Common Patterns in an Uncommon Place: The Civil Rights Movement and Persistence of Racial Inequality in Waterloo, Iowa

An Honors Project for the Program of Africana Studies

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Introduction

For longer than the twenty-one years I have lived in Waterloo, Iowa, the city has been divided by race. The Cedar River divides the city neatly in half, running from the northwest to the southeast limits and forming what Waterloo’s natives call the “east” and “west” sides, each of which contains its own public high school. As the daughter of a mother who grew up on the east side and a father who grew up on the west side, I heard stories that stressed the differences in life on the river’s two banks. I learned the most about the polarity of my city as I moved through the public schools, quickly picking up on the idea that the west side was the safer side, the whiter side, and the richer side.

The differing reputations of each side are rooted in historical circumstance, beginning with the first Great Migration. The first significant influx of African Americans to Waterloo occurred in 1910. A massive strike on the Illinois Central Railroad forced Illinois Central employers to hire a group of African American strikebreakers from Mississippi.¹ A need for blue collar jobs pulled African Americans to northern urban centers such as Waterloo. Upon arrival, the recent immigrants settled immediately behind the tracks on the east side of town in an area called Smokey Row.² This was the only area in which the city would allow its first African Americans to live due to restrictive covenants enforced by the city government.

The legacy of that initial residential restriction remains present in the city today. Based on the most recent decennial census data, the population of Census Tract 18, in which the center is the old Smokey Row neighborhood, still has the highest percentage of

African Americans than any other census tract in the city, at approximately seventy five percent. Waterloo’s dissimilarity index, which is a measure of the percentage of the minority population that would have to move in order for a community or neighborhood to achieve the racial composition of the city, was 62.3 as of 2009. This far exceeds that of the other large urban centers in Iowa.  

Indeed, the Iowa HOME consortium stated in its 2009 report that “historical patterns of racial segregation persist in Waterloo,” indicating that racial segregation, and more generally, racial inequality, persists in the city.

This thesis answers the question “Why does inequality persist in Waterloo?” by focusing on the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s—the civil rights movement—and the subsequent decades of the 1970s and the 1980s. During the civil rights movement, multiple efforts addressed racial inequality in Waterloo, targeting housing, employment, and education. Yet inequality in all three sectors remains present in the city today. In these chapters, I will analyze the factors during the civil rights era responsible for the persistence of inequality—ranging from weak and ad hoc programs and policies to the post-civil rights era dissolution of the black middle class and rise of concentrated low-income black neighborhoods. An analysis of persistence factors is important because it provides an explanation of current demographic patterns within the historical legacy of Waterloo’s civil rights movement. Most importantly, this analysis suggests the reasons for the shortcomings of Waterloo’s civil rights programs.

This study converses with many scholarly works of civil rights, inequality, and communities. For decades, a group of scholars has been studying the civil rights

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3 *Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice* (Waterloo/Cedar Falls Iowa HOME Consortium, October 2009), 20.
4 Ibid., 10.
movement on the local and community level rather than the national level. Steven F. Lawson suggests that the events of the civil rights movement can be better understood by focusing on communities and grassroots organizations instead of national organizations and leaders. While the study of Waterloo supports Lawson’s argument, it also challenges it by suggesting that the connection between local political struggle and national political struggle as well as national institutions and local activists is indispensable to the study of the civil rights movement. Jeanne Theoharis echoes the ideas of Lawson, adding that local people were many times the leaders in the national black freedom movement, relying on grassroots organizing and theorizing of local problems to advance a national movement. Behind every national civil rights organization was a community of concerned citizens who systematically attacked racial inequity on a daily basis. This study is more aligned with the argument of Theoharis, as individual citizens formed the organizational center of the civil rights movement in Waterloo.

This study largely supports the argument of the “second ghetto.” A term coined by Arnold Hirsch, the second ghetto refers to the redefining and restrengthening of segregated black communities after World War II until 1970. The second great migration during WWII resulted in a significant influx of African Americans to Northern urban centers. Upon the end of the war, black migrants had filled the homes and jobs of many returning soldiers, leaving cities with shortages in both housing and employment.

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These shortages led to the onset of commercial redevelopment and urban renewal, which increased the number of available homes for blacks in concentrated, low-income areas—the second ghetto. The white citizens of Chicago, for example, dealt with the altered demography of their city by extralegally reinforcing the subordinate place of blacks. White citizens employed bombings, riots, and arson targeting black homes impinging on their neighborhoods, thereby strengthening the city’s racial divisions.\(^8\) A study of Waterloo challenges this perspective. Urban renewal and housing discrimination were so effective in segregating black and white populations that whites generally did not retaliate against blacks that moved into their neighborhoods. Hirsch’s observation that public policy and commercial redevelopment further hemmed blacks into specific areas of Chicago is supported in Waterloo, where weak city ordinances and the construction of mega malls further isolated black citizens from the promises of equal opportunity. Hirsch focuses on Chicago in his analysis, but the same process occurred in Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, St. Louis, and, I will argue, the small midwestern city of Waterloo, Iowa.\(^9\)

This study contributes to the larger scholarship on the history of the civil rights movement in northern cities. Thomas Sugrue’s book *Sweet Land of Liberty* argues that the history of civil rights in northern cities is just as important to understanding race relations today as is the history of civil rights in southern cities. He also argues that racial progress was much slower in the North than it was in the South, forcing citizens to boycott, participate in walk-outs, and demonstrate; any action that would threaten the

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\(^8\) Ibid, 40.

privilege of whites became an effective means of producing change.10 Most importantly, Sugrue argues that the devastating 1967 riot, repeatedly blamed for the present state of the city, was not the impetus for Detroit’s urban crisis. In fact, as was the case in Waterloo after summer violence sparked by racial tension in 1966, 1967, and 1968, the racial inequality that contributed to the violence-catalyzing tension had developed decades before the violence. The racially charged violence of the late 1960s, therefore, was a symptom, not a consequence, of racial inequality in American cities.

Waterloo engages with Hirsch’s and Sugrue’s arguments because of its industrial history and urban composition, even though the city’s general population and black population are a fraction of the size of the cities these scholars studied. While Waterloo did not experience a significant post-WWII housing and employment crunch, the legal and extralegal factors of second ghetto formation were present in urban renewal, employment discrimination, and racial violence. The shift from an industrial economy to a post-industrial economy, which occurred across the nation, affected not only large cities like Detroit, which Sugrue discusses in *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, but also smaller centers such as Waterloo.11 This shift, combined with individual acts of resistance between blacks and whites, contributed to the onset of the urban crisis in cities such as Detroit and Waterloo. The connection between the second great migration, the shift from industrial to post-industrial economies, and individual actions of activism, which is central to these secondary sources, is the crux of Waterloo’s post-war urban history.

Many of the programs and policies implemented during civil rights era in Waterloo with the intention of diminishing racial inequality actually contributed to the

10 Ibid., xxviii.
persistence of inequality in the city. Many of these ad hoc programs targeted endemic, economic causes of racial inequality in the city, and therefore proved extraordinarily difficult to abolish. The overselling of the Manpower Development program, which promised jobs to black students during the summer months, left many students unemployed. Waterloo’s city council designed the Fair Employment Practices Commission and Human Rights Commission with little penalizing power due to conflicting interests with other programs and companies. The urban renewal program reinforced the racial isolation of black communities, as it restricted displaced black families to homes in the immediate vicinity of the renewal project.

Due to the nature of their targets, some government-organized programs succeeded in diminishing racial inequality in Waterloo. As a symptom and not a cause of racial inequality, school segregation proved to be easier to dismantle than more root causes of inequality. Racial balancing of the Waterloo public schools was carried out during the early 1970s through a series of comprehensive redistricting and busing policies. Today, relative racial balance remains within Waterloo’s public schools. In this way, the public schools, at least in terms of racial integration, functioned as a microcosm of an equal Waterloo, which did not exist outside the school’s walls.

The majority of Waterloo’s post-civil rights history is framed by the movement of people, both black and white, within and outside of the city limits. While white families left the city altogether starting in 1970, black middle-class families left crowded, low-income east side neighborhoods for the whiter neighborhoods of the west side and adjacent town of Cedar Falls. Waterloo’s migration patterns supports the argument made by William Julius Wilson in *The Truly Disadvantaged*. Wilson cites the outmigration of
working and middle class families from low-income, inner-city neighborhoods, which began in earnest in 1970 as the legislation of the civil rights movement dissolved previous barriers barring black movement into higher quality neighborhoods and suburbs. This outmigration, while it further integrated American cities, segregated socioeconomic groups within cities. Low-income individuals became concentrated within inner city neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{12}

Due to a combination of factors—Waterloo’s widespread reputation as one of the most segregated cities in the nation, its limited business opportunities, the closing of Rath Packing company in the early 80s, and the Iowa Farm Crisis of the 1980s—many black professionals and middle class families left the city or bypassed it altogether for larger cities with more accessible opportunities for upward social mobility.\textsuperscript{13} As the income of blacks within the historically black community’s epicenter on the east side increased, they moved over to the west side or into Cedar Falls, where housing and living conditions were of higher quality. With few middle class blacks to provide the necessary capital to improving education, housing, and employment within Waterloo’s black communities, blacks continued to have unequal opportunities in relation to whites.

An analysis of these persistence factors—their design, their delivery, their function, and their consequences—is essential to understanding the present residential and demographic patterns of Waterloo. Additionally, this analysis is useful in designing and ensuring the success of future programs and policies focused on issues of racial inequality. Understanding the origins of Waterloo’s racial inequality is vital not only to current school administrators and policymakers in Waterloo, but city officials across

\textsuperscript{12} William Julius Wilson, \textit{The Truly Disadvantaged} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 40.

\textsuperscript{13} Barbara Western, personal interview by author, August 7, 2013.
northern midwestern cities. Waterloo’s high school students, union members, and interested citizens alike should use this paper as a resource to better understand the city that they live in.
A History of the People and Programs of Waterloo’s Civil Rights Period: 1950 to 1970

A series of efforts targeted inequality in employment, housing, and the public schools during the civil rights movement in Waterloo. Initiatives ranged from the policies of local, state, and federal governments to grassroots community organizing by private groups of concerned citizens. Government-organized programs, with the exception of school desegregation, lacked the leadership of dedicated and community-minded individuals to see the program through to success. Overwhelmingly, these kinds of individuals were the most effective in enacting change in Waterloo during the civil rights era, often working within local or federal institutions to catalyze progress. Whether working in the local union, in after-school programs, battling for political office, or standing firm against opposition during a school board meeting, individuals in Waterloo shaped and propelled the movement for racial equality forward.

Employment

Unions were areas of dynamic racial integration during the civil rights era. Since union strength grew as membership increased, union leaders urged both black and white workers to join the union and work together to negotiate with their employers. Interracial unions worked with African Americans during the 1930s and 1940s to combat racial discrimination in black and white communities.14 Waterloo experienced a dramatic shift in white-black labor relations during the decades prior to the civil rights era. The first twenty-four African Americans arrived by rail in 1910 to work as strikebreakers for the

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Illinois Central Railroad.\textsuperscript{15} Animosity between white and black workers during the strike added to the already strong racial ideology of difference held by white citizens. The establishment of unions such as United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA) Local 46, which stressed the solidarity of workers over their racial differences, diminished tension between black workers and white workers.\textsuperscript{16}

The most comprehensive integration effort in employment occurred with the UPWA Local 46 union at the Rath Packing Company, one of the largest employers of Waterloo’s African Americans during the civil rights era and beyond.\textsuperscript{17} Local 46 was organized in the late 1930s and early 1940s as an interracial union.\textsuperscript{18} The antidiscrimination program of Local 46 was established in 1950.\textsuperscript{19} This program directly aligned with the racially egalitarian focus of the UPWA’s antidiscrimination program of the late 1940s, which included the implementation of nondiscrimination clauses in union-management contracts, enforcement of color-blind seniority systems, and the promotion of blacks to more skilled positions, including policy-making positions.\textsuperscript{20} Backed by the UPWA’s policies, Local 46 helped break down Rath’s discriminatory practices in hiring, work conditions, and promotion policies throughout the 1950s.

These gains not only improved African Americans’ opportunities for employment and advancement within Rath, but also convinced the local’s members to join Waterloo’s

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Bruce Fehn, “‘The Only Hope We Had’: United Packinghouse Workers Local 46 and the Struggle for Racial Equality in Waterloo, Iowa, 1948-1960,” \textit{Annals of Iowa} 54 (Summer 1995), 186.
\textsuperscript{19} Fehn, “‘The Only Hope We Had’,” 186.
burgeoning civil rights movement.\textsuperscript{21} The participation of African Americans in Local 46 provided them with springboard from which to engage in the pursuit of social justice in and out of the packinghouse.\textsuperscript{22} The widened scope of Local 46 to community-wide issues of discrimination connected the history of African American labor in Waterloo to the quest for civil rights.

The greatest achievements of Local 46 in both worker’s rights and civil rights were catalyzed by the 1948 riot outside the Rath plant. The riot occurred on the sixtieth day of a seventy-five day strike by Local 46 over wage increases.\textsuperscript{23} Over 4,600 union workers struck at the Rath plant, with only 25 to 30 crossing the line to work as strikebreakers.\textsuperscript{24} Black strikebreaker Fred Lee Roberts fatally shot striking white union member Chuck Farrell in front of the company’s front gate.\textsuperscript{25} Roberts was attempting to drive through the plant’s front gate when his car was surrounded by nearly 200 striking workers, who shouted threats and lifted his car off the ground. Fearing for his life, Roberts fired the gun out of his car window as a warning shot, not intending to kill. Robert’s bullet killed Farrell instantly.\textsuperscript{26} Hundreds of union members witnessed the shooting and reacted by storming inside the packing plant and beating the strikebreakers inside.\textsuperscript{27} According to Charles Pearson, a militant Local 46 leader, “If there was [going to be] a racial break…it would have been at that time—a black man killing a white man.”\textsuperscript{28} However, the violence was directed against the company itself and not the black community; in fact, blacks and whites unified during confrontations with the police and

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, 187.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Fehn, “‘The Only Hope We Had,’” 195.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} “Guard on Duty; Murder Filed,” \textit{Waterloo Daily Courier}, May 20, 1948, 2.
\textsuperscript{27} Horowitz, \textit{Negro and White, Unite and Fight!} (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 176.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, 149.
National Guard and channeled their violence toward company property and strikebreakers themselves.\(^{29}\) Black and white union workers knew they would lose their jobs if they did not stay together.\(^{30}\)

Sixteen weeks after the strike began, the UPWA called off the strike as union solidarity weakened in the country’s largest plants. Members of Local 46 had to accept Rath’s original wage increase offer of nine cents, in addition to the company’s imposition of a policy of superseniority, which granted seniority to strikebreakers.\(^{31}\)

The strike and resulting violence at Local 46 permanently altered the political approach of the union. At the UPWA’s 1948 convention, Russell Lasley, a black leader of Local 46, urged convention delegates to view the rush of labor militancy instigated by the strike as progress. This new generation of militant workers could be integrated into both the leadership of the union and the shop-floor infrastructure to advance the success of the union.\(^{32}\) Additionally, UPWA leaders anticipated that companies would use race to divide workers and weaken the union. To combat this, union officials focused their energy on the union’s antidiscrimination program.\(^{33}\) Members of Local 46 witnessed an unprecedented strengthening of the union as they pursued anti-discriminatory action inside and outside of the plant.

The subsequent strengthening of the union triggered union-management conflicts that amplified the civil rights activity of Local 46 during the 1950s.\(^{34}\) Due to compromises between the union and the company, departments of Rath Packing Company that had been open to only whites were now open to blacks. As blacks entered these “white” departments, groups of white non-union workers refused to work beside

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\(^{29}\) Ibid, 195.

\(^{30}\) Ibid.

\(^{31}\) Ibid.

\(^{32}\) Horowitz, *Negro and White*, 176.

\(^{33}\) Fehn, “ ‘The Only Hope We Had,’” 196.

\(^{34}\) Halpern and Horowitz, *Meatpackers*, 128.
them since they still saw blacks as subordinates. The company had seen the union grow in strength after the 1948 strike and knew that if the black workers were fired, entire departments of unionized workers would threaten to walk out. Rath would fire any foreman who made discriminatory actions in the fear that the union would launch a massive strike on the company. According to Jimmie Porter, black vice president of Local 46, “I never felt as a company policy [that] I was ever discriminated against because of race.”

In this way, the local influenced the non-discriminatory practices of management.

In the mid-1950s, those opposing the pursuit of racial equality by the UPWA, the parent union of Local 46, targeted the union for communist influence. These accusations, however, simply reflected the commitment of the UPWA to rank-and-file union members as well as the advancement of minorities and the working class, according to Local 46 leaders Jimmie Porter and Charles Pearson. Waterloo’s Local 46 was no exception, with its members turning their eyes outside of their own employment concerns and focusing on the well being of their community by systematically addressing discrimination in employment, education, and in public places.

The overwhelming strength of the union can be contributed to a racially diverse group of dedicated leaders. The union had the support of several anti-racist whites. Community activist Punchy Ackerson played a significant role in the founding of the union as well as in the recruitment of black union members. Lowell Hollenbeck, another community activist, organized meetings of black and white union workers and encouraged the tactic of direct action as well as the strong opposition to discrimination. For example, in the early 1950s, black union leaders, along with Ackerson and

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36 Halpern and Horowitz, Meatpackers, 146.
37 Fehn, “‘The Only Hope We Had’,” 210.
Hollenbeck confronted local businesses previously accused of discriminating against black patrons. They formed integrated delegations of local residents and union members, both black and white, who entered taverns, restaurants, and cafes and demanded service.\footnote{Ibid, 209.} The integration of the union as a whole and its leadership especially represented previously unparalleled hope for the black community; blacks began to see whites as possible advocates for racial equality, not opponents.

Individual personalities mattered within the civil rights efforts of Local 46. These individuals provided the local with its unique, egalitarian traits. If Waterloo’s black population had a singular leader during the civil rights era, it was Jimmie Porter. Porter was born in Holmes County, Mississippi, in 1931, the son of a domestic worker. At the age of seventeen, Porter joined the ranks of dozens of other African Americans moving North with the second Great Migration immediately following WWII. He worked at the John Deere tractor plant for six years. Rath hired Porter in 1954, and he began work in one of the dirtiest and physically demanding positions—the resin room on the hog kill. His charisma and work ethic caught the attention of Local 46 officials, and only a year after being hired, he was elected trustee of the union.\footnote{Ibid., 128.} He quickly moved up the ranks of the union, from divisional steward, to financial secretary, and, finally, vice president.

Another important civil rights leader who began her activist career in the union was Anna Mae Weems. Weems was an individual who saw employment inequality and set out to eliminate it. Born in Waterloo in 1926, Weems’ career as a leader in racial equality began as early as high school, where she was the first African American to direct the band at East High.\footnote{Anna Mae Weems in Chen and Jackson, “African American Voices of the Cedar Valley,” University of Northern Iowa, accessed February 9, 2014, http://www.uni.edu/chen/drupal-AA_voice/videos.} Rath hired Weems in 1955 as a janitor, and she soon passed the

\footnote{38 Ibid, 209.} \footnote{39 Ibid., 128.}
required qualification test to move from the custodial staff to the production
department.⁴¹ Due to close relationships with union leaders, Weems was one of the
women recruited by Local 46 to break the company’s resistance to hiring women in
production departments. Weems passed the test, and became the first black woman to
transfer from the custodial department to the sliced bacon department.⁴² When her white,
female peers refused to take breaks with her or speak to her, she decided to tap into her
connections with Hollenbeck and other union officials and work for the union. Soon she
became the first black female shop steward, forcing the women who were previously
treating her as subordinate to call on her to protect their rights.⁴³

Weems, one of Waterloo’s most influential civil rights leaders, exemplified the
alliance between black packinghouse workers and the local civil rights movement.
Several years after Rath hired Weems, Local 46 developed a human relations committee
that became aligned with Waterloo’s chapter of the NAACP. The union rule that all
executive board members of the union must belong to the NAACP further strengthened
this alliance.⁴⁴ At that time, Waterloo’s NAACP members were all professionals, white-
collar citizens, and middle class blacks who refused to communicate with the union.
When the two groups joined, the professional leadership of the NAACP fell away and
Weems took control.⁴⁵ As the chairman of the Human Relations Committee of Local 46
and the president of the Waterloo chapter of the NAACP, Weems focused the
committee’s energy on promoting civil rights and enhancing black employment.

⁴¹ Herbert Plummer Jones, “The Shaping of Freedom: Industrial Urbanism and the Modern Civil Rights
⁴² Anna Mae Weems in Chen and Jackson, “African American Voices of the Cedar Valley,” University of
⁴³ Halpern and Horowitz, Meatpackers, 138.
⁴⁴ Ibid, 143.
⁴⁵ Ibid., 138.
The Human Rights Committee of Local 46 drew strength from the advancement of worker’s rights and channeled that strength through the NAACP and into the surrounding community. The union supported the work of the committee, providing compensation to committee members who attended meetings two to three times a week while taking time away from working at Rath. Union and NAACP members either stopped buying from those stores that refused to hire blacks or formed picket lines, announcing to passersby that the store was discriminating.\footnote{Ibid, 145.} In 1953, union leaders presented a “Resolution on Discriminatory Practices in the City of Waterloo, Iowa” to the Waterloo City Council. This resolution called for the city to take action against the many businesses that openly practiced discrimination in refusing to serve blacks and other minority citizens.\footnote{Fehn, “ ‘The Only Hope We Had’,” 210.} The union sent its resolution to forty-one organizations throughout the community, calling for them to adopt similar resolutions and forward them to the mayor, just as they had done. While not much in the way of large-scale policy change came from the city government due to the resolution, the union took it upon itself to attack and eliminate the discrimination of local businesses. A meeting of several union members with the mayor and county attorney resulted in at least one restaurant near Rath reversing its policy and serving blacks for the first time.\footnote{Ibid.}

Monroe Stevens illustrated how Local 46 served as a conduit for black professionals to enact change in their community. Rath employed Stevens as an assistant division steward in the 1950s. He soon became captain of his department and a Local 46 official. Stevens utilized the antidiscrimination strategies he honed during his union duties in various community organizations. One of those organizations was a community garden that was an extension of the Community Enables program, directed by fellow...
Rath employee and union member Jimmie Porter. The garden functioned as a food bank that provided fresh vegetables to Waterloo’s elderly. For six to seven weeks throughout the summers of the 1960s, six children from local schools planted and tended the garden. During harvest time, Stevens brought the children back to the garden to collect the vegetables, package them, and deliver them to homes.

The unique qualities of Waterloo’s local 46 can only be appreciated by understanding other meatpacking locals throughout the country during the early civil rights period. The racial equality and focus on community reform exhibited by Local 46 was not replicated in the UAW organizations of Detroit. In post-war Detroit, UAW president Walter Reuthers initially built the organization on policies of racial equality and fair working conditions. Reuthers sat on the board of directors of the NAACP and provided funding through the UAW to the Montgomery Improvement Association, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and several other civil rights organizations.

In an effort to maintain ubiquitous power in the UAW, Reuthers targeted Local 600, a union with influential black members, by removing its key leaders from power and promoting them to the national union staff in order to reduce the local influence of the union. Additionally, the Ford Company reduced the workforce of one of their main factories by fifty percent throughout the 1950s, essentially eliminating the production foundry, which was predominantly black. Unlike the Human Rights Committee of Waterloo’s Local 46, the UAW of Detroit’s Fair Employment Practices Department failed to address workers’ complaints of discrimination. Instead of responding to

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51 Ibid, 807.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
episodes of discrimination with direct action in the factory and greater community as Local 46 did, the UAW’s Fair Employment Practices Department functioned to defuse civil rights activism in the union by simply collecting and processing workers’ discrimination complaints.\textsuperscript{54} In this way, the UAW did not facilitate civil rights organizing, thereby discouraging and eventually extinguishing civil rights organizing in the union.

While Detroit’s Local 600 largely escaped communist accusations from threatened company leaders, both Local 46 and the predominantly black Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers (FTA) Local 22 of the Winston-Salem R. J. Reynolds tobacco company were accused of communism.\textsuperscript{55} Communist accusations led to the eventual demise of Local 22, while Local 46 persevered due to the political and racial diversity of its members. Management of the tobacco company, in an effort to recruit more white workers, made it a point to break up predominantly black Local 22 and utilized the accusation of communist infiltrations to do so.\textsuperscript{56} By the early 1940s, management’s accusations had turned most white employees and black employees not directly involved in the conflict against the local. Black community leader Alderman Williams, who requested that workers withdraw their support for the union and “send the Communists away for good,” exemplified the sentiments of many in the Winston-Salem community.\textsuperscript{57} Subsequently, the tobacco company refused to negotiate with Local 22, arguing that it had not complied with the Taft-Hartley Act, which required union officials to sign an affidavit stating that they were not members of the Communist Party. Without

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, 801.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} Williams in Ibid.
support from the community and employees, or the ability to bargain, Local 22 had little political strength left and disbanded by the end of the 1940s.\textsuperscript{58}

The diverse leadership of Local 46, in addition to the union’s strong focus on the working class, posed a threat to other local organizations as well as national UPWA organizations with white leadership and large numbers of minority employees. The union’s opponents cited its interracial make-up as evidence for its communist bent. A Jewish man, a black man, and a Canadian held the three highest leadership positions in the union during the 1950s.\textsuperscript{59} The racial diversity of Local 46’s leadership explains why accusations of communism failed to stick. Union officials had ties to nearly every corner of the community—black, white, professionals, and the unemployed—resulting in an undeniable and unwavering strength, even in the face of serious accusations.

Kansas City’s UPWA Local 36 had much tighter community ties than Winston-Salem’s Local 22. Local 36 had many similarities to Waterloo’s Local 46 during the mid-twentieth century: jobs were available in large numbers to African Americans relative to other employers in the city, and local unions were unflinchingly interracial. A four-day strike in 1938 at the Armour packinghouse solidified the interracial platform of the Local 36, as workers organized social activities together to pass the time as they were on strike.\textsuperscript{60} The upward mobility and community of activism provided black union members with the same boost of dignity felt by black members of Local 46. William Raspberry, an official of Local 36, said of his union membership, “It gave me dignity. I felt like a human being, I felt like a person.”\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid, 804.
\textsuperscript{59} Halpern and Horowitz, \textit{Meatpackers}, 147.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, 73.
\textsuperscript{61} Raspberry in Ibid, 83.
In contrast to Local 46, however, Local 36 functioned more as participants in civil rights organizations and activities than leaders of the movement. The union worked within the confines of the organization it was working for, whether it was a march sponsored by the NAACP or a picket line organized by the Urban League; members were known for picketing against discrimination within each town in which a union meeting was held. Waterlo’s Local 46 is unique from Local 36 in that union leaders were mandated to belong to the NAACP, and therefore had an organizational role in the union’s civil rights programs and policies.

Chicago’s UPWA local shared the most similarities with Waterloo’s Local 46, including NAACP involvement. Chicago served as the midwestern hub for black southern immigrants during the first and second Great Migrations, with half of black employees working for the packinghouses by the end of WWII. Like Waterloo, Chicago UPWA locals advocated for racial equality inside and outside the packinghouse, and were active leaders in their communities during the height of the civil rights movement. Joining forces with the NAACP, urban league, and other community organizations, the unions combated segregation, mob violence, housing discrimination, and other problems plaguing their community. Union leadership involved both black and white workers, further increasing the interracial foundation of the union as well as its ability to enact change within the packinghouse and the greater Chicago community. The focus of the union was on improving the living conditions of its working class members, in order to provide them with the “fullness of American life.” Within these comparisons, Chicago’s UPWA local was the most similar to Waterloo’s Local 46. From

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62 Ibid, 81.
63 Ibid, 28.
65 Ibid.
66 Phillip Weightman in Halpern and Horowitz, *Meatpackers*, 64.
political alliances with the NAACP and other smaller organizations to the union’s focus on the quality of life of its rank-and-file members, the unions of Waterloo and Chicago seem to have evolved similarly into some of the most influential community organizations of their time.

The varied success and failure of these UPWA locals depended on the persistence of factors that challenged them. For unions such as Local 36 in Kansas City, lack of a leadership role in civil rights activities confined the union’s interracial policies to the walls of the packinghouse. For others, such as Waterloo’s Local 46 and Winston-Salem’s Local 22, communist accusations challenged the leadership and unity of the union. Local 46, with close ties to community leaders and unity throughout the union hierarchy, only gained solidarity following the accusations while Local 22, with weak community ties, crumbled under the accusations.

Overall, Local 46 was an integral organization in Waterloo civil right’s movement. Functioning as a platform for equality both inside and outside the packinghouse, the union was both a testing ground for ideas about racial equality and integration as well as an extraordinarily active organization that used the diversity of its members to effect change in Waterloo. For the union, strong-willed individuals at the local level, not the higher leadership of the parent UPWA, defined the depth and breadth of Local 46’s integration efforts.

Outside of the activities of Local 46, however, there were many other efforts by the local government as well as conscientious citizens to address inequality in employment across the city.
The 1957 passage of the city’s Fair Employment Practices Ordinance came as a result of collaboration between citizens and the city council.\textsuperscript{67} The ordinance provided for the creation of a fair employment practices commission, which would be able to investigate and address employment discrimination in Waterloo’s businesses and industries. In February 1957, the city council held a hearing at which educators, clergy, union leaders, and social workers described the city’s need for the ordinance. Louis Bultena, Professor of economics at Iowa State Teachers College, described the current disconnect he was observing between the education of African Americans and their subsequent employment, stating that “while more Negroes are receiving adequate education, they are unable to obtain positions commensurate with their training. Many are forced to accept unskilled work with resultant loss to the Negro students and the community.”\textsuperscript{68}

Alternatively, he noted, some overqualified African American applicants left Waterloo for other communities where they could find employment compatible with their level of education, thereby diminishing the quality of employees in the community. The president of Local 46 was also present at the meeting, and cited union policies for providing equal opportunities and working conditions at Rath Packing Company.

Seven months after the hearing, on September 24, 1957, the Waterloo City Council adopted a Fair Employment Practices Ordinance providing for the subsequent creation of a Fair Employment Practices Commission.\textsuperscript{69} While the ordinance gave the commission the power to investigate employment discrimination accusations, it did not give the commission the ability to penalize discriminating organizations; instead, the commission’s members envisioned public sentiment and education as the main agents of

\textsuperscript{68}Bultena in Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69}“Council passes FEPC ordinance,” \textit{Waterloo Daily Courier}, September 25, 1957, 7
change to improve employment practices.\textsuperscript{70} Without the threat of punishment, discriminating businesses were not forced to implement fair employment policies and discrimination continued throughout the city.

With the persistence of employment discrimination practices throughout Waterloo in the late 1950s and early 1960s as well as the massive 1963 March on Washington, groups of concerned African American citizens in Waterloo decided to express their dissatisfaction through a march. In 1964, a group of nearly 450 African American citizens participated in a “March for Freedom” from East High School to city hall. The march was sponsored and organized by the Waterloo chapter of the NAACP as well as the Citizens’ Committee, and was based on a similar march conducted by students at the State College of Iowa in Cedar Falls several months prior.\textsuperscript{71} The non-violent protestors, led by Reverend Eugene Williams of the Antioch Baptist Church, presented mayor Ed Jochumsen with a list of grievances that focused on discrimination in jobs, housing, and law enforcement. The protestors also asked for the city council to create a Human Rights Commission to address the issues plaguing minority groups in the city, especially African Americans.\textsuperscript{72} Little came from the city government as a result of this march, but it most certainly served to alert city council members and inattentive citizens that there was burgeoning unrest in the city.

A similar march occurred two years later, on June 4, 1966, when a group of approximately 200 African American protestors marched on city hall.\textsuperscript{73} Leaders in the group included Eddie Denton, chairman of the human rights committee of Local 46, Roosevelt Taylor, president of the Fair Employment Practices Commission, and Anna

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} “Officials, Negroes to Meet: Race Grievances to be Discussed,” \textit{Waterloo Daily Courier}, July 5, 1966, 13
Mae Weems, former Rath Packing union leader and community activist. Reverend I. V. Tolbert of Payne AME Memorial Church presented a list of twelve grievances to Mayor Lloyd Turner. Initially sparked by the suspicious suicide of an African American man in the city jail, the majority of the grievances addressed the city’s endemic racial problems, most of them involving issues with unfair employment practices. Protestors demanded “that Negro police and firemen be recruited and hired, fair employment practices in sub-letting of city contracts...more city jobs for Negroes and investigation of hiring practices, especially in industry.”

The marches acted as the final impetus for the creation of the Waterloo Human Rights Commission, which was founded on July 7, 1966. The commission, led by Washington, D. C. attorney Ronald James, functioned to enforce the policies embodied by the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965 in Waterloo. The Act criminalized discrimination in housing, education, employment, and public accommodations and services. Under the unfair employment practices clause, the Act prohibited employers from refusing to hire employees due to race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin. Moreover, the Act prohibited employers from engaging in wage discrimination. The commission was created to enforce anti-discriminatory policies throughout all sectors of the city, including responding to complaints of discrimination and investigating existing causes of discrimination throughout the city. After a busy first year of organizing programs and addressing discrimination, underfunding from the city

74 ibid.
77 Ibid.
government halted the commission’s progress, and it remained relatively stagnant throughout the decade.⁷⁹

Groups of citizens independent of the city government built their own committees to address discrimination and inequality in the city. The Equal Opportunity Council and Citizen’s Committee of Waterloo consisted of groups of citizens advocating for political change independent of the city government. The Equal Opportunity Council consisted of “people of all races, creeds, classes and national origins,” according to members in leadership positions.⁸⁰ The council recognized the lack of equal opportunity within Waterloo, and cited it as a “basic cause of unrest, crime, and decay in a community.”⁸¹ Council members also asserted that freedom of residence was the key aspect of justice. Understanding members helped collect and compile monthly fact-finding sheets, called “equal opportunity progress reports,” in order to compare equal opportunity in housing, education, and employment across Waterloo’s communities.⁸²

In the summer of 1967, the council worked closely with the Human Rights Commission, presenting committee members with a list of racial discrimination complaints.⁸³ The group presented one concern from each of the following areas: housing, employment, justice, and education, all chosen from the many the council had received in each area.⁸⁴ The commission picked up where the legal power of the council left off, calling in each complainant to record his or her full testimony and taking the appropriate legal action against the discriminating party.

⁸⁰ Ibid.
⁸² Ibid.
⁸⁴ Ibid.
The East Side Citizen’s Committee was a voter registration and voter education organization spearheaded by Local 46 union official Ada Treadwell in late 1963 to support William Parker, who became the first black elected judge in Iowa. The Citizen’s Committee sought to bring black citizens “into the mainstream of community life; especially in the field of politics and all policy-making groups.” In addition to educating voters on the majority-black east side of town, the committee analyzed voter registration for the east side districts in order to determine who would run in their neighborhood and challenge the current leaders in office. The committee formed an all-black ticket for local office, which functioned as a protest vote: although the members of the Citizens’ Committee knew that the ticket would not win, its presence reflected the voice of the East Side voters, who said to local white politicians, according to Ada Tredwell, “I’m not satisfied with what you’re doing.”

In addition to local government and independent groups of citizens taking efforts to eliminate discrimination in employment throughout the city, the United States Department of Labor initiated the Iowa Manpower Job Training (OJT) program in 1967 to provide unemployed African Americans the skills to become employed. The statewide OJT program ran on a cycle of education, training, and placement. After the period of classroom work, program officials attempted to immediately place trainees into jobs for which they were trained. The Job Developer of the OJT program collected personal data on each trainee during the classroom phase in an effort to determine what section of the 

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86 “Citizens Committee; NAACP Share Office in Cosby Center,” Waterloo Defender, April 4, 1969.
87 Ada Tredwell in Halpern and Horowitz, Meatpackers, 147.
state each student preferred to take his or her on-the-job training.\textsuperscript{89} Job Developers combined this classroom data with unfilled job orders recorded by the Iowa State Employment Service to pair students with compatible employers.\textsuperscript{90}

In Waterloo, the program was designed to provide summer jobs to high school students who would otherwise be unemployed and perhaps free to incite disturbances in the city.\textsuperscript{91} By the summer of 1967, city officials estimated the number of unemployed African American youths around 1,200. However, the Manpower Development OJT program only placed two of them, both as non-union bricklayers.\textsuperscript{92} According to Warren Nash, the president of the Black Hawk County NAACP, “These and other programs have been offering too little too late. The government promised instant jobs, but here the kids are standing around in the streets without jobs. The youths see it as another instance of the whites going back on their word.”\textsuperscript{93} While the OJT program improved somewhat over time according to Dr. Nash, the majority of African American high school students remained unemployed and on the street during the summer, indicating the overall inefficacy of Iowa Manpower Development’s program.

Both the local and federal government, as well as Waterloo’s concerned citizens, addressed racial inequality in employment from the 1950s through the 1960s. Local 46 introduced its members to fair working conditions within the Rath Packing plant, and subsequently spurred them to action in the greater community. The passage of the Fair Employment Practices Ordinance and the two marches on city hall are examples of the collaboration between citizens and local government to improve working conditions in Waterloo. In contrast, the Iowa Manpower Development OJT program was an

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{91} “How Waterloo’s Negroes Feel Towards the White Community,” \textit{The Witness}, July 20, 1967, clippings archive, binder 1, Waterloo Public Library.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{93} Nash in ibid.
employment equality initiative conceived and carried out exclusively by the federal government.

Individual activists and government bodies alike pursued employment equality throughout the civil rights era in Waterloo. Community activists such as Jimmie Porter, Anna Mae Weems, and Monroe Stevens led the movement for Waterloo by expressing unrest, proposing policy change, and addressing discriminatory issues on the grassroots level. Working within groups such as Local 46 and the Black Hawk County chapter of the NAACP, the actions of these activists compelled policy changes within the city and state. Employment equality initiatives sponsored by the city and state governments, such as the Manpower Development OJT program, the Human Rights Commission, and the Fair Employment Practices Commission arose in response to the work of the city’s activists.

**Schools**

Citizens and city officials pursued desegregation in Waterloo’s public schools during the late civil rights period. The Waterloo school board implemented systematic integration efforts, beginning in 1968 and continuing through the early 1970s. Waterloo’s public schools were highly segregated by the mid-1960s, with 81 percent of white students attending schools where 90 percent of the student body was white, and 66 percent of black students attending schools with a black majority student body. Additionally, there were only four black elementary school teachers, all teaching in the city’s predominantly black schools, and one black teacher in each of the two high schools.

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The city government was spurred to action after violence and protests, catalyzed in part by school segregation, that ripped through the city in early July 1967. Shortly after the unrest and thirteen years after the Brown v. Board of Education ruling declared racially segregated schools illegal, the Waterloo school board issued its first statement in support of school desegregation. The desegregation of Waterloo’s public schools occurred over a comparatively short period of approximately five years. During that time, groups of parents, students, citizens, and school board members fought aside each other and against each other in an attempt to provide equal educational opportunities to all of Waterloo’s youth. Once again, as was the case with efforts targeting employment, small, focused groups of concerned citizens were the most effective at promoting change in the city due to their personal proximity to the issue and their ability to use the necessary pressure to advance the movement, both within and without formal organizations.

The U. S. Commission on Civil Rights was involved with the process of desegregating Waterloo’s schools. Dr. David Cohen of the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights met with the Waterloo school board’s Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunity Education three weeks after the 1967 riot shone a spotlight on the city’s racial problems. Dr. Cohen cited busing and open enrollment as possible solutions to Waterloo’s problem of de facto school segregation. Waterloo’s small size made busing a likely successful policy, as many students lived within walking distance of more than one school, resulting in minimum cost to the school district. The success of Waterloo’s open enrollment policy would depend on two variables, according to Cohen: convincing

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95 ibid.
96 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
the school board that open enrollment would improve students’ education, and overcoming anxieties of white communities experiencing the influx of black students.99

At the end of the 1968 school year, the Iowa Civil Rights Commission called attention to the extreme de facto segregation seen in Waterloo’s schools, especially its elementary schools.100 In May of 1968, the commission met with the State Department of Instruction and the school boards of several of Iowa’s largest cities, including Waterloo. The groups discussed possible solutions to the observed racial imbalances in the student bodies of Waterloo’s elementary schools and the development of in-service training for teachers regarding minority students.101 At these meetings, the commission made it a point not to tell the school boards what policies should be put in place, but instead encouraged them to independently develop their own solution, focusing on correcting racial disparities. Commission Chairman Mrs. Elliot Full noted the effect of housing segregation on segregation in schools, stating that “School boards are not the cause of the ghetto, but during the period before the ghetto is broken up by the enforcement of housing laws, they have the responsibility to deal with the problem.”102

The Waterloo Board of Education approved an open enrollment busing policy for the Waterloo Schools in the spring of 1968, to be initiated during the 1968 to 1969 school year.103 Board members were aware of the limits of the policy upon its passage. The president of the board, Sydney Thomas, stated after approving the policy that open enrollment would not be a panacea, but the first step of many to achieve desegregation of the Waterloo Schools.104 The approved open enrollment policy was qualified as both

99 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
102 Full in “Ask Meeting,” Waterloo Daily Courier, 8.
104 Sydney Thomas in “OK Open Enrollment,” Waterloo Daily Courier, March 26, 1983, 3.
voluntary and limited, in that students would only go to schools where space was available, and only those who volunteered to participate would occupy those available spaces. Under the policy, students in grades one through six would be able to transfer with the request of their parent or guardian if the following conditions were met: there was available space at the school receiving the transfer student, racial balance was improved by the student’s transfer, and the student transferred for one school year. In addition, the district would provide transportation for the transfer student if five or more students were being transferred from one school.

The voluntary design of Waterloo’s open enrollment policy, while penned with good intentions, caused the city to fall into the trap experienced by hundreds of other cities that adopted open busing policies. The vast majority of students opting to transfer were black, and, in order to improve the racial balance of the receiving school, these students were sent to predominantly white schools on the west side of the city. Therefore, Waterloo’s busing program was largely a one-way operation, and increased the pressure on both white and black neighborhood schools to provide education of equal quality to their students.

At the same time the city addressed school segregation through policy, a pioneering group of citizens focused its efforts on the school that needed them the most. The Bridgeway Project was a pilot project spearheaded by the Waterloo school board in 1970 as an effort to integrate Grant Elementary School, in which 99 percent of the

107 Ibid.
student body was black.\textsuperscript{109} Grant’s location in a predominantly black residential district on the east side of the city explains its racial homogeneity. The open enrollment policy of the Waterloo schools made the design of the Bridgeway Project as a magnet school possible, since white children were voluntarily transferred into the school and black children were transferred to schools with majority white student bodies. During the school’s first operational year, 144 students enrolled in the program: 76 white students transferred into Grant school and 68 black students transferred into elementary schools with a majority white student body.\textsuperscript{110} Nearly equal groups of black and white students composed the student body of Bridgeway’s first class.

The Waterloo Education Association (WEA), a private organization that consisted of citizens advocating for desegregated schools, called upon the entire community to contribute to Bridgeway’s success. Involvement from the community, the WEA stated, would result in the greatest improvement in education throughout the city.\textsuperscript{111} Speaking to her reasons for sending her child to the Bridgeway Project, a white mother stated that the education programs offered by the Project will offer “our children a terrific opportunity for individual growth and achievement.”\textsuperscript{112} Parents of both black and white students involved in the program cited the opportunity for social development as the primary reason for their involvement in the project. According to one black parent:

The project will open new horizons of human relationships, new insights to truth and new opportunities for educational excellency. I feel my children will benefit from the Bridgeway Project because they will have the opportunity to learn about

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} WEA in “Parents Invited to Grant Meeting,” \textit{Waterloo Daily Courier}, February 15, 1970, 1.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid, 1-2.
other children and their culture, how to live together peacefully and still acquire learning through integration.\textsuperscript{113}

Members of the school board and parents of participating students lauded the Bridgeway Project as an innovative program that tested organization, educational equipment, and an individualized curriculum. Lessons learned from Bridgeway could be applied to other Waterloo schools.

Much of the Bridgeway Project’s success can be traced back to the visionary leadership of William Knowlton. The school board chose Knowlton to lead the Bridgeway Project as principal, due to his nineteen years of experience as a principal in the Waterloo schools.\textsuperscript{114}

Knowlton graduated from the State University of Iowa in 1941. He served in the Army Air Force in the South Pacific during WWII, and came to Waterloo following his deployment.\textsuperscript{115} His ability to connect with children may have been associated with his hobbies; as a proliferate cartoonist, his books sold over one million copies.\textsuperscript{116} According to Knowlton, “Your ability to laugh with these young people is an immutable requirement for good teaching—and may even mean your survival in the classroom.”\textsuperscript{117} Knowlton saw children as “refreshing, unpredictable, and sometimes very funny people.”\textsuperscript{118} His teaching philosophy was characterized by a respect for students’ abilities, a belief in individualized curricula, sensitivity to students’ needs and desires, and, of course, the recognition of the humor inherent in the school day.\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} “Will Knowlton Heads Bridgeway Project,” Waterloo Daily Courier, undated clipping in Waterloo Public Library, local history section, binder 1, Waterloo, IA.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
This philosophy drove all of Knowlton’s decisions moving forward with the Project. Calling on his extensive experience within the Waterloo school district, Knowlton handpicked the teachers that he knew would ensure the success of the Bridgeway Project. Knowlton claimed that the students of the Project would not only be learning by innovative methods by some of the most qualified teachers in the city, but would be learning through their peers in a racially integrated environment. Following the implementation of the Bridgeway Project’s successful curriculum throughout the city’s schools, both black and white children, previously deprived of the social benefits of racial integration, would have equal educational opportunities.

The Bridgeway Project was one of the most effective programs at providing equal educational opportunities to the black and white students of Waterloo. The school board, with the help of the WEA, handpicked the ideal teaching staff and administrators to successfully carry out their vision of not only a perfectly integrated school, but a school characterized by a culturally competent and innovative curriculum that taught to children, not to their race or socioeconomic background.

Students also contributed to Waterloo’s pursuit of equal educational opportunities during the late 1960s and early 1970s. A group of four African American students at East High School were interviewed as part of the 1967 Waterloo Human Rights Commission Report, compiled and issued after the July racial violence in an effort to summarize and understand the experiences of black citizens in Waterloo. According to student James Tillman, his position as an athlete at East caused him to be treated the same as a white student; however, he did cite some discrimination of teachers toward

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120 Ibid.
students. Beverly Smith attended East High from 1967 to 1970 and experienced some of this discrimination from her guidance counselors during the class scheduling process. “One year, I had a counselor who had a reputation of not really supporting children of color. She indicated to me the possibility that I should look at a trade school. And in my family, college was what you did after graduating high school.” Smith cited the counselor’s ingrained belief system as the root of her discrimination toward black students, providing evidence for the idea that a group of teachers and staff at East High saw their racial discrimination as a natural part of their belief system, and were unable to recognize that it was no longer acceptable in the changing racial atmosphere of the city.

The only African American school social worker in Waterloo during the early 1970s stated that white counselors and teachers frequently had trouble relating to black students. Citing the unfamiliarity of white teachers and counselors with black students due to their residential segregation, the social worker stated that a lack of understanding on the part of white faculty and staff contributed to discrimination and tension between black students and white teachers.

In response to this discrimination, East High students demanded equal education in Waterloo’s high schools. Students expressed their unrest with three days of peaceful protests at East High School during the first month of the 1968 school year. On the first day, eight to ten black students walked into principal Lawrence Garlock’s office to inquire why an African American history course was not being taught. The third day of protests ended with a walkout of thirty to forty black students during the middle of the

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123 Ibid.
124 Beverly Smith, personal interview by author, August 9, 2013.
125 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
school day. The school was subsequently shut down for the remainder of the week in an effort to restore calm and return to normal operations. A delegation of black East High students and concerned adults met with the Waterloo Public School Board the evening after the walkout to address the students’ list of twelve grievances, which focused on the eradication of discriminatory practices in terms of curriculum, language, counseling, and teaching. By November of 1968, African American history was being offered as a regular course at East High.

In response to widespread dissatisfaction with the city’s busing policy and the general persistence of disparities in educational quality between predominantly white and black schools, individual citizens and community organizations spoke out to encourage the school board to take more proactive measures to pursue educational equality. In January of 1972, Dr. Robert Harvey of the Waterloo Board of Education, one of a handful of black professionals in the city at the time, proposed a series of aggressive equalizing initiatives to the school board. Harvey recommended that more black teachers and administrators be hired and that more relevant texts for minority students and in-service training programs for teachers be purchased by the district. Superintendent George Diestelmeier said of the proposal: “The philosophy is commendable; the implementation may be difficult. I don’t know if it is possible to

128 “Race Tension; Close School at Waterloo,” Des Moines Register, September 12, 1968, clippings archive, binder 1, Waterloo Public Library.
129 Sydney Thomas in Ibid.
130 “Names 6 as Instigators in Waterloo,” Des Moines Register, September 13, 1968, clippings archive, binder 1, Waterloo Public Library.
implement these 10 recommendations and still stay within the budget.”  

The school board had allocated $100,000 in state dollars for the 1972 to 1973 school year to implement desegregation policies throughout the district. The board voted down the recommendations five to two despite receiving two other statements in favor of desegregation from the League of Women Voters and the Parent Teacher Association. 

One month later, the school board adopted three of Dr. Harvey’s original ten points, as well as four revised points and two recommendations from Superintendent Diestelmeier regarding the use of desegregation funds for the upcoming school year. The three unrevised points requested that the non-certified school staff throughout the district be maintained at 12-14% black, that programs be instituted under the $100,000 desegregation budget, and that textbooks and other educational materials include the contributions of all minority populations. The rejected demands were that the new Central High School’s principal be black, that the district’s busing plan be abolished, and that four black principals be hired. Dr. Harvey’s original major request for more black teachers in Waterloo schools was one of the adopted but revised points, with the revised clause stating that minority teachers, not exclusively black teachers, would be maintained at 12 to 14 percent.

In addition to Harvey, groups of concerned parents, both black and white, resisted the district’s busing policies throughout the early 1970s. A group of concerned white parents organized the Neighborhood Schools Association (NSA) in the fall of 1971 in an effort to prevent involuntary busing of students and to preserve the “traditional

134 Diestelmeier in ibid.
136 “Total School Integration by Next Term is Rejected,” Waterloo Daily Courier, February 15, 1972, clippings archive, binder 1, Waterloo Public Library.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
neighborhood school concept,” meaning that only children who lived in the neighborhood of the school would attend that school.\textsuperscript{139} A spokesman for the NSA stated in the \textit{Courier} that the group “was not opposed to voluntary busing or integration,” and simply opposed the increase in transportation costs that would be incurred by sending a child to a school not in their neighborhood.\textsuperscript{140} Although the NSA decided not to respond to Dr. Harvey’s proposed desegregation plan, its members were outspoken about their efforts to end open enrollment, even discussing petitioning for the passage of a state constitutional amendment banning the busing policy in January of 1972.\textsuperscript{141}

Local organizations without direct ties to the schools contributed to the chorus of voices advocating for desegregation. The Coalition of the Black Community, an organization of concerned black citizens, spoke out against the open enrollment policy and the proposed enrollment boundaries of the Waterloo’s third high school, Central, in March of 1972. The proposed boundaries only broke up the East High School enrollment boundary, resulting in the preservation of the predominantly white West High and predominantly black schools. According to the Coalition, “Any boundary designations for Central High School which leaves West High School untouched will be unacceptable to the coalition.”\textsuperscript{142}

The Coalition’s second main goal was to abolish the open enrollment program of the Waterloo schools by the fall of 1972.\textsuperscript{143} Members of the Coalition highlighted the one-way busing of students out of east side schools to west side schools as their main complaint regarding the open enrollment program. They would only tolerate open

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} “Blacks Request End to Open Enrollment,” \textit{Waterloo Daily Courier}, March 19, 1972, 15.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
enrollment if busing occurred both ways. The League of Women Voters also circulated a petition during the same month in support of desegregation of the high schools: 900 signatures were obtained.

In April of 1972, the Waterloo school board established the enrollment boundaries of the new Central High School. Located in approximately the center of Waterloo, Central overlapped portions of both East and West High School’s attendance zones, thereby desegregating both high schools (Figure 1). Census Tract 18, which was 91 percent black in 1970, was neatly divided by the 1972 enrollment boundaries, sending approximately equal proportions of Census Tract 18 students to each of the three high schools (Figure 1). The enrollment boundaries of both Central and West, which were both on the west side, contained significant portions of the east side (Figure 1). East High’s enrollment boundaries, however, did not contain any portion of the west side (Figure 1).

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144 Ibid.
By 1970, East High was 23 percent African American while West High was 1 percent African American. After Central was opened in 1972, West High’s minority enrollment grew to 4.3 percent while East High’s minority enrollment remained the highest of the high schools at 21.9 percent. Central’s African American enrollment was 11.4 percent. Over five years, Central’s enrollment of black students increased to 16.2 percent while East High’s decreased to 19.0 and West’s climbed to 9.2 percent. In this way, the construction of a third high school and the resultant redrawing of enrollment boundaries advanced the desegregation of the schools through racial balance of student bodies.

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These limited desegregation measures instigated protests by both black and white
groups throughout Waterloo. Monroe Stevens, Jimmie Porter and Bev Smith participated
with over one hundred other students, parents, citizens, and activists in one of the largest
peaceful demonstrations in the civil rights period in Waterloo, which occurred on May
25, 1972. Following open enrollment of the Waterloo public schools and the
implementation of busing policies, eight female African American students were sent to
West Junior High School in a predominantly white section of the city.\footnote{150} Stevens was
notified that a disruption had occurred at the school and arrived to see the eight girls in
the parking lot surrounded by people from the surrounding neighborhood.\footnote{151} Further
investigation of the incident revealed that the girls’ teacher was teaching them from a
book entitled \textit{Little Black Sambo and the Preacher’s Watermelon}.

This news enraged the group of black citizens that had gathered at the scene, and
all 150 of them walked to the Waterloo Public School Administration building and
occupied Superintendent Diestelmeier’s office for nearly four hours, carrying with them a
list of demands that they hoped, if met, would resolve the racial problems the eight
students had experienced at West Junior. These demands consisted of three components:
call a special board meeting to fire Mrs. Alice Margaret Hayes, the teacher who read the
offensive book to her class, as well as the principal of West Junior; close West Junior for
the remainder of the year; and begin in-service training immediately for the staff of the
school.\footnote{152}

Ultimately, an injunction was prepared by county attorney Dave Dutton to resolve
the situation, stating that those arrested had the choice of either being booked at the

\footnote{150} Monroe Stevens in Chen and Jackson, “African American Voices of the Cedar Valley,” University of
\footnote{151} Ibid.
police station or photographed at the administration building and contacted at a later date by authorities. The protestors remaining in the building after the injunction notice was read were arrested, taken to the police station, and booked. The school board decided, several days later, to suspend Mrs. Hayes from teaching.

Following the lack of further initiative exhibited by the school board, citizens supporting more extensive school desegregation strategies began a boycott of stores in the Logan Plaza. Picketers were searching for support from white-owned businesses in pressuring the school board to respond to their demands, and they stated that the boycott would continue until the demands they presented superintendent Diestelmeier and the Waterloo Board of Education were met. In a larger sense, the black citizens involved in the boycott were targeting white businesses because they were “drawing resources from the community,” according to Frank Howard, one of the leaders of the boycott.

After seventeen days of picketing, the owners of the shopping centers served the picketers with a court order—a temporary injunction—to halt their activity. Picketers continued to protest for three more weeks on public property at the entrance of the shopping center. Over these weeks, leaders of the protest seemed to broaden their rationale for picketing at the shopping center, from attaining support for the demands set before the school board to simply expressing discontent in terms of discrimination in employment and education, according to Jimmie Porter.

Despite the protestors vocalizing their complaints for nearly a year, the city’s policy-makers exhibited a complete lack of response. As a result, the protestors settled for a more tangible, short-term solution to the larger issues of educational and

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153 Ibid.
154 “Court Bans Picketing at Waterloo Shopping Center,” Des Moines Register, June 12, 1972, 1.
155 Howard in Ibid.
156 “Court Bans Picketing at Waterloo Shopping Center,” Des Moines Register, June 12, 1972, 1.
157 Porter in “Store Manager Says Pickets Have Caused 85% Business Loss,” Waterloo Daily Courier, June 22, 1972, clippings archive, binder 1, Waterloo Public Library.
employment discrimination. Subsequent legal negotiations between the picketers and the shopping center owners ended the boycott with an agreement involving the hiring of more minorities by the businesses at the Logan Plaza.\textsuperscript{158}

In addition to picketing at Logan Plaza, a local organization called the Concerned Parents of Waterloo protested to the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction regarding the lack of equal educational opportunity in 1972, and requested that the State enact further desegregation in the Waterloo schools.\textsuperscript{159} In the same month, Waterloo’s local NAACP chapter filed a lawsuit against the Waterloo schools, claiming that Waterloo’s schools were segregated.\textsuperscript{160}

Following these displays of dissatisfaction and the Iowa State Board of Education’s issuance of nondiscrimination guidelines in November of 1972 to end racial isolation in Iowa’s public schools, the school board took the first step in addressing Waterloo’s educational discrimination on a holistic scale, as called for by Jimmie Porter. The State Department of Education ordered the school board to submit a report by May 31, 1973, indicating its plans to reduce racial isolation in schools.\textsuperscript{161} James Sage, president of the school board, asked the superintendent to develop a series of policies to address racial isolation in Waterloo in February of 1973.\textsuperscript{162} The board subsequently pursued a desegregation plan under Title VII of the Emergency School Aid Act, a program under which federal funds were provided to school districts if their nondiscrimination policies were filed with the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. With enrollment declining throughout Waterloo schools due to a decrease in the population of elementary school-aged children, the school board’s proposed

\textsuperscript{158} “Logan Picketing Ends,” \textit{Waterloo Daily Courier},” July 2, 1972, 1.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid, 10.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
desegregation plan would need to satisfy both federal regulations as well as the changing student volume.\textsuperscript{163}

The school board created an advisory committee to assist in the preparation of the Title VII proposal. On the committee were representatives from all corners of the community, including the Waterloo Education Association, Human Rights Commission, Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, University of Northern Iowa, NAACP, East Side Citizens’ Committee, PTA, League of Women Voters, parents of children from all schools in the district who supported integration, and the NSA, who opposed any plan that would dissolve neighborhood schools.\textsuperscript{164} Another community organization, called “The Consortium,” worked with the advisory committee to prepare a thorough Title VII proposal, which laid out the in-service and desegregation training, recruitment of desegregation experts, and remedial services necessary for the effective implementation of desegregation programs in the school district.\textsuperscript{165}

With the help of the advisory committee, the school board proposed two plans in the fall of 1973. Plan A addressed the drop in school attendance by closing three elementary schools and reduced segregation by redrawing elementary district attendance zones to match those of the high schools.\textsuperscript{166} Additionally, busing costs would increase since six new bus routes would be added to facilitate the blending of City View elementary school, which was 91.8\% minority in 1971, with schools of low minority attendance on the west side.\textsuperscript{167} Each of the three closed elementary schools were associated with four schools across the city, and the students previously attending those

\textsuperscript{163} ibid.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid, 13.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.
schools were assigned to one of the four associated schools. The main minority attendance zones and their adjacent white attendance zones were involved in the plan; however, not all elementary schools were involved and therefore total desegregation could not be achieved. Plan B would decrease transportation costs by busing students to groups of schools with adjacent boundaries; however, state minority percentage guidelines were not met by the plan, resulting in its rapid dismissal. Through the forced busing of Plan A, desegregation of Waterloo’s schools would involve the majority of students in the district, not only those involved in open enrollment, and therefore be sustained over the long term.

With so many groups involved in the proposal drafting process, the vast majority of the community supported Plan A due to its project longevity and inclusion of the majority of Waterloo’s students. However, due to the busing component of the plan, the NSA (Neighborhood Schools Association) opposed the Title VII proposal and the related desegregation plan. The NSA gained support from parents of children attending schools scheduled to close upon implementation of the plan, as their children would be bused across the city to different schools. Despite a statement by the NSA’s attorney that desegregating policies were not necessary, the school board met on April 5, 1973, and passed Plan A four to three. Under the plan, 8.5 percent of Waterloo’s students were reassigned to new schools, resulting in 91 percent of black students attending

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169 Ibid, 12.
170 Ibid.
171 Ibid.
172 Ibid.
173 Ibid.
predominantly white schools. The other 9 percent of black students attended the Bridgeway Project, which maintained the near equal black to white student ratio.  

With the start of the 1973-1974 school year, Waterloo stood as an example to other Iowa cities, such as Des Moines, that had not yet addressed school segregation. Plan A was adopted and implemented without a court order, unlike many cities with segregated schools, due in large part to the support of desegregation by the *Waterloo Courier, Des Moines Register*, KWWL (the local television station), and several industrial and commercial leaders in the community. Additionally, the inclusion by the school board of parents and teachers throughout the planning process was integral to the success of the plan’s implementation.

Despite the smooth adoption of the Plan, both black and white citizens still expressed resistance to the program. Perhaps the most vocal of these resistance groups was the predominantly white NSA, now 7,000 members strong, who ordered an injunction against the Waterloo school board in a last ditch effort to stop the implementation of the desegregation plan. However, the group lacked the funds to further pursue court action. The Iowa Department of Public Instruction’s 1974-1975 report declared the Waterloo’s high schools completely desegregated, while the thirteen elementary schools affected by Plan A policies had stabilized minority enrollments.

While Waterloo’s story of equal educational opportunity during the civil rights era has many similar components to the stories of other cities, the fight for school

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desegregation started later and reached conclusion more rapidly in Waterloo than in other cities. Waterloo’s school board developed and implemented a desegregation program over approximately five years, from 1968 to 1973, while the development of a successful program in Milwaukee took over thirty years. In Milwaukee, the battle for more black teachers began in the 1930s and 1940s, while black teachers in the Waterloo schools was not a significant issue until Dr. Harvey’s presentation to the school board in 1972.\footnote{Jack Dougherty, \textit{More Than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee}, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 24.} In the early 1940s, the director of the Urban League and the Milwaukee school board reached a compromise, stating that newly hired black teachers would teach only in predominantly black schools.\footnote{Ibid, 27.} By the early 1960s, the Milwaukee School District enacted a policy of compensatory education throughout the city, which entailed individualized curricula based on student’s perceived abilities.\footnote{Ibid, 65.}

The Urban League worked with the school district to start the “Youth Incentive Project,” whose goal was to help black students strengthen their connections between school and work. Similar to the sit-in in the superintendent’s office in 1972, Wisconsin state NAACP leader Lloyd Barbee led several debates and protests in school board meetings between 1963 and 1964.\footnote{Ibid, 99.} Waterloo and Milwaukee shared similar goals in their school desegregation protests of the mid-1960s: the Milwaukee United School Integration Committee led protests over the city’s open enrollment policies in 1965, and black history classes were the focus of student protests during 1967 at predominantly white Riverside High School.\footnote{Ibid, 121.} Debates with the school board were not enough to initiate desegregation programs; instead, Lloyd Barbee took the Milwaukee Public Schools to U.S. district court on the grounds that segregation in Milwaukee’s public
schools were created and maintained by the administration itself.\textsuperscript{185} The judge issued a ruling in January of 1976 in favor of Barbee and the plaintiffs, and instituted a three-year school desegregation plan for the city of Milwaukee.\textsuperscript{186} Unlike Milwaukee, which required a court ruling to institute a school desegregation plan in the city, the collaboration of the Waterloo school board with group organizations and unaffiliated citizens from every corner of the city allowed the adoption of Plan A without force. Additionally, the modeling of Waterloo’s Plan A on other successful integration plans reassured citizens that Waterloo’s plan would be successful.

Dayton, Ohio had a desegregation timeline more similar to that of Waterloo, in that desegregation only became a significant issue during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Dayton, while having a current population twice the size of Waterloo’s, had a similar industrial past and is located in the Midwest. Similar to Waterloo, racial violence in 1966 drew attention to segregation in the city. Subsequently, the city formed a committee to propose policies to dispel future racial tension.\textsuperscript{187} The school board’s first attempt at pursuing equal educational opportunities was the implementation of more classes in black history, similar to Waterloo’s East High School.\textsuperscript{188} The U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare encouraged the Dayton school board to adopt a plan to desegregate the schools, starting with desegregating teachers by the academic year of 1970-1971.\textsuperscript{189} School board meetings were places of animated debate, as they were in Waterloo, with the busing program the main point of contention.\textsuperscript{190}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{185} Ibid, 152.
\bibitem{186} Ibid, 153.
\bibitem{188} Ibid, 97.
\bibitem{189} Ibid, 98.
\bibitem{190} Ibid, 102.
\end{thebibliography}
Ultimately, the case for desegregation in Dayton made it to the U.S. Supreme court twice between 1972 and 1976. The judge created a busing plan for the city that would send students from predominantly black schools to predominantly white schools and vice versa to create a two-way busing system.\textsuperscript{191} When the school year began in Dayton in September of 1976, the then chief of the U.S. Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division called Dayton’s program of racial desegregation one of the most successful in the country: there was no violence, school attendance was high, and there was no evidence of families leaving the city to attend schools elsewhere.\textsuperscript{192}

Similar to Waterloo, Chicago’s battle for desegregation during the 1960s and 1970s consisted of boycotts, sit-ins, and controversial open enrollment programs. Civil rights advocates in the city issued multiple requests and demands to members of the school board during the 1960s, which resulted in limited transfer plans for high school students. Pressure by the federal government after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 led Superintendent James Redmond to design a small scale desegregation plan that, at its height, bused 400 to 500 students from predominantly black schools to predominantly white schools.\textsuperscript{193}

While the city produced desegregation plans with pressure from the federal government in the case of Chicago, pressure by the school board president was all that was necessary for the proposal and passage of a desegregation plan by the Waterloo school board. Similar to Waterloo, Chicago’s large-scale desegregation policies, proposed in February 1972, were compared to state desegregation guidelines; unlike

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid, 104.
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid.
Waterloo’s Plan A, however, Chicago’s program was not aligned with state guidelines.\textsuperscript{194} The massive student population of Chicago relative to Waterloo meant that the passage and implementation of a school desegregation plan took several years longer than in Waterloo. The state implemented a cohesive desegregation plan on March 15, 1978, involving career development centers such as those in Milwaukee, faculty desegregation, and academic interest centers to improve basic skills.\textsuperscript{195}

Waterloo’s efforts to attain educational equality remain consistent with the pattern established by efforts to attain employment equality. The programs that involved diverse groups of community members in their creation and delivery were the most effective in enacting change in the community. Plan A’s effectiveness can be attributed to its collaborative nature. Both parents, citizens, community organizations, and school administrators were involved in its creation. While the NSA stood as the largest opponent to the plan’s implementation, the support of Plan A from city and state officials, as well as black and white parents, overwhelmed the voice of the predominantly white NSA. After the conversion of Central to a junior high school in 1988, high school attendance zones were maintained to foster desegregation.\textsuperscript{196}

Current enrollment of the two public high schools for the most recent school year of 2012-2013 demonstrates the persistent success of Plan A: West High School is 34 percent minority and 21 percent black while East High School is 47 percent minority and 36 percent black.\textsuperscript{197} A significant portion of West’s students live in attendance zones on the east side, and a similar portion of East’s student live in attendance zones on the west side (Figure 2). The current enrollment boundaries retain the strategy of the 1972

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid, 60.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid, 63.
boundaries. The West High and East High boundaries divide Census Tract 18, now 89 percent black, approximately evenly, to promote racial and socioeconomic balance at both high schools. Compared to 1972, much more of the east side is included in the 2013 West High enrollment boundaries (Figure 2). This is directly responsible for the diminished gap in minority students between the high schools compared to the early 1970s.


However, successful racial integration did not translate to total equality throughout the public school system. Lingering inequalities in educational achievement remain between the east and west sides’ public schools.
Housing

All discussions of segregation are fundamentally based on patterns of residency. Desegregation efforts in the public schools and businesses across Waterloo could not be successful without systematic efforts to desegregate Waterloo’s neighborhoods. From urban renewal, to federal and local fair housing laws, to community organizations and individual residential desegregation efforts, desegregation in housing was an effort that required every segment of the community as well as the local, state, and federal government.

The Federal Housing Act of 1949 officially launched urban renewal throughout the nation. The Act provided billions of dollars to local authorities to clear blighted areas and build new housing developments, university buildings, hospitals, and commercial spaces in their place. The overarching goal of the act was to remove blighted properties and the associated poverty from the targeted neighborhoods in the hopes of reducing white flight and attracting more middle class individuals to the city. The height of urban renewal occurred between 1950 and 1974, when approximately 2,500 neighborhoods were razed in 993 cities across the country. African Americans owned most of the older, single-family homes characterizing the estimated 400,000 housing units within these neighborhoods. By 1963, more than 609,000 people were displaced by urban renewal. Two-thirds of them were racial minorities, the vast majority African American.

Throughout the country, urban renewal failed to alleviate poverty in urban centers. Instead, poverty simply moved to different areas of the city as displaced families

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199 Ibid.
200 Ibid.
found shelter in replacement public housing, much of which cities built in predominantly black areas. Since the majority of displaced families moving into these housing projects were poor, poverty often became more concentrated than before urban renewal’s intervention. In this way, urban renewal projects had a leading role in strengthening the racial and economic segregation of American communities.

Waterloo’s programs of urban renewal were no different than urban renewal programs across the country in their basic goals. In an attempt to improve housing quality in the city, the city cleared neighborhoods consisting of poor quality housing and built new homes and apartment buildings in their place. Upon introduction of the program in Waterloo, most of the older, run-down homes existed on the predominantly black east side. The city government carried out urban renewal projects in Waterloo over a period of approximately twelve years, from 1960 to 1972. Between those dates, four main projects were undertaken to renew blighted areas of the city. The projects were funded by federal dollars from the Title I program of the Housing Act of 1949, which provided federal funding to urban renewal projects.  

The city’s Urban Renewal Board proposed the first urban renewal project in 1960. The area to be cleared and reconstructed consisted of approximately 95 acres on the east side of Waterloo on Logan Avenue. The Logan Housing Project, as it came to be called, was considered Waterloo’s pilot project for urban renewal. According to Frederick Mast, chairman of Waterloo’s Urban Renewal Board, the area was “large enough to demonstrate the feasibility of renewal but small enough to accomplish dramatic results in a short time.” These characteristics made the site ideal for a pilot

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203 Ibid.
project, as success at this site could be quickly confirmed in order to ensure federal funds for subsequent renewal projects. The project aimed to improve services and utilities in the area. The city used resultant dividends to encourage groups of homeowners in the area to improve their homes and keep property values high. Consistent with the national pattern of urban renewal, neighborhoods targeted for slum clearance and redevelopment were overwhelmingly black. Of the 220 families relocated by the Logan Housing Project, approximately 75% were black.204

Leaders of the project saw it as an immediate success. According to George Vohs of the Waterloo Daily Courier, “It is conclusive that urban renewal so far has brought better housing, better opportunity, new neighbors, new expense, new attitudes, whether pro or con, and some new problems to the more than 94 families relocated from the project to date.”205 Additionally, according to federal statistics, 92% of displaced families formerly living in substandard housing experienced a substantial improvement in housing quality upon their move out of the Logan urban renewal area.206 In this way, Waterloo’s pilot urban renewal project improved the quality of life of Logan residents previously residing in sub-standard housing.

While several of the relocated families reported positively of their post-relocation living situation, many reported negatively. Many families felt as though their homes had been stolen away from them by the organizations of urban

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205 Ibid.

renewal. Especially for black families, who had to work exponentially harder to purchase and maintain a home than white families, the machine of urban renewal only created more problems for them upon relocation.

The city council approved Waterloo’s second major urban renewal project in February 1965. The project, encompassing 1,520 acres of the Westfield-Virden area on either side of the Cedar River, was directly tied to the city’s larger flood control project. The project involved not only removal of blighted housing and other structures failing to comply with redevelopment plans but the installation of dikes, levees and landfill.Industrial development, not residential improvement, was the focus of this program. The first acquired property was the Illinois Central Railroad depot and freight station on the east bank of the Cedar River, which was demolished and the land used to build a new First Street bridge in order to extend U.S. Highway 63 through the city. The city used urban renewal funds to build a scouring dam in the Cedar River to extend the amount of river available for recreational use. Due to the industrial focus of this project and the lack of displaced families, the Urban Renewal Board felt minimal resistance from the community.

In contrast, the city’s later low-income housing-focused project faced significant protest. White homeowners vehemently resisted the construction of low-income housing, which would attract black families to their neighborhoods. The Alabar Hills project in 1968 received some of the strongest resistance of urban renewal in the city. The proposed location, on the corner of Doreen Street and Sager Avenue, was on the west

210 Ibid.
side of Waterloo, far removed from the isolated black community of the east side. Upon hearing of the location proposed by the Urban Renewal Board, 1,251 Alabar Hills residents signed a petition objecting to the construction of the low-income housing units in their racially homogeneous neighborhood. This was the longest petition in Waterloo’s 121-year history. Wallace Butler, the attorney for the objecting residents, stated at a meeting with Catholic Charities, the organization funding the project through the FHA, that “Our arguments are not racial...these are not bigots at all,” and that the residents only object to “putting slum dwellers in a decent neighborhood.” Butler clarified that the petitioning residents were not against integration but were concerned that the project would lower the value of their property. He also stated that low-income families that would move into the new building would “not be accepted and they’re not wanted.” Some residents stated that they would approve of the project if the homes to be constructed were for single families and not multiple families. In response, Father Rhomberg of Catholic Charities replied, “I just can’t believe 1,251 people are unable to accept anyone who is below a certain income.”

Ignoring the resistance of white residents, Catholic Charities moved forward with the construction of the Alabar Hills Project. Petitioning residents proposed a re-zoning of the plots to only allow single-family dwellings and attempted to stage a march on Doreen Street; however, both were unsuccessful in deterring the construction of the project, which was completed in 1968. This project stands as a successful attempt by the local

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216 Rhomberg in ibid.
government to integrate the black and white communities of Waterloo, although the project was on a very small scale.

Two years later, Catholic Charities along with contracting company Homestead Developers followed through on its promise to sponsor a “scattered-sites” housing project, proposing 106 low-income housing units to be built on both the east and west sides of Waterloo.217 The project consisted of nine different sites, encompassing Alabar Hills and three other previously constructed low-income housing projects. This type of project was the first of its kind in the state of Iowa.218 The FHA 236 program approved the non-profit project. The program allowed sponsors like Catholic Charities to charge less rent since the government subsidized part of the interest on the construction loan.219 Priority preference for the homes was given to the elderly, handicapped, and to families relocated by urban renewal, the majority of which were black.220 The city constructed all of the units on vacant property, 25 percent of which was land purchased with urban renewal funds. Little resistance to these projects arose from residents near the proposed areas, partly because all of the potential residents were screened by the project manager, John White, to determine eligibility before a sale was confirmed.221 Many residents of the new buildings made approximately the same income as the other residents in the area, allowing for a smooth transition for both new and original residents.

Outside of urban renewal programs, federal, state, and city legislation contributed to residential desegregation efforts in the city. By 1950, Iowa had the least amount of

218 “Chamber Shows First Housing in ‘Scattered-Site’ Project,” Waterloo Daily Courier, August 30, 1972, 12.
220 “Moderate Income Housing Units Expected to Open about Mid-July,” June 28, 1972, Waterloo Daily Courier, 3.
221 Ibid.
legislation addressing housing discrimination in the country. The only law in place in 1950 was a statute banning discrimination from the 1880s—one of the oldest statutes of its kind in the United States. The statute provided for equal access of all citizens to restaurants, theaters, hotels, and places of public gathering. However, this statute did not mention equal opportunity in housing, thereby providing realtors and white homeowners the freedom to deny the purchase of a home to anyone they chose. The first law prohibiting discrimination in housing in Iowa after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1965 and Fair Housing Act of 1968 was a fair housing bill passed by the state in early 1967, which enforced equal opportunities in housing to all people regardless of race, class, religion or gender throughout the state. The city council passed its own Fair Housing Ordinance in March of 1968, which protected the same classes under the federal and state laws.

More non-discrimination legislation followed in 1969, establishing the Human Rights Ordinance, which gave the Human Rights Commission the power to penalize discriminatory organizations. One of the commission’s primary functions was to address housing discrimination in the city; specifically, to receive complaints, investigate them, and, if necessary, file a written charge of discriminatory practice with the city. The Iowa State Civil Rights Commission received the forwarded charges. The individual that violated the city’s non-discrimination laws was then issued a penalty, charged, and

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222 Report on Urban Renewal Programs and their Effects on Racial Minority Group Housing in Three Iowa Cities (Des Moines, Iowa: Iowa State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, June 1964), 1.
223 Ibid.
225 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (Waterloo/Cedar Falls Iowa HOME Consortium, October 2009), 10.
provided a conciliation agreement, of which the discriminating individual would approve before it would be accepted.\textsuperscript{227}

While the city implemented policies to encourage residential integration, some white families took it upon themselves to facilitate integration in housing by moving to the east side.\textsuperscript{228} The Duttons attained professional degrees at the University of Iowa during the early 1960s. Upon graduating from the University of Iowa Law School, Dave accepted a job at a Waterloo law firm and moved from Iowa City to Waterloo in 1960.\textsuperscript{229} At that time, Mary was finishing her nursing degree, and joined Dave in Waterloo in 1961. Their involvement with Waterloo’s civil rights movement began with Dave’s participation in Republican politics, where he presented a plank on the integration of schools and society to the county platform.\textsuperscript{230} The presentation reflected the strong conviction both Mary and Dave had for equality in all aspects of society, and as they laid down roots in Waterloo, they fervently pursued this goal.

As Mary and Dave became increasingly involved in Waterloo’s civil rights movement, they decided to invite some African American couples over to their home on the west side to listen to their experiences of living in a segregated northern city. The stories of their peers inspired Mary and Dave to action. According to Dave, “we made the decision that if integration of housing was going to occur, it needed to start with white people moving into integrated neighborhoods.”\textsuperscript{231}

Chuck and Gale Quirk’s experience living in the adjacent, predominantly white city of Cedar Falls led to their move to the Highland neighborhood. Chuck joined the faculty of the University of Northern Iowa in 1965 as Assistant Professor of History

\textsuperscript{227} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{228} Mary and Dave Dutton, personal interview by Hannah Shirey, February 27, 2011
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{231} Ibid.
while Gale worked as a social worker.  

During their time in Cedar Falls, they had an African American foster daughter. Their white neighbors did not approve; they circulated a petition that called for the Quirks to move, arguing that their housing of a pregnant, black foster daughter meant they were supporting immorality.  

As fervent democrats and, most importantly, firm believers in the equality of all persons, the Quirks tapped into their connections in Waterloo to find a neighborhood more compatible with their ideologies. Mary Dutton and Gale knew each other well, and a meeting in Highland during the late 1960s piqued the Quirks interest in the integrated, progressive community.  

In the late 1960s, several homes in the Highland neighborhood on the east side went up for sale. In addition to containing attractive and historic homes, Highland was one of the only integrated neighborhoods in the city. However, the closing of St. Frances Hospital in 1965 and the subsequent shift of doctors, nurses, and other professionals to the west side location of the new hospital drew white and professional families out of the neighborhood. The ubiquity of block-busting throughout the neighborhood accelerated the emigration of white families to the west side.  

Block-busting was the tactic of convincing families to sell their homes at a loss by appealing to their fear of depreciation caused by black families moving into their neighborhood. However, according to Chuck Quirk, “it just so happened that Dave and Mary and the Rosses and us and a few others went the other direction.”  

The Duttons, Rosses, and Quirks moved into Highland in 1968 to provide their children with the opportunity to attend the Bridgeway Project and to maintain the integration of the neighborhood.  

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233 Gale Quirk, personal interview by author, August 6, 2013.  
234 Ibid.  
235 Chuck Quirk, personal interview by author, August 6, 2013.  
236 Mary and Dave Dutton, personal interview by Hannah Shirey, February 27, 2011.
While living in Highland during the height of Waterloo’s civil rights period, the Duttons and Quirks took advantage of their location and became involved with several community organizations. Mary Dutton and Gale Quirk became members of the Know your Neighbor Committee, a group of women that met and spoke about their experiences in learning how to live with people different than themselves. The impetus of the committee’s organization was the racial isolation observed between the east and west sides of Waterloo and between Cedar Falls, an adjacent overwhelmingly white city, and Waterloo. Additionally, the committee was concerned with the more urgent matter of “white flight.” As black families moved into neighborhoods, white families would move out. The committee became active in the early months of 1965 and consisted of five women from both Waterloo and Cedar Falls. Organized by the wife of democratic state Representative James Jackson, the committee intended to discuss discrimination and prejudice in its communities and help dissipate fears and misunderstandings among people of different backgrounds. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Know Your Neighbor Committee was speaking at schools, churches, boy scouts and girl scouts throughout Waterloo and Cedar Falls, encouraging participants to ask them difficult questions and providing candid and thought-provoking answers regarding such topics as interracial marriage, dating, and integrated neighborhoods. The efficacy of the committee is difficult to measure since the attitude of Waterloo’s citizens was the target of change, but the resiliency of their message is apparent. According to Gale Quirk,

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237 Chuck and Gale Quirk, personal interview by author, August 6, 2013.
238 Louis Bultena and Harold Reasby, Negro-White Relations in the Waterloo Metropolitan Area (Cedar Falls, Iowa: Iowa State Teachers College, Spring 1955), 5.
240 Ibid.
241 Gale Quirk, personal interview by author, August 9, 2013.
“Occasionally I’ll still hear from someone who had heard us and they’ll say, ‘you know, you really gave us something to talk about.’”

Chuck Quirk and Dave Dutton became involved in the organization of a center for urban education on the east side of Waterloo. Quirk analyzed an urban education program in Chicago and formed a committee for minority group education, consisting of community leaders, school administrators, and faculty from the University of Northern Iowa, in order to produce a collaborative set of programs, one of them being urban education. Called the University of Northern Iowa Center for Urban Education, the center opened in July of 1969 as the only venture of its kind in the state at the time, focused on “serving persons from Waterloo’s ‘inner’ city who otherwise might not continue their education,” according to the Courier.

Mary Dutton followed her desire to integrate Waterloo’s neighborhoods to the League of Women Voters, of which she was president from 1971 to 1973. The League took on the issue of low-income housing in Waterloo in 1968, when Dutton was co-chairman, urging city officials to plan and coordinate programs to provide low-income housing to the community. The League of Women Voters Housing Committee produced a comprehensive booklet that discussed the efforts of private groups in Waterloo to provide low-income housing and the basic provisions of the federal housing laws. In the booklet, the League also outlined the various federal housing programs that Waterloo would be able to use in order to fund the construction of low-income housing. In early 1972, the League began lobbying the city of Waterloo and making statements at city council meetings in support of low-income housing. Due to its efforts,

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242 Ibid.
243 Chuck Quirk, personal interview by author, August 9, 2013.
247 Ibid.
the city created a low-rent housing commission, although no housing specifically for low-income individuals was present or scheduled for construction in the city by spring of 1973.\(^{248}\) Despite the lack of city involvement in low-income housing, League members partnered with a private organization called Housing Opportunities to rehab blighted houses on the east side of Waterloo, donating their free weekend hours to the cause.\(^{249}\)

Dave Dutton balanced the pursuit of equal opportunity for black citizens and enforcement of the law through his position as assistant county attorney from 1967 to 1969 and county attorney from 1969 to the 1975.\(^{250}\) The Black Deputy Program, conceived in 1969 in part by Dutton, was a federally funded program designed to increase the number of black policemen on the Waterloo police force.\(^{251}\) Black men between the ages of thirty and forty were trained to serve as part-time law enforcement officers. They responded to calls in black communities either with a white officer or on their own, serving as an internal member of the community to more smoothly enforce Waterloo’s laws. Dutton’s position as prosecutor of black criminals placed his own safety and the safety of his family at risk. Dutton’s meeting with the assistant chief of police during the early 1970s was interrupted by a drive-by shooting into the meeting room, while threats of firebombs in the bushes of the Duttons’ Highland home during the same timeframe resulted in weeks of twenty-four hour police protection.\(^{252}\)

The work of the Quirks and Duttons, through their physical presence in the Highland neighborhood and their individual work in the community, advanced desegregation on a grassroots scale. While their example in resisting white flight did not result in the mass movement of other white families into the east side, the example of


\(^{249}\) Mary Dutton, personal interview by author, August 18, 2013.

\(^{250}\) Dave Dutton, personal interview by Hannah Shirey, February 27, 2011.

\(^{251}\) “Aw C’mon Sheriff, Let’s Tell It Like It Really Is,” *Waterloo Daily Courier*, October 27, 1971, 4.

\(^{252}\) Dave and Mary Dutton, personal interview by Hannah Shirey, February 27, 2011.
their move and community involvement instigated conversations of integration across the city and supported the creation of concrete policies to improve race relations.

Cities across the country took a similar approach to promoting residential desegregation, using fair housing laws, urban renewal programs, and local organizations to promote the movement of people throughout the city’s neighborhoods and to ensure quality housing for every individual. Such programs and policies were instigated much earlier in larger cities such as Detroit and Chicago.

In Chicago, violence and urban renewal programs catalyzed by housing shortages and housing discrimination began decades earlier than the racial violence and urban renewal programs of Waterloo. Chicago’s black population increased drastically after World War II: 77.2% increase from 1950 to 1960 and 65.1% increase from 1960 to 1970. These population increases caused a housing shortage for both white and black Chicagoans, forcing blacks to push on the walls of the racially homogeneous black community and pursue housing opportunities in white neighborhoods. The movement of blacks into previously all white neighborhoods triggered a period of “hidden violence” in Chicago from 1940 to 1950, characterized by racially motivated bombing or arson of individual houses, or large housing riots involving the mobbing of black homes by the hundreds by whites. This decade of violence revealed a form of resistance rarely seen “outside the context of a large citywide disorder,” and functioned in favor of the violent white citizens to contain black communities within their pre-established ghettos.

Large-scale housing riots and community-focused racial violence characterized the subsequent decade. During this period, white protestors targeted urban renewal

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254 Ibid, 41.
255 Ibid.
housing projects proposed in white communities. Between 1946 and 1957, the seven largest uprisings against low-income housing projects occurred, involving on average 1,000 protestors. These protestors targeted the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), which managed the construction of low-income building projects throughout the city. The city redeveloped the commercial area of the Chicago Loop in the 1950s through the slum renewal and housing project construction patterns characteristic of urban renewal. This involved the clearance of predominantly black slums pushing business out of the Loop and construction of housing projects on Chicago’s predominantly black south side. The redevelopment of Chicago’s loop is analogous, but not identical, to Waterloo’s flood plain redevelopment. Both cities sponsored urban renewal programs with the goal of improving land for public use. However, in the case of Chicago, slum clearance was the lynchpin to restoring the Loop’s businesses while in Waterloo, it was one of many necessary steps in revitalizing the city. For both cities, slum clearance allowed the city to replace areas that were detracting from the city’s function with areas that contributed to and improved the city’s function.

In Detroit, the federal government, city officials, and private housing reformers pursued public housing solutions to solve the crisis of the overcrowded slums as early as the 1930s. The Citizens’ Housing and Planning Council (CHPC), founded in 1937, was dedicated to the reconstruction of urban slums. This group of liberal activists, consisting of social workers, planners, architects, and business leaders, sought to replace Detroit’s substandard and overcrowded housing with sanitary public housing. The

256 Ibid, 61.
257 Ibid, 106.
259 Ibid.
Detroit Housing Commission and City Plan Commission delegated federal funds to the city’s housing projects, similar to Waterloo’s Urban Renewal Board.

From the late 1930s to early 1940s, the Eight Mile-Wyoming section of Detroit—a black ghetto surrounded by white neighborhoods—was the site of the city’s first controversy over public housing. While the CHPC proposed that the homes be sold to white buyers for redevelopment and that a new group of homes be built adjacent to a previously established black neighborhood, the City Plan Commission suggested that temporary housing be built for Eight Mile residents while the area was redeveloped. Although both of these organizations supported the construction of public housing, residents of Eight Mile formed an organization called the Eight Mile Road Civic Association in order to express their collective desire to own and develop their own homes, not to be forced out of their neighborhood by the city. Local 600 of the UAW supported the Civic Association, and pressured the city to provide housing for the thousands of black migrants arriving from the south. A compromise was eventually reached between both camps, with six hundred units of contemporary housing constructed on the land and the approval of an FHA subsidy by the city government to provide for the construction of single-family homes.

Subsequent construction of public housing only elevated racial tensions and segregation in the city. Between 1940 and 1950, the city government constructed more than 1500 single-family homes in the Eight Mile-Wyoming area. The construction of a two hundred-unit public housing project in the Seven Mile-Fenelon neighborhood resulted in violence between white members of the Seven Mile-Fenelon association and the black workers to which the housing units were promised. This conflict caused the

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260 Ibid 68.
261 Ibid, 71.
262 Ibid.
Detroit Housing Commission to mandate the continuation of racial segregation in Detroit’s public housing.\textsuperscript{263} In 1945, protests of the Oakwood housing project by potential white neighbors led to its dismissal by the Housing Commission.\textsuperscript{264} Due to the election of an anti-public housing mayor in 1949, little public housing was constructed in the city after 1950, leaving black inner-city residents struggling in decrepit housing.

Urban Renewal programs providing for the construction of highways or private housing projects were widespread throughout the 1950s, with little help offered to black families displaced by the projects.\textsuperscript{265} Housing discrimination by private sellers was also widespread during this period. Groups of homeowners advocating for open housing in the city during the 1960s were met with fierce resistance from predominantly white neighborhood associations, fearful of depreciation caused by the presence of a black family in their neighborhood.\textsuperscript{266} Black families that were the first to move into all-white neighborhoods were the targets of violence by neighborhood associations, which used violence in an attempt to maintain the racial isolation of their neighborhood.\textsuperscript{267}

In these ways, the timeline of the city’s programs addressing residential segregation began nearly thirty years earlier than Waterloo’s. Additionally, the white protests over public housing in the 1940s had a significantly stronger influence than the protests over housing projects in Waterloo, which did nothing to stop construction. While Waterloo’s white citizens resisted the movement of black families into their neighborhoods through discrimination in selling, Detroit’s white citizens utilized discrimination, petitioning, and violence as a direct and last ditch method to remove the “infiltrators.”

\textsuperscript{263} Ibid., 74.
\textsuperscript{264} Ibid., 80.
\textsuperscript{265} Ibid, 49.
\textsuperscript{266} Ibid, 220.
\textsuperscript{267} Ibid, 249.
A wealth of programs and policies designed to address inequalities in housing characterized the late civil rights era in Waterloo. Among them, the larger scale federal, state, and city-sponsored policies affected less change than small-scale community-focused efforts run by small groups of dedicated citizens. The grassroots organization exemplified by the Duttons and Quirks was the most effective in promoting desegregation in the city, as it addressed specific problems, such as “white flight” or racial misconceptions, on a micro scale. In contrast, Waterloo’s urban renewal policies, while declared successful by the Urban Renewal Board and many white citizens far-removed from the projects, did little to break up black racial isolation; indeed, urban renewal in Waterloo functioned much the same way it did in Chicago, by reinforcing the walls of segregated black communities instead of integrating them.

**Conclusion**

Many of Waterloo’s citizens worked alongside private organizations and the city government to implement desegregation policies targeting the public schools, the city’s employers, and housing. Private citizens were integral to the success of the civil rights movement in Waterloo. Dedicated and resilient individuals such as Jimmie Porter, Anna Mae Weems, Monroe Stevens, William Knowlton, and the Quirks and Duttons were essential components of the progress that occurred in Waterloo from 1950 to the early 1970s. Many of their successes occurred through the civil rights organizations and institutions that characterized the civil rights movement in Waterloo. These individuals fearlessly acted upon their own convictions, which inspired Jimmie Porter to rise to vice president of Local 46, Anna Mae Weems to become president of Waterloo’s NAACP chapter, Stevens to work with the Community Enables program, Knowlton to manage the helm of the Bridgeway Project, and the Quirks and Duttons to move into the Highland neighborhood.
Good Gone Bad: Policies, Programs, and Redevelopment Plans Explain the Persistence of Racial Inequality in Housing, Schools, and Employment

Racial inequality persisted in Waterloo through the civil rights period to the present time due to the shortcomings of programs implemented by nation-, state-, and city-wide organizations. The explanation for the persistence of racial inequality in Waterloo—which we may term “persistence factors”—can be considered in two categories: those factors arising during the civil rights era and those arising after the civil rights era. This chapter focuses on the former category, which includes piecemeal government-sponsored programs, pervasive discrimination, and commercial redevelopment plans that were implemented in the city from approximately 1950 to 1970. Generally, programs targeting the symptoms of racial inequality had more success at diminishing it than programs targeting more structural, economic components of inequality. In the case of Waterloo, public school desegregation programs had the most success, as they targeted the symptomatic issue of school segregation. However, civil rights programs and policies targeting employment and housing faced a much greater challenge in the economic, structural nature of employment and housing inequality, which they were unable to successfully disassemble.

In the 1960s, urban renewal and the Human Rights Commission arose to address housing discrimination across the city. Urban renewal, Waterloo’s major federally sponsored project to provide quality housing to all citizens, exacerbated unequal housing opportunities in the city. As discussed in Chapter 1, urban renewal was a federal initiative launched by the Federal Housing Act of 1949 that provided billions of dollars to local authorities to clear old, blighted homes and replace them with new housing developments, hospitals, commercial spaces, and community buildings. In Waterloo, the
Urban Renewal Board, assembled by the city government, determined which areas of the city would receive urban renewal funds. By 1960, the east side was home to over fifty percent of homes classified as dilapidated by the decennial census, and therefore was home to many of the city’s urban renewal projects.268

In Waterloo, many families displaced by urban renewal projects were white. According to the Waterloo Human Rights Commission, urban renewal projects displaced 486 white families and 209 non-white families between 1961 and 1967.269 Upon displacement, the Urban Renewal Board provided limited assistance in relocation. Unlike the displaced white families who were able to move away from the renewal site, the vast majority of black families struggled to find quality housing after their displacement, and ended up buying or renting homes adjacent to the renewal site, strengthening the isolation between black and white communities.270

Reactions to urban renewal were mixed for both black and white citizens. According to the Waterloo Courier, which interviewed nearly one-third of the people displaced by the process, most interview participants liked their new homes better than their old homes, yet found the cost of living was higher than their old homes.271 Complaints about urban renewal ranged from higher mortgage payments and living further away from downtown to difficulty in finding relocation housing and lack of amenities present in previous homes.272

268 Social Explorer Tables (SE), Census 1960 Tracts Only Set, Social Explorer & U.S. Census Bureau, DUALabs. Accessed March 2, 2014. “Blighted” housing is considered that classified as “dilapidated” within the census data.
272 Ibid.
Most black families reported negatively of their post-relocation living situation. Many families felt as though their homes had been stolen from them by urban renewal, since they had been paid low prices by the city government for their property. One displaced black resident reported being paid a lower price by the city for his lot than his white neighbor.273 Indeed, in 1964, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights reported that prices paid by the city government to holders of urban renewal property were at 2.6 times the assessed tax value while houses sold on the open housing market at the same time were bought for approximately 3.8 times the assessed tax valuation.274 As former city councilwoman Willie Mae Wright said of the effects of urban renewal in Waterloo, “It was devastating, they uprooted people and tore down their houses.”275 One comment from a displaced black citizen represents the sentiment of many families relocated by the city’s urban renewal projects:

After saving and borrowing to some day have something of your own, the pencil gangsters come along and take it from you. How could I be happy? Would you be? I have my tax statement and I am wondering if I will get any money back for the loss I took by you know who. A friend of mine who was renting up Adams Street and with a very large family had to move and he also got next to nothing. He was buying, too. I could go on and on, but what’s the use...I was tricked into losing out by the real estate company who said, “Do nothing until you hear from us.”276

274 Ibid.
275 Willie Mae Wright, personal interview by author, August 13, 2013.
Urban renewal had underpaid this citizen for his property, thereby depriving him of his original home and adequate compensation to purchase a new home.

Wright was another African American resident negatively affected by Waterloo’s urban renewal policies. Upon arriving in Waterloo in 1954, Wright rented a home with her husband. In 1960, the Waterloo Urban Renewal Board slated her rental home for clearance. Initially, the board stated that it would help Wright and her family find a home. However, not a single place the board proposed fit the needs of her family. The first option proposed to her by the board was the predominantly black City View area on the east side of Waterloo. However, City View lacked schools, busses, and stores, and was therefore unsatisfactory, Wright argued. The owner of the next house offered to the Wrights refused to sell his home to them because they were a black family. The third and final home offered to the Wrights by the Urban Renewal Board was on Mullan Avenue in an all-white area on the west side of the city. According to Wright, “I would have been the only black on Mullan Avenue. And I said, ‘Oh, no, I’m not going to jeopardize my kids and expose them to that where they can’t mingle and play and enjoy kid life.”

After the Urban Renewal Board’s third offer, its members told Wright that they could no longer assist her in locating a home and that she had thirty days to relocate. Wright ended up finding a home on her own terms, located on the east side of Waterloo, which she purchased in 1960. Initially, Wright was only one of two black families in the neighborhood; however, many of the white families living on and around Almond Street moved out after she moved in.

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277 Willie Mae Wright, personal interview by author, August 13, 2013.
278 Ibid.
279 Ibid.
Regarding the experience of purchasing a home in Waterloo during the late 1950s and early 1960s, Wright stated, “It wasn’t pretty, unless you were over on the other [west] side of the tracks. And by being on this side of the tracks, it was a little difficult to get a home in Waterloo.” Especially for black families, who worked harder to purchase a home than white families, the machine of urban renewal only created more problems for them upon relocation.

Complaints from relocated families reached such a magnitude that United Services, the contracting company responsible for relocating displaced families, considered cancelling its contract with the Waterloo Urban Renewal Board. The issue arose when James Harrington, a United Services employee, referred a black family to a landlord in an all-white neighborhood on the west side of Waterloo. When the family rented the home, United Services reacted strongly, telling Harrington that his “position will destroy the United Services organization and adversely affect the entire community.” Subsequently, United Services instructed Harrington to move the family out of the west side and refrain from referring displaced black families to available homes on the west side. Harrington refused to deny black families equal housing opportunities and left United Services several weeks after the incident, stating, “in many ways the suggestion of discrimination in our Urban Renewal project is more in the way of acts of omission than commission. But in either event precious little, if any, responsibility has been taken...to insure that the rights of all citizens are protected.”

281 Ibid., 14.
Race restrictions attached to renters’ qualifications imposed discrimination in Waterloo’s urban renewal projects during the 1960s and 1970s. Harrington reported that, during the height of urban renewal in Waterloo, only two of thirty-six available rental properties did not contain racial restrictions on prospective renters. Displaced black citizens were unable to access these racially restricted properties, and were not given the same opportunity to rent housing as displaced white citizens.

The voices of several local officials joined Harrington’s in revealing the inherent discrimination in Waterloo’s urban renewal projects. Eugene Speller of the National Urban League stated that urban renewal programs had amplified the existing problem of discrimination in the city. As a black citizen of Waterloo, he reported personal experience with housing discrimination enhanced by urban renewal; in several instances, he was about to reach a deal on a home over the phone before the homeowners discovered he was black and refused to sell to him. According to James Harrington of United Services, many white homeowners who had homes available for rent would not rent to black families for fear of what their neighbors would say.

The pastor of Payne Memorial A.M.E. church in the heart of the east side, one of the black community’s largest churches, reported widespread dissatisfaction with urban renewal programs among his congregation. His main complaint was that residents were poorly informed on the intentions of the program, and that this lack of information resulted in hasty and ill-advised moves out of the renewal area. Many families displaced by the Logan Housing Project moved out of the area at the same time, severely limiting

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283 Ibid.
284 Ibid.
286 Ibid.
housing opportunities, especially for black families seeking rental housing. Rev. Talbert also stated that many people were against the urban renewal program since they were severely restricted in their choice of relocation.

The shortage in rental housing brought on by Waterloo’s first urban renewal project, the Logan Housing Project, demonstrates the limited housing opportunities available to displaced blacks following urban renewal. According to James Harrington, half of the black families forced to relocate were financially able to purchase a home while the other half had to rent. Harrington further argued that most of the housing available to black families upon relocation was “located in a circumscribed area in proximity to the present Urban Renewal Area.” Since the Logan Housing Project was located in a predominantly black area of the east side, relocated families were unable to move outside the borders of established black communities, simply reinforcing racial segregation of the city by moving black families into homes on the border of black and white communities.

Shortages in low-income housing for black residents increased not only during the Logan Housing Project construction but also throughout the 1960s. Urban renewal projects demolished approximately 800 housing units, most of them inhabited by low-income citizens, from 1960 to 1970. No housing units exclusively for low-income individuals had been constructed over that decade, leaving hundreds of families, many of them black, without financially accessible relocation housing. Displaced families were

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287 Ibid., 15.
288 Ibid.
289 Ibid.,
left to compete for the few properties they could afford. But, due to discrimination, black families were left with even fewer options.

Of the available homes on the periphery of black communities, many were financially out of reach of many black families because the Federal Housing Association (FHA) did not approve them for insured loans. The FHA considered the areas relatively unstable and feared they would deteriorate, thereby disqualifying the homes for loan approval. In response to this lack of FHA loans, the city government organized a $30,000 fund under the urban renewal plan to assist low-income families with relocation. The fund paid utilities deposits and closed gaps in a relocated family’s income and rent payments. According to the Courier, many families had received aid for several months from the fund, and, by 1962, four families relied on the aid for an indefinite amount of time. However, a family could use the funds for no more than five years, at which time support would be withdrawn. In this way, the city provided very minimal financial assistance to relocated families, and failed to reduce the financial obstacles contributing to the difficult relocation process for black families.

The contribution of urban renewal programs to the persistence of unequal housing opportunities and segregation was not unique to Waterloo. In Chicago, just as in Waterloo, black residents displaced by urban renewal construction were forced to seek housing either in poorly constructed public housing inside concentrated black areas or in adjacent residential areas. Trade-offs between black community leaders and the

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291 Ibid.
293 Ibid., 15.
294 Ibid.
Chicago Housing Authority, the city’s urban renewal governing body, forced black leaders to abandon major integration programs in lieu of minor changes to renewal plans.\(^{296}\) The post-war housing shortage had reached such desperate levels for black Chicagoans that having a home was the first priority, with its quality and location second.

Detroit also experienced enhanced housing discrimination and racial segregation due to urban renewal. Unlike Waterloo’s Urban Renewal Board, which provided displaced families minimal assistance in locating relocation housing, Detroit’s city government made no effort to help displaced families find new homes.\(^{297}\) “Slum clearance” sponsored by the urban renewal plan razed the blighted homes of inner-city residents and replaced them with middle-class housing designed to increase city tax revenue and improve the living conditions of slum dwellers.\(^{298}\) The city built very few low-income homes during the urban renewal process, resulting in amplification of the city’s already serious housing shortage. Detroit’s displaced low-income families, many of them black, were forced to temporarily relocate into buildings adjacent to the slum clearance area or move to homes of the same blighted quality from which they had just been evicted. This pattern is identical to that seen in Waterloo. Urban renewal programs wreaked havoc on cities across the country, causing shortages in low-income housing and increasing the already difficult housing search for displaced black families, the majority of whom ended up purchasing or renting homes in the predominantly black neighborhood from which they were originally displaced.\(^{299}\)

\(^{296}\) Ibid.
\(^{298}\) Ibid., 49.
\(^{299}\) Ibid.
Urban renewal, designed to remove housing of poor quality and provide all residents of Waterloo with affordable, quality housing, enhanced unequal housing opportunities between black and white citizens and further established segregated black communities. After James Harrington stepped down from his position at United Services, local ministers, members of the National Urban League, and the Advisory Committee for the Iowa Commission on Civil Rights complained that the organization only perpetuated inequalities in housing opportunity throughout the city. These complaints led United Services to the realization that equal housing opportunities and racial segregation were directly related. In 1972, United Services stated that, “The essential problem that exists now was here even before urban renewal began. The community might just as well face the fact that Waterloo has a growing Negro population and it simply cannot continue to isolate them from the rest of the community.”

Waterloo’s Human Rights Commission, designed to enforce state anti-discrimination laws across the city, failed to eliminate housing discrimination in the city. The primary reason for this failure was that the commission did not have enough power to penalize discriminating organizations in such a way that would cause them to halt discriminatory practices. After filing a discriminatory charge with the city government, the guilty individuals were charged a penalty fee and then worked with the commission to design a conciliatory agreement, which could only be accepted by the commission after the guilty party accepted it. With the final penalty decided by the guilty individual, most penalties were extremely innocuous. Lillian Hornstein, who refused to rent her property to black tenants, was required to provide monthly reports of available housing

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accommodations to the commission and post a sign in the front of her property stating that she believed in equal housing opportunity. The commission had no power to effectively enforce the Housing Discrimination Provision of the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965. With the punishment decided by the guilty party, discriminating individuals were not held accountable and left to continue their discriminatory behavior.

This lack of penalizing power most likely resulted from conflicts of interest within the city council itself. The council facilitated both the Human Rights Commission’s anti-discrimination efforts and directed the Urban Renewal Board. If the council had given the Human Rights Commission the ability to effectively penalize discriminatory organizations and individuals, the council’s Urban Renewal Board, which was often accused of discrimination throughout the 1960s, may have been jeopardized. In order to avoid this, Waterloo’s city council organized a Human Rights Commission that would allow the city’s urban renewal programs to continue as planned while satisfying the desire of civil rights-minded citizens through its exploratory and educational design.

Organizations similar to Waterloo’s Human Rights Commission, designed to investigate complaints of discrimination across the city, were present in other cities across the state and the country and similarly lacked penalizing authority, leaving them relatively powerless to combat discrimination. The Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission was designed in part to address housing discrimination issues under the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965. The commission relied heavily on the District Court to

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issue subpoenas to obtain evidence of discrimination and temporary injunctions to bring individuals accused of discrimination to commission hearings. It had little power of its own to penalize discriminating individuals.\textsuperscript{303} The majority of the commission’s powers lay in drafting and revising improved anti-discrimination legislation for the city based on its investigations of discrimination complaints.\textsuperscript{304}

Human Rights Commissions organized in larger cities fell short in similar ways. Detroit’s Commission on Community Relations was organized in 1953 as a successor to the Interracial Committee, which was organized a decade prior. The committee’s responsibility was to investigate discrimination complaints and make recommendations to the city government regarding policies and programs that affect interactions between races. Educational programs designed to “promote mutual understanding” stood in the place of fines, fees, or other penalizing procedures. Unlike the Iowa commissions, which had some level of enforcement power, the Detroit Commission on Community Relations lacked any penalizing power whatsoever, and stressed mutual understanding through education above all.\textsuperscript{305}

Persistent housing discrimination before and after the establishment of Waterloo’s Human Rights Commission provides evidence of the program’s shortcomings. The force of housing discrimination kept blacks living in cheaper housing on the east side in predominantly black neighborhoods. Pervasive housing discrimination by both realtors and white homeowners functioned to limit housing opportunities for blacks during the civil rights era. As the mediator between the homeowner and prospective buyer, realtors


\textsuperscript{304} Ibid.

held a precarious position in post-WWII Waterloo. Officially, the policy of the Waterloo Board of Realtors in the 1960s was to show “any property to any qualified buyer who is acceptable to the owner, regardless of race, color or creed, but strictly limited by the terms of the employment contract as dictated by the owner of the property.”306 This policy left the decision to sell and ability to discriminate in the hands of the homeowners. Realtors, however, were simply attempting to make commission and could not afford to refuse to handle the property of owners who imposed restrictions concerning the buyer, according to the Board of Realtors attorney.307

Home loan associations were not exempt from the criticism of discrimination, either. In a public meeting of the Mayor’s Committee on Racial Understanding in February 1964, executives of these associations stated that the question of race was not a consideration in making home loans to Waterloo residents.308 However, anecdotal evidence suggested otherwise. Waterloo dentist Robert Harvey accused the home loan associations of racial bias in lending. Dr. Harvey claimed that he attempted to take out a loan to build a house on land he already owned and that the lenders insisted that he put down thirty percent of the loan as a down payment. Dr. Harvey felt that this was an unusually high requirement and that the loan association’s request prevented him from getting the loan and building his home, despite the fact that he possessed the qualifications of salary and credit rating.309 Dr. Harvey stated that a white couple making

307 Ibid.  
309 Ibid.
$5,000 per year received a loan on an $18,000 house; he and his wife made much more
than $5,000, yet were unable to buy a house of their choosing.\textsuperscript{310}

The informal racial restrictions of homeowners complemented discrimination by
the formal organizations of realtors and home loan associations. At a March 1964
meeting of the Waterloo Committee on Better Racial Understanding, Anna Mae Weems
said she had been contacted by several white people who had been discouraged by their
white neighbors from putting their homes for sale open to black purchase.\textsuperscript{311} By the
summer of 1964, the Iowa State Advisory Committee to the U. S. Commission on Civil
Rights stated that between ninety to ninety-five percent of the owners of available rental
property in the state of Iowa refused to rent to blacks.\textsuperscript{312}

Another clear sign of the gravity of housing discrimination in Waterloo was the
inability of Ronald James, a black Washington, D.C. attorney named the first director of
the Waterloo Human Rights Commission, to find a home. Possibly the most highly
qualified of his black counterparts in Waterloo during the mid-1960s, James sought an
apartment for himself, his wife, and child, on the predominantly white side of Waterloo.
Members of the commission did not clearly state whether discrimination was the cause of
James’ inability to find adequate housing, but the combination of his race, his occupation,
and the racial homogeneity of the west side made it highly probable that discrimination
prohibited James from immediately finding housing upon his arrival. Another
bureaucratic obstacle of the Human Rights Commission was present here. The accused
party must have shown intent to discriminate for the Human Rights Commission to

\textsuperscript{310} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{311} “Racial Committee Urged to Broaden its Activities,” \textit{Waterloo Daily Courier}, March 19, 1964, 35.
\textsuperscript{312} “Claim 95% Won’t Rent to Negroes,” \textit{Des Moines Register}, July 12, 1964, 13.
pursue legal action. Because it was so difficult to prove intent, most racial discrimination was not penalized.

The force of housing discrimination was so pervasive that it persisted despite the 1966 creation of the Human Rights Commission, passage of the 1967 Iowa Fair Housing law and the adoption of a local-level human rights ordinance in Waterloo in 1969. In the summer of 1972, another housing discrimination complaint came before the Human Rights Commission. Karla Cutler, Janet Anderson, and Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Wilder, all black, said that Mrs. Arlene Bedard, the manager of an apartment complex, refused to rent them an apartment without the consent of the owner, who stated he “didn’t like to rent to colored people.” In the case of the Wilders, Mrs. Bedard did not offer to show them either available apartment, knowing that there was no chance of the owner offering them for sale. A 1971 report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights noted the continuation of housing discrimination in the city. Realtors encouraged whites to buy homes on the west side and showed black families properties exclusively on the east side. Witnesses quoted in the report stated that real estate salesmen first considered status and skin color before showing homes to prospective buyers. Even five years after the creation of the Human Rights Commission, it was clear that housing discrimination was hardly on the decline.

The Human Rights Commission and urban renewal failed to equalize housing opportunities for Waterloo’s residents. While Waterloo’s Urban Renewal Board further delineated the boundaries between black and white communities, the Human Rights

315 Ibid.
Commission lacked the enforcing power to enforce the State’s housing discrimination legislation.

Housing discrimination is still present in twenty-first century Waterloo. In April 2008, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, at the request of the executive director of the Waterloo Commission on Human Rights, David Meeks, provided the Iowa Civil Rights Commission (ICRC) $25,000 to perform fair housing testing in Waterloo.\(^{317}\) The commission would evaluate landlords and property managers to determine if they were complying with the Fair Housing Act and the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965. Specifically, the IRC designed the testing to determine if landlords and property managers discriminated against potential tenants based on family status.

Initially, the program did not directly target racial discrimination. Twenty housing rental units were randomly selected and potential applicants were chosen based on family status: one tester had minor children in his household while the other did not. All of the testers were white.\(^{318}\) The testers asked the landlord about the property to be rented, such as rent, deposit, and amenities.\(^{319}\)

Evidence of discrimination became quickly apparent when testing began. Racial steering, defined by the commission as the “practice of channeling homeseekers into different areas based on their race or some other prohibited factor,” was the most apparent form of discrimination in the tests.\(^{320}\) After comparison of each tester’s conversation with the landlord by the ICRC testing coordinator, the commission

\(^{317}\) Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (Waterloo/Cedar Falls Iowa HOME Consortium, October 2009), 58.
\(^{319}\) Ibid., 1.
\(^{320}\) Ibid.
determined that six of the twenty tests indicated evidence of possible discrimination; five of those tests indicated evidence of racial steering based on the landlord’s use of the words “mixed,” “transitional,” and “not the best” in describing the neighborhoods of their rental properties.\textsuperscript{321} For example, a real estate salesman encouraging black clients to consider only integrated or predominantly black neighborhoods would be considered racial steering. The use of these words indicates that the landlord may have been influenced by the perceived race of the tester in describing the neighborhood.\textsuperscript{322}

While discrimination in family status was the focus of the commission’s study, racial discrimination was found to be a significant component. Specifically, the steering of white potential applicants out of mixed or predominantly black areas contributes to the persistence of unequal housing opportunities in Waterloo. According to the commission, nearly forty years after the Waterloo Commission on Human Rights issued its report calling for an end to housing discrimination, racial steering has contributed to maintaining Waterloo as the most segregated city in Iowa.\textsuperscript{323}

Commercial redevelopment also contributed to the persistence of racial inequality in Waterloo. The construction of new commercial spaces affected not only the locations of major employers in the city, but provided competition for black business owners. In the late 1960s, two of the state’s largest shopping centers were opened in Waterloo and the adjacent Cedar Falls. College Square opened November 12, 1969, in Cedar Falls.\textsuperscript{324} Recognized by its builders as “one of the most modern ‘shopping cities’ to be opened in

\textsuperscript{321} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{322} Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (Waterloo/Cedar Falls Iowa HOME Consortium, October 2009), 59.
\textsuperscript{323} Final Report: Familial Status Testing in Waterloo, Iowa (Des Moines, Iowa: Iowa Civil Rights Commission, 2008), 16.
\textsuperscript{324} “Many Stores to Greet Customers Opening Day,” Waterloo Daily Courier, November 11, 1969, 3.
the country,” College Square provided a wealth of retail stores under a single roof. Less
than a year later, Crossroads Shopping Center—the largest enclosed shopping center in
the state of Iowa—opened on the west side of Waterloo.325

The construction of Crossroads and College Square had detrimental effects on the
retail sales of downtown businesses. Previously the hub of Waterloo’s retail activity, the
downtown business district struggled to survive following the construction of the two
shopping centers. A report published by Jack Meltzer, director of the University of
Chicago Center for Urban Studies, calculated that Waterloo’s downtown retail stores
were getting twenty-eight percent of the total retail business in Waterloo in 1970,
compared to ninety percent in 1965.326 Due to the downtown businesses’ lack of income,
many of Waterloo’s previously thriving businesses were forced to close. Even
Waterloo’s largest downtown department store, Black’s, experienced waning business in
the wake of College Square and Crossroads. After a decade of decreased business, a
store once hailed as a “shopper’s dream” closed its doors on July 3, 1981.327

For shoppers on the east side of Waterloo, the downtown business district was the
only major retail center on their side of the river (Figure 3). The subsequent construction
of College Square in Cedar Falls and Crossroads on the far limits of the west side
provided more employment and shopping opportunities to the predominantly white west
side while drawing them from the only retail center readily accessible to east side
shoppers. Additionally, east side businesses, many of which were owned by blacks, lost
business due to mall construction, and high-priced mall retail space kept them from

327 “Back in Black’s: Work on Architectural Treasure Reveals Hidden Gems,” Waterloo Courier, May 3,
2e23-5c82-8aa8-d7ed7b20edbb.html.
moving into west side malls.\footnote{328}{While the downtown business district is finally recovering from the effects of mall construction today, residents on the predominantly black east side of Waterloo remain the furthest distance from the major retail centers of Crossroads and College Square, putting them at a disadvantage compared to their west side counterparts.\footnote{329}}

![Figure 3](https://example.com/figure3.png)

**Figure 3.** Map of the major shopping centers and department stores in the Waterloo metropolitan area in 1970. Each blue square represents on shopping center, except for the large square in downtown Waterloo, which represents the entire downtown business district. Compiled using “Crossroads Grand Opening Wednesday,” *Waterloo Daily Courier*, May 12, 1970, 10.

Post-WWII suburbanization and urban development can be thought of as a net movement of people and jobs to the suburbs of urban areas. According to Donald N. Steinnes, the construction of suburban malls has devastated central cities, causing

\footnote{328}{“Report Proposes Single Downtown Retail Center,” *Waterloo Daily Courier*, April 30, 1970, 3.}
significant dips in employment. As families moved out of urban centers into suburbs, suburban shopping malls filled a necessary niche for the new community. Massive shopping malls provide a source of new employment to the city, therefore drawing people from the central city to the suburbs, where they can live next to their place of employment. In this way, Steinnes argues, jobs followed people out of the city into the suburbs. Furthermore, large businesses, such as the major department stores in shopping malls, are largely unaffected by trends in other employment sectors, while small businesses are significantly affected.

The shift from established downtown retail centers to shopping centers was a consistent pattern across the country in the 1960s. Shadowing suburbanization, shopping centers offered a shopping environment targeting, according to Lizabeth Cohen, the white and middle class. Cohen argues that while black citizens were battling discrimination, real estate developers and retailers “were collaborating to shift economic resources to new kinds of segregated spaces.” In New Jersey, for example, shopping centers became stratified by class, with downtown “bargain centers” serving poorer citizens lacking the transportation to shop at suburban malls. Between 1964 and 1992, all of Newark’s downtown-located department stores closed due to mall construction, leaving downtown residents lacking cars without easy access to the resources previously provided by those stores.

331 Ibid., 416.
332 Ibid.
333 Lizabeth Cohen, “From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar America,” American Historical Review 101, no. 4 (1996), 1068.
334 Ibid., 1079.
335 Ibid., 1080.
While Waterloo did not fit neatly into the downtown-suburban pattern that many larger cities adopted during the 1960s, both Crossroads and College Square developed on the outskirts of the city, in much the same way suburban shopping centers arose in Newark and other urban centers across the country. Waterloo’s east side is analogous in its high minority concentration to downtown neighborhoods of the nation’s larger cities. The end result of suburban shopping center construction mirrors that of Waterloo’s peripheral mall construction: the already limited pool of shopping and employment opportunities provided to citizens in predominantly minority areas further decreased with mall construction and the subsequent closing of downtown businesses.

In addition to commercial redevelopment, the failure of two major employment discrimination policies established in the late 1960s contributed to the persistence of racial inequality in the city. The first of these was the city’s Fair Employment Practices Ordinance, which provided for the establishment of the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) in 1957. Similar to the Human Rights Commission, the FEPC had no ability to penalize discriminating businesses to a severe enough degree that they would reform their practices. The commission was designed in this way due to way the State’s Fair Employment Practices law was passed. While the majority of the state’s Commission to Study Discrimination in Iowa saw legislation as the key to elimination employment discrimination, the minority of the commission contended that enforcement by legal means was not the way to end employment discrimination. As the minority stated in their report, “The evil, in all its manifestations, can be reached only by a combination of three painstaking approaches: (1) education and (2) social psychiatry,

leading to (3) a transformation of the human spirit.” Although the law was passed several months later, the law contained a compromise between legal enforcement and education of society, which manifested itself in a lack of enforcing power and a focus on general education. Waterloo’s FEPC was designed within the vein of the state commission, and therefore adopted this compromise upon its inception. Therefore, Waterloo’s FEPC educated the discriminating business and the public about fair employment practices instead of penalizing the business at fault.

The city council’s construction of a lackluster FEPC stemmed from negotiations with opponents of strong penalizing power. Waterloo’s largest employers, including Rath Packing and John Deere, held significant clout in city politics as well as the city economy, as they were responsible for Waterloo’s title of “Factory City of Iowa.” With issues of discrimination widespread, a strong legal arm of the FEPC would have the capacity to sanction these companies, possibly reducing their employment capacity and profit. These sanctions could then effect the larger economy of the city. It is probable, then, that the city council recognized the possibility of jeopardizing the economic integrity of the city and created a more conservative, essentially powerless version of the FEPC to satisfy the many citizens calling for its creation.

Analogous to the Human Rights Commission, the failure of the FEPC was due to a lack of enforcing power. Businesses that had engaged in discriminatory behavior for years, even decades, would not be changed solely by the educational approach of the

337 Ibid.
340 Fehn, “ ‘The Only Hope We Had’,” 128.
341 Willie Mae Wright, personal interview by author, August 13, 2013.
FEPC, so employment discrimination flourished in the city. Interviews conducted by a
group of students at the Iowa State Teachers College in 1955 demonstrate the
entrenchment of employment discrimination in the city at the start of the civil rights
movement. The student researchers found that all black employees at the retail stores
they visited were hired as maids, janitors, or stockroom workers.\(^{343}\) The manager of a
clothing store stated he “did not believe it would be possible for Waterloo stores to have
Negro clerks.”\(^{344}\) Virtually all of the black employees at the John Deere tractor plant
worked the dirtiest and most physically demanding jobs, while their equally qualified
white counterparts worked under better conditions.\(^{345}\)

Free of the fear of punishment or penalty, employment discrimination continued
unfettered through the 1960s. The pattern of black employees in low-wage jobs remained
in place a decade after the establishment of the FEPC. In the fall of 1967, the Human
Rights Commission surveyed 284 Waterloo companies and found that over seventy
percent of black employees worked as laborers or operatives while twelve percent
worked as service workers.\(^{346}\) Employees with jobs classified as “white collar” were
ninety nine percent white. The percentage of black laborers in the city was over two
times the city’s black population at the time of the report, indicating disproportionate
concentration of black laborers in the city.\(^{347}\) Blacks entering the city for work, therefore,
were primarily filling service occupations. According to the commission, “the

\(^{343}\) Louis Bultena and Harold Reasby, *Negro-White Relations in the Waterloo Metropolitan Area* (Cedar
Falls, Iowa: Iowa State Teachers College, Spring 1955), 15.
\(^{344}\) Ibid.
\(^{345}\) Ibid., 14.
\(^{346}\) *Hearing before the Waterloo Commission on Human Rights* (Waterloo, Iowa: Waterloo Human Rights
Commission, September 7, 1967), Table 1, 61. In Waterloo Public Library, local history section, Waterloo,
Iowa.
\(^{347}\) Ibid., 62.
distribution of Negro employment is concentrated in jobs with low pay and little prestige or status, a phenomenon commonly known as ‘underemployment.’”  

Fair Employment Practices Commissions across the state and the country were similar to Waterloo’s FEPC in that they lacked enforcing power. The federal Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) was a reaction by FDR to the 1941 March on Washington Movement, organized by A. Philip Randolph and other civil rights leaders, to protest racial discrimination in the defense industry. Additionally, the movement threatened to bring over 250,000 African Americans to Washington, DC, to protest Congress’s resistance to addressing fair employment legislation. FDR negotiated with Randolph and the other organizers of the Movement, and Randolph stated that antidiscrimination legislation alone would stop the protest from occurring.

Thus, the FEPC, on which subsequent commissions such as Waterloo’s was based, was organized in 1941 by FDR. Due to its origin as an executive order, it was limited to hearings, public education, and publicity to enforce anti-discrimination legislation. The committee had no ability to subpoena, fine or jail violators of anti-discrimination laws. Consequently, rates of job discrimination remained constant or increased in such Midwestern cities as East St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Chicago and across the country.

The second major failed employment program of the late 1960s was the U.S. Department of Labor’s On-The-Job Training (OJT) program, implemented by Iowa

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348 Ibid.
350 Ibid.
352 Ibid.
Manpower Development in 1967. One of the main goals of the implementation of the program in Waterloo was to train unemployed high school students so that they could work over the summer and stay off the street. However, the program was oversold: while those who completed the program were promised employment, the vast majority remained unemployed. Out of approximately 1,200 unemployed black youth in Waterloo in the summer of 1967, the OJT program only placed two as bricklayers. The OJT program failed to reduce the number of unemployed youth in Waterloo, and, consequently, was partially blamed for the eruption of three days of violence and looting in July of 1967 that caused $5,000 in damage in the city. Discrepancies in unemployment between white and black citizens persisted through the 1960s and 1970s. In 1970, 3.7 percent of Waterloo’s white population was unemployed while 7.2 percent of Waterloo’s black population was unemployed.

Remnants of black underemployment and unemployment entrenched during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s persist in the city today. Between the five census tracts (out of twenty within the city limits) with the largest percent black population, two blue-collar occupation types predominate: production occupations and transportation and material moving. However, significant growth in white-collar black employment has occurred in the city, as office administration jobs are the third most popular within these tracts. Discrepancies in unemployment rates between black and white citizens echo the patterns

355 Ibid.
357 Social Explorer Tables: ACS 2008-2012 (5-Year Estimates), CT 1, 7, 17.01, 17.02, 18, (SE), Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau.
358 Ibid.
359 Ibid.
established in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, but are significantly worse. In the 2000 census, sixteen percent of the black labor force was unemployed while only four percent of the white labor force was unemployed.\textsuperscript{360}

In contrast to housing and employment, the major education initiative set in place by the Waterloo school board peacefully eradicated segregation in the Waterloo schools. Further analysis will focus primarily on this policy, as it was the major program of educational equality in the city during the late civil rights era. The school board’s desegregation plan became policy in 1973. However, the plan focused on correcting racial imbalance as a pathway of equalizing education quality, instead of directly ensuring equal educational quality across all of Waterloo’s schools.

Some components of the plan, however, addressed the newly integrated student bodies of Waterloo’s public schools. The 1973 plan did provide for the hiring of additional teacher’s aides and in-service training for faculty and staff prior to and throughout the school year.\textsuperscript{361} The in-service program, however, focused on programs to encourage positive interracial interactions, such as simulations, group dynamics, and minority language differentiation, rather than quality teaching for all pupils in all schools. Regarding the staff in-service training component of the desegregation plan, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights stated: “There was little evidence, however, of black materials and the black experience being incorporated naturally into the teaching.”\textsuperscript{362}

\textsuperscript{360} Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (Waterloo/Cedar Falls Iowa HOME Consortium, October 2009), 35.
\textsuperscript{362} Ibid., 23.
By the 1970s, Waterloo’ citizens generally considered schools on the side of Waterloo academically inferior to schools on the west side. According to Robert Oberbillig of the Human Rights Commission, “I think that one of the things is that, one of the real disasters here is the fact that it’s fairly common knowledge as far as the white community is concerned that the schools on the east side are inferior.” Most likely, black communities felt the same way, as many black students pursued transfers into west side schools. According to the Human Rights Commission, the spread of the idea of inadequacy from white parents to white students, and from white students to their black peers, had caused black students to believe that they were receiving an inferior education, causing them to lose the motivation to pursue academic success. The Brown v. Board decision of 1954 established the social science logic that segregation of minority students in segregated schools had a debilitating effect on their educational development. According to Chief Justice Warren in his closing statement, “Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children…A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn.” The Waterloo Human Rights Commission seems to have directly adopted this logic, and used it to critique 1973’s Plan A. Robert Oberbillig’s testimony in the Human Rights Commissions 1967 report repeated this logic while explaining the effect of Waterloo’s segregated schools on students attending east side schools. “Consequently, whether it’s true or not, they

367 Warren in Ibid.
automatically think that they are given an inferior education. They don’t try as hard. The whole aspect of motivation is gone. These are some of the very serious aspects of the community.”368

Waterloo’s school desegregation plan lacked the equal education policies of some cities, yet shared the same shortcomings as others. For example, Dayton, Ohio’s school desegregation plan also lacked policies to ensure equal education quality between all schools in the district, resulting in failure of the plan to ensure equal education opportunity in the same way as Waterloo. While Dayton’s two-way busing program essentially equalized minority student ratios across the district by the late 1970s, gaps in academic achievement between black and white students remained.369

Unlike Waterloo and Dayton, the Milwaukee School District’s desegregation program directly addressed racial achievement gaps by a compensatory education program, which designed curricula based on student abilities, and the “Youth Incentive Project,” which encouraged black students to connect academic achievement to future employment opportunities.370 A significant influx of immigrant families and their school-aged children spurred the establishment of Milwaukee’s compensatory education program. The “Youth Incentive Project,” a collaboration between the Urban League and the Milwaukee Public Schools, was financed with approximately $50,000 from city industries. In Waterloo, migrant populations did not comprise a significant portion of the population until decades after the 1960s, and the smaller size of the city most likely made

it more difficult for the school board to collect thousands of dollars for a youth education initiative like Milwaukee’s.

While 85 percent of Milwaukee’s public schools were legally desegregated five years after the passage of the U.S. District Court’s desegregation plan, rapid movement of white families out of Milwaukee city limits into surrounding suburbs left minority students concentrated in inner-city schools, which were lower achieving than schools in the white suburbs.\(^{371}\) This same “white flight” and its black analog occurred in Waterloo, which led to a corresponding educational achievement gap between white and black students. While school desegregation programs differed in their attention to racial achievement gaps, differences in achievement between white and black students remained in school districts across the country.

As discussed in Chapter 1, busing was one method the Waterloo school board used to rectify the racial imbalances of public schools. The board’s open enrollment busing plan for the 1968 to 1969 school year, however, was limited to students that both volunteered to transfer and would increase the racial balance of the recipient school. Because of these caveats, the majority of students taking advantage of the policy were black students attending the predominantly white, historically higher achieving schools on the west side. Students open enrolling also had to pay for their own transportation. Therefore, only the wealthiest of minority students were able to experience the benefits of integration.\(^{372}\)

In 1973, the school board’s Plan A was adopted, which involved forced busing of many of Waterloo’s public school students to attain racial balance.\(^{373}\) The plan was put

\(^{371}\) Ibid, 188.
in place with the start of the 1973 to 1974 school year, and, due to the collaborative nature of its creation, the introduction of Plan A was comparatively seamless throughout the city.\textsuperscript{374}

Since the 1973 busing program was phased out and replaced with the district’s current open enrollment policy, under which minority to nonminority ratios determine the ability of a student to open enroll in the district, relative racial balance is present today for the majority of Waterloo’s public schools. The Iowa State Board of Education’s 1972 nondiscrimination guidelines defined a segregated or “minority isolated” school as one that had a minority enrollment twenty percentage points greater than that of the total school district. For the 2012-2013 academic year, the average enrollment percentage of black students in the Waterloo public schools is thirty percent, so the threshold for a segregated school in Waterloo is fifty percent. Under these guidelines, only two of Waterloo’s eleven elementary schools remain segregated, compared to four considered segregated in 1973.\textsuperscript{375} One of the middle schools is considered segregated, while both high schools have approximately the total black enrollment percentage of the district.\textsuperscript{376} The city has made progress in equalizing educational opportunities, although that progress is limited.

While the racial balance attained in the early 1970s remains intact, disparities in education quality between predominantly black and predominantly white schools on the east side and west side schools, respectively, remain. Based on Iowa Tests of Basic Skills results from the 2012-2013 academic year, the percentage of students in third


\textsuperscript{375} Ibid., Table 4, 26.

through fifth grade reaching proficiency in reading and math was nine percent lower for
east-side-attending students than west-side-attending students.\textsuperscript{377} Differences in scores
were even greater for middle school students: the percentage of east-side-attending
students reaching proficiency in reading was thirteen percent lower than students
attending middle schools on the west side. Differences in proficiency were the least
between the two high schools, yet the percentage of East High students reaching
proficiency was still six percent lower than the average percentage of proficient West
High students.\textsuperscript{378}

The legacy of the 1973 desegregation plan remains embedded in the city today.
While some measures of racial balance have been achieved across the school district,
inequality in the quality of education persists, and this inequality is tied directly to race:
schools on the east side of the city had and still have poorer academic performance on
standardized tests. The persistence of racial segregation in the city, with the majority of
black students residing on the east side of the city, has contributed to the persistence of
unequal educational opportunities.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The civil rights movement in Waterloo gave citizens promises of equality through
various programs and policies. However, many of them fell short and left these promises
hollow. Limited penalizing power originating from negotiations between civil rights
activists and local, state, and federal leaders rendered the Human Rights Commission and
the Fair Employment Practices Commission essentially powerless. Urban renewal only
enhanced housing discrimination in the city, mall construction further isolated east side-

\textsuperscript{377} “Iowa Assessment Percent Proficient,” Waterloo Community School District, accessed December 4,
\textsuperscript{378} Ibid.
dwelling black residents from the city’s goods and services, and the school desegregation plan failed to address differences in education quality between predominantly black and predominantly white schools. However, some programs were more successful in diminishing racial inequality than others due to their approach to the issue. Programs that addressed symptomatic issues, such as school segregation, had greater success in achieving their goals than programs that targeted entrenched, underlying economic inequalities. This explains why, of all Waterloo’s civil rights programs and policies, the school board’s desegregation plan exhibited the most success. The goal of the school board’s Plan A was to achieve racial balance across all area public schools, and it did so using a combination of busing and redistricting. Programs such as the Human Rights Commission, urban renewal, FEPC, and Manpower Development OJT program attacked more endemic and economic causes of racial inequality in Waterloo. Discrimination in housing and employment, chronic black unemployment, and discrepancies in housing quality between black and white neighborhoods were much more difficult to dismantle than school segregation. Due to the challenging nature of their targets, these programs did little to diminish racial inequality in the city.

Furthermore, while each effort was designed with good intentions, none of them approached racial discrimination from a holistic perspective. Each policy or program addressed inequality in individual sectors of the community as ad hoc civil rights efforts. Without holistic, over-arching, and well-designed programs to address racial inequality in Waterloo, the issue has persisted. Evidence of racial inequality in housing, employment, and schools in the present day demonstrate the underlying consequences of these programs’ shortcomings.

While weak policies and programs worked to maintain racial inequality in Waterloo during the late civil rights era, the movement of people within the city contributed to the persistence of racial inequality from 1970 to 2000. The black population in Waterloo nearly doubled from 1960 to 2000, forcing blacks to move outside historically black Census Tract 18 into other parts of the city. As middle class blacks moved out of the east side community, and either purchased more expensive homes on the west side and in adjacent Cedar Falls or moved out of the area altogether, lower income blacks stayed behind. The population of low-income blacks grew drastically from 1960 to 2000. Some of these families stayed in Census Tract 18 and adjacent areas while others moved into less expensive housing closer to the Cedar River. Low-income blacks became concentrated on the east side, as the majority of the black middle class left Census Tract 18 between 1960 and 1970. This black movement was coupled with a pattern of “white flight.” As blacks moved over to the west side and Cedar Falls, whites with the financial means left the city altogether—nearly 12,000 individuals left the city from 1970 to 2000.379

The demographic patterns observed in Waterloo echo those occurring throughout the country. In the U.S., the number of blacks moving from the lower class to the middle and upper class increased drastically during the 1970s and 1980s.380 In a process known as “black flight,” upwardly mobile blacks moved out of inner cities and into surrounding

suburbs. Lower income blacks were left behind, lacking political power, leadership, and capital to maintain parks, schools, and businesses. Poor black neighborhoods became more concentrated and grew in earnest from 1970 to 1980 most dramatically.\(^{381}\) Whites reacted to both middle class black movement into suburbs and the growth of low-income areas with a pattern of “white flight,” in which they moved further out of the city or to a new part of the city altogether.\(^ {382}\)

This pattern of middle and upper class emigration from black ghettos increased in earnest throughout the country during that time, as housing, employment, and education opportunities previously unavailable to blacks became readily available due to the institutionalized successes of the national civil rights movement. While the income of black families persisted as a fraction of the income of white families, the number of black families receiving a middle class income increased.\(^ {383}\) This increase slowed during the national economic crises of the mid-1970s, causing an increase in unemployment for blacks.\(^ {384}\) These changes did not change income inequality between blacks and whites; the income of blacks continued to lag significantly behind that of whites.\(^ {385}\)

The development of black socioeconomic structure in Waterloo is consistent with William Julius Wilson’s argument in *The Truly Disadvantaged*. Wilson ties together the national shift from goods-producing to service-producing industries—
deindustrialization—with the outmigration of black middle class families from inner-city

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\(^{385}\) Ibid.
neighborhoods to suburbs to explain the formation of inner-city ghettos. As 1970s
deindustrialization dramatically increased the rate of black unemployment, poverty
became concentrated in America’s inner cities.\(^{386}\) The individuals left to occupy inner-
city neighborhoods, what Wilson calls the “underclass,” were thereby socially and
economically isolated from the remainder of the city. This isolation is the key
component, Wilson argues, of ghetto formation and maintenance. The middle class
individuals who previously provided economic and social stability to inner-city
neighborhoods by patronizing churches, stores, and community organizations; sending
their children to local schools, and reinforcing societal norms moved out and left
residents of the ghetto with little hope of upward mobility.\(^{387}\)

These socioeconomic-specific patterns of black movement in post-civil rights
Waterloo demonstrate that certain individuals benefitted from the civil rights success of
the previous decades. By the 1970s, blacks had the ability to live anywhere in Waterloo
they chose. However, middle class blacks comprised the majority moving out of the east
side into the more expensive homes of the west side or Cedar Falls. Low-income blacks
lacked the financial capabilities to take advantage of the freedom to move, and were
therefore left stranded on the east side, unable to take advantage of these new freedoms.

**The Struggle Continues**

Through the 1970s and 1980s, Waterloo’s civil rights programs and policies
established in the prior two decades became institutionalized, resulting in a dramatic
decline in riots, protests, and marches in comparison to the prior two decades. Activists
in the city still pursued equal opportunities for all residents in education, employment,

\(^{387}\) Ibid., 54.
and housing, and established neighborhood centers and community organizations to connect impoverished black families with the city’s social service agencies, provide education, assist in locating employment, facilitate community gatherings, and encourage communication throughout the city.

African Americans established community organizations and small businesses in earnest throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s. The most prominent and popular within Waterloo’s black communities were the Jesse Cosby Neighborhood Center, the African Palace Youth Center, and KBBG, Waterloo’s first black radio station.

Neighborhood centers led by local activists and supported largely by federal funds grew in strength and multitude during the late 1960s through the 1970s. The Jesse Cosby Neighborhood Center and the African Palace Youth Center exemplify the reliance of black communities on the services of these centers. Both of the centers were located in Census Tract 18, which allowed them to operate within the low-income black neighborhoods they served. Upon the opening of the first of these centers—the Cosby Center—nearly one family in ten living in Census Tract 18 had an annual income of less than $1,000. Twenty eight percent of Census Tract 18 families earned less than $4,000, placing them below the poverty line for urban residents. Approximately eighty percent of Census Tract 18’s population was black, and sixty percent of the Tract’s population had less than an eighth grade education.

In 1966, independent citizens established the Jesse Cosby Neighborhood Center on the east side as one of the first minority-based social service agencies in the Waterloo

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389 Ibid.
390 Ibid.
The Center was named after Jesse Cosby, a nationally renowned square dance caller who moved to Waterloo from Jefferson County, Alabama, in 1945. Cosby constantly organized activities for the black youth of the community, the most popular of those activities being the Community A Cappella Choir, which toured across the Midwest for nearly ten years. In January 1966, the center’s staff consisted entirely of volunteers and a council of eighteen black members from the surrounding area.

By September of 1966, Charles McMillan, age 24, took the helm as director of the Cosby Center. The Office of Economic Opportunity, the federal agency responsible for managing Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty programs, provided a substantial grant to the center that covered most of its financial needs. The grant application, prepared by the county director of social welfare, clearly stated that the purpose of the center was to “support and advance progress already started, wherein a group of segregated people are already taking responsibility for and promoting their own welfare.” According to McMillan, the center helped “neighborhood residents climb out of their economic shell.”

McMillan, who worked previously as a math teacher in Savannah, Georgia, and as a Job Corps supervisor, lived and worked around poverty his entire life, and his initial confidence ensured the long-term success of the Cosby Center. As of November 1, 1966, the program roster of the Center provided in the Waterloo Defender outlined the following programs: adult basic education, Red Cross first aid classes, art classes, family

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395 McMillan in Ibid.
396 Ibid, 15.
counseling and welfare case worker services, employment referral service, clerical skills study class, study aid center, and meetings of community organizations such as the NAACP, 4H Club, Cub Scouts, Citizens Committee, and Civilian Patrol. The Center was highly active during the 1970s, hosting the meetings of other community organizations and offering a wide range of classes targeting children, students, and adults seeking education and employment.

Financial support from local businessmen aided the establishment of the African Palace Youth Center in 1969. According to Ace Redd, the director of the center during its first years, the Palace was the black population’s first youth center. The main purpose of the Palace, stated Redd in the Courier, was to provide a place for kids to socialize with their friends “with the freedom of being themselves and identifying with relevancy to growing up into a mature young black in today’s world.”

In pursuit of this mission, the Palace carried out various projects and provided hundreds of services to youths and their families in the surrounding neighborhoods. The Palace provided food to needy families; counseling to children, their families, and their schools; and employment for local youth. In December of 1972, the Palace launched a pilot hot breakfast program, focusing on the educational consequences of hunger for schoolchildren. With only three public schools in Waterloo serving breakfast at the time, the Palace’s breakfast program satisfied a significant demand. Volunteers recruited from the neighborhood surrounding the Palace provided baked goods, prepared food, and

397 “Cosby Center Calendar,” Waterloo Defender, November 1, 1966.
399 Ibid.
400 Ibid.
ate with the children to “explain etiquette, nutritional values of their morning meal, etc."  

Registered teachers taught classes for high school credits and to high school dropouts at the Palace during the early 1970s. The Palace formalized dropout classes in 1974 under the program name “Operation Education.” With approximately six hundred dropouts from the Waterloo public schools in 1973, the Palace projected that 1974’s figure would be nearly twenty percent higher. The direct connection between high school dropouts, their lack of steady income, and the crime they allegedly committed motivated the staff of the Palace to tailor a program to disrupt the pattern. Seven volunteer teachers, two counselors, and a Palace staff member held classes for two hours each weeknight, and focused on helping students obtain a high school diploma, pursue and develop careers, and motivate students to continue learning.

Jimmie Porter, former Local 46 official and civil rights activist, founded KBBG-FM 88.1—Waterloo’s first black radio station—as Afro-American Community Broadcasting, Incorporated, in 1977. The station’s first day on air was July 26, 1978. According to Porter, a major impetus for establishing the station was the blatant misrepresentation and stereotyping of minorities, especially blacks, on local radio stations. According to Lou Porter, Jimmie’s wife, the lack of blacks’ access to radio stations and the blatant divide between the white west side and black east side further

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405 Ibid.
407 Ibid.
motivated Mr. Porter to start the station. Ms. Porter stated, “The one thing he wanted to see was to get rid of that gap. That river has divided us for so long, so long.”408

The station provided a source of community news and knowledge that many black citizens had never known. According to Lou Porter, “Back when the radio station started...our people were so hungry. They were so hungry for something that is ‘mine,’ ‘This is our radio station.’ People would come by and just look at it, so beautiful, they had never had anything like that in their life. People would parade their relatives through.”409 Immediately upon the station’s first broadcast, black citizens took advantage of the station’s open door policy to spread the news about community events, incidents of discrimination, or other bits of news. Lou stated:

When the radio started it was a constant watch, and the door was always open.

‘Mr. Porter, guess what just happened, so-and-so on this street.’ Or, a person from the community would come in and say, ‘I was in this store today and do you know how they treated me?’ Or, they would tell the store people, ‘We’re going to KBBG, and we’re going to tell them what you just did to us.’ That was actually the way it worked.410

From the point of its inception, KBBG held true to its mission statement, “Communicate to Educate.” Black History Month was a period of especially high activity for the station. Specials ranged from debates surrounding black history education, to discussions about the importance of family, to interviews with local junior high and high school students regarding the meaning of black history to them.411

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408 Lou Porter, personal interview with author, August 8, 2013.
409 Ibid.
410 Ibid.
maintained its open-door policy, and encouraged citizens, both black and white, to come on air and express their opinion to continue the spread of knowledge throughout the community. In this way, KBBG filled a vital niche for the black communities of Waterloo, opening lines of communication to each other, to happenings across the river, and to national news stories that had previously passed them by.

Black citizens established these neighborhood and community organizations in the heart of the east side black community, in Census Tract 18. They sustained their activities through the 1980s and 1990s, and several of them, such as KBBG and the Jesse Cosby Center, are still active in the community today as they were decades ago.

In addition to neighborhood centers, black small businesses were prevalent throughout the east side. The history of Waterloo’s black newspaper, the Waterloo Defender, demonstrates this prevalence. The first edition of the paper was published February 11, 1966. The publisher and owner, Harris Ceaser, who was also the chairman of the Equal Opportunity Council at the time, pledged to be “a positive force in the community and heartily subscribe to the concept of being an asset to Waterloo.”

Despite his initial commitment, he published issues of the paper quite irregularly from 1966 to 1969, with only nine issues published between those four years. This irregularity was most likely due to either a lack of sponsoring advertisers or a lack of subscribing citizens.

Whatever the cause, the frequency of published issues increased dramatically during the 1970s. Between 1970 and 1979, Ceaser published thirty issues of the Defender and distributed them throughout the city. Advertisements studded each page,

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412 “Hello, Mr. & Mrs. Waterloo,” Waterloo Defender, February 11, 1966, 1.
from national sponsors such as Pepsi, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Sears, and Budweiser to local sponsors such as supermarkets, car dealerships, banks, and bakeries.\(^{414}\) The proliferation of the newspaper during this time reflects the monetary support of Waterloo’s business owners and general population, as they increasingly purchased and advertised within the paper from the 1960s to the 1970s.

In addition to the *Defender*, other black-owned small businesses were prevalent throughout Waterloo, predominantly on the east side. The owners of many of these small businesses held positions in the Black Business and Professional Organization, an organization founded in the summer of 1972 by a small group of Waterloo’s black small business owners.\(^{415}\) Several of the success stories of black small business owners were featured in the *Waterloo Defender*. These included the Living Room, a bar and lounge owned by Redell Walls; Frazier’s House of Beauty, a beauty parlour owned by Clarence Frazier, several dry cleaners and tailor shops, grocery and convenience stores, and a pool hall.\(^{416,417,418}\)

Black activity in local politics increased dramatically in the late 1970s and 1980s, with many black citizens, mostly female, campaigning in elections for the Board of Supervisors and city council. Anna Mae Weems, Martha Nash, and Mary Berdell participated in elections during the mid-1970s, relying on financial assistance and votes from both black and white supporters.\(^{419}\) Berdell won the 4\(^{th}\) ward election in 1973, and served a two-year term as an independent on the city council.\(^{420}\)


\(^{416}\) *Waterloo Defender*, February 11, 1966.

\(^{417}\) *Waterloo Defender*, December 31, 1971

\(^{418}\) *Waterloo Defender*, June 2, 1972.


became the second black person to win a city or county election in Waterloo in 1983.\(^{421}\) As a ten-year member of the city council, Wright’s greatest accomplishments included the unanimous passage of the city’s affirmative action plan, which increased employment opportunities for black citizens. Wright also advocated for and won the extension of city water and sewer systems to the Maywood residential area on the northeastern side of the city, a predominantly black community.\(^{422}\) Wright’s voice on the city council was essential to the advancement of racial equality in the city, as she minimized differences in employment opportunities and human services between black and white communities.

Churches continued to be active during these decades, indicating the presence of a black middle class on the east side of Waterloo. Waterloo’s largest and oldest historically black churches include Antioch Baptist Church, Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Payne A.M.E, and Union Missionary Baptist Church.\(^{423}\) The ministers of these churches and members of the congregation advocated for racial equality throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Reverend Eugene Williams of the Antioch Baptist Church led the 1964 march on city hall to present grievances to mayor Jochumsen, while Reverend Talbert of Payne A.M.E. led the subsequent 1966 march on city hall.\(^{424}\) The strength of these churches throughout the 1970s and 1980s is readily apparent in the community bulletin-style “What’s Going On” section of the \textit{Waterloo Defender}. Events included religious and celebratory events, such as Mount Carmel’s annual Emancipation Proclamation service on New Year’s Day, to musical programs by performers throughout Waterloo and Cedar Falls, joint services with other Waterloo churches, festivals, and

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\(^{421}\) Ibid

\(^{422}\) Willie Mae Wright, personal interview by author, August 13, 2013.


banquets. Waterloo’s historically black churches also organized fundraising events and drives. Examples of these types of events include Payne A.M.E.’s sickle cell anemia fund, Ebony and Jet subscriptions, and scholarship awards.

Waterloo’s historically black churches collected funds throughout the 1970s to build new churches and renovate those already established. Reverend Clarence Terry, an employee of the Waterloo Housing Commission, established the Greater Abyssinia Fundamental Baptist Church in the fall of 1972, after he and his congregants collected funds for three years. Congregations grew rapidly in size and financial capacity throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Payne A.M.E.’s congregation raised over $200,000 by 1968 to pay off bond indebtedness on their church building. By 1974, Antioch Baptist’s congregation had grown from a couple hundred in 1960 to over one thousand. The church building had recently been renovated, due to funds from congregants, and Reverend Williams planned to use more funds to institute outreach programs for local underserved populations.

An economic downturn in the 1980s, due in part to the closing of one of the primary employers of black citizens, Rath Packing Company, forced many black citizens to call on their local churches for both spiritual and economic guidance. Historically black churches partnered with social service agencies and neighborhood centers, such as the Jesse Cosby Neighborhood Center and the University of Northern Iowa Center for

427 “A Church is Born,” Waterloo Defender, September 8, 1972.
428 “Payne AME Church Debt is Cleared,” Waterloo Daily Courier, June 28, 1968, 3.
430 Ibid.
Urban Education (UNI-CUE).\textsuperscript{431} These partnerships allowed church leaders to educate their congregations about the resources available to them and use the financial and material resources between the two groups most effectively. Many historically black churches reported tight finances during the 1980s, some reporting decreased membership rolls due to the migration of blacks out of the city.\textsuperscript{432}

The quest for equal opportunities for blacks in Waterloo continued after the tumultuous civil rights era of the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s. The institutionalized successes of the local and national civil rights movement facilitated the growth of the city’s black organizations and institutions during the 1970s and 1980s, as neighborhood centers flourished and the city’s historically black churches continued to hold a dominant position in society. Small businesses, such as Waterloo’s black newspaper, the \textit{Waterloo Defender}, and successful campaigns by black politicians further indicate the post-civil rights progress of Waterloo’s black community.

\textbf{Decennial Census Data Analysis}

Within the advances of Waterloo’s civil rights movement, certain segments of the city’s black population took advantage of the political and social changes of the time to physically move, either to another neighborhood in Waterloo or out of the city altogether. This “black flight,” characterized by middle class families moving out of lower income areas with cheaper housing to higher income areas of more expensive and higher quality housing, coincided with “white flight” of white families out of racially integrated neighborhoods. The results of this movement, while a sign of progress for middle class

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{431}“Church Plays Continuing Major Role in Blacks’ Lives,” \textit{Waterloo Daily Courier}, August 14, 1985, B1.
\item \textsuperscript{432}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
black families, had devastating effects on lower income black families, and left many communities on the east side struggling to recover.

Decennial census data illustrates the patterns of demography, income, education, and housing that shaped African American communities in Waterloo from 1960 to 2000. Each included map is broken into census tracts. Socioeconomic status is ascribed to population groups based on household income.

Waterloo’s geography presents a challenge when situating it within the historiography of “black flight.” Many studies of black emigration trace the clustering of blacks into urban centers, or inner cities, and follow their movement as they move up in socioeconomic status out of the inner city into the suburbs. The cities used in these studies have a residential downtown, which makes suburban and urban neighborhoods distinct from one another. Waterloo lacks a clear suburban and urban divide, partly due to its lack of a residential downtown and its small size. Waterloo’s black communities have historically been concentrated on the east side instead of the downtown area, therefore this demographic analysis is focused on the east side.

Before examining the demographic changes in individual census tracts, it is important to understand patterns of change that occurred in the city as a whole throughout the last third of the twentieth century. From 1970 to 2000, the population stayed relatively constant at approximately 70,000. However, the white population has gradually decreased over time, characteristic of widespread “white flight” out of the city. In contrast, the black population has increased by nearly one-third from 1970 to 2000 (Figure 4).

Widespread “white flight” and an increase in the black population coincided with dramatic increases in unemployment for both blacks and whites in Waterloo from 1970 to 2000. From 1970 to 1980, the unemployment rate for blacks more than doubled, while the white unemployment rate increased by approximately fifty percent. The unemployment rate for blacks stayed relatively constant through 1990 and 2000. The unemployment rate for whites hovered around six percent in 1990 before decreasing slightly in 2000 (Figure 5). These trends indicate a possible relationship between “white flight,” “black flight” and unemployment on a city-wide scale.
Trends in poverty mirrored trends in unemployment from 1970 to 2000 (Figure 6). The percentage of impoverished white and black individuals increases steadily from 1970 to 1990, with a slight decrease by 2000. The percent of black individuals categorized as below the poverty level is approximately four times that of white individuals.
Increased rates of unemployment and poverty within Waterloo’s black population provide an explanation for city-wide black income lagging behind both white and total income (Table 1). While unemployment and poverty rates increased from 1970 to 2000, black households throughout Waterloo continued to make, on average, two-thirds of the average income for all Waterloo households.

Table 1. City-wide income averages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total households average income</th>
<th>White households average income</th>
<th>Black households average income</th>
<th>Black household average income as percent of total household average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970*</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$10,500</td>
<td>$6,500</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>$23,977</td>
<td>$24,870</td>
<td>$15,977</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>$30,332</td>
<td>$31,441</td>
<td>$19,892</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>$44,607</td>
<td>$46,215</td>
<td>$30,200</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These values adapted from detailed family income data for each group.
Analysis of income distributions reveals the effect of “black flight” and “white flight” on community composition. A striking change in the income distribution of Waterloo’s total black population occurs between the income distributions of 1960 and 1970. The 1960 black and white population’s income distribution is indicative of a classic bell curve, with a healthy middle class—the largest collective group—represented by the middle four deciles (Figure 7A). The top three and bottom three deciles, low-income and high-income proportions of the population, are relatively smaller segments of the population. In 1960, a greater proportion of the white population reported an income in the top three deciles than the black population, indicating that Waterloo’s white population consisted of more high-income individuals than the black population.

This pattern changes dramatically in 1970, when the lowest third of income brackets—low-income households—represents the largest proportion of Waterloo’s black population. The black population represented by the middle third of income brackets shrinks dramatically, and represents the smallest proportion of the city’s blacks (Figure 7B). By 1970, the population of whites represented by the middle third of income brackets has decreased while the population represented by the top third has grown in size. This shift in distribution indicates that the white middle class was generally the group leaving the city through “white flight.” The distribution shifts of both the black and white populations are evidence of the effects of both “white flight” and “black flight.” As able individuals left the city, they took their capital and resources with them, and left low-income individuals stranded. Thus, the low-income black population grew and came to characterize the city’s black population.
While an overview of Waterloo’s city-wide census data provides an introduction to the general pattern of the consequences of “black flight” and “white flight,” finer analysis of black communities themselves is necessary to fully understand the formation of a concentrated, black, low-income community—a ghetto—within the city limits. As the location of Waterloo’s first black community and an historically predominantly black area, Census Tract 18 has long reflected the development of black communities across Waterloo. Because of its place as the geographical origin of Waterloo’s black community, it serves as a starting point for an analysis of ghetto formation within the city. Census Tract 18 has remained the city’s predominantly black section for decades. Between 1960 and 2000, the black population within Census Tract 18 has only increased, from just under eighty percent in 1960 to ninety percent in 2000. In 1960, Census Tract 18 was the only predominantly black census tract in the city, with over half of the black population in the city residing within the tract (Figure 8). Through to 2000, Census Tract 18 remained the home of the most blacks in the city.

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The greatest shift of the tract’s black population occurred with income distribution. In 1960, Census Tract 18 contained a relatively normal distribution of black household income levels. The largest reporting group occupied the middle four deciles, while the top three and bottom three deciles represented smaller proportions of the population. Approximately fifty percent of black households reported incomes in the middle four deciles, representing a healthy black middle class presence within the tract (Figure 9A).

In 1970, the proportion of black families with an income in the four middle deciles decreased by fifty percent. Forty percent of black families reported incomes within the bottom three deciles (Figure 9B). This indicates an absence of the black middle class, most likely due to “black flight” out of the tract, and the subsequent growth of the low-income black population.

The population of low-income blacks further increased as the black middle class further decreased in size by the 1980 census. The bottom three deciles represented sixty five percent of the population, while only twenty eight percent of the population reported an income within the middle four deciles. Less than seven percent of households reported an income within the top three deciles (Figure 9C).

By 1990, the low-income majority of Census Tract 18 had stabilized. All households, of which ninety-three percent were black, reported increasingly low incomes, with sixty percent of households reporting an income in the bottom three deciles. One-third of households reported an income within the middle four deciles (Figure 9D).
Despite the consequences of ghetto formation brought on by both “black flight” and “white flight,” data contradictory to the income distribution pattern demonstrates the progress of Census Tract 18’s neighborhood centers and other community organizations in addressing employment and educational challenges for the community’s members. The percentage of the black population categorized as below the poverty level remained relatively constant around twenty five percent from 1970 to 1990, peaking at nearly thirty percent in 1990. A dramatic drop in poverty level occurred between the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses, with nearly a ten percent drop in the percentage of individuals below the poverty level between 1990 and 2000 (Figure 10).

![Figure 10. Proportion of black individuals reporting an annual income below the poverty level, from 1970 to 2000. Social Explorer Tables (SE), Census 1970-2000, U.S. Census Bureau and Social Explorer, accessed February 23, 2014.](image)

The data most contradictory to the tract’s income distribution pattern is that of educational attainment. Within the tract, the education of all individuals improved dramatically from 1970 to 2000. In 1960, approximately sixty percent of the black population within the tract had less than a high school education, while only one percent of the 1960 black population of Census Tract 18 had a college education, approximately
half of the total black population’s average (Figure 11). By 1970, the percentage of blacks with less than a high school education had decreased to forty four percent, and the percentage of blacks with some level of college education had increased to three percent of the total black tract population. The proportion of blacks with less than a high school education remained consistent with that of Waterloo’s total population, while the tract’s proportion of college-educated blacks continued to lag behind that of the total population.

The population of college-educated blacks within the tract continued to rise in 1980, with six percent reporting some college education. The percentage of blacks within the tract reporting less than a high school education continued to decrease to one third while the percentage reporting a high school education increased several percentage points from 1970. By 2000, approximately seventy percent of residents within Census Tract 18 had a high school diploma or greater (Figure 11). This pattern is surprising in light of the dominance of low-income households in the tract, and could be explained in part by neighborhood centers such as the Cosby Center and the African Palace as well as the work of the Waterloo Public Schools.

434 The 1990 census was not included in this data analysis because it did not provide a breakdown of educational attainment data by census tract and race.
As Waterloo’s black population grew during the second half of the twentieth century, individuals moved outside the walls of Census Tract 18. With less and less of Waterloo’s black population residing within Census Tract 18, it raises the question where the rest of the black population lived within the city, and what characteristics defined the region in which they lived. In 1960, the only other tract containing a significant portion of the black population was Census Tract 6.\footnote{Ibid.} Within this tract, similar to Census Tract 18, fifty percent of nonwhite (of which ninety-eight percent were black) households reported an income in the middle four deciles.\footnote{Social Explorer Tables (SE), Census 1970, U.S. Census Bureau and Social Explorer, accessed February 23, 2014}

As Waterloo’s black population grew in size over the next decade, it expanded outward to adjacent census tracts. Census Tracts 17 and 19, which bordered Census Tract 18, housed higher proportions of middle-income black families and lower proportions of low-income black families in comparison to Census Tract 18. These
patterns are reflected in the tract’s average income in 1970 (Figure 15). Census Tract 1, 6 and 7, closer to downtown than Census Tract 17, 18, and 19, consisted of much higher proportions of low-income black families than the tracts further north (Figure 15). Percent differences between average black household income by tract and city-wide black average income shows that tracts on the west side and in Cedar Falls experienced immigration of black households earning greater than the city-wide average (Figure 13). Housing values paralleled the movement of higher income blacks out of Census Tract 18. Financially capable blacks moved out of Census Tract 18 into adjacent Census Tracts 17 or 19, which had higher housing values than Census Tract 18 (Figure 12).

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437 Average income for the 1970 census tracts was calculated by determining the income decile that fifty percent of the population fell into, and reporting the average value of that decile as the average.
Figure 12. Average housing values and black population in 1970 across the city of Waterloo. Compiled with Social Explorer Tables (SE), Census 1970, U.S. Census Bureau and Social Explorer, accessed February 23, 2014.
In 1980, the black population had spread to six primary tracts: 1, 7, 17.1, 17.2, 18, and 19. The average family income in 1980 was approximately $24,000, while the average black family’s income was $15,900 (Table 1). The average income for black families in Census Tract 1 and 7 in 1980 was approximately $15,000. The average income for black families in Census Tract 17.1, 17.2, and 19 was several thousand dollars higher than the $15,700 average of black families residing in Census Tract 18. Thus, higher income black families were moving out of Census Tract 18 into surrounding tracts on the east side and areas of the west side and Cedar Falls, indicative of “black flight” (Figure 13).
Figure 13. Percent difference of average black household income from black city-wide average income, mapped with black population. Compiled with Social Explorer Tables (SE), Census 1970-1980, U.S. Census Bureau and Social Explorer, accessed February 23, 2014.
Additionally, black families with the highest income lived in census tracts on the west side of Waterloo, such as Census Tract 15 or 13, or in Cedar Falls near the University of Northern Iowa (Figure 13). “Black flight” to Cedar Falls is evident by steady increases in the city’s black population from 1980 to 2000 (Figure 14).

![Black Population Growth in Cedar Falls, 1980-2000](image)

Figure 14. Growth of the black population in Waterloo’s adjacent Cedar Falls. Compiled with Social Explorer Tables (SE), Census 1970-2000, U.S. Census Bureau and Social Explorer, accessed February 23, 2014

This pattern of “black flight” to the west side and Cedar Falls continued to 1990. Census Tract 1, 7, 17.01 (formerly 17.1), 17.02 (formerly 17.2), 18, and 19 were home to the majority of Waterloo’s black population in 1990. In 1990, the average Waterloo household earned slightly over $30,000. The average black Waterloo household earned approximately $20,000 (Table 1). Census Tracts 1 and 7 continued to house predominantly low-income black households, while black households earning equal to or greater than the city’s average annual income resided, for the most part, on the west side of Waterloo and in Cedar Falls (Figure 13, Figure 15). The average earnings for black
households in Census Tract 18 was $20,500, consistent with the city’s average for all black households, yet lagging behind the city average by 33 percent (Table 1).

The growth of the black population through 2000 fueled the pattern of “black flight” throughout the city. In 2000, the same tracts remained populated by a significant portion of the black population—greater than twenty-five percent—with the addition of Census Tract 5. The average income for all Waterloo households had increased to approximately $44,000 while the average income for black households had increased to slightly above $30,000. Black families with incomes equaling or surpassing the city’s average annual income lived in tracts either on the west side or in Cedar Falls, consistent with the pattern of “black flight” seen in 1980 (Figure 15). Low-income black families became increasingly concentrated in downtown areas, encompassing Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3 (Figure 15). Census Tract 17.01 and 19 demonstrate moderate growth of the black middle class with incomes greater than the average black household earnings.

Moderate growth of the black middle class was evident from 1970 to 1980. Census Tracts 17, 18, and 19 reported incomes below the city’s total average in 1970; however, by 1980, tracts 17.1, 17.2, 18, and 19 reported incomes approximately equal to the city’s total average (Figure 15). These data are consistent with a growth of middle-income earning households within Census Tract 18 and adjacent tracts. However, this growth appears to become stagnant following the 1970s. In 1990, the average income between the same four tracts was approximately the same as 1980. Some growth is evident by the 2000 decennial census, yet the income for black households within those four tracts lagged behind the total city average by approximately twenty-five percent, or $12,000.
The movement of middle class black families out of Census Tract 18 from 1960 to 1990 caused the tract to become dominated by low-income households (Figure 15). As more and more black households made financial gains, they were able to move across the river, to the west side and to Cedar Falls. Over time, lower-class blacks moved to areas of less expensive housing downtown in Census Tract 1, 6, and 7. Middle and upper class blacks moved to areas of more expensive housing that matched their income level, either on the west side or in Cedar Falls (Figure 12). This change is clear in a comparison of black socioeconomic distribution before and after the height of “black flight” in the city (Figure 16).
As Waterloo’s black population grew in size and expanded throughout the city from 1960 onward, divisions in socioeconomic status by income level characterized the evolving residential patterns. Middle and upper class black individuals with incomes in the top seventy percent moved out of predominantly black sections of the city, like Census Tract 18, beginning in the 1960s. These individuals generally moved to the west side of Waterloo and to Cedar Falls, areas with much higher housing values than census tracts on the east side. Subsequently, low-income households were left stranded on the east side, lacking in the political and economic resources of higher income individuals and trapped inside an evolving ghetto.

The movement of black middle class individuals was so significant in Waterloo that the Courier dedicated several days to discussing the issue. Louis Starks, one of two practicing black attorneys in Waterloo, discussed the reasoning behind potentially leaving Waterloo in a week-long segment in the Courier entitled “The Waterloo Black Community in Transition,” published in 1985. As a young professional in the early stages of his career, Starks, 27, weighed the option of starting his own practice as a private attorney in Waterloo or in, according to Starks, “a large, urban area where there are greater career and cultural opportunities,” and where he can work toward his career goals “with greater ease.”

The Courier described the pattern of black professionals and recent black graduates leaving or bypassing Waterloo altogether as “contagious,” and detrimental to the economic future of the city and the future of the city’s black communities. Starks cited attractive alternative options, especially large southern cities with their immense business opportunities and long-established black associations open to professionals, as

one impetus behind the emigration of Waterloo’s black middle class. The pull of thriving urban centers only increased due to Waterloo’s lack of a community of black professionals, which was partially responsible for the difficulty of building a successful career in the city.

The recession that hit most of the nation in the early 1970s did not reach Waterloo until approximately 1975.439 During the decade from 1975 to 1985, Waterloo experienced the layoff of thousands of workers from John Deere Tractor Works, the county’s largest employer, and the decline and eventual closing of the county’s second largest employer, Rath Packing Company. In 1974, John Deere employed over 11,000 residents of Black Hawk County. However, between 300 and 350 were laid off during the summer of 1975.440 By 1975, Rath laid off several hundred workers, leaving the company at a “very low level of employment” according to President J. C. Walker.441

Unfortunately for Iowa’s economy, the national recession was not the only tribulation it faced during this time. The Iowa farm crisis hit Waterloo’s largest employers through the 1980s, contributing to the stunted growth of the black middle class. Demand for agricultural products spiked in the early 1970s, when poor weather conditions in Europe led to increased demand.442 American farmers responded to the call for production, and in 1974, for the first time in history, per capita farm income exceeded that of urban Americans.443 Competition for agricultural lending increased in line with farmer’s optimism. Independent banks competed with the Farm Credit System and the

440 “More Waterloo Firms Announce Layoff Plans,” Waterloo Courier, April 1, 1975, 6.
441 Ibid.
443 Ibid.
Farmers Home Administration to provide loans to farmers upgrading and expanding their farms.\textsuperscript{444} This economic uplift ceased in 1979. First, a change in Federal Reserve policy caused interest rates to double, making it difficult for farmers to pay back their loans. Second, President Jimmy Carter ceased the shipment of farm products to the Soviet Union after they had invaded Afghanistan. Demand dropped off and prices lowered, leaving farmers no way to pay back their creditors and causing their debt to accumulate.\textsuperscript{445}

The national recession and the farm crisis slashed the employment numbers at both John Deere and Rath. Rath’s multi-level construction became obsolete by the mid-1970s introduction of the new single-floor plant model.\textsuperscript{446} From 1966 to 1981, Rath’s workforce decreased by over fifty percent.\textsuperscript{447} Further layoffs occurred for the next four years, leaving approximately 250 employees at the plant by the end of 1984.\textsuperscript{448} Rath closed in 1985, after a shift from family-owned to employee-owned failed to save the company from bankruptcy. The devastation of the plant’s closing left physical marks on the city. According to Willie Mae Wright, “There were so many vacant homes, that’s because when Rath’s closed down, there were so many people that were unemployed, and they just closed like that, and they just walked off and left their homes.”

Between 1979 and 1985, Deere’s tractor sales decreased by forty percent and combine sales decreased by sixty percent.\textsuperscript{449} Financial losses began to build for the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{444} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{445} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{446} Bob Brown, personal interview by author, August 13, 2013.
\textsuperscript{448} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
company, with $28.5 million net loss reported for the first quarter of 1983. The company reported losses of $28.2 million in the first quarter of 1985. Massive layoffs followed these financial losses. Between 1982 and 1985, nearly eight thousand employees were laid off, most of them indefinitely, from John Deere & Company, formerly John Deere Tractor Works.\textsuperscript{450}

Bob Brown recalled the spike in unemployment in Waterloo after decreases in hiring by both Rath and Deere. Brown stated that many of the unemployed workers were middle-aged, “in their 50s, even 60s. Where are you going to find a job at that age? So, that was sad when that happened, because Rath Packing was well-known all over the United States.”\textsuperscript{451}

The slowing of black middle class growth in the 1980s can be attributed, in part, to these deindustrialization trends throughout the city. Defined in part as a decrease in manufacturing jobs, deindustrialization’s greatest effects hit Waterloo in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the massive layoffs at Deere and decline and closing of Rath. The 1980s Iowa farm crisis exacerbated the devastating effects of deindustrialization, causing unemployment to further increase throughout the city. As discussed in Chapter 2, in the 1970s and 1980s, blacks predominantly worked in manufacturing and service industries. Therefore, deindustrialization and the farm crisis hit black communities in Waterloo much harder than white communities (Figure 5, Figure 6).

**Conclusion**

These analyses show that certain segments of Waterloo’s black population benefitted from civil rights efforts, while others did not. Blacks on the east side

\textsuperscript{450} ibid.
\textsuperscript{451} Ibid.
established small businesses, neighborhood centers, ran political campaigns and continued to strengthen their churches. However, the successes of the civil rights movement were only accessible to a handful of Waterloo’s black population. As is evident in the case of Census Tract 18, middle class individuals took advantage of the ability to live anywhere in the city beginning in the 1970s, leaving Census Tract 18 for the more expensive homes and better educational and professional opportunities on the west side. This “black flight,” while a sign of success for the middle class segment of the black population, was devastating for low-income black households, which were mostly left stranded on the east side without the capital of the middle class to support them.

The predominantly low-income population of the east side only grew with the closing of Rath, layoffs at Deere, and the farm crisis, which left many of Waterloo’s blacks unemployed. Evidence of black middle class recovery is present in the 2000 census data, yet, for nearly two decades, the black middle class struggled to recover from the blow of rampant unemployment, and inequalities in housing, education, and employment persisted throughout the city.
Conclusion

This paper aims to understand the persistence of racial inequality in Waterloo despite the multi-layered efforts to equalize opportunity during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s in the city. Specifically, what policies, programs, and initiatives were put in place by governing bodies to address racial inequality in Waterloo? What was the nature and outcome of their function? Did they succeed in reducing inequality in the city, or did they enhance it? How did demographic patterns of the growing black population affect racial inequality in the city?

The first chapter of this study provided an overview of the many programs, policies, and initiatives put in place by citizens and various governing bodies to address and reduce racial inequality in the city from approximately 1950 to 1970. These programs targeted employment, housing, and education throughout Waterloo. Programs funded by national and state governments included urban renewal, the Iowa Manpower Development On-the-Job Training Program, and the Waterloo school board’s Plan A. Programs under the city government or led by independent citizens included the Human Rights Commission, and the Fair Employment Practices Committee, UPWA Local 46, and the East Side Citizen’s Committee. Independent families, such as the Quirks and Duttons, worked together to build equality within their neighborhoods.

Dedicated and community-minded individuals served an important role in the civil rights movement of Waterloo. These types of individuals—the Quirks, Duttons, Jimmie Porter, Willie Mae Wright, Bill Knowlton, and Anna Mae Weems—worked through local and federal institutions and bureaucracies to instill in the city the change they saw as necessary. For example, union leaders like Anna Mae Weems and Jimmie
Porter worked within the structure of Local 46 and the larger UPWA to ensure equal employment opportunities for all members. These leaders envisioned a Waterloo with equal opportunities for all citizens, and drew strength from that vision to inspire those around them to continue the fight for equality.

Chapter two provided an analysis of the shortcomings of specific policies and programs put in place to address inequality in Waterloo during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Some policies, such as urban renewal and the Iowa Manpower Development OJT Program increased racial inequality and tension between blacks and whites throughout the city, while other programs such as the FEPC and HRC were unable to completely address discrimination in the city because they lacked the power to enforce the state’s antidiscrimination law. The FEPC and HRC addressed only specific segments of the inequality issue in Waterloo. Furthermore, opposition groups dampened the strength of these ad hoc efforts. While the goal of these programs was significant change in racial inequalities plaguing the city, their inherently limited enforcing power prohibited them from achieving this large-scale change.

The success of these programs and policies depended on their approach to the issue of racial inequality in the city. While the most successful initiatives, like the school board’s Plan A, attacked the more symptomatic and superficial side of racial inequality in Waterloo—school segregation—programs that demonstrated little success, such as the HRC and FEPC, targeted entrenched, systematic, and economic components of racial inequality such as unequal housing opportunities, employment discrimination, and chronic black unemployment. In this way, the programs attacking the weakest targets yielded the most successful results.
The troubled legacies of these ad hoc programs are evident in the current employment, education, and housing patterns of the city. Housing discrimination, which plagued African American homeowners during the 1960s decade of urban renewal, is weaker yet still present in the city today, as is evident in a 2008 report by the Iowa Civil Rights Commission. The educational achievement gap between east side-dwelling, predominantly black students and west side-dwelling, predominantly white students also remains present. Unemployment and underemployment of African Americans relative to white residents, while significantly improved from the time of the city’s Fair Employment Practices Commission, remains a significant issue for the community. African Americans represent a significantly larger proportion of blue-collar workers than Waterloo’s white residents, and black individuals are unemployed and impoverished at twice the rate of white individuals.\textsuperscript{452}

Chapter three focused on the 1970s and 1980s, the decades immediately following the civil rights period in Waterloo. This period lacked the marches, riots, and protests that characterized the previous decades of intense civil rights activism. Instead, an institutionalization of civil rights programs and policies characterized the efforts. Black community leaders founded a series of independent community and neighborhood organizations that provided social services to poor blacks—these included the Cosby Center and African Palace—and outlets to increase black involvement in city politics and city-wide discussions of racial equality, such as the East Side Citizen’s Committee and KBBG. Historically black churches remained strong during these decades, too.

\textsuperscript{452} Social Explorer Tables: ACS 2008 to 2012 (5-Year Estimates) (SE), Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau.
demonstrated by growing congregations, expansion of churches, and facilitation of city-wide events within church buildings.

Despite the growth of these organizations during the 1970s and 1980s, the black middle class, defined here as the four median income deciles, actually decreased in size from 1960 to 1990 in predominantly black Census Tract 18. The pattern seen in Census Tract 18 was echoed within the city’s entire black population from 1960 to 1970. This “black flight” was due to the successes of the civil rights movement; blacks in Waterloo with the financial capability could live anywhere in the city they pleased. As the black middle class decreased in size during the end of the twentieth century, the lower class—defined here as the bottom three income deciles—increased in size. By the end of the twentieth century, Census Tract 18 was a predominantly lower class community. Black families with an income equal to or greater than the city’s average generally lived either on the west side of Waterloo or in Cedar Falls, near the University of Northern Iowa. The movement of black families to higher income neighborhoods left lower income blacks economically and socially stranded on the east side of the river.

The growth of Waterloo’s low-income black population from 1970 onward was exacerbated by economic decline and consequential unemployment. The 1980 farm crisis, the 1985 closing of Rath Packing Plant, and massive layoffs at the John Deere Tractor Works during the early 1980s left thousands of Waterloo’s citizens unemployed. With Waterloo’s black population disproportionately employed by these industrial employers, the black population was devastated by this economic downturn, and the rate
of unemployment and poverty within black communities such as Census Tract 18 rose accordingly.\footnote{453}{Social Explorer Tables (SE), Census 1970-2000, U.S. Census Bureau and Social Explorer, accessed February 23, 2014.}

This pattern is consistent with William Julius Wilson’s analysis of the formation of the black underclass, which occurred throughout American cities over the last three decades of the twentieth century. Financially capable blacks took advantage of the civil rights movement’s successes by moving anywhere they pleased, whether that meant to a different neighborhood or to a different part of the country. Beginning with earnest in 1970, black middle class individuals fled from inner cities to suburbs or different cities altogether. This “black flight” left lower-income blacks without the social or economic buffer the middle class provided, and low-income households proliferated. Nation-wide deindustrialization only increased chronic black unemployment in the country’s urban centers, increasing the numbers of unemployed and impoverished blacks in inner cities and strengthening the presence of the underclass.\footnote{454}{William Julius Wilson, \textit{The Truly Disadvantaged} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 12.}

Many of the factors contributing to the persistence of inequality in Waterloo manifested themselves in cities across the country. Urban renewal, as a federal program sponsored by the Fair Housing Act, hurt black housing opportunities in American cities during the 1960s and 1970s. Chicago and Detroit experienced tremendous growth of black slums during the decades following WWII, as the black population exploded past the housing supply. Blacks generally settled in all-black neighborhoods since that was the only housing available to them. This pattern continued through urban renewal programs; as slum clearance displaced black families, they would relocate in the only housing available to purchase. The construction of public housing or low-income
housing units outside predominantly black neighborhoods drew fervent resistance by
potential white neighbors, which maintained the segregation of black and white
neighborhoods. Cities such as Cedar Rapids, Detroit, Cincinnati, and Chicago
established organizations analogous the Human Rights Commission and the Fair
Employment Practices Commission to address discrimination and inequality in specific
sectors of the community. These organizations similarly lacked enforcing power and did
little to equalize housing and employment opportunities in American cities during the
civil rights era.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, cities throughout the country addressed school
segregation with plans and strategies similar to Waterloo’s. In education, Waterloo
actually exceeded national norms. Few cities approached a plan for school integration in
such a collaborative way as the Waterloo school board, which incorporated the ideas of
over a dozen community organizations into the design of Plan A. Due to this
collaborative method, Waterloo’s public schools were integrated through Plan A with
little federal government involvement. In contrast, school desegregation in Milwaukee,
Dayton, and Chicago required interference by the state or federal justice department. The
construction and implementation of Waterloo’s Plan A took approximately five years,
from the Iowa Civil Rights Commission’s meeting with the Waterloo school board in
1968 to the implementation of Plan A in the fall of 1973. Other cities that undertook
school integration during the civil rights era did not move as swiftly as Waterloo.
Integration of the Milwaukee public schools took approximately thirty years, while the
integration of the public schools of Dayton and Chicago took approximately ten years.
The most unique aspect of civil rights organizing in Waterloo was the UPWA’s Local 46 at Rath. As the employer of thousands of Waterloo’s citizens, many of them black, Local 46 served an integral role within Waterloo’s battle for racial equality during the 1950s and 1960s. The union built strength from within Rath itself, forming a leadership board of both black and white employees. Local 46’s greatest work involved its members working together to directly address issues of housing and employment discrimination in the community through sit-ins and protests. Black union officials such as Monroe Stevens, Willie Mae Wright, and Jimmie Porter used their organizing and leadership experience with the local in their community-based civil rights work throughout Waterloo.

The civil rights focus of Local 46, especially its strong connection to the local chapter of the NAACP, set it apart from other unions in the country during the civil rights era. The ubiquitous power of UAW president Walter Ruthers, who sat on the NAACP’s board of directors and funded other major civil rights organizations, sapped the strength of Detroit’s predominantly black Local 600 by removing its key leaders from power and essentially ignoring complaints of discrimination filed away by UAW of Detroit’s Fair Employment Practices Department. Winston-Salem’s FTA Local 22, unlike Waterloo’s Local 46, crumbled under communist accusations due to its minimal connections to community leaders and unity within its membership. Waterloo’s Local 46 and Chicago’s UPWA locals shared strong community connections, including overlapping membership with the NAACP and urban league. However, the deep network of Local 46’s members to community leaders and the union’s fervent dedication to civil rights made Waterloo’s
Local 46 one of the most influential bodies during Waterloo’s civil rights movement and sets it apart from locals throughout the country.

The story of Waterloo is similar to Sugrue’s story of Detroit’s “urban crisis” and Hirsch’s story of Chicago’s “second ghetto.” Waterloo’s history of urban renewal and the maintenance of predominantly black east side neighborhoods aligns with the consequences of urban renewal Hirsch analyzes to describe the post-WWII re-strengthening of the black ghetto in inner city Chicago. The wealth of boycotts and protests conducted by Waterloo’s citizens during the civil rights era supports Sugrue’s argument that slower racial progress in the North demanded civil disobedience to propel the movement forward. Similar to Detroit, Waterloo experienced racial violence during the late 1960s; however, the subsequent racial inequalities that plagued the two cities did not begin with the riots. Long-standing inequalities between blacks and whites had existed in the cities many decades prior, and both cities had unsuccessfully attempted to dissolve those inequalities prior to the violence.

Waterloo’s small size relative to the country’s major urban centers provides an interesting and revealing point of analysis for the larger study of the civil rights movement. As discussed in Chapter 1, many of Waterloo’s civil rights policies and programs followed those established in other cities across the country. Due to the nature of this follow-on effect, much of Waterloo’s civil rights activity occurred later than other larger urban centers in both the North and South. This later activity provided city officials and activists an historical context for many of the programs and policies implemented in Waterloo. However, the delayed nature of the movement meant it was also compressed, with the majority of civil rights activity in the city occurring in less than
a decade. This compressed nature contributed to the ad hoc nature of policies and programs implemented in the city, as citizens called on government officials and activists to address issues of racial inequality over a relatively short timespan. Waterloo’s small size provided activist individuals room to pursue their agendas, both within and without bureaucratic institutions. With a smaller black population within a small total population, grassroots individuals had more freedom and power to work towards their goals of racial inequality throughout the city. Community organizing and dissemination of political ideas occurred more rapidly and efficiently through Waterloo’s population than exponentially larger urban centers such as Detroit and Chicago.

Despite Waterloo’s smaller size and fervent civil rights movement, many of the same factors that facilitated the persistence of racial inequality in larger urban centers presented themselves in Waterloo. During the civil rights movement, an array of ad hoc programs and policies addressed racial inequality, with those targeting the weakest, most superficial components of the problem exhibiting the most success. The power of many local civil rights programs was stifled by compromises between the city council and opposition groups, leaving organizations with little power to enforce the city’s civil rights legislation. “Black flight” and “white flight” comprised post-civil rights era persistence factors in Waterloo. The institutionalized successes of the civil rights movement provided all of Waterloo’s blacks the opportunity to move to any neighborhood in the city. However, financial limitations excluded Waterloo’s low-income black population from taking advantage of this opportunity, leaving financially able middle class blacks with the ability to move. It is within these patterns of movement that the true irony of the civil rights movement comes alive. While policies, programs, and initiatives addressed
racial inequality for the good of all segments of black populations, only blacks with financial capabilities could take advantage of their successes. The exclusion of low-income blacks from the successes of the civil rights movement is the ultimate persistence factor. With these individuals unable to access the movement’s successes, inequality has remained, both within black populations and between white and black populations of Waterloo.
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