As young professionals continue

to establish their presence in Church Hill, what are the costs for the neighborhood?

The benefits of gentrification are obvious to anyone who walks through Church Hill.

There are many new businesses and beautiful, restored houses; thus, identifying the costs require

closer examination. Neil Smith describes the common perception of gentrification in the United

States as "a marvelous testament to the values of individuals and the family."[339] In reality,

individuals do not steer gentrification; rather, financial institutions, developers, and policies

guide gentrification in neighborhoods.[340] Stephen Jenkins aptly described the gentrified

neighborhood as "hip, artistically beautiful, and the people who were there from the beginning

are looking around saying what happened?"[341] The major costs of gentrification in Church Hill

are new restrictions on longtime residents, an increasing divide between the two sides of the

neighborhood, and new amenities that cater to the middle-class residents.

The major concern, driven by years of analysis by scholars, is that longtime residents are

pushed out by the gentrifying class. The blatant disregard for longtime residents by the HRF has

been replaced by more nuanced pressures. John Lewis Taylor III has lived in his Church Hill

home for over fifty years. He explained the racial change of his neighborhood, "I would say

since '63 that area was predominately black. Now there may be on a block of 25 houses, there

may be five black families on that block."[342] He went on to say, "We recently had four neighbors

who were Caucasians to move into that block, and I say that because a month ago, I got a notice

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[339] Neil Smith, "Restructuring of Urban Space" in *Gentrification of the City* edited by Neil Smith and Peter Williams (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 19.
[340] Neil Smith and Michele LeFaivre "A Class Analysis of Gentrification" in *Gentrification, Displacement, and Neighborhood Revitalization,* 54.
[341] Stephen Jenkins, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, October 14, 2015.
[342] John Taylor III, interviewed by Laura Brower and Patricia Herrera, November 7, 2014, accessed January 10, 2016, http://arts.vcu.edu/madeinchurchhill/2015/01/13/john-taylor-iii-esq/

from a city inspector that there was a repair that needed to be done on our house, and that if we

didn't get it done, they would criminalize it."[343] Similarly, Stephen Jenkins recalled when he first

moved on his block in Church Hill receiving almost daily advertisements, sometimes

handwritten, to sell his house for cash. Jenkins said out of fourteen houses there are only three

black families on his block. One of those families has three generations living in the house which

Jenkins suspects is the only way they are still able to afford living in the neighborhood.[344]

Scholar Peter Marcuse addresses the notion of "pressure of displacement" which is not as

commonly discussed in the scholarship on gentrification, but is very fitting for Church Hill.

When families see their neighborhood changing around them and new businesses opening up for

a clearly different social status, Marcuse says, many families will move before the inevitable

displacement comes.[345] "When gentrification inflates home prices in once-disinvested

neighborhoods, it is common to find that poor home owners are suddenly eager to cash out on

the appreciation by selling and moving away."[346] Therefore, forced displacement, such as done

by the Historic Richmond Foundation in the 1950s, may be a thing of the past, but there is no

way of knowing how many Church Hill residents left in recent years because of the pressure of

displacement as they witnessed their neighborhood dramatically change.

The other major cost of young professionals in the neighborhood is that the gentrified

boundary the Historic Richmond Foundation initially carved by pushing out African American

tenants has expanded considerably over the decades. South Church Hill is not commonly used in

the vernacular of Richmond residents; rather, the gentrified portion of the neighborhood claims

to be "the" Church Hill while Church Hill North is a common term to distinguish the portion of

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[343] Ibid.
[344] Stephen Jenkins, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, October 14, 2015.
[345] Peter Marcuse "Abandonment, gentrification, and displacement: the linkages in New York City" in
Gentrification of the City, 157.
[346] Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, Elvin Wyly, *Gentrification* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 74-75.

the neighborhood with fewer amenities and more African American residents. In other words, the less gentrified portion of Church Hill received a different name to represent its different status. Lindsay Parks, a resident of Church Hill North, believes the media plays a huge role in this divide, "When Church Hill is in the news for good things, when Church Hill has these articles about these awesome restaurants, these awesome things happening, these beautiful homes, these beautiful historical whatever this is the Church Hill that's being portrayed. When Church Hill is in the news for shootings or crime that's my Church Hill."[347] Indeed one very real status marker is the differences in property values. Hillary Bleckley explained, "We have joked about north of Broad and south of Broad: NoBro and Sobro. There's a connotation being south of Broad. We even feel the market value of our house is better being south of Broad."[348] In the 1997 Church Hill North Historic Nomination Application, David Collett and Isabel Smith attributed the difference in the two neighborhoods to the fact that John Adams constructed the Van Lew mansion on Grace Street in the southern portion of the neighborhood; thus, Church Hill North never boasted homes of such grandeur.[349] Collett and Smith further noted that Church Hill North properties were made of wood as opposed to the brick of the St. John's District. Certainly the Historic Richmond Foundation's choice of the brick houses on East Grace Street as its pilot contributed to the stark contrast in the neighborhood.

An overwhelming theme in interviews with young professionals in Church Hill is that they will leave when their children get to school age rather enroll in the Richmond Public School system. Kirsten Gray expressed concern in the current trend she sees, "I wish mainly for the new generations of young adults up here, you know, I'm seeing all these people push all their babies

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[347] Lindsay Parks, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, March 4, 2016.
[348] Andrew and Hillary Bleckley, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, January 21, 2016.
[349] US Department of Interior, *Church Hill North Historic District 1997 Nomination,* p. 26, accessed February 29, 2016, http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Cities/Richmond/Church_Hill_North_HD_textlist.htm.

around in their carriages I would like to see people, I'd like it to not be so transient. I'd like for them to really invest in the neighborhood, to really invest in the schools."[350] The Bleckleys are already looking to move from Church Hill because of the schools. When asked what their long-term plans are, Leigh Anne Jenvey said, "Where we are, we are zoned to Bellevue Elementary School. So if we have kids here and we wanted to really stay and could stay, fit in this house til they're in elementary school, great. That's fine. We feel great about that. Beyond that, I'm not really sure. But I think our long-term plan would revolve around schools." Her husband echoed, "I think the schools need to improve for people to stay who have the ability to leave." [351] Lara Kling expressed the likely sentiment of most young professionals in Church Hill: "I don't really like to talk about it because I want both Church Hill and a good school, and I want that to be an easy decision."[352] The Klings are considering homeschooling as a way to stay in the neighborhood. Whether the current trend of young professionals living in Church Hill continues appears to be contingent on the quality of schools within the city. This represents a shift from decades ago when retired or childless couples moved into the city intending to stay permanently. Young professionals want to experience urban living so they are staying put after college; yet, children bring a new problem that gentrifiers did not have to consider as seriously in the 1980s. Indeed, most gentrification scholarships gives little attention to schools because empty nesters used to comprise the main gentrifying demographic.

Despite several costs to the neighborhood, there are also benefits from young professionals moving into Church Hill. Young professionals often fill previously vacant houses. Lindsay Parks and her husband bought a house in 2013 in Church Hill North that had been

[350] Kirsten Gray, interviewed by Ama Ansah, Tom Emmons, and Miranda Rosenblum, October 4, 2014, accessed February 7, 2016, http://arts.vcu.edu/madeinchurchhill/2015/01/13/kirsten-gray/.
[351] Eric and Leigh Anne Jenvey, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, VA, February 7, 2016.
[352] Stefan and Lara Kling, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmon,VA, February 22, 2016.

vacant from the time it was built in 2009.[353] She said they received a warm reception from their

African American neighbors who were happy to see someone finally living in the house. There

are also some efforts to help bridge the gap between the two sides of Church Hill. The city of

Richmond released a plan for a bike path from Fairfield Court and Armstrong High School, both

Church Hill North landmarks, down 29th Street to Libby Hill Park in the southern portion of

Church Hill.[354] The project is a meaningful way for the city to connect the two sides of the

neighborhood. Unfortunately, Carol Wharton, member of the Church Hill Association, revealed

that most members object to the bike path. Wharton said some members blatantly stated they

believe the bike path out of Church Hill North will increase crime; others said they thought it

would disturb the historic district.[355] Additionally, The *Times-Dispatch* reported with hope

Church Hill North may see better days. "Saturday was a day of temporary transformation for the

Church Hill North neighborhood in Richmond's East End, as food trucks, musical performers

and pop-up shops gathered along North 25th Street in an area deemed a food desert with quite a

few vacant buildings." Interestingly, food trucks, musical performers, and shops are more

indicative of a gentrified neighborhood. Nevertheless, residents reportedly enjoyed the day.

"Barbara Cotter, who has lived in Church Hill since the late 1970s, said that until Saturday, she

had never seen the neighborhood so lively and energetic."[356]

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[353] Lindsay Parks, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, March 4, 2016.
[354] Ned Oliver, "Richmond Plans 2nd Bike Boulevard for Church Hill," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 23, 2015, accessed February 22, 2016, http://www.richmond.com/news/local/city-of-richmond/article_7c9f22e3-5539-56a3-9c48-dc24dbce07f2.html
[355] Carol Wharton, interview by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, VA, February 19, 2016.
[356] Meredith Newman, "Church Hill North Neighborhood Offers Possibilities," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 15, 2014.

Implications

Church Hill North is a working-class community on the precipice of being swept away by gentrification. According to scholars Smith and LeFaivre, there is a thin line between gentrification and revitalization. Gentrification can lead to revitalization when neighborhoods are completely devalorized, but often gentrification takes over neighboring areas that simply have a working class culture.[357] Lindsay Parks noted, "They just built three brand-new houses behind me that are ridiculous. They're going for $215,000. Very small and not in a great part of the neighborhood."[358] Developers anticipate major profits to be had in Church Hill North as the gentrified southern part of Church Hill continues its steady expansion. David Herring and Greta Harris agree that the Better Housing Coalition's time in Church Hill is coming to an end as it is no longer viable to build affordable housing in the neighborhood.[359] This is truly remarkable considering in the 1980s and 1990s that houses were practically given away. In many ways, it would seem there is no reason to consider changing policies on gentrification because Church Hill appears to be the ultimate neighborhood success story. Peter Marcuse cuts straight to the point, "The large question is not *whether* abandonment can be avoided, gentrification controlled, displacement eliminated, or even *how* these things can be done, but rather whether there is the desire to do them."[360] The southern portion of Church Hill is a gentrified neighborhood, but many of the residents are planning on leaving. Who will replace them? Property values may be even higher in the next wave, such that young professionals probably could not afford the asking prices. "Because so many things are dependent in part on where one lives-- primary education,

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[357] Smith and LeFaivre, "A Class Analysis of Gentrification" in *Gentrification, Displacement, and Neighborhood Revitalization,* 61.
[358] Lindsay Parks, interviewed by Kathryn Parkhurst, Richmond, Virginia, March 4, 2016.
[359] Greta Harris and David Herring (lecture, Better Housing Coalition, Richmond,Virginia, September 10, 2015).
[360] Peter Marcuse "Abandonment, gentrification, and displacement: the linkages in New York City" in *Gentrification of the City*, 175.

exposure to crime and environmental hazards, access to decent and healthful food-- the quality of one's neighborhood can affect life outcomes."[361] The difference between residents in the southern portion versus the northern portion of Church Hill is how much their life outcomes are affected by where they live. Residents in the southern portion of Church Hill can leave the neighborhood for better schools, fresher food, and sell their house with many options for relocation. Residents in the northern portion are more tied to their neighborhood's services. Thus, the new restaurants, bakeries, and coffee shops, while the neighborhood remains a food desert and the public schools underfunded, are not improving life outcomes. The one-sided amenities in Church Hill reflect the typical trend of gentrification to benefit the middle-class.

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[361] Lance Freeman, *There Goes the 'Hood*, 205.

Conclusion

In 1962, the *Commonwealth Magazine of Virginia* ran an article entitled "Church Hill Comeback." In 2013, *Style Weekly* ran a Church Hill comeback story entitled "High on the Hill." Is Church Hill the ultimate neighborhood success story? Church Hill is a small neighborhood where renewal, revitalization, and gentrification efforts have each occurred. With each new attempt, it seems the neighborhood will get back on its feet. Ultimately, Church Hill offers an insightful window into the many stages of urban development. It also reflects how easy it is to assume residential patterns naturally unfold. Some attempts, such as the Model Neighborhood Program, were less successful than others. Many of the nonprofit organizations, such as CHART and Better Housing Coalition, made useful changes to the dilapidated housing in the neighborhood. Yet, no organization made a bigger impact on Church Hill than the Historic Richmond Foundation.

The Historic Richmond Foundation intentionally gentrified the area surrounding St. John's Church before the term even existed. Historic Richmond Foundation members strategically sought to replace African American tenants with white tenants. After raising millions of dollars, the HRF successfully carved out a white enclave in Church Hill. This action laid the foundation for the status symbol that the area south of Broad Street was superior to the area north of Broad Street. While gentrification did not immediately take root in the entire neighborhood, the St. John's area maintained its exclusivity throughout the twentieth century, even through the nadir of Church Hill. In the last ten years, Church Hill gained serious momentum due to gentrification. Middle-class young professionals benefit from the changes in Church Hill, but they do not plan on staying long enough to return an investment into the neighborhood.

Young professionals are moving into Church Hill for the various amenities offered such as small businesses, central location, rich history, and the appeal of urban living over the suburbs. Yet, this gentrifying demographic has to consider the quality of city schools unlike previous gentrifiers. Thus, the future of Church Hill is hardly stable as young families plan to move out in the relatively near future. Currently, Church Hill is a major destination in the city, one of the original goals of the Historic Richmond Foundation. The restaurants and beautiful houses indicate Church Hill has finally arrived after decades of crime, drugs, and dilapidated housing. Yet, upon closer examination, the success story of Church Hill is also a story of inequality.

As Florine Allen noted in the beginning of the twentieth century, M Street served as a divider between the white side of the neighborhood and the African American side. After World War II, Church Hill became almost entirely an African American neighborhood. The Historic Richmond Foundation brought back a segregated divide in the neighborhood by establishing a white block near St. John's Church. Over time, the white enclave grew and is now considered by most "the Church Hill." Church Hill North represents the predominantly African American portion of the neighborhood that will likely be enveloped by the gentrified Church Hill. Church Hill North is the same area where the formerly enslaved lived as freedmen, and where Douglas Wilder, Henry Marsh, and Dr. Jean Harris were raised. Church Hill is often seen as a success story, but whose success? Gentrification benefits middle-class, typically white, residents at the expense of low-income residents. There are nationally recognized restaurants in Church Hill, but the neighborhood is labeled a food desert. The property values are extremely high, but the schools struggle to stay accredited. Church Hill has yet to experience a complete transformation.

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